

Population Displacements and Multiple Mobilities in the Late Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage

POLITICS, SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

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Edited by

Catherine Horel
Bettina Severin-Barboutie



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Preface

This volume is the fruit of a reflection that started at a conference on war and population displacements in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries held at the German Historical Institute in Paris in April 2015. During the event, we discussed the importance of the conference's issue in the Ottoman Empire as one of the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and transcontinental empires that, for centuries, shaped the history of Europe and the world. Given this diagnosis, we decided to launch a project exploring the relationship between military conflicts and human movements in the Ottoman Empire over the *longue durée* and as widely as possible in space.

Our goal was twofold. On the one hand we wanted to deepen our knowledge about the movements of hundreds of thousands, sometimes even millions, of people – both within the Ottoman Empire and beyond its borders – that were provoked by the military conflicts ensued by the expansion and consolidation of the Ottoman Empire from the middle of the 14th to the end of the 17th centuries, but also played a role in its decline and dissolution since the 18th century. In other terms, we wanted to approach the history of the Ottoman Empire as a history of war and human mobility. On the other hand, we intended to bring together researchers from academic disciplines that do not always work together and thus open a dialogue in a research field, which not only have great potential for historical research but is also highly relevant in the present.

In order to achieve these goals we organized two successive workshops: a first one focusing on the early modern period that took place during the *Turkologentag* in Hamburg in September 2016, and a second concentrating on population movements induced by the conflicts of the “Eastern Question” in the Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus in the 19th century, and from the Young Turk Revolution to the aftermath of the World War I. Organized in cooperation with colleagues from the universities of Basel, Bern, Geneva, Giessen, Lausanne, Neuchâtel and Zurich, the Graduate Institute of Geneva and DODIS (Swiss Diplomatic Documents), this second workshop took place in Lausanne in October 2018.

As said before, the present volume is the outcome of our investigation into war and population displacements in the Ottoman Empire since 2015. It brings together both, conceptual contributions and case studies from the Balkans, the Middle East, Asia Minor and Caucasus. Some of them are the revised versions of papers presented in Lausanne.

We are deeply indebted to our partners, contributors and “hidden helpers” for their participation and support all along our project. Our particular

gratitude goes to Thomas David at Lausanne University for his generous help and financial support in the organization of the workshop in Lausanne, to the Laboratoire d'Excellence "Écrire une histoire nouvelle de l'Europe" (LABEX EHNE) and Justus-Liebig-Universität of Giessen for their financial support of the project, to Arby Gharibian for editing the volume, to Sarah Maria Noske and Larissa Sebastian for the proof-reading and final editing of all the contributions and to Dennis Klose for indexing the names. Last but not least, we would like to express our thanks to the editors of "The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage. Politics, Society and Economy" for allowing us to publish our volume in their collection as well as to Franca de Kort for her ongoing support and engagement in the publication of this book.

Catherine Horel and Bettina Severin-Barboutie

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Introduction: Population Displacements and Multiple Mobilities in the Late Ottoman Empire

Nicole Immig

Migration and mobility have always been an integral part of human behavior. This also holds true for the Ottoman Empire. Nomads, travelers, merchants, diplomats, soldiers, and refugees traversed the wide lands of the Ottomans, and sailed their waters over long and short distances. Commodities and goods moved from one place to another, while ideas, concepts, and thoughts spread across the Empire's changing borders, often leading to military encounters with long-lasting consequences. These decisively changed the political and socio-economic order as well as the demographic fabric of empires, states, regions, and localities, particularly in the nineteenth century and the late Ottoman period, which are the core focus of this volume.

What happened in the Ottoman Empire – and Europe and elsewhere beginning in the late eighteenth century – drew increasing attention from political, intellectual, and socio-economic elites. With the emergence of a public press and new technologies for transmitting information and developments within the Empire – including domestic turmoil, military conflicts, insurrections, and rebellions, with their major impact on the region's demographic fabric – were now observed more closely and quickly by a European audience, and probably vice versa. Similarly, notions and ideas traveled through new information channels and circulated more easily, quickly, and widely than ever before. The emergence of ethno-nationalist ideas – and the concept of demographically homogenizing 'one's own place,' which was circulating since at least the early nineteenth century – cannot be analyzed without taking into account the developments mentioned above.¹ As a result, the nineteenth century was

1 While many expulsions and war-induced migrations on Ottoman territory, from the mid-nineteenth century onward, have been the subject of extensive written and visual documentation by domestic and foreign correspondents, journalists, artists, and photographers, the representation of displacement and migration in the media and the arts has rarely been explored by research. For a first approach see Y. Doğan Çetinkaya, "Illustrated Atrocity: The Stigmatisation of Non-Muslims through Images in the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars," *Journal of Modern European History* 12, no. 4 (2014), 460–78.

also characterized by its wider connectedness, in addition to the emergence of a broader geographical frame forcing us to situate migration, population displacements, and mobility in a much larger picture.

The literature on the history of migration, population displacement, and mobility in relation to the Ottoman Empire is vast.² Given the Empire's wide geographical and temporal dimensions, the existing historiography expands into various disciplines and academic fields including history, literature, Islamic studies, Turkish studies, Near Eastern studies, and Oriental studies, to name just a few. Generally, as is true of many other regions, research on the history of population displacement and mobility has often been conducted from a centered nation-state approach, one that focuses on a state perspective and relies mostly on official documents and accounts, statistics, and observations. Findings often remain fragmentary due to a general lack of documents, the limited usage of archival material, as well as its wide dispersion and frequently restricted access. Needless to say, such approaches often tend to reproduce one-sided national(istic) accounts of migration and mobility. While top-down approaches are fairly common, those using a subaltern or micro-historical standpoint toward migration are scarce. Another major obstacle to comparative research, which is somehow linked to the 'national' approach toward the history of migration and mobility in the former territories of the Ottoman Empire, is the fact that many studies are often published in the respective national languages or circulate solely within their particular academic discipline. This phenomenon, along with the lack of transnational and interdisciplinary academic networks, complicates the wider diffusion and exchange of research findings.

It is in the context of these historiographical shortcomings that this volume seeks to contribute to research on population displacements and mobilities in the late Ottoman period. It aims to broaden the existing literature by bringing together authors with different regional angles, ranging geographically from Montenegro and Yemen to Epirus, Asia Minor, and Palestine, thereby offering varied research perspectives and interests. This wide range of geographical studies is reflected in a variety of research languages and primary source material. This diversity, which reflects the extensive plurality of migration and of mobility in general, will serve as the focus for this volume.

2 The core of the existing literature concentrates on the late Ottoman period, and along with the titles already mentioned, includes literature concerning other regions of the Empire that also saw massive demographic changes, such as Cyprus, the Greek islands including Crete, and Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Algeria, and Libya. For an account in the context of global capitalism, see also Isa Blumi, *Ottoman refugees. 1878–1939. Migration in a Post-imperial World* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

By concentrating on the nineteenth century and the late Ottoman period, we explore a time of massive transformation and change. According to Mehmet Hacısalıoğlu's analysis of migrations in the Balkans, a 'new era of population transfers began' in the late eighteenth century.³ Marked by military defeats, economic and social crises, and a growing number of local insurrections from the late eighteenth century onwards – and leading to the territorial loss of practically all of the Empire's European provinces until the Balkan Wars – historiographical accounts have often characterized this period as the 'decline' of the Ottoman Empire. Insurrections, such as the Serbian revolt in 1804 and the Greek Revolution in 1821, were violently suppressed by the Ottoman military, including punitive measures such as deportation, expulsion, and forced displacement.⁴ The revolts were also accompanied by violent attacks by the insurgents, such as massacres and expulsion, especially of local Muslim and Jewish populations.⁵

While the conflicts in the Balkans – referred to as the 'Eastern' or 'Oriental question' in the historiography – often resulted in massive and sometimes even complete demographic transformation, changing the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural composition of these areas, the Russian Empire's expansionist policies beginning in the mid-eighteenth century further weakened the Empire's position in the Black Sea region and the Caucasus.⁶ Drawing on earlier experiences, for many states population displacement had become an important means for homogenizing its territories. In the first half of the nineteenth century, such displacement unfolded along religious rather than ethno-national terms. Similar to many other evolving Balkan nation-states, in Russia such policies mostly affected Muslim populations, which were either violently forced to leave or – at least on paper via treaties or agreements ending the respective conflicts – could voluntarily choose between staying or emigrating to Ottoman

3 Mehmet Hacısalıoğlu, "Negotiations and Agreements for Population Transfers in the Balkans from the Beginning of the 19th Century until the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913," *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2018), 31–75, 31.

4 For a general account, see Frederick Anscombe, "The Balkan Revolutionary Age," *The Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 3 (2012), 572–606, for an overview on forced displacement in the context of the Greek Revolution see Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire 1815–1914* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2011), 63–90.

5 See Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims (1821–1922)* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995), 11–12; Nedim İpek, *Rumeli'den Anadolu'ya Türk Göçleri* [Emigrations of Turks from the Balkans to Anatolia] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994); and Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

6 For an overview, see Karpat, *Ottoman Population*.

lands.⁷ The massive emigration of Muslims went hand in hand with the invitation of Orthodox Christians to settle in occupied areas formerly populated by Caucasian Muslims, who had already emigrated or were expected to do so.⁸ The numbers of Muslim refugees from the Caucasus entering the Ottoman Empire since the late nineteenth century are impressive. Multiple conflicts, ranging from the annexation of the Crimean peninsula in the late eighteenth century to the Russo-Turkish War of 1812 and the Crimean War of 1856, sparked a massive flow of Muslim immigrants, with an estimated 100,000 Crimean refugees in 1794 alone.⁹ Official data for these early migrations is difficult to gather, and numbers remain unclear, although it is certain that the number of refugees from this region between 1854 and 1876 numbered 1.5 million, rising to 1.8 million refugees in 1922, mostly Crimean Tatars and Circassians, with smaller numbers of Chechens and Abkhazians.¹⁰

In 'Ottoman Europe' on the other hand, the military conflicts in the Balkans from the mid-nineteenth century onward, which culminated in the Serbian and Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, continued the emigration of Muslim refugees fleeing violence, including Turkish-speaking and Bulgarian-speaking Pomak, along with other smaller Muslim populations and Jews. It is estimated that over one million Muslims had left the Balkans by the end of the nineteenth century, with this number increasing with the Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913.¹¹ In addition to the refugees pouring into the empire from other regions, it is estimated that approximately five million Muslim immigrants arrived in Ottoman lands between 1856 and 1910 alone – even before the Balkan Wars.¹² Such

7 Ibid. For later expulsions, see also Alexandre Toumarkine, *Les Migrations des Musulmans Balkaniques en Anatolie: 1876–1913* (Istanbul: Isis, 1995).

8 See also James Meyer, *Turks Across Empires: Marketing Muslim Identity in the Russian-Ottoman Borderlands, 1856–1914* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014); Oktay Özel, "Migration and Power Politics: The Settlement of Georgian Immigrants in Turkey (1878–1908)," *Middle East Studies* 46, no. 4 (2010), 477–96.

9 Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, 65.

10 S.J. Shaw and E.K. Shaw, *The History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977), 116; Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, 63–66.

11 Ibid., 63–66. For an overview see also A. Akgündüz, "Migration to and from Turkey, 1783–1960: Types, numbers and ethno-religious dimensions," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 24, no. 1 (1998), 97–120, 98–99.

12 Christian immigration also emerged during this period, however on a much smaller scale, for instance among Poles and Hungarians fleeing political suppression after the 1848 Revolutions, and among Cossacks in the mid-nineteenth century. A small number of Russian Old Believers immigrated to the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century. Many of them settled around Istanbul, or left after a short stay. There was also a notable number of Central and Eastern European Jews immigrating to Ottoman Palestine. Estimates range from 25,000 people in 1880 to 100,000 up through 1914. The numbers are

migrations are often approached within a national historiographical framework, rather than transnational or transregional comparative analyses.¹³ But an exclusively national and often teleological approach to the history of migration and mobility often neglects the many facets and stages of belonging and (national) identity formation. The contributions by Ozan Arslan on migrants from the Caucasus as seen by Russian authorities, and by Renaud Dorlhac on the Muslim Cham issue in the Albanian, Greek and Turkish national projects, examine these complex layers of migration, and show the dynamics and consequences of such concepts of belonging in a period of political transition from Empire to Nation-state.

Administering and controlling these huge demographic upheavals, and more specifically the great influx of Muslim refugees into Ottoman territories, became one of the major tasks of the Ottoman state administration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The role of state institutions in managing migration has only recently become the focus of studies, with recent ones analyzing the establishment of modern administrative instruments within a broader framework of Ottoman modernization efforts dating back to the nineteenth century.¹⁴ In connection with centralization and bureaucratization efforts that began in the mid-nineteenth century, the Ottoman administration employed social engineering strategies as policies of sedentarization, immigrant settlement, and internal colonization, as the settlement of nomadic tribes and populations became a pressing and persistent issue for the Ottoman state, primarily due to the growing power of local tribes and families in many regions of the Empire.¹⁵ New legislation, such as the land code of 1858 or the provincial law of 1864, sought to integrate the tribes and other local power holders into the Ottoman Empire, all while trying to disrupt older networks of local loyalties.¹⁶ Furthermore, modernization and cross-border administrative

uncertain, since they also include internal migration from other areas of the Ottoman Empire. Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, 63–64, 67–70, 75.

13 See also the Transottomanica project as developed in the epilogue of this book by Stefan Rohdewald.

14 See for instance Ella Fratantuono, “State Fears and Immigrant Tiers: Historical Analysis as a Method in Evaluating Migration Categories,” *Middle East Journal of Refugee Studies* 2, no. 1 (2017), 97–115; Başak Kale, “Transforming an Empire: The Ottoman Empire’s Immigration and Settlement Policies in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 2 (2014), 252–71. For a new project on the immigration policies of the Ottoman Empire as ‘pull factors’ see Fuat Dündar, “Challenges of examining the Ottoman/Turkish immigration policies,” *ZMO Working Papers* 28 (2021), 1–16.

15 Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire*, 93–103.

16 *Ibid.*, 104–105.

centralization also involved the implementation of new administrative instruments and processes to survey, control, and manage mobility and migration.¹⁷ Meanwhile, immigration policies and the settling of Muslim refugee populations, such as the ones mentioned above, had to adjust to Ottoman conceptions of population productivity with regard to territory, as well as to ideas of civilization within the greater framework of Ottoman imperialism.¹⁸ As a result, in addition to ethnicity and religion, what mattered to the Ottoman state administration with regard to settlement policies was the immigrant's agricultural productivity, and their potential economic impact as future Ottoman citizens. Thus, new concepts for differentiating people on the move and placing them within hierarchies often determined the fate of many refugees and migrants in their future destinations. Viewed within the broader framework of global patterns of state-building measures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – as recently shown by Ella Fratantuono – strategies of immigrant settlement went hand in hand with the 'expropriation of land, eradication of nomadism, and the expulsion of certain groups.'¹⁹ As such, the reliability and loyalty of migrants and refugees as future citizens also came into play, particularly in the context of military conflict, territorial transformation, and the emergence of new nation-states. Having crossed state borders, migrants and refugee populations were frequently subjected to the politics of antagonistic states, either from rival Empires or newly erected nation-states pursuing their own national projects in the region. In this political context, immigrants considered to be co-ethnic or co-national were seen by the receiving states as a potential means for new state-building projects, while the same

17 David Gutman, "Travel Documents, Mobility Control, and the Ottoman State in an Age of Global Migration, 1880–1915," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3, no. 2 (2016), 347–68; David Gutman, "Agents of Mobility: Migrant Smuggling Networks, Transhemispheric Migration, and Time-Space Compression in Ottoman Anatolia, 1888–1908," *Interdisciplines* 1 (2012), 48–84; Omri Paz, "The Usual Suspect: Worker Migration and Law Enforcement in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Anatolia," *Continuity and Change* 30, no. 2 (2015), 223–49.

18 See Selim Deringil, "'They live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45, no. 2 (2003), 311–42; Ussama Maksidi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002), 768–69; Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference, The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2008). For a critique see Özgür Türsay, "The Ottoman Empire seen Through the Lens of Postcolonial Studies: A Recent Historiographical Turn," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 60, no. 2 (2013), 127–45.

19 Ella Fratantuono, "Producing Ottomans: Internal Colonization and Social Engineering in Ottoman Immigrant Settlement," *Journal of Genocide Research* 21, no. 1 (2019), 1–24.

logic saw other migrants as a threat.²⁰ The above mentioned centralization and bureaucratization, along with a new legislation – and most importantly the establishment of new institutions to survey, manage, and control mobility and migration within or across its borders – reflected this perception of the other.²¹ Such concepts gradually challenged the perception of existing non-Muslim populations living within the Empire, culminating in broad measures of ethnic cleansing and demographic engineering towards the Empire's non-Muslim communities in the context of the World War I.²² The Balkan Wars and World War I, with their numerous expulsions, deportations, and forced migrations, clearly proved that the concept of homogenizing populations had become an accepted tool of population policy. The negotiations and agreements that ended or followed the various conflicts anticipated and sanctioned population displacement and population transfer in official treaties and conventions, such as the Agreement of the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange.²³ The role of institutionalized demographic engineering in this process is the focus of a number of studies, beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century up to the Young Turk regime. Many of them concentrate on the gradual evolution of a policy of social and demographic engineering, including the total uprooting and destruction of the entire Armenian population of Anatolia, as well as other Christian communities in the Ottoman Empire.²⁴ A contribution to the

20 See Holm Sundhausen, "Geschichte Südosteuropas als Migrationsgeschichte. Eine Skizze," *Südost-Forschungen* 65–66 (2006–2007), 422–77.

21 See David Cameron Cuthell, *The Muhacirin Komisyonu: An Agent in the Transformation of Ottoman Anatolia, 1860–1866* (Ph.D. Diss., Columbia University, 2005).

22 See Uğur Ümit Üngör, "Seeing like a Nation-state: Young Turk Social Engineering in Eastern Turkey, 1913–50," in *Late Ottoman Genocides: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Young Turkish Population and Extermination Policies*, eds. Dominik J. Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 9–33.

23 Holm Sundhausen, "Von 'Lausanne' nach 'Dayton': Ein Paradigmenwechsel bei der Lösung ethnonationaler Konflikte," *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte*, 2006, accessed 23 Feb. 2021, www.europa.clío-online.de/essay/id/fdae-1306; For the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange see Dimitris Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece* (Paris: The Hague, 1962); Onur Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement: Reconsidering the Turco-Greek Exchange of Populations, 1922–1934* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

24 See Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006); Uğur Ümit Üngör, "'Turkey for the Turks': Demographic Engineering in Eastern Anatolia, 1914–1945," in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 287–305. Vividly discussed by historians, political activists, and the descendants of refugees is genocide towards non-Armenian populations. See for instance George N. Shirinian, ed., *The Asia Minor Catastrophe and the Ottoman Greek Genocide: Essays on Asia*

discussion of how to assess these policies in a historical perspective is given here by George Kalpadakis, who analyzes the Unionist legacy of demographic engineering in the early twentieth century within global patterns and trends of population management and control, rather than in the narrow frames of the Empire or the emerging Turkish nation-state.

Focusing on the scale of migration and the large numbers of refugees, especially in the violent nineteenth century, has mostly drawn our attention to large groups of people on the move. Concentrating on these larger numbers has led to a tendency to see refugees as objects of history rather than subjects with historical agency. They often figure as ‘victims’ that could be fully managed and controlled, and that were used by the state to pursue and implement certain political goals, for instance to (re)populate or to ‘empty’ a certain area. As such, individual experiences often tend to be overlooked. However, as already argued mainly through the prism of the Ottoman experience in the Balkan Wars, individual experiences of uprooting, expulsion, and loss often shaped Ottoman and Turkish policies and attitudes against Christian citizens in the years to follow.²⁵ Similar to ‘being or becoming a refugee,’ the experience of ‘migration’ as a biographical marker could characterize individual careers, as the skills learned through migration could later be transformed and serve as a specific form of knowledge. Here existing patterns of mobility in Ottoman officialdom – and related paths of education for professional careers – often overlapped with personal fortunes of refugeehood, as Denis Ljuljanovic shows by analyzing Muslim intellectuals from Montenegro. His findings show that looking beyond the biographies of figures of major political, social, or cultural significance can help us understand the multiple layers of migration and mobility, thereby avoiding the disregard and neglect of smaller or specific groups of migrants and individuals.

Minor, Pontos, and Eastern Thrace, 1912–1923 (New York: Athens Printing Company, 2012); George N. Shirinian, *Genocide in the Ottoman Empire: Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks, 1913–1923* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books 2017); Tessa Hoffmann, Matthias Bjørnlund, and Vasileios Meichanetsidis, eds., *The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks: Studies on the State-Sponsored Campaign of Extermination of the Christians of Asia Minor, 1912–1922 and Its Aftermath: History, Law, Memory* (New York: Melissa International, 2011). For an overview of the discussion of ‘genocide’ in the Greek context, see Erik Sjöberg, *The Making of the Greek Genocide: Contested Memories of the Ottoman Greek Catastrophe* (New York: Berghahn, 2016).

- 25 On the impact of the Balkan Wars on the ideology of the Young Turks, see Erik Jan Zürcher, “Macedonians in Anatolia after 1914: The Importance of the Macedonian Roots of the Unionists for Their Policies in Anatolia after 1914,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 6 (2014), 960–75; Eyal Ginio, *The Ottoman Culture of Defeat: The Balkan Wars and Their Aftermath* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2016).

In this regard, mobile women are especially invisible in literature on the Ottoman Empire. The history of migration and population displacement is often a history of men, represented by male accounts and (still too often) written by male academics. However, many of the migrants were female, and gender often played a role in how migrants experienced migration, as recently highlighted by Randa Tawil with regard to the journey of Zeinab Ameen, a female migrant from Ottoman Lebanon in the early twentieth century.²⁶ Similarly neglected is the fact that children often perceived migration and displacement differently than adults.²⁷ To fully understand migration and mobility, categories other than ethnicity, nationality, and religion should be integrated, such as gender and age, in addition to smaller social entities such as the local community, household, family, or individual as a driving force in the history of migration.²⁸ Seeing refugees and migrants as individuals enables us to perceive them as actors who employed the existing political and legislative framework for their own good. Refugees and migrants therefore acted also as entrepreneurs, who actively negotiated their state of refugee hood or migrancy, turning historical displacement and ‘losing a place’ into a process of ‘place-making,’ as recently analyzed in a study by Vladimir Hamed-Troyanski for Circassian refugees in Transjordan.²⁹ Bringing the often invisible agency of refugees and migrants into the focus of migration history is also central to the contributions by Catherine Brégianni, for the Greek banker Andreas Syngros, and by Simone Egger, for the transnational love affair between Smyrna and Munich in Chapter 4. Both base their findings on personal accounts that enrich the many layers of migration and mobility with individual perspectives within the dynamic political and socioeconomic transformation of the late Ottoman period. Brégianni and Egger also point to another often neglected fact in the history of migration. The massive demographic transformation

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- 26 For more information on Zeinab's migration to the Americas, listen to the podcast of Zeinab Tawen being interviewed by the *Ottoman History Podcast*, Episode 478, accessed 26. Feb. 2021, <https://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2020/09/zeinab.html>. With regard to the Armenian Genocide, see also Vahé Tachjian, “Gender, Nationalism, Exclusion: The Reintegration Process of Female Survivors of the Armenian Genocide,” *Nations and Nationalism* 15 (2009), 60–80; Fouad Akram Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
- 27 See Maksudyan's works regarding the experiences of the Armenian Genocide: Nazan Maksudyan, *Ottoman Children and Youth During World War I* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2019).
- 28 See Beshara Doumani, *Family Life in the Ottoman Mediterranean: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2017).
- 29 Vladimir Hamed-Troyanski, “Circassian Refugees and the Making of Amman 1878–1914,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49 (2017), 605–23.

caused by expulsion, forced migration, and violence-induced population displacement has long overshadowed the fact that people also migrated due to socio-economic reasons. In both stories told by Brégianni and Egger, the growing involvement of the Ottoman economy in global markets, in addition to an increasing transfer and exchange of technologies, goods, and ideas, played a decisive role in their ‘migration story.’

Ottoman ‘globalization,’ which was closely linked to the *Tanzimat* reforms in the nineteenth century, was fostered by major infrastructure works, such as an expanded road and railway system, along with the establishment of shipping connections via European maritime routes. With the modernization and integration of Ottoman markets within international and global trade, port cities in both Anatolia (and urban centers along Anatolia’s Western coast) and the Mediterranean (such as Alexandria or Haifa) developed into attractive destinations for global entrepreneurs and migrants seeking work.³⁰ Political conflicts, such as World War I, as well as newly erected state borders, which appeared due to territorial changes of the Empire since the nineteenth century, often posed a severe problem for traditional imperial trade routes, the transhuman pastoral economy, traditional livestock routes in the Balkans and elsewhere, and individual relationships, such as the transnational love-affair presented by Egger.³¹

Economic resources – and most importantly the demand for land – often played an important role in local conflicts, such as the Russo-Turkish and Balkan Wars, as well as in the Ottoman Empire’s eastern provinces.³² Claims on land and ‘making [a] place’ for new-comers, migrants, and refugees often had long-term implications for ensuing generations. In addition to the often exclusively national approaches to migrants, migrations, and population displacements, multiple forms of mobilities were used by the respective ‘successor states’ of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, as well as by the various emerging nation-states on former Ottoman territory in the Balkans, Caucasus, and

30 Méropi Anastassiadou, “Greek Orthodox Immigrants and Modes of Integration within the Urban Society of Istanbul (1850–1923),” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24 (2009), 151–67; Ulrike Freitag, Malte Fuhrmann, Nora Lafi, and Florian Riedler, eds., *The City in the Ottoman Empire: Migration and the Making of Urban Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2011); Maḥmūd Yazbak, *Haifa in the Late Ottoman Period, 1864–1914: A Muslim Town in Transition* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 1998).

31 See Robert Pichler, “Hirten, Söldner und Wanderarbeiter. Formen der mobilen Ökonomie in den Dörfern des südalbanischen Hochlandes,” in *Die weite Welt und das Dorf. Albanische Emigration am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts* eds. Karl Kaser, Robert Pichler, and Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers (Vienna: Böhlau, 2002), 133–61.

32 See for instance the case of Serbia Miloš Jagodić, “The Emigration of Muslims from the New Serbian Regions 1877/1878,” *Balkanologie* 2, no. 2 (1998), <https://doi.org/10.4000/balkanologie.265>.

the Near East. The contested national historiographies feature migrants and refugees as victims of neighboring states and rival empires, and also involve ideologies and a general faith in history. They are often fitted into powerful master narratives of the nation-state, with no distinction between larger and smaller population movements, different forms of migration and mobility, and the multiple and complex motivations underlying these migrations. The contributions by Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman and Sarah Shields explore such generalizations and (mis)uses of migration stories in the historiography. They stress that population displacement, when occurring within periods of conflicts, has always had significant repercussions on the postwar era, often with long-term political and socio-economic ramifications. They also demonstrate that understanding the history of migrations and population displacement calls for a multi-pronged approach on a micro-, meso- and macro-level of analysis, as well as the integration of personal accounts and comparative approaches that make it possible to read existing sources against the grain in an effort to open up new prospects for research.³³ Both texts focus on continental parts of the Empire, namely Yemen and Palestine, but also offer a reminder – and here I speak particularly from a Balkan historian's perspective – that the history of migrations and mobility in the Ottoman Empire cannot be written without including the Mediterranean as a space of high geographical mobility connecting continents.³⁴

The contributions collected in this volume address some of the above-mentioned aspects from recent migration research. They attempt to give an insight into how migration has been represented in the past, and how we intend to recount and remember historical migrations, population displacement, and forms and expressions of mobility in the future.

There are other obscure areas in historiography and research that should be addressed in the future. Tracing the multiple routes of migrants and refugees – their various starts and stops, short-term settlement due to state restrictions, economic shortage, personal issues (such as health problems) are equally important – and are linked to the complex relations of mobility and immobility

33 For such an approach to the history of migrations in the Balkans focusing on the (Post-)Yugoslav Region, see Ulf Brunnbauer, ed., *Transnational Societies, Transterritorial Politics. Migrations in the (Post-)Yugoslav Region 19th–20th Century* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009).

34 See also the publication by Elisabeth Fraser, *Mobility of People and Things in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Art of Travel* (Milton: Routledge, 2019). For an integration of the Mediterranean and its 'fragmented histories' as a region of entanglement between Europe, Africa, and Asia, see the proceedings of the 'Mediterranean Mobilities and Borders' workshop organized in 2018 in Istanbul by Malte Fuhrmann and the 'A Modern Mediterranean: Dynamics of a World Region, 1800–2000' DFG-Network, accessed 26. Feb. 2021, <https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-8048>.

in the study of migration. This also entails the inclusion of those who profited or benefited from the mobility and migration of others, by providing means of transportation, transmitting necessary information and networks for migrating, or translating the required documents for border crossings. The concept of mobility can reveal significant insights into the relation of material culture and migration. Studying the means of transportation for people and goods, as was recently done in Onur İnal's investigation of the camel as a historical actor, clarifies the extent to which they transformed trade and transport.³⁵ Shifting attention to the means by which information circulated, such as letters or newspapers – and linking them to mobility as a means of intellectual mobilization – provides a better understanding of the dynamics of insurrections and revolts, as well as their transformation into revolutions, such as the Greek Revolution in 1821.³⁶ Given the twenty-first century 'migration crisis,' and current demands to integrate recent refugee memories within global and national historiographies and memory-scapes, the way in which migration was and is represented should be of concern to every researcher studying migration.³⁷

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35 See Onur İnal, "One-Humped History: The Camel as Historical Actor in the Late Ottoman Empire," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 53, no. 1 (2020), 57–72.

36 See Nassia Yakovaki, "When Exactly Did the Greek Revolution Begin? The Philiki Etaireia as Part of Revolutionary Action during the Year 1820," paper delivered at *The Greek Revolution in the Age of Revolutions (1776–1848). Reappraisals and Comparisons International Conference* (Athens, 12–13 March 2021).

37 Concerning the integration of refugee memories of the Greek-Turkish population exchange in Turkey, see the homepage for the 'Exchanged refugees' association, accessed 26 Feb. 2021, <http://www.lozanmubadilleri.org.tr/>.

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PART 1

Population Movements and Migrants as Assets



Demographic Engineering and the Unionist Legacy

George Kalpadakis

Introduction

A distinguished historian of modern Turkey famously characterized the period between 1850 and 1950 as ‘Europe’s age of demographic engineering,’¹ a time when the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Anatolia were transformed into a vast arena of experimentation with radical population policies. The aim of this paper is to expand on the origins of the concept, whose emergence was connected to the notion of social engineering, before focusing on its manifestation within the ethno-territorial landscape of the late Ottoman era. Drawing lessons from a number of case studies, it also seeks to address whether the League of Nations’ formalization of population displacement ultimately displayed loyalty to the nationalist ideal by providing humane logistics to a fundamentally inhumane policy of ethnic homogenization, in spite of pursuing its policy responses in the spirit of an Enlightenment-based liberal technocracy.

1 Social Engineering

The pioneering sociologist Karl Mannheim maintained that social engineering was defined in terms of the relationship between social theory and political practice, pointing out that ‘planning is the reconstruction of a historically developed society into a unity which is regulated more and more perfectly by mankind from certain central positions.’² However, in the wake of the totalitarian destruction wrought by World War II, it became necessary to distinguish between various strands of central planning, and to reassert the primacy of individual freedom vis-à-vis the right of the state to intervene in the private

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- 1 Erik-Jan Zürcher, “The Late Ottoman Empire as Laboratory of Demographic Engineering,” paper delivered at *Le Regioni multilingui come faglia e motore della storia europea nel XIX-XX secolo*, Naples, 16–18 Sept. 2008.
 - 2 Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction: Studies in Modern Social Structure* (Abingdon: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1940), 193. For a recent comprehensive overview of the concept, see Thomas Etzemüller, “Social Engineering, Version: 2.0,” *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, 4 Oct. 2017, http://docupedia.de/zg/Etzemueller_social_engineering_v2_de_2017.

sphere. Karl Popper distilled widespread popular concerns when he expressed criticism of what he termed ‘utopian social engineering,’ which promoted the reorganization of societies on the basis of ideological prejudice. Tapping into the growing, civilizing awareness of the scientific racism underlying the inter-war period’s eugenics projects, Popper broadened his analysis by linking social engineering with the ‘canvas-cleaning’ perspective on how to reconstruct society as outlined in Plato’s *Republic*, which is to say based on the idea that society should be reconstructed with a clean slate, by violent means if necessary, on the basis of a blueprint designed by a centralized elite in the role of an enlightened vanguard. He distinguished this from the benign approach of ‘piecemeal social engineering,’ which is achieved through democratic consensus over how to tackle social evils. As Popper noted:

Just as the main task of the physical engineer is to design machines and to remodel and service them, the task of the piecemeal social engineer is to design social institutions and to reconstruct and run those already in existence ... Holistic or Utopian social engineering, as opposed to piecemeal social engineering [however] ... aims at remodeling the ‘whole of society’ in accordance with a definite plan or blueprint.³

Building on Popper’s concept of ‘utopian social engineering,’ the political scientist James Scott has argued that its proponents disregard local knowledge in favor of a ‘sweeping, rational engineering of all aspects of social life in order to improve the human condition.’ He points to how a range of policies involving, for example, rural settlement, agricultural collectivization, urban architecture, and forestry planning were employed to achieve this, and discusses numerous such examples in Germany, France, Brazil, India, Ethiopia – and perhaps more comprehensively than anywhere else – the Soviet Union. Scott expands on this:

many of the most tragic episodes of state development in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries originate in a particularly pernicious combination of three elements. The first is the aspiration to the administrative ordering of nature and society ... The second element is the unrestrained use of the power of the modern state as an instrument for

³ Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (Abingdon: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), 64–67.

achieving these designs. The third element is a weakened or prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist these plans.⁴

In more modern usage, demographic engineering refers to state interventions that are designed to control population levels, in addition to their composition, distribution across territories, and relative size. Nesim Şeker, who has studied Turkish state-building as an enterprise dedicated to the elimination of ‘undesirables,’ has defined it as ‘any deliberate state programme or policy originating from religious/ethnic discrimination or initiated for political, strategic or ideological reasons which aim to increase the political and economic power of one ethnic group over others by manipulating population through various methods.’⁵

The economic historian Milica Bookman has introduced a neat typology of nationalist social engineering modes, which she connects to six types of large-scale demographic strategies aimed at achieving ethnic homogeneity: the manipulation of census numbers; the employment of natalist policies which are designed to raise the birth rate of the major ethnic group and decrease that of the undesired minority; the assimilation of specific groups into the major ethnic group, for example through the imposition of a certain language or religion on the members of a minority group; traditional border alterations on the basis of irredentist projects whose goal is to reconfigure the ethnic balance in a region; the creation of economic and political incentives and disincentives to compel an ethnic group to leave the country; and finally forced population movements. As Bookman aptly notes, ‘[an] inter-ethnic war of numbers is taking place in numerous locations [whose goal] is to increase the economic and political power of an ethnic group relative to other groups, and the method by which this is achieved entails the increase in size of one population relative to others.’⁶

4 James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1998), 88–89.

5 Nesim Şeker, “Demographic Engineering in the late Ottoman Empire and the Armenians,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 43 (2007), 461; Nesim Şeker, “Forced Population Movements in the Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic: An Attempt at Reassessment through Demographic Engineering,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 16 (2013), 1–16.

6 Milica Bookman, “Demographic Engineering and the Struggle for Power,” *Journal of International Affairs* 56 (2002), 25. For a theoretical overview of the concept of demographic engineering and other competing paradigms for the study of state violence against minorities, see Nikos Sigalas and Alexandre Toumarkine, “Ingénierie démographique, génocide, nettoyage ethnique. Les paradigmes dominants pour l’étude de la violence sur les populations minoritaires en Turquie et dans les Balkans,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 7 (2008), §5–8.

2 Demographic Engineering and the CUP

As the nation-building enterprise unfolded, coercive demographic engineering methods were employed in order to achieve homogenization: an exemplary case can be traced back to a broad-based umbrella organization established in parallel with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Sufficiently flexible to hold within their ranks a wide array of varying ideological currents from pan-Islamism to Turanism, the Unionists led an evolving, reform-minded constitutionalist movement that sought to transform the remaining parts of a multi-ethnic empire into a Turkish nation-state. In terms of population politics, its core ideas were marked by continuity from the early revolutionary period between 1913 and 1918, until the Kemalist era started coming to a close in the early 1950s.⁷ Ultimately, the factor which determined the fate of the disintegrating Empire's subjects was the ethnic and political distance separating them from the national core: the devolution of powers down to groups with minority status, as well as the very idea of improving their social and economic conditions, were prospects repudiated on the basis they would enhance tribalist impulses, foment separatism, and invariably jeopardize the unitary nature of the Turkish state. Ethnicity gradually overrode even loyalties towards the state, as with the Christian Armenian employees of the Turkish government, who were gradually excluded, contrary to Muslim Turkish farmers, who were not, despite the fact that they were patently evading the tax system. In certain cases, such as those of the Sephardic Jews or the Muslim Kurds, persecution was ultimately avoided, as it was believed that they could more readily adapt to the process of Turkification. As Üngör points out, "Turkish-nationalist social engineering consisted of a broad scope of policies ranging from marginalization, isolation, incarceration, border alteration, deportation, forced assimilation, population exchange, to outright indiscriminate massacre, and in the most extreme case: fully fledged genocidal destruction."⁸

What the Unionists essentially achieved was to render Anatolia a laboratory of ultra-nationalist experimentation in which Muslims were Turkified and non-Muslims were excluded, resettled, deported, and in the case of the

7 For a comprehensive analysis of the end of the Hamidian regime and the concomitant rise and transformation of the CUP, see the works of M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press, 2008), 150–202; M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), and *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 210–318.

8 Uğur Ümit Üngör, "Geographies of Nationalism and Violence: Rethinking Young Turk 'Social Engineering,'" *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 7 (2008), §14.

Armenians, Assyrians and Pontian Greeks, massacred. As Hans-Lukas Kieser has indicated, the leaders of the Young Turks drew their legitimacy for state violence by employing the notion of modernity as part of a discourse advocating homogenization, and promoting the reengineering of the demographic fabric of the post-imperial society.⁹ Already in 1915, demographic engineering took a violent turn in the eastern provinces of Turkey, where the CUP feared a Russian invasion with the collusion of the Armenians. In the span of a few months, the Ottoman state depopulated their settlements and eradicated their leaders, while micromanaging the expropriation of their property and businesses to Muslims. As legislation was being introduced for the mass deportation of the Armenians to the Syrian Desert, acts of targeted extermination were spearheaded by a wide array of actors including local officials, police officers, gendarmes, and Kurdish tribal elements. Kurds themselves would also become victims of mass deportations to Central and Western Anatolia in a process of demographic dilution: an upper limit of 5 per cent was established, which the Kurdish population was not to exceed relative to the rest of the population. At the same time, the CUP ordered that the villages vacated by the deported Kurds and Armenians in the east be repopulated or colonized by Muslims who had sought refuge from Bulgaria, Albania, and Bosnia. The property and overall institutional structures of the deportees, most notably schools and churches, were subsequently allocated to the settlers, and re-engineered to serve the goal of Turkification.

As previously noted, the discourse employed by Mustafa Kemal's Republican People's Party (RPP) after the CUP dissolved in 1918 was formulated in terms of modernization, which enabled it to gain widespread international support. When moderate Turkish Kurds rose up to protest their treatment in February 1925, in what would later become known as the Sheikh Said rebellion, international reactions against the violent response were muted, as the Turkish political leadership was widely perceived as a westernizing force.¹⁰ Despite the modernization successes of the Kemalist state in terms of education, secular reform, communication and urbanization, it failed to help forge

9 Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2018), 3–7.

10 Uğur Ümit Üngör, "Seeing like a Nation-state: Young Turk Social Engineering in Eastern Turkey, 1913–50," in *Late Ottoman Genocides: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Young Turkish Population and Extermination Policies*, eds. Dominik J. Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 9–33; Uğur Ümit Üngör, "Turkey for the Turks: Demographic Engineering in Eastern Anatolia, 1914–1945," in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 287–305.

an inclusive social contract. Little wonder then that the coercive policies of forced assimilation and population transfer did not harmonize inter-ethnic relations, but invariably led to the radicalization of the Kurdish population and the intensification of sub-ethnic loyalties. In turn, this compelled the increasingly intransigent Turkish leadership to devise more sophisticated legal and administrative tools to serve its comprehensive policy of demographic engineering. Its goal became to redesign Turkish society through large-scale policies implementing the ethno-nationalist vision of ‘landscaping the human garden.’¹¹ This firstly entailed the indefinite imposition of martial law on the eastern provinces, until it was certain that the Kurdish chieftains and intelligentsia would never revive, and secondly that non-Turkish languages be prohibited east of the Euphrates, so that Kurds could no longer speak them, with the ultimate goal being to relocate them to the western provinces where the Turkish element was much more dominant. After the Kemalists consolidated their one-party dictatorship in 1931, they instituted the Settlement Law, which sanctioned the mass deportation of entire ethnic groups, and even political targets such as the socialists and the anarchists.¹² What they all had in common was their perceived discordance with Turkish identity. If Kurdish elites could not be Turkified, and hence had to be displaced and dispersed, Kurdish peasants, nomads, and city-dwellers were thought to be more culturally pliable, and therefore underwent a process of forced assimilation.

During the interwar period, it became commonplace to draw a distinction between a moderate integrationist demographic politics derived from ethno-nationalist ideologies, and a racially charged, radical population politics espoused by fringe groups and totalitarian regimes, which advocated exclusion, coercion, and extermination. The case of the Unionists shows that a neat delimitation between varying population strategies is essentially inapplicable to realities on the ground, where hybrid strategies were often enacted using mechanisms ranging from legal instruments to paramilitary force. The demographic engineering schemes they put into motion compounded elements rooted in their Ottoman heritage (i.e. the relocation of entire communities) with traditional Western European policies adopted by nationalizing elites in an effort to unmix rural populations, in addition to more overt colonial methods employed against Native Americans in the United States and Nazi policies

11 See Amir Weiner, “Introduction: Landscaping the Human Garden,” in *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-century Population Management in a Comparative Framework*, ed. Amir Weiner (Palo Alto: Stanford Univ. Press, 2003), 1–18.

12 Erol Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 7 (2008), §19.

later inflicted on Eastern Europeans in the 1940s.¹³ Arguably their most distinctive feature was the propensity of the Unionists, after they seized control of the state apparatus in 1908–09, to legitimize the Turkification-Islamification of Anatolia by grounding the ensuing displacement practices in legal and administrative instruments. A major incentive that galvanized this enterprise was undoubtedly drawn from the protracted processes of forced mass migrations of Muslims beginning in the Caucasus, Crimea, and the Balkans in the 1850s and 1860s, and culminating in the devastating displacements of Turkish populations necessitated by the Balkan Wars in 1912–13.¹⁴

3 Ethnic Separatism and Internationalism

At the same time, the radical mode of demographic engineering which reconfigured the map of Anatolia and the Balkan Peninsula during the interwar period was entirely consonant with the ideological climate of the era. Ethnic separatism was part and parcel of national and imperial toolkits, employed respectively to manage conflict and prevent a united opposition, as well as an extension of demographic engineering, which prioritized communally defined social and political structures. Indeed, the intellectual roots of partition were part of a utopian internationalist vision – here one recalls Popper’s notion of ‘Utopian social engineering’ – in which ethnic groups needed to be separated in order to coexist harmoniously within an international system.¹⁵ This echoed Giuseppe Mazzini’s idea of ‘divine cartographies,’ in which peoples are naturally located in their respective homelands.¹⁶ As Brendan O’Leary has put it, ‘the ostensible purpose of political partition, its formal justification, is that it will regulate, that is reduce or resolve a national, ethnic or communal conflict.’¹⁷ Such was the case with the 1923 Lausanne Convention, which provided for the simultaneous population exchange between Greece and Turkey on exclusively

13 Myron Weiner and Michael S. Teitelbaum, *Political Demography, Demographic Engineering* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 65–74.

14 Umut Özsu, *Formalizing Displacement: International Law and Population Transfers* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2015), 59–70.

15 Paul Morland, *Demographic Engineering: Population Strategies in Ethnic Conflict* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), and Weiner and Teitelbaum, *Political Demography*, 110–13. See also James D. Fearon, “Separatist Wars, Partition, and World Order,” *Security Studies* 13 (2004), 394–415.

16 See Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Cultures, and Identities Since 1775* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2011), 58–59.

17 Brendan O’Leary, “Analysing Partition: Definition, Classification and Explanation,” *Political Geography* 26 (2007), 888.

religious grounds.¹⁸ Remarkably, it had a retroactive character legitimizing all of the forced migrations that had taken place since the outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912. Further legitimacy was provided by the League of Nations, which condoned the population exchange despite its coercive character. Essentially, the League of Nations formalized international support for demographic engineering strategies as a means of nation-building.

Matthew Frank has perceptively noted that even though what he terms the ‘fantasies of ethnic unmixing’ had existed since the 1860s, it was during the interwar years that international treaties organized and regulated the compulsory resettlement of national minorities for the first time. This came to be regarded as a ‘progressive’ solution for solving ongoing conflicts through resettlement and partition.¹⁹ A distinguished critic of this view was the historian Arnold Toynbee, who took issue with ‘the inoculation of the East with [Western] nationalism.’ Commenting on the 1923 Greek-Turkish population exchange, he believed that this set a very dangerous precedent by opening the way for a clash of civilizations. He was particularly fearful that the British Commonwealth would go to war with ‘the Oriental world,’ as the latter began to disintegrate into irredentist parts each forcing the mass displacement of populations.²⁰

A more constructive critique of interwar demographic engineering was launched by Reginald Coupland (1884–1952), one of the foremost authorities on decolonization, who played a major part in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, the division of Palestine in 1937, and the conflict in India between Muslims and Hindus. Coupland’s view was that the Lausanne solution to the Greek-Turkish conflict should be avoided at all costs rather than emulated, because it was an instance of shallow, nineteenth-century chauvinism that called for the removal of ‘demographic misfits,’ and subscribed to a form of ‘jealous particularism’ that would ultimately lead the world to a ‘race schism.’ As he argued, World War I had shown that interconnectedness was the new distinguishing feature of the postwar world, and that ‘human society ... has become so close-knit, so complex an organism.’ Coupland of course had his own axe to grind, as he was

18 Elisabeth Kontogiorgi, *Population Exchange in Greek Macedonia: The Rural Settlement of Refugees 1922–1930* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006). For a detailed analysis of the regimentation of the population exchange and the resettlement of Greek refugees, see Onur Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement: Reconsidering the Turco-Greek Exchange of Populations, 1922–1934* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 87–124, 157–78.

19 Matthew Frank, “‘Fantasies of Ethnic Unmixing’: ‘Population Transfer’ at the End of Empire in Europe,” in *Refugees and the End of Empire*, eds. Pippa Virdee and Panikos Panayi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 81–101.

20 Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilisations* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), 18.

witnessing the dissolution of the British Empire, and was thus keen to preserve the Commonwealth by proclaiming it transcended ethno-racial divides. At the core of his vision was the idea of trusteeship, by which he meant the right of former imperial powers to manage less advanced societies, but without claiming sovereignty. In fact, this was exactly his interpretation of ‘mandate rule’ as defined in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.²¹

Coupland’s vision would become the philosophy underpinning the ‘Balfour formula’ of 1926, according to which all Dominions were ‘autonomous Communities within the British Empire, wholly equal in status and united by a common allegiance to the Crown, freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.’ It comes as no surprise, then, that his colleague at Oxford, Isaiah Berlin, panicked when he was told that Coupland had been appointed member of the Palestine Royal Commission, and feared that his colleague would be sharply critical of the Zionism project that Berlin himself supported.²² For Coupland, at the heart of population transfers lay the pernicious ideal of demographic homogeneity, which should never be sanctioned by the international community. Coupland’s imperialistic criticism of population transfers would be undermined by the case of the Sudeten Germans, who proved instrumental in destabilizing Czechoslovakia, thereby confirming the deepest fears of those who supported demographic engineering, namely that large minorities could easily be instrumentalized as Trojan horses in the irredentist schemes of more powerful neighbors. Following the lead of Winston Churchill, who in 1944 called for a ‘clean sweep’ of the Germanic presence in Poland, and the US President Franklin Roosevelt, who told Anthony Eden that ‘the Prussians will be removed from East Prussia in the same manner as the Greeks were removed from Turkey,’ approximately twelve million Germans were expelled from the USSR, Poland, and the Czech Republic after the war.²³

21 As he pointed out, ‘the principle of the Mandate is simply the doctrine of trusteeship.’ Reginald Coupland, *The Study of the British Commonwealth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), 28.

22 Arie M. Dubnov, *Isaiah Berlin: The Journey of a Jewish Liberal* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 113–17 and 147–158; Arie M. Dubnov, “The Architect of Two Partitions or a Federalist Daydreamer? The Curious Case of Reginald Coupland,” in *Partitions: A Transnational History of Twentieth-Century Territorial Separatism*, eds. Arie M. Dubnov and Laura Robson (Palo Alto: Stanford Univ. Press, 2019), 56–84.

23 See Laura Robson, *States of Separation: Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2017), 170–72. The *Heim ins Reich* policy pursued by the Nazi regime, which sought to ‘repatriate’ to Greater Germany thousands of *Donauschwabern* from Eastern and Southeastern Europe, constituted a mirror image of the same policy, albeit for different ends, thereby reinforcing the notion that when demographic concerns form an integral part of foreign policy, minority groups can be relegated to instruments of callous calculations even on the part of their own nation-states.

In this way, Coupland's supranational imperial federation of mixed populations was decisively defeated, and the postwar order in Europe largely followed the path towards creating a minority-free continent.

4 'Hostages' and Retributive Violence

One question that arises is whether the League of Nations provided a humane logistics to an inhumane policy practice by formalizing population displacement. That is, whether it eased the uprooting of minorities from their homelands, all the while silently sanctioning the philosophy of 'divine cartographies' that underpinned the entire socially devastating process. Little had changed even after the 1923 exchange, as demonstrated by the treatment of the remaining minorities in Turkey as 'hostages' in a system of mutual deterrence. Perceived as a guarantee for communal peace, during periods of tensions and conflict they were vulnerable to mistreatment and retributive violence. Someone who understood this point well was the legal mind who drafted India's first independent constitution, B.R. Ambedkar, who himself belonged to one of the religious minorities in the Indian caste system. Pointing to the Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1923, he advocated a similar arrangement for Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India. Of course the scale would be vastly larger, involving the transfer of twenty million people. As he noted, Hindustan would have to be made homogeneous, because as he feared the Hindus who had remained in Pakistan would find themselves in a similar position as 'the Armenians under the Turks or ... the Jews in Tsarist Russia or in Nazi Germany,' in other words as 'a helpless prey to the fanaticism of a Muslim National State.' Even though the task would be formidable, he noted that Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria 'shouldered [it] and carried it to a successful end because they felt that the considerations of communal peace must outweigh every other consideration.'²⁴

Ambedkar's idea of population exchange was rejected in favor of a minority protection regime signed by Pakistan and India in 1950 with close affinities to the League of Nations regime. But this did not happen before 17.9 million people had either left or were driven from their homes, mainly in Bengal and

See Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1993), and Geza Charles Paikert, *The Danube Swabians: German Populations in Hungary, Rumania and Yugoslavia, and Hitler's Impact on their Patterns* (New York: Springer 1962).

24 B.R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or the Partition of India* (Kolkata: Thacker, 1944), 102-03.

the Punjab, and before more than three million had died or gone missing, in addition to hundreds of thousands of abductions and acts of sexual violence against women and girls.²⁵ While the case of India and Pakistan emphasized that an orderly population exchange like the one that took place in 1923 was a far more liberal and humane solution to the conflict, the question remains whether its coercive thrust ultimately served to legitimize the ultra-nationalist measures of demographic engineering in the post-Lausanne era. Despite their basis in law, they were supremely coercive and gradually led to the same results as a full-scale population transfer. Ultimately, even though more radical means of population tinkering such as ethnic cleansing and mass deportations were deemed morally unacceptable, the Lausanne exchange of 1923 set a groundbreaking precedent for a liberal success story in state building through population transfers. At the same time, it indirectly sanctioned the overriding logic of demographic engineering, which would gradually develop much more sophisticated administrative practices, techniques, and legal tools to achieve exactly the same ends as those that had been widely condemned in the court of international public opinion in the early twentieth century.

Conclusion: The Legacy of Formalizing Displacement

Population transfers are commonly viewed as part of a large-scale, liberal technocratic effort to formalize population displacement with the aim of ending conflicts. The wide prevalence of practices of demographic engineering after the war, however, indicates that a more dynamic interpretation is needed for the mechanisms employed to force population movements, and especially for the strategies underpinning them. Attempting to conceptualize forced migration in these terms has the potential to yield a more comprehensive understanding of the broader currents and practices in which it was embedded during the interwar period.

While the principle of ethnic separation has done little to avert ethnic conflict throughout history, international support for it has been growing. Guided by the idea of using population transfer and partition as a means of creating a modern state order, the League of Nations presented demographic engineering

25 Ranabir Samaddar, "Introduction: Borderlands of Independent India: Transition, Violence and Justice," in *Transitional Justice and Forced Migration: Critical Perspectives from the Global South*, ed. Nergis Canefe (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2019), 10–12. See also Amritjit Singh, ed., *Revisiting India's Partition: New Essays on Memory, Culture, and Politics* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016).

as a political necessity requiring a supranational arbiter. As a means of building a postimperial rationale for the ongoing presence of European powers in the Eastern Mediterranean, it advocated granting 'ethnonational space' to Armenians in Syria and Lebanon, Assyrians in Iraq, and Jews in Palestine. And if these resettlements generated further conflicts, this was not viewed as a failure of the population strategy of transfer and partition, but on the contrary as a further indication that an external power would be needed to oversee the state building process. Moreover, as demonstrated by the use of the Assyrians against the Arab and Kurdish revolts in Iraq, the creation of dependent homogeneous communities provided colonial states with the capacity to deploy them in their service.²⁶ After the war, the United Nations also favored ethnic nationalism as the basic building block of the modern state system, indirectly sanctioning both partition and population transfers. Arguably the most extreme case of this was the USSR's displacement or deportation policy, which continued into the late 1940s and targeted Poles, Romanians, the Baltics, Volga Germans, Ingrian and Karelian Finns, Crimean Tatars and Greeks, Kalmyks, Balkars, Karachays, Meskhetian and Karapapak Turks, and Far East Koreans.²⁷ Despite the exuberant rights-centered rhetoric and institutions, which emerged after the last war, the de facto realities in conflict resolution were not far removed from what Popper condemned as 'Utopian social engineering,' with the ethnonational ideal often continuing to supersede all other principles of international relations.

A plausible hypothesis is that there may have been deeper geostrategic powers at work that have pushed back against emphasizing principles too overtly critical of the logic of demographic engineering. As the historian Laura Robson aptly noted in her study on population transfers in the Middle East,

[the] post-1945 atmosphere of quiet approval for various iterations of ethnonational separation did not reflect an ideological commitment to [population] transfer and partition as an answer to ethnic conflict. Rather, it represented a continuation of an earlier strategy of creating externally monitored regimes of ethnic separation to justify and channel international intervention ... The astonishing longevity of the idea

26 Robson, *States of Separation*, 169–72. See also Stavros T. Stavridis, "The Assyrian Issue 1914–1935: Australian Documents and Press," in *Genocide in the Ottoman Empire: Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks, 1913–1923*, ed. George N. Shirinian (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 158–86.

27 Egidijus Vareikis, "Report: Enforced Population Transfer as a Human Rights Violation," Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, 5 Dec. 2011.

that transfer and partition could represent solutions to global problems of ethnic pluralism suggests that this process is still ongoing.²⁸

A potent testament to this is the fact that the international community, understandably apprehensive of the human toll wrought by protracted clashes, has not proactively reversed ethnically based divisions in various conflict zones, most notably in Cyprus and Bosnia, despite the fact that post-Nuremberg international law stipulates that the coerced removal of peoples from their land is illegal. Likewise, it has continued to tolerate, albeit tacitly, more sophisticated means of demographic engineering that amounted to involuntary population transfers. Turkey, for example, used a series of legal and administrative instruments to target, discriminate against, and ultimately force the emigration of the vast majority of the country's Greek residents under the pretext of Athens' Cyprus policy, first in 1955²⁹ and more drastically in 1964–65.³⁰ A similar phenomenon had already been observed in partition violence in India, which has accurately been described by the historian Taylor Sherman as a 'moral economy' of retribution in which communal justice was tacitly thought to be achieved only through proportional suffering.³¹ In the final analysis, despite the universalistic institutional forms and humanistic discourse championed by the United Nations, it appears that the underlying ethno-national loyalties passed on to the postwar political environment by late Ottoman exercises in demographic engineering have seemingly remained more or less intact.

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28 Robson, *States of Separation*, 171.

29 Dilek Güven, "Riots against the Non-Muslims of Turkey: 6/7 September 1955 in the Context of Demographic Engineering," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 12 (2011).

30 For an overview of the process as it manifested in the postwar period, see George Kalpadakis, *Kypriako 1954–1974. Stochastikes prosarmoges kai o aionios deligiannismos* [The Cyprus issue, 1954–1974. Judicious integration and perennial delegiannism] (Papazisis Press: Athens 2020), 50–132.

31 Taylor C. Sherman, *Muslim Belonging in Secular India: Negotiating Citizenship in Postcolonial Hyberabad* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015), 19–21.

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Seeking a Homeland, Serving the Empire: Muslim Migrants from Montenegro and Their Integration within the Ottoman Bureaucracy (1870–1914)

Denis Ljuljanović

Introduction

The relationship between forced migrations, military conflicts, and nationalism represents an emotional, conflictual, and terminological puzzle. The extant scholarship that examines this triangular relationship is divided into two main strands. One strand, which is rooted in refugee studies, focuses on the conflict rather than the ideological reasons behind population transfer and forced migration.¹ Most of the research belonging to this area of study suggests that military and security reasons were the main impetus behind forced migrations, while studies on nationalism and nation-building focus on the nationalist ideologies of states, and describe population transfer as part of ethnic cleansing policy.² This article approaches both research strands as being interconnected and relevant to forced migrations and displacements, and will therefore try to connect them. In this light, the article's aim is to contribute to refugee studies and the history of migration within an Ottoman context. It focuses on the conflict during the Great Eastern Crisis (1875–78) and the displacement of Montenegro's Muslim population to different Ottoman provinces and Istanbul, in addition to their role in the Ottoman bureaucracy. These Muslims are often called Mohammedans in the documents, and in the Ottoman literature they are known as *muhacir* (refugee/migrant/expellee/the departed),³ a term that does not exactly correspond to the English translation of 'migrant' or 'refugee.' While the terms refugee (*mülteci*) and migrant (*göçmen*)

1 Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016).

2 Pertti Ahonen, *People on the Move: Forced Population Movements in Europe in the Second World War and Its Aftermath* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2008).

3 According to Ella Frantatuono 'the term *muhacir* gained resonance as a social category as the Ottoman state developed settlement and aid strategies to administer the large immigrant population.' See Ella Frantatuono, "Producing Ottomans: Internal Colonization and Social Engineering in Ottoman Immigrant Settlement," *Journal of Genocide Research* 21 (2019), 9.

are used quite widely in contemporary Turkish, the word *muhacir* belongs more to Ottoman (religious) terminology, and is derived from the prophet Mohammed's migration from Mecca to Medina, known as *Hijra* (*Hicret* in Turkish).⁴ In the nineteenth century, it was often (but not exclusively) related to expellees from the Balkans (*Balkan kökenli*) or Rumeli (*Rumelili*).⁵ Since the term *muhacir* does not precisely correlate with contemporary English usage, I will often refer to these persons as *muhacirler*/refugees/migrants/itinerant Ottomans. I also argue that the lives of these *muhacirler* provide a dynamic set of filters for exploring world histories, and challenge previous uses of Ottoman history that neglected the roles of migrants as a subordinate category within meta-nationalistic narrative(s).⁶ Many of these itinerant Ottomans were not isolated subjects, but belonged to multicultural and multilingual environments of diverse peripheries operating in the larger region (from the Balkans to the Middle East), and helped to shape the imperial center as well. As such, these migrants were incorporated into the body of public officials, playing important roles in the development of Ottoman institutions, and serving as active players within the Young Turk movement.⁷ These itinerant Ottomans were thus integrated within Ottoman 'governmentality,' which some scholars today refer to as a kind of 'Ottoman colonial modernity.'⁸ This article uses a post-colonial theoretical approach and center-periphery relations to answer the following questions: what factors (war, ideology, territorial sovereignty, economy) brought about these displacements? What happened to the lives of the refugees after military conflicts? How did these 'children of the Borderlands'⁹ and the peripheries define the imperial center? What was the imperial center's

4 See the Web page of Islam Encyclopedia (in Turkish) about the meaning of *Hicret*: <https://islamsiklopedisi.org.tr/muhacir--osmanli> (accessed on 24 June 2020).

5 Esra Bulut, "Friends, Balkans, Statesmen Lend Us Your Ears': The Trans-state and State in Links between Turkey and the Balkans," in *Transnationalism in the Balkans*, eds. Denisa Kostovicova and Vesna Bojčić-Dželilović (New York: Routledge, 2008), 96.

6 Isa Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees, 1878–1939: Migration in a Post-Imperial World* (London: Bloomsbury Academy, 2013), 2.

7 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims: 1821–1922* (Pennington, NJ: Darwin Press Inc, 1996).

8 Ella Fratantuono examines immigrant settlement policies as 'Ottoman internal colonization and social engineering.' See: Fratantuono, *Producing Ottomans*; Furthermore, Isa Blumi defines this Ottoman colonial attempt as an 'initial gesture of Ottoman spiritual colonialism' that are actually 'drawn from within Ottoman refugee communities' helping to shape Ottoman institutions. Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees*. 11.

9 Erik Jan Zürcher, "The Young Turks – Children of the Borderlands?," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9 (2003), 275–86.

policy – toward migrants from Montenegro, and what role did these migrants play in establishing links with the imagined homeland?

To answer these questions, I will trace several examples of refugee activities across the empire's full geographic reach, ranging from the Balkans to Eastern Anatolia and the Middle East. This trans-regional scope will help to make the argument that *muhacirler* played a more significant role in the making of the larger modern world than is generally accepted in the extant scholarship.

1 Orientalist Perception(s) and State Building in Montenegro: War and Forced Migration

In his 'Diary' (1876), the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky observed that 'in connection with the Eastern question, some small beast (*piccola bestia*) has run into Europe which does not give to all good, peace-loving people a chance to calm down-people who love mankind and wish to see it flourishing.'¹⁰ In his opinion, this *piccola bestia* did not belong to 'civilized' Europe, therefore 'it does seem that with the final solution of the Eastern question, all other political strife in Europe will be terminated.'¹¹ Indeed, thinking about what Dostoevsky called a 'final solution' was a common feature at the turn of the century, one that culminated with imperialism. This process of finalizing the *Question d'Orient* was promoted not only by Russia and Austria-Hungary, but by South Slavic populations in Rumelia as well. It was in the immediate aftermath of the Berlin Treaty (1878) that the Ottoman Balkans experienced perhaps the most intense period of violence and mass migration. This scheme of a 'final solution' was accepted among the Balkan autonomous regions (i.e. especially Montenegro and Serbia), thereby intensifying 'ethnic' and 'sectarian' conflict, which was supported by Russian Pan-Slavist policy of the time.

Historically, the region of Zeta on the Adriatic Sea, which was later known as Montenegro (*Karadağ*), became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1496. Due to its geographic position and tribal social structure, this region was only nominally incorporated within the Ottoman administrative system subordinated to the *pashas* appointed by the Ottoman Imperial Council in Scutari (*İşkodra/Shkodra/Skadar*). Montenegro was actually a semi-independent principality under the Ottomans, and was initially represented by a bishop-prince (*vladika*). For most of Montenegrin history, *vladikas* conserved Montenegrin

10 Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *A Writer's Diary* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1993–94), 428.

11 *Ibid.*, 428.

tradition, and maintained good relations with Imperial Russia via the Orthodox Church. Tsars often supported Montenegrin tribes in their efforts to strengthen their semi-independent status, as well as in anti-Ottoman movements.¹² Actually, during most of the nineteenth century, with the help of the traditional protector state of Russia, Montenegrin rulers and intelligentsia constructed national narratives of Montenegrins as the ‘chosen people,’¹³ who should build a nation-state and carry out this final solution against ‘undeveloped barbaric Ottomans.’ The invented traditions of the Montenegrins as a ‘chosen people’ entrusted with the specific mission to ‘save the true faith and Serbdom,’ and to fight against the ‘Turkified Slavs’ and ‘big Asiatic Mongols (Ottomans),’¹⁴ were supported by Montenegrin newspapers in the 1870s. Furthermore, the *Montenegrin Voice (Glas Crnogorca)* newspaper remarked that Montenegrins ‘have the mission (*zadaću*) of being the interpreter of all Serbdom and the messenger of their sorrow to the world, from those free high mountains of Montenegro.’¹⁵ This small group of people should work for the liberation and unity of millions of Christians, who for many centuries had been in a state of shameful slavery under the Mohammedan yoke, the butchers of the faith of Christ.¹⁶ This concern for Christian ‘liberation’ from the Muslim yoke emanated from the nationalistic meta-narratives that assumed conflict was inevitable among different ethnically constituted religions. Moreover, Montenegrin authorities found legitimacy for this liberation and state building in the Orientalism discourses popular throughout nineteenth century Europe – considered to be the ‘center of civilization.’ In this regard, the more outside patrons insisted on using these discourses, the more local nationalist promoters insisted on exploiting various ‘barbarian’ identities. The Montenegrin newspaper accordingly presented ‘the people of the East as being incapable of leading an independent life-style,’ adding that ‘they do not know about the right of liberty.’ Because they are ‘incapable for civilization’ and ‘incapable of leading an independent life-style’ someone ‘should bring

12 Armando Pitassio, “The Building of Nations in South-Eastern Europe, the Cases of Slovenia and Montenegro: A Comparative Approach,” in *The Balkans: National Identities in a Historical Perspective*, eds. Stefano Bianchini and Marco Dogo (Ravenna: Longo, 1998), 53.

13 According to Anthony D. Smith the notion of a ‘chosen people’ can be applied only with the sanctification of national narratives as sacred communion. Furthermore, he points out that religious notions of the ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’ are integrated into the national culture that represents their nation as ‘chosen’ and their policy as ‘sacred.’ See Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004), 18.

14 Petar Petrović Njegoš, *Lažni car Šćepan Mali* [Fake Tsar Šćepan Mali] (Trieste: without publisher, 1851).

15 *Glas Crnogorca*, 21 Apr. 1873. Quote ‘sa slobodnijeh visina crnogorskih.’

16 *Ibid.*, Quote ‘zakletog krvinka vjere hristove.’

civilization to them.¹⁷ Those who possess ‘progress’ (*napredak*) are not just Montenegro and Serbia, but also other Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire that are ‘active, productive and smart.’ Consequently, the condition for true progress was the complete liberation of the people from the Ottoman yoke.¹⁸ In this light, the Great Eastern Crisis paved the way for the ascendancy of Pan-Slavism and promotion of the Montenegrin nation-state, led by ‘Prince Nikola and brave Montenegrins’¹⁹ against the local Muslim population, who were largely seen as Turks. Since these local Muslims were not included in the Montenegrin national myth, instead being perceived as a ‘barbaric’ and ‘oriental other,’ many Muslim families were expelled during this process of nation- and state-building in Montenegro.

2 Ottoman Policy and Migrants as Political Instruments

During the Great Eastern Crisis (1875–78), Montenegro was involved in several battles against the Ottoman Empire, known as the Great War (*Velji rat*) in Montenegrin historiography.²⁰ After this crisis and the Russo-Ottoman War (1877–78), Montenegro became an independent state in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin. Between 1875 and the 1880s many Muslims migrated to the Ottoman Empire in response to nationalist pressures, while others sought to maintain their religion and traditions within Montenegro, and some even switched sides when it suited their personal interests. At this early stage of the crisis, the large flow of refugees from Montenegro overwhelmed the Ottoman bureaucracy, which was unable to properly care for these itinerant Ottomans. Kirby Green, the British Consul at Scutari, wrote to the British Foreign Secretary Marquis of Salisbury that refugees wanted to return to their homes in order to

17 *Glas Crnogorca*, 21 Apr. 1873. One can find many orientalist statements like: ‘istočni narodi nisu sposobni za samostalni život’ or ‘pravo na slobodu.’ See further also: ‘nesposobni za civilizaciju (...) nesposobni za samostalni život (...) nositi civilizaciju.’

18 *Glas Crnogorca*, 21 Apr. 1873.

19 *Glas Crnogorca*, 15 Jan. 1877.

20 See Živko M. Andrijašević, Šerbo Rastoder, *Istorija Crne Gore: od najstarijih vremena do 2003* [History of Montenegro: From Ancient Times to 2003] (Podgorica: Centar za iseljenike Crne Gore, 2006); Živko M. Andrijašević, *Crnogorska crkva, 1852–1918* [Montenegrin Church, 1852–1918] (Nikšić: Filozofski fakultet, 2008); Šerbo Rastoder, “Istorijsko-metodološki okvir istraživanja novije istorije crkve (vjerskih zajednica) u Crnoj Gori (1878–1945)” [The Requirements on Historical and Methodological Frameworks of Contemporary Church History in Montenegro 1878–1945], *Istorijska nauka i nastava istorije u savremenim uslovima* [History as a Science and Continuity of History in the Present], *CANU* 14 (1994), 199–242.

continue their previous life in Montenegro; however, these *muhacirler* 'have been ordered away by Montenegrins' and 'the Turkish authorities also discourage their repatriation.' The *muhacirler* hoped that 'England will not permit the xxxth²¹ article of the Treaty (of Berlin) to be disregarded until too late.'²² The Ottoman government encouraged these migrants to stay, and welcomed them 'as male inhabitants' who could be enlisted in 'a regular force for frontier defense.'²³ As a result, large numbers of male migrants accepted their position in the Ottoman administration, joining the Ottoman bureaucracy and often playing an active role. These examples were not included in the Montenegrin and Turkish historiographies, and especially did not point out their regional and local identities, seeing them instead as marginalized, and hence bereft of agency. Contrary to that, my argument is that these *muhacirler* were part of dynamic constituencies across a wide range of settings, and were consequently influential subjects of the Ottoman Empire. In short, they were far from being the victims they have often been presented as.²⁴ In this respect, the new Hamidian regime (1876–1908) ensured that the entrenched Ottoman bureaucratic order provided assistance for the refugees, as well as opportunities for active participation in the bureaucracy.²⁵ The Ottoman state established a Refugee Commission (*Muhacir Komisyonu*) for this purpose, which became part of the Ministry for Police (*Zaptiye Nezareti*) in 1875, as part of the latter's reorganization during the Great Eastern Crisis into a General Refugee

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- 21 According to the report by Kirby Green, refugees from Montenegro were willing to live their lives as before, combining their Turkish and Montenegrin hybrid identities in religious and other cultural areas. They also had the option of living in the Ottoman Empire and keeping connections with their land, retaining their business and estates. Article xxx of the Treaty of Berlin guaranteed them these possibilities: 'Muslims or other subjects who own a property in the territories annexed by Montenegro, have a possibility to residence outside the Principality and to retain their estates' (*les Musulmans ou autres qui possèdent des propriétés dans les territoires annexés au Monténégro et qui voudraient fixer leur résidence hors de la Principauté pourront conserver leurs immeubles*). See Deutsches Reichsgesetzblatt, Band 1878, no. 31: 307–45. However, as explained later in the report, article xxx of the Treaty was not respected by Montenegrins or by Ottoman authorities, as they were occupied with the division, homogenization policies, and identity formation.
- 22 Bilal N. Şimşir, *Rumeliden Türk Göçleri* [Migrations of Turks from Rumelia] (Ankara: Türk tarih kurumu basımevi, 1989), 632; Quote mentioned in the document about Ottoman administrative unite of *İşkodra Vilayeti* as: Scutari, 9 Oct. 1878, in Foreign Office Archives (Public Record Office, London), F.O. 424/75, Confidential (3799), No. 232: 146–47.
- 23 *Ibid.*, see the document from the British Consul at Scutar (*İşkodra vilayeti/Ottoman Empire*): Mr. Kirby Green to Salisbury, Scutari, 26 Oct. 1878, 641.
- 24 Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees*.
- 25 Maurus Reinkowski, "The State's Security and the Subjects' Prosperity: Notions of Order in Ottoman Bureaucratic Correspondence (19th century)," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, eds. Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2005), 208.

Commission (*İdare-i Umumiye-i Muhacir Komisyonu*) in response to the new migration towards the Ottoman Empire.²⁶ These commissions developed into one of the key bureaucratic agencies of the modernizing Ottoman Empire, arranging long-distance resettlement and aid to refugees in the form of land grants, agricultural subsidies, and tax exemptions.²⁷

The policy of helping refugees and including them within the bureaucratic apparatus can also be analyzed in the broader context of the Ottoman counter-colonialist response to European imperialism.²⁸ This Ottoman colonial modernity was a 'survival tactic' for ensuring the stability and protection of the state that entailed an important quest for legitimacy or in Weber's words, 'the state's monopoly on the use of force.'²⁹ In order to ensure stability and protection, the Ottoman government recruited many of the arriving refugees to promote devices of Ottoman legitimacy such as coats of arms, Friday prayer, the caliphate, and education – the necessities of civilization and prosperity.³⁰ These Muslims from Montenegro would play a role in the larger regional context, and would also be among the most enthusiastic supporters of the Ottoman government.

2.1 *The Unity of Islam and Pan-Islamism in Ottoman Rumelia*

At a time when millions of Europeans were migrating to America, the Muslims from the Balkans were invited to settle down in 'house of peace' (*dar al-salam*). In the early 1880s, the Ottoman Empire offered and encouraged 'unequivocal ideological support to the immigration of Muslims from the lost Ottoman territories.'³¹ In 1887, Şeyh-ul-İslam issued a religious decree (*fetva*) encouraging migration, directly 'calling for Muslims from these (lost) areas to emigrate and settle within the Ottoman state.'³²

26 Nedim İpek, *Rumeliden Anadoluya Türk Göçleri* [Migrations of Turks from Rumelia to Anatolia] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1996), 43–106.

27 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [The Ottoman Archive of the Prime Minister's Office]: BOA., Y.EE. No. 101/54, Hicri, 4 Zilhicce 1297, (7 Nov. 1880).

28 Isa Blumi, "Ottomanism Then and Now: Historical and Contemporary Meanings," *Die Welt des Islams* 56 (2016), 290–317.

29 Max Weber, "Politik als Beruf," *Gesammelte Politische Schriften*, (Munich: 1921), 396–450.

30 Selim Deringil, "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45 (2003), 311–42.

31 Amir Karić, *Myth of Bosniak Pan-Islamism* (Sarajevo: Center for Advanced Studies, 2015), 75–76; Kemal H. Karpat, "Hidžret iz Rusije i sa Balkana: proces samodefiniranja u kasnoj osmanlijskoj državi" [The Hijra from Russia and the Balkans: The Process of Self-Determination in the Late Ottoman State], in *Muslimani Balkana, istočno pitanje u XX stoljeću* [The Muslims of the Balkans: The Eastern Question in the 20th Century], ed. Fikret Karčić (Tuzla: Behram-begova medresa, 2001) 68.

32 Ibid.

A High Commission on Islamic Immigration was set up to monitor Muslim migration under the direct supervision of the Sultan as the Caliph of all Muslims. This commission, in cooperation with local *imams* outside the Ottoman Empire, gave many sermons in mosques, and determined the conditions under which a Muslim should live. Since many Muslims were living now under Austro-Hungarian, Serbian or Montenegrin rule, some *imams* encouraged mass-migration from the land of disbelief (*dar al-kufr*) to the Ottoman Empire.³³ A supporter of this idea was Hilmi Taşlıcalı from Pljevlja (modern-day in Montenegro, back then part of Ottoman empire), who wrote a ‘Treatise on the Hijra and Muhajirin’ (*Risala fi al-hijrawa al-muhajirin*) in 1885 (1303).³⁴ He lived for some time in Istanbul and Medina, where he wrote this book, in which he reminded the Muslims of the Balkans, the majority of whom lived in Christian states (such as Montenegro), that migration is an obligation for all people living under infidel rule.³⁵ This Pan-Islamic call was compatible with Ottoman vision and policy, and was diffused with the help of bureaucrats and Islamic scholars. As a result, religious authorities and bureaucrats used documents to heavily emphasize the Sultan’s position as the Caliph of all Muslims, thereby pledging their loyalty to him. A refugee from Montenegro named Hafiz Salih Gašević – who was born in Nikšić (1850), where he finished elementary religious school and Ottoman junior high school was one of the bureaucrats in charge of promoting religious consciousness through a language understood by the people living in the periphery. He then continued his education in Istanbul, and was later appointed as a district governor (*kaymakam*) in Luma and Šahović (modern-day Tomaševo in Montenegro), where he wrote and translated a poem about the Prophet Mohammed in the Bosnian language entitled ‘*Mevlud alani ali lisan-i Bosnevi*’ (1296/1879).³⁶ The *Mevlud* had an ideological message. It brought its subjects living on the periphery closer to the new counter-colonial ideology known as unity of Islam (*İttihad-i İslam*). In the prologue to the *Mevlud*, Gašević mentions that he is a migrant, and sees himself as ‘*muhacir* from the homeland (*vatan*) of Nikšić’ who wants

33 Ibid., 73.

34 Ibid.

35 Fikret Karčić, *Šerijatsko pravo – reformizam i izazovi modernosti* [Islamic Law: Reformism and Challenges of Modernity] (Sarajevo: Biblioteka, knjiga 6, 2009), 134–35; Ekrem Gülşen, “Hilmi b. Hüseyin Bosnevînin (Arapça-Türkçe) Hicret Risâlesi Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme” [Hilmi Husain Bosnevi and the Analysis of the Hicret Risalesi], *PESA (International Journal of Social Studies)* 4 (2018), 30–45.

36 Salih Gašević, *Mevlud alani ali lisan-i Bosnevi* [Mevlud in Bosnian Language] (Skopje: Kosovo Vilayeti Maatbasi, 1296/1879); Prior to 1879, all Mevluds were performed exclusively in Turkish (Süleyman Çelebi) or Arabic (Berzanji or Sufi Busiri).

to promote 'Islam as the right path.'³⁷ As a local notable who was expelled, he praised Caliph Abdul Hamid Khan for accepting so many migrants, as well as the Sultan's contribution to spreading the message of the Prophet Mohammed in the local (Bosnian) language.³⁸ Many local Muslims did not speak Arabic or Turkish, but according to Hafiz Gašević, the inhabitants had 'a great desire to know the actual message of the *Mevlud*.'³⁹ By the time of the Hamidian regime, these *muhacirler* at the imperial ideological margins were propped up by the Ottoman government to influence certain religious practices and ensure the loyalty of the Muslims toward the Sultan *cum* Caliph. In this respect, another prominent *muhacir* from the town of Ulcinj (Ülgin in Turkish, Ulqini in Albanian) bears mentioning: Hafiz Ali Ulqinaku (born 1853), who completed an Albanian translation of the '*Mevlud Sherif*' (1879) that was published in Istanbul.⁴⁰ The translation of the *Mevlud* into the Albanian language was meant to prevent nationalistic tendencies and separatist movements as was the case with the *Mevlud*'s translation into Bosnian, but it also sought to bind Ottoman Rumelia to religious notions of Unity of Islam.⁴¹ Abdulhamid II's support of 'Albanianism'⁴² was thus an attempt to bound Albanian (and Bosnian) speaking Muslims to Pan-Islamism instead of an independent national movement.⁴³ The main supporter of such ideas was Mehmed E. Safvet Pasha, a former Grand Vizier who on 12 April 1880 submitted a memorandum advocating a separate policy for people living in the periphery, especially Albanian-speaking groups who offered 'essential support' (*maya-ul-istinadi*) to the Ottoman

37 Ibid., 1. See quotes: '*muhadžir sam, vatan mi je bio Nikšić/Ime mi je hafiz Salih Gašević*' and '*pravi put*.'

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid. See quote: '*Mi smo žudni znati Mevlud šta kaže*.'

40 Ali Ulqinaku was a teacher in the elementary school of the Duda (Shkodra) and appointed in 1889 as Mufti of Lezha. See Rezart Beka, "The life and work of Hafiz Ali Ulqinaku," in *The Albanian Mawlid of Hafiz Ali Ulqinaku (r.a.)* (Cambridge: Muslim Academic Trust, 1436 Hicri/2014), 4.

41 Celal Nuri İleri, *İttihad-ı İslam ve Almanya* [Unity of Islam and Germany] (Istanbul: Yeni Osmanlı Matbaa ve Kütüphanesi, 1333/1914).

42 Nathalie Clayer, "The Albanian Students of the Mektebi-i Mülkiye: Social Networks and Trends of Thought" in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, ed. Elisabeth Özdalga (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005).

43 Nuray Bozbor, "The Policy of Abdulhamid II regarding the Prizren League," *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies* 11 (2006), 47. Sultan Abdulhamid II tried to give an Islamic character to the organized resistance of Albanian notables in the Prizren League (1878) in order to oppose preparations for the Congress of Berlin and eventual consequences of the Treaty.

bureaucracy in combatting its enemies.⁴⁴ Such engagements were favoured by the Hamidian regime to oppose Pan-Slavism and Hellenism in the Balkans, as well as European imperialism globally, with a ‘unified politico-religious entity vis-à-vis the colonial West with its ties to Christendom.’⁴⁵ These refugees operating at the fringes of the Ottoman world for the ‘unity of Islam’ transformed and shaped the institutionalization of religion over the next three decades. They were not just occupied with translating the *Mevlud*, but also held important positions as religious scholars or bureaucrats in the Ottoman administration in Rumelia. They gained political importance by expanding Ottoman authority in areas that remained on its edges or even outside of empire, and by connecting the local population and refugees to ‘religious brotherhood.’ Another such refugee was Hadži Mustafa Suknić, who was born in Podgorica (1853) and moved with his family to Shkodra during the Great Eastern Crisis (1878) to find a safe haven where he could work in the local mosque as an imam. Another prominent *muhacir* was Mula Medo Kokić from Podgorica, who also became an imam in Shkodra, in the Rus district inhabited by refugees from Montenegro. Podgoričeli Yusuf Ziyaeddin effendi Uruçi also decided to leave his hometown Podgorica, but two years later in 1880.⁴⁶ He settled then in Shkodra, where he was a famous professor (*müderriis*) and known as former deputy of the first Ottoman Parliament.⁴⁷ Some of these migrants worked near the Ottoman-Montenegrin border zone in Tuzi, and kept contacts with families and communities across the border in Montenegro. Among them were Murat Vodopić and Halil Efendi, who were also part of the Ottoman bureaucracy.⁴⁸ The younger generation of refugees included Vodopić, who was appointed as the main religious authority (*müftü*) in Tuzi in 1910,⁴⁹ and

44 George Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874–1913* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 73.

45 Kamal Soleimani, “Modern Islamic Political Thought, ‘Islamism’ and Nationalism,” *Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies R&D*, 2 (2017), 1–16.

46 Muhamet Pirraku, “Veprimtaria e Myderriz Jusuf Podgoricës be Rrjedhen e Lëvizjes Kombëtare” [The Activities of Professor Jusuf Podgorica and His Role in National Movement], *Revistja Paqja* [Magazine Peace] 19, no. 2, (January 2007), 197–222.

47 Hakki Tarik, *Meclis-i Meb’usan 1293–1877* [Ottoman Parliament 1877] (İstanbul: Gazete-Matbaa Kütüphane, 1954).

48 Skender Rizaj, “Çështja e muhaxhirëve (1875–1881)” [The Question of Immigrants 1875–1881], in *Shpërngulja e shqipëtarëve gjatë shekujve* [Emigrations of Albanians during Centuries], (Prishtina: Session për Hulumtime Shkëncore, 1992), 155.

49 Murat Vodopić was a student in Istanbul and later appointed at this position as *müftü*. About the students from Montenegro in Istanbul see the Web site Montenegrina – an official Digital library of Montenegrin culture and heritage. The text is under the name and title: Ajdin Rakić, Crnogorski student u Carigradu [Montenegrin Students in Istanbul], <http://montenegrina.net/fokus/ajdin-rakic-crnogorski-studenti-u-carigradu/> (Accessed 30 March 2019).

Halil, who occupied an important position as the district governor of Tuzi immediately after the Great Eastern Crisis in 1880.⁵⁰ In other parts of ‘Turkey in Europe,’ in Chania (Crete), major (*binbaşı*) Mehmet Krnić from Podgorica was appointed as a guard of Berovich Pasha – the governor of Crete who also originated from Montenegro.⁵¹

Known today in the local Albanian context as the *muhaxhoret nga Mali i Zi* (Montenegro migrants) who were settled in the city or hinterlands of Scutari vilayet, they constituted a powerful sub-group in helping to bring both religious unity and security to borderland areas. Their engagements aimed to preserve Sultan Abdulhamid’s four pillars of the state, by being active subjects in the empire’s western border (the pillar of support in Ottoman Rumelia).⁵² This sub-group of migrants recognized the Hamidian regime as their protector, if for no other reason than that it had provided opportunities for their long-term survival. In return, they were expected to reestablish and preserve stability in the Ottoman peripheries, or to be incorporated in the Sultan’s private guard. As a result, many refugees from Montenegro’s occupied regions of Krajina (*Kraja*), or from the cities of Ulcinj and Podgorica, took important positions in the Sultan’s Yıldız Palace, as will be discussed below.⁵³

2.2 *Ottoman Politics and Migrant Activism in the Ottoman Capital*

Apart from migrants who were settled in the vast areas of the empire’s peripheries, some other groups of *muhacirler* made the fortunes in the empire’s expanding cities, such as Thessaloniki and Istanbul. In the big cities there were many itinerant Ottomans who conducted political, commercial, and military

50 See: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [The Ottoman Archive of the Prime Minister’s Office], See: BOA, Y.A.RES. 9/28, M. 28 Muharrem 1298/H. 31 December 1880 and BOA, Y.A.RES. 11/61; DH.MKT. 1338/22.

51 Državni Arhiv Crne Gore [State Archive of Montenegro], See: DACG, MID, binder 114.

52 George Gawrych, *The Crescent*, 55. See the quote ‘*dört rüknlu devlet*’ four pillars of the state.

53 This study focuses on Slavic speaking and Albanian migrants/*muhacirler* from the region of Krajina (*Kraja*); those from Ulcinj (Ulqin) and parts of Podgorica were not given detailed consideration. However, according to the Austro-Hungarian diplomat Theodor Ippen, over sixty people from this region worked as personal guards to Sultan Abdulhamid II. Some of them worked as gunmen (*tüfekçi*), or gendarmes (*hadim jandarma*) or as commandants in different parts of the Ottoman Empire, such as Tahir Pasha from *Kraja* (part of *Işkodra vilayeti*), Tahir Pasha from Podgorica (also part of *Işkodra vilayeti*), Halil Bey Skeja, and Osman Pasha, the general of brigades and commandant of guardian battalions (*zuaveve shqiptare*). See Nathalie Clayer, *Në fillimet e nacionalizmit shqiptar - Lindja e një kombi me shumicë mysliman në Evropë* [Aux Origines du Nationalisme Albanais: La Naissance d’une Nation Majoritairement Musulmane en Europe] (Tirana: Marlin Barleti, 2012), 62–63; Theodor Ippen, *Skutari und die Nordalbanische Küstenebene* (Sarajevo: Daniel A. Kajon, 1907), 41–42.

activism. Often these *muhacirler* asked the empire for institutional assistance and help. As a consequence, these groups did not operate in self-isolating cells, but rather became active subjects, constantly negotiating with the central government and reorganizing their initiatives. The constant efforts by government officials to address the needs of these refugees allowed the latter to play important roles in the Ottoman court as gunmen (*tüfekçi*) or gendarmes (*hadım jan-darma*), or as the personal guard for Sultan Abdulhamid II (Halil Bey Skeja, Tahir Paşa from Kraja, Osman Paşa etc.).⁵⁴ The First secretary (*Mabeyn-i Hümayun Başkâtibi*) of the Ottoman Empire between 1894 and 1908, Tahsin Pasha, wrote that ‘Abdulhamid II’s guards on the first line were Albanians.’⁵⁵ Albanians enjoyed a special status in the Sultan’s palace, because they were an Ottoman fortress in Rumelia.⁵⁶ According to the Ottoman First secretary, ‘Bosniaks also enjoyed a special status.’⁵⁷ At the turn of the century, it was usual practice in Ottoman palaces to find Albanian- and Bosnian-speaking *muhacirler* from Montenegro. One such prominent itinerant Ottoman bureaucrat was Tahir Pasha from Kraja, the son of Mehmet Dragaj, who became an active mobile player in the Ottoman capital (i.e. Yıldız palace). After the League of Prizren (1878) and the Treaty of Berlin, he was appointed as a bureaucrat in the Ottoman periphery⁵⁸ and intervened several times in local politics in the Ottoman Balkans.⁵⁹ He first became governor of Shkodra until 1896 (replaced by Has Edip), and later captain of the palace guard or *tüfekçi*.⁶⁰ Ibrahim Temo, one of the founders of the Committee of Ottoman Union, a forerunner organization of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and

54 Ibid., 41–42.

55 Tahsin Paşa, *Sultan Abdülhamid’in Sirdaşı* [A Confident Person of Sultan Abdulhamid] (İstanbul: Yakın Plan Yayınları, 2000), 33. Quote: ‘Padişahın muhafazası olarak Arnavutlar birinci safi işgal ederlerdi.’

56 Ibid., 33. Quote: ‘Sultan Hamidin Arnavutlara karşı bu itimadi onun için bir siyastin temelini teşkil ediyordu (...) Rumelide Arnavutlar, Abdülhamid siyasetinin kalesi gibi görülürdü.’

57 Ibid., 34. Quote: ‘Arnavutlardan sonra Sarayda Boşnakların özel bir yeri vardı.’

58 See: Vali Kabashi, “Kujtimet e Stambollit” dhe shqipëtarët e Beshiktashit [“Istanbul Memoirs” and Albanians at Beshiktash], *Koha Ditore* (Kosovë), 11 Apr. 2020. About Tahir Pasha from Kraja see also the newspaper *Serveti Fünun* [Wealth of Knowledge], No. 483. This newspaper was an Ottoman avant-garde journal that played a significant role among the intellectuals.

59 BOA, BEO 30/2224, Hicri, 02. Z, 1309; Tahir Pasha played an active role on the Ottoman-Montenegrin border near Berane and Kolašin, as well as in Işkodra Vilayeti (Scutari).

60 Fatos Baxhaku and Karl Kaser, *Die Stammesgesellschaften Nordalbanians: Berichte und Forschungen*, 144; see Bericht 37, Ippen an Goluchovski, Scutari, 7. September 1901 or HHStA, Politisches Archiv XXXVIII, 419, (Scutari 1901), 376–79.

the Young Turk movement, was simply stating the fact that Tahir Pasha played a very important role in the Abdulhamid II's policy in the Ottoman Balkans and Yıldız palace.⁶¹ Further, Eqrem Bey Vlora described him in his memoirs (written in German), stating that he (Vlora) personally 'enjoyed conversation with old Marshall Tahir Pasha from Krajina, who became a captain of the palace.'⁶² Vlora also described an incident from 31 March 1909, when Sultan Abdulhamid II was obliged to resign the throne, and an old Marshall Tahir Pasha said (to Abdulhamid) in the name of all Albanian soldiers: 'you have fed us for thirty years, thus do not let us be embarrassed by not allowing us to protect you on this day!'⁶³ Tahir Pasha's message of unmitigated loyalty to Sultan Abdulhamid II ultimately cost him his life. Being so firmly linked to the Sultan, Tahir Pasha was equally threatened by the Young Turk revolt of 1908 and 1909. While others in the region celebrated the demise of the Hamidian regime, for many, including *Krayinalilar*, the events of April 1909 threatened their political security. Together with other guardians from Kraja (modern-day Montenegro), Halil Shahin Sjeja and Zef Maci Shestani were removed to Dodecanese islands.

Other prominent personalities among these *muhacirler* were Hasan Izzet Efendi and his son Damat Ferid Pasha (1853–1923) who after a Montenegrin-Ottoman conflict landed in Istanbul from Potoci (Montenegro). Both played noteworthy roles in the Ottoman bureaucracy and used opportunities to rise in prominence. First, Izzet Efendi was a member of the Ottoman Council of State (*Şûrâ-yı Devlet*) and worked in the Ottoman administration in Beirut and Sidon vilayets.⁶⁴ His son Ferid attended the school in Ottoman Lebanon and later married Sultan Abdulmecid I's daughter (Mediha Sultan). This was why he was known as *Damat* of the Ottoman family, which means 'bridegroom.' By the turn of the century, he used his social networks and human resources to actively engage in Ottoman diplomacy (in Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg and London),⁶⁵

61 Dr. Ibrahim Temo, Ahmet Riza, *Biz İttihatçılar* [We, the Unionist] (İstanbul: Örgün Yayınevi, 2009), 90–94. Quote: '*saray silahşorlarından İşkodrali Tahir bey.*'

62 Quote: 'mit dem alten Marschall Tahir Pasha, einem fruheren Parkwachter aus Kranje, der Komandant der Palastgarde geworden war, unterhielt ich mich prachtig. Wenn ich bei ihnen war, erlebte ich die Verhältnisse vergangener Jahrhunderte des osmanischen Reiches, in denen solche treue und ergebene Paladine der Dummheit die Geschicke eines Weltreiches nach Belieben lenken und verrenken konnten [sic!].' See Eqrem Bey Vlora, *Lebenserinnerungen I* (De Gruyter: Oldenbourg, 1973), 81.

63 Quote: 'Der alte Marschall Tahir Pasha sagte im Namen aller albanische Soldaten: "Du hast uns dreissig Jahre hindurch für diesen Tag genährt, tue uns nicht die Schande an, jetzt unser Antlitz zu schwärzen, indem du uns untersagst, dich zu verteidigen!"' *Ibid.*, 202.

64 BOA, A) MKT. 135/41, Hicri, 17. B 1264.

65 BOA, BEO. 3782/283586, Hicri, 13. B 1328.

and became a powerful politician in the Ottoman capital. After the Young Turk Revolution (1908), he was one of the founders of the liberal Freedom and Accord Party (*Hürriyet ve İttilâf Fırkası*) and became a member of the Ottoman Parliament. Damat Ferid Pasha also held the Office of Grand Vizier during two periods under the reign of the last Ottoman Sultan Mehmed VI.⁶⁶

During World War I he strongly opposed the CUP policy and its persecution of non-Muslims (i.e. Armenians/*Ermeniler* and Greeks/*Rumlar*).⁶⁷ Infused with liberal idealism and favoring more regional autonomy for diverse communities, he became one of the initiators of the war crime trials against the CUP members who were in power when these atrocities were committed against the Armenian population. However, due to his involvement in the Treaty of Sevres (1920), which marked the partition of the Ottoman Empire among the Allied powers, he remained widely disliked, and was seen as a traitor in modern Turkey.⁶⁸

2.3 Ottoman Bureaucrats in Ottoman Peripheries

There are also groups of trans-imperial migrants who took important positions in other parts of Ottoman peripheries, far from Ottoman Rumelia and Istanbul. Such personalities included Tahir Pasha Bilbez/Bibezić,⁶⁹ who was the governor of Van, Bitlis, and Mosul, in addition to his son Cevdet Bey, and nephews Mustafa Nuri and Haydar Hilmi Vaner.

Tahir Pasha was born into a family from Podgorica, the son of Hacı Ali Efendi Bibezić (in Turkish known as Bilbez).⁷⁰ He started his career in 1868 in his hometown Podgorica as a prominent Ottoman official in the Chamber of the City (*Podgoriçe Kazası Tahrirat odası*) and become secretary of the Podgorica Land Registry (*Podgoriçe Tapu Kitabeti*) in 1872.⁷¹ After the major changes occurring in the Ottoman Empire, such as the Great Eastern Crisis and Montenegro's independence in 1878, he was expelled from Podgorica to Shkodra Province. However, as a bureaucrat who already had experience with Ottoman administration in Podgorica, he was immediately appointed

66 Ali Birinci, *Hürriyet ve İttilâf Fırkası: 11 Meşrutîyet Devrinde İttihat ve Terakkî'ye Karşı Çıkanlar* [Freedom and Accord Party: Second Constitution and Politics against the Committee of Union and Progress] (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2012).

67 Ibid. He was also twice a Grand Vizier (*sadriazam*) during 1919 and 1920. See İsmail Hâmi Danişmend, *Osmanlı Devlet Erkânı* [The Ottoman State] (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1971).

68 Ibid. Quote: 'vatana ihaneti sabit olan.'

69 Fahrettin Altay, *On Yıl Savaş ve Sonrası* [Ten Years War and Afterwards] (Ankara: Eylem Yayınları, 2008), 8.

70 BOA, DH. SAİD. 3/138, H. 29.12.1265.

71 BOA, DH. MKT. 1173/41, Hicri Ol. Ca. 1325.

chief secretary of Scutari vilayet (*İşkodra Vilayeti Mektupçuluğu*). In 1880, following his temporary service as chief secretary in Thessaloniki (*Selânik Mektûbçuluğu*), he was transferred to several locations in Bitlis, Mosul, and Van (1898–1906), briefly in Trabzon (1907) and then again in Bitlis (1907–08), Erzurum (1908–10), and Mosul (1910–12).⁷² Tahir Pasha was a key frontier actor (*serhad memurları*), and became a significant policy implementer, usually for the Palace. He was often asked to mediate and investigate local disputes. His personal experience of governance, which spanned thirty-three years in the eastern provinces, was no doubt central to his reputation as someone capable of restoring public order and calming social unrest. Tahir Pasha was committed to the bureaucratic spirit, and was thus appointed as a commission chairman for the Ottoman-Iranian Border Commission (1905–08).⁷³ This dispute escalated in 1905, when Iran supported some tribal chiefs in the frontier zone who willingly interfered in the affairs of the pro-Ottoman tribes living in Urumiah. Tahir Pasha was ordered to resolve this conflict on the border.⁷⁴ In a pamphlet, he criticized the Ottoman centralization efforts toward Kurdish tribes as a failure that opened up space for Iranian interference in the region.⁷⁵ In 1908, when the Young Turk Revolution broke out, the new government established by the Community of Union and Progress (CUP) suggested that they found it unnecessary to alert Ottoman troops regarding the status quo line with Iran, due to the critical financial situation. Although this issue remained unresolved for several years, this example shows an ascendant local who emerged from the Ottoman-Montenegrin borderland and became a mobile subject at the Ottoman-Iranian border, thereby illustrating the agency of migrants who shaped Ottoman policy. Scholars have often failed to consider the mobility of trans-regional biographies within the Ottoman Empire and its lost territories, although multiple examples connect vastly different (post)Ottoman regions and communities.

Another good example for this trans-regional mobilization was Tahir Pasha's first son, Cevdet Bey, who emerged in the confused post-Berlin regime (after 1878) adapting to the new conditions of the time. Importantly, he distrusted

72 BOA, DH. MKT. 1168/15, Hicri 09. R. 1325.

73 Bozkurt Ugur, "II. Abdülhamid'in Valilerinden İşkodralı Tahir Paşa'nın (1848–1913) Hayatı ve Devlet Adamlığı" [Tahir Pasha – One of Abdulhamid's Governors 1848–1913], *Igd Univ Jour Social Science* 18 (2019), 237–54.

74 Quote 'hudud-u İraniye tahkikine memur olan heyet-i resmiyye Erzurum valisi devletlü Tahir Pasha hazretleri,' in Sabri Ateş, *Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013), 233 and 325. Sabri Ateş mentioned as a source the Erzurum printing house (Erzurum Maatbasi, 1329), 7.

75 *Ibid.*, 233.

the Hamidian regime, joined the CUP, and participated in the Young Turk movement. As such, he became governor (*mutasarrif*) of Jerusalem (1911–12)⁷⁶ and district governor (*kaymakam*) of Nevrokop (today Gotse Delchev in Bulgaria). In these positions as governor, he witnessed ethnic tension and conflict from Jerusalem to the Balkans. After the Balkan wars (1912–13), fear grew among CUP members that they might lose Arab provinces as well as Ottoman Anatolia, hence the violence beginning in 1914 exerted by the Ottoman government against its subjects in six vilayets (*vilayet-i sitte*) known as Ottoman Armenia.⁷⁷ During this disordered period, Cevdet Bey served as the governor of Van, having succeeded Hasan Tahsin Üzer in 1914.⁷⁸ His experiences in Jerusalem and the bloody Balkan wars turned him away from a logic of cooperation with heterogeneous groups, and transformed the Ottoman space into a zone of violence in the Great War. The last decade of the Ottoman Empire was a period in which practices of negotiation with locals were forgotten, and nuances were no longer tolerated.⁷⁹ During this period of political turmoil, the Ottoman administrative goal became the extradition of people, even though they had a strong Ottoman link in the past. Cevdet Bey and his brother-in-law Enver Pasha (Minister of War since 4 January 1914 and *de facto* Commander in Chief)⁸⁰ bear responsibility for the massacres of the Armenians (1915) through the Deportation Law (*Sevk ve İskân Kanunu*) issued on 27 May 1915. The Special Organization (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*) played a key role in the massacres against non-Muslim population, which was directed by Eşref Kuşçubaşı's group that included a migrant from Montenegro named Ömer.⁸¹

In addition to the political links between the Bibezić family and the central government, Tahir Pasha's nephews (Mustafa Nuri and Haydar Hilmi Vaner) also emerged as extensions of vast family networks in the general administrative development of empire. They both started working with their

76 Among the local Arab population in Jerusalem, he was known as '*mutasarrif al-Quds al-Sharif*'; while in the French and English-language literature he was referred to as 'governor of Palestine' (Djevdet Bey, Gouverneur de Palestine). See Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem (1872–1908)* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2011), 57.

77 Hans-Lukas Kieser, Kerem Öktem, Maurus Reinkowski, *World War 1 and the End of the Ottomans: from the Balkan Wars to the Armenian Genocide* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

78 Hasan Tahsin Üzer, *Makedonya Eşkiyalık Tarihi ve Son Osmanlı Yönetimi* [Macedonian Bandit History and the last Ottoman Period of Governance] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1979).

79 Kieser, Öktem and Reinkowski, *World War 1*.

80 Enver Paşa, *Enver Paşa'nın Anıları* [Enver Pasha's Diary] (İstanbul: Türk İş Bankası, 2016).

81 Benjamin C. Fortna, *The Circassian: A Life of Eşref Bey, Late Ottoman Insurgent and Special Agent* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016), 27.

well-connected uncle, notably on projects that explicitly tied the Ottoman peripheries to the central government and global world. Mustafa Nuri worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Hariciye Nezareti*) as an important intermediary between Ottoman institutions and exploitative projects of foreign capital. Accordingly, the aforementioned *muhacirler* used their opportunities and capacities to penetrate into the heart of the Ottoman bureaucracy and establish connections with the larger world. As demonstrated, the regions of Montenegro provided the Ottoman bureaucracy with dozens of such examples, including 'liberal' reformers such as Cevdet Bey, Mustafa Nuri and Haydar Hilmi Vaner. The rise of the CUP gave new impetus to these 'liberals,' who advocated state centralization modeled on European states, and promoted a break-up of the 'conservative elite.' According to the Austro-Hungarian consul in Mitrovica, one such personality was Vaner, who was 'acting as a Young Turk or as an Albanian.'⁸² He was born in Podgorica in 1875⁸³ and joined the Ottoman administration in the Van vilayet (1889) at a very young age. His positions as district-governor of Mitrovica and Köprulu in Ottoman Macedonia provided him with several possibilities to promote liberal ideas within the Young Turk movement.⁸⁴ Together with CUP members Müsir Kazim Pasha and Hacı Adil Bey (Minister of the Interior/*Dahiliye Naziri*), he joined Sultan Reshid on his tour of Rumelia between 5–26 June 1911. During the Sultan's visits to several cities (Thessaloniki, Skopje, Prizren, Prishtina, Bitola), he served as the primary translator from Ottoman Turkish into Albanian.⁸⁵ Vaner was also known to have maintained contacts with members of his family in Scutari vilayet, thanks to which he calmed the revolts in the Malësia region in 1911.⁸⁶

Conclusion

The historiographies of regional states (i.e. in Greece, Serbia or Montenegro) often represented the Ottoman period in the Balkans as a 'Turkish yoke' and reduced it to 'Turkish' barbarism, emphasizing the fundamental difference

82 HHSStA, PA XIV/15, Liasse XI/6, Mitrovica, Zambaur, 20 Feb. 1909; Clayer, *The Albanian Students*, 306.

83 BOA. DH. SAID. 92/359. Quote '1290 sene-i hicrisinde, sene-i maliye, 1289 Podgorica Kasabasinda tevelliid ettigi.'

84 BOA. DH. MUI. 3–2/36, lef.4. 22 Aug. 1909.

85 This was the first time a Sultan had officially visited any Ottoman region. See BOA. DH. MTV. 25/32, 31 May 1912; Tafil Boletini, *Pranë Isa Boletinit* [With Isa Boletini], (Tetovë: Ndërmarrja Gazetare, 1996), 73.

86 BOA. DH. SAID. 180/173, 06 Apr. 1911.

between Europe and the Orient. Not only in the historiographical works, but also in the Montenegrin media, local Muslims were resolutely portrayed as a Turkified (*poturice*) 'other' belonging to the Orient, and should therefore abandon the European 'Montenegrin land.' This Montenegrin nationalist promotion in the media took the form of discursive violence and the physical expulsion of the Muslim population during the Great Eastern Crisis (1875–78). As has been discussed, the Montenegrin state applied several exclusionary practices toward Muslims during this period, and often called upon the Montenegrin army 'to expel Turks.'⁸⁷

The Ottoman Empire generally welcomed Balkan migrants to form a regularly embodied force for frontier defense in the Balkans and other parts of the empire.⁸⁸ There was a bureaucratic imperative to evenly distribute these *muhacirler* across the different areas of the empire, and to bound them up in a 'brotherly union.' In the words of the Ottoman intellectual Şemseddin Sami Frasheri, this meant 'being a subject' of the Ottoman State.⁸⁹ As a result of this Ottoman political agenda, large numbers of expellees accepted to call themselves Ottomans, in the sense of belonging to the Ottoman Empire and being its subjects. Furthermore, these measures catalyzed their position in the Ottoman bureaucracy, and the active role they sought to play within it. Their multilayered interactions created numerous channels of opportunity. They were consequently far from being victims, as has often been stated, but active agents who became members of parliament, Grand Viziers (*sadriazam*), bureaucrats, guardians and established intellectuals who were incorporated within the Ottoman administration, and penetrated the empire's periphery and reinforced its center. The primary lesson to be drawn from these stories is that Ottoman bureaucracy and imperial policy influenced its periphery, but was also impacted by local agents (i.e. migrants), who shaped the core values of both the Ottoman peripheries and Istanbul.

87 *Glas Crnogorca*, 15 Jan. 1877. Quote: 'bjež'te Turci.'

88 Şimşir, *Rumeliden Türk Göçleri*, 641.

89 Alexander Vezenkov, "Reconciliation of the Spirits and Fusion of the Interests. 'Ottomanism' as an Identity Politics," in *We, the People: Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*, ed. Diana Mishkova, (Budapest: Central European Univ. Press, 2009), 52.

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PART 2

*Differentiating and Hierarchizing People
on the Move*



Muslims of Epirus, Muslims of Empire? The Cham Issue in Relation to Albanian, Greek and Turkish National Projects (1908–25)

Renaud Dorlhiac

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the future of the Cham population became an increasing matter of concern for the different states and nationalisms that had to deal with this issue. Residing in the western part of Epirus, a region located at the margins of the Ottoman Empire until its allotment to Greece and Albania in 1913, this population was subject to various categorizations depending on the interests of its proponents.

Firstly, the word ‘Chameria’ has a regional meaning, denoting a region extending from the Konispol area in modern-day Southern Albania to the Greek area of Preveza, across from the Ionian island of Lefkada.¹ This definition is rarely used by actors, who prefer to assign an ethnocultural meaning to the word. The Greeks always limit the word ‘Cham’ to the Albanian-speaking people of Chameria. They do not include non-Muslims or Muslims who do not speak Albanian, as well as Albanian-speaking Muslims who live outside this informal region. On the contrary, Albanian nationalism used it in a much broader sense as a combination of geographical and cultural criteria, designating its entire Albanian-speaking population (including Christians). According to some conceptions, it may also include the whole of Epirus and, in its broader meaning, all of Greece’s Albanian-speaking Muslims.

In this text, Cham will be understood as a regional and religious group, because contrary to their counterparts in Southern Albania, the huge majority of Chameria’s Albanian-speaking Christians did not take part in spreading Albanian national identity. When they tried to defend their specificity, they instead sought refuge in an ‘Epirotic’ or ‘Arvanit’ identity, which was much more compatible with Hellenism, and acceptable to Greek nationalism.²

¹ Today it generally corresponds to the regional unit of Thesprotia.

² In July 1911, a manifesto inspired by the Union and Progress Committee in Ioannina gave rise to a controversy between Muslims and Christians, with the former describing the town as the capital city of Southern Albania (while reiterating their support for the constitutional regime), and the latter rejecting this designation, preferring the term ‘Epirot’ to ‘Albanian.’

Incidentally, these identities make it difficult to connect with Albania, where the demographic balance is not in favor of the Christian community.

While the Albanian and Greek historiographies generally tend to focus on the time between the interwar period up through the end of the Greek civil war, this paper will examine the Cham issue at a time when national feelings were less entrenched and personal identities more flexible, which is to say from the Young Turk revolution in 1908 to the final establishment of the Greek-Albanian border in 1925. This paper will explore the physical and mental trajectories of a population subject to pressure, retaliation, assimilation, and wartime displacement, as well as the compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey implemented in 1923. In doing so, this paper will underscore the means and tools promoted by the interested parties to ensure their success, including through a third one such as Italy, which played a major role in fostering the rise of Albanian nationalism during its military occupation of Epirus. Three sharply delineated periods (the Young Turk regime, the Balkans and World War I, the aftermath of World War I) will be used to highlight the profound and enduring changes that occurred in less than a generation in this sensitive border region, leaving the Chams with no alternative but to choose between new loyalties.

1 Chams under the Young Turk Regime (1908–12)

At the end of the Ottoman Empire, this Albanian-speaking Muslim population was characterized by a number of important features. First, as an almost entirely Sunni community, it was fairly well integrated in the Ottoman state. Second, unlike the Christian population of Epirus, the Chams were a mainly sedentary group reluctant to move abroad, even for the short term. Most of their movements took place within the borders of the state, and more specifically within their own region. Third, they were known for traditionally providing the empire with many soldiers. For all of those reasons, Chams were perceived at the time as being truly loyal to the empire.

Moreover, on many occasions they had the opportunity to express their loyalty by defending the Ottoman state's territorial integrity against Greek expansionism, which put it at risk. During the Great Eastern Crisis, they opposed Greek claims on Epirus, as well as plans to establish new northern borders for Greece as far as the Kalamas River, as it would have split Chameria in two. They were strongly backed by Ottoman authorities, who relied on Albanian notables to stir up fierce resistance against Greece. One of them, Abedin Pasha Dino, was also appointed as the Ottoman commissioner for the delineation of

Epirus's borders in 1879, just before being appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs from June to September 1880, when bilateral negotiations with Greece were at their peak. The year before the Balkan wars broke out, dozens of people were recruited as volunteers in July 1911 to protect the southern border near the Arta region. Furthermore, unlike what happened in the others *kazas* of Ioannina Vilayet, the reservists from Chameria readily complied with the sixth week of mobilization that was declared in August for that purpose.

Furthermore, at this time the Chams were globally less imbued by national ideas than other Albanian Muslim communities, especially heterodox ones such as the Bektachis and Halvetis among others, who were rather scarce in this part of Epirus. This does not mean that they did not sense a kind of Albanian identity or regionalism, but that its connection to a sense of nationality was very weak. Abedin Pasha Dino was part of the Prizren League steering group, while some other notables such as Sylejman bey Dino, Mustafa bey Janina, and Qazim bey Preveza took part in its southern branch. This league was tolerated and even fostered by Ottoman authorities at the time of the Eastern Crisis, before being contained and repressed when it gave rise to nascent autonomist feelings within the Albanian community, which proved counterproductive. The growing opposition between Greek nationalism and the Ottoman state since the Eastern Crisis is key to understanding the emergence and dissemination of Albanian national ideals in the Cham community. With the aim of countering the spread of Hellenism, Ottoman authorities first settled Muslim refugees in the southern part of Ioannina Vilayet, near the border with Greece. At the beginning of the Young Turk regime, they took important measures to accentuate differences between Muslim Albanians and Christian Greeks.³ In 1909, an administrative reform established a new *kaza* in Janina Vilayet that included most of the Cham community, which had previously been divided among those of Margariti (Preveza), Filat and Paramithia (Ioannina).⁴ That same year, the Ottoman state allowed, for a short period of time, the presence of an Albanian press,⁵ as well as the opening of Albanian cultural societies ('*Bashkim'i*') and schools. Lastly, they did not object to the formation of Albanian Muslim irregular bands, a decision taken in February 1909 during a meeting that took place in the well-known village of Frashëri, in modern-day Southern Albania, which was attended by Cham leaders such as Musa Demi and Muharrem Rushiti. However, as was the case during the Eastern Crisis,

3 Nathalie Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), 668–69.

4 This sandjak was called 'Çamlık' (that is to say Chameria).

5 The newspaper *Zgjim'i Shqipërisë* [Albania's awakening] was published in Ioannina between 1909 and 1911.

this strategy proved dangerous for the Ottomans. The engagement of a growing part of Cham leaders increasingly included national claims. The conflict of loyalties stood out clearly in the Gërçe memorandum issued by Chams delegates from Filat, who met in Cepo monastery in July 1911. Released the previous month after the great Albanian revolt, this memorandum demanded recognition of an autonomous Albanian province within the empire. This trend towards autonomist aspirations also led to sporadic clashes between Albanian bands and regular Ottoman troops.

2 Chams in Wartime (1913–18)

During the Balkan Wars, the embedding of Epirus within the Greek state gave rise to fierce fighting and atrocities. The main slaughter occurred near Skupitza on 24 March 1913, at a moment when the Greek conquest was almost complete.⁶ On that day seventy-five Cham notables who had gathered to pledge allegiance to the newly established Greek authorities were murdered in Seljani by the Cretan *çetas* of Deligiannakis and Spiros Fotis (with the assent and support of the Greek captain Dimitriades), who were supposed to escort them to the town of Paramithia. A few months later, in January 1914, Fuat bey Pronio and Suhi bey Dino (the nephew of Ahmet bey Dino, a great landowner married to a female relative of soon-to-be Grand Vizier Talaat Pasha), were also murdered by the Greek gendarmerie. According to the Italian point of view, the killings of Cham elites were meant to end their influence and counter the dissemination of an Albanian ideology among a largely uneducated population.⁷ These practices continued during World War I, albeit on a smaller scale,⁸ with many villages being burned down and shattered, mainly in Filat and Paramithia Kazas (unlike those in Margariti).⁹

These punitive measures went along with the setting up of a drastic legal order. First, the adoption of a banditry bill enabled Greek authorities to catch and exile all of the family members of bandits, and to seize their assets.¹⁰ They also took more severe retaliatory action against families of Chams collaborating with the Italians in Albania, and freedom of movement was strongly restricted

6 Lambros Baltiotis, "The Muslim Chams of Northwestern Greece," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 12 (2011), 5.

7 Archivio Storico diplomatico dell Ministero degli Affari Esteri (hereafter cited as ASDMAE), Archivio di Gabinetto 1915–18 (hereafter cited as AG), Centro informazioni Parga a Capo Ufficio Politico Militare, Ioannina, 3 Sept. 1917, no. 128.

8 In December 1916, murders and exactions were noted in Mazrek and Gradisht villages.

9 Gardiki, Dragumi, Petronitza, Minina, and Janjar.

10 ASDMAE/AG, D495, Consolato Generale d'Italia in Ioannina, 18 Apr. 1918, no. 593/7.

and scrutinized. More broadly speaking, a subordinate status applied to all of the regions annexed after the Balkan Wars, which were modestly referred to as 'New Territories.' Although Article 6 of the Treaty of Athens signed in mid-November 1913 between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Greece formally recognized land property rights by virtue of Ottoman title deeds or laws at the time of annexation, in practice significant restrictions were imposed on them, for instance on the lease or sale of land. Apart from a few rare exemptions, the last ones were prohibited from 1913 to 1920, while the occupation of abandoned lands was allowed as early as 1914. Moreover, an extremely constraining tax system applied notably to the large estates in the hands of a few Muslim landowners, and massive grain requisitions occurred in 1917 to circumvent the Greek coastal maritime blockade, leading to starvation that caused dozens of deaths.

According to a report from the Italian general commissioner in Ioannina, from July 1917 onward the Greek occupation of Epirus drove more than three thousand Muslim Chams to seek refuge in other parts of the empire, mostly in Istanbul, Thrace, and Asia Minor. A migration flow from the Filat area to the United States emerged at the beginning of World War I. Notwithstanding this trend, the Cham population endeavored to mobilize itself politically. For instance in February 1914, the Muslim population of Voshtina pleaded with Italy to pursue border corrections in order to avoid being annexed by Greece. This mobilization reacted to the protest of the National Defence Committee of Paramithia, which acting on behalf of the entire population of the town and region – regardless of religion – opposed the allotment of this 'Hellenic' region to Albania on 24 November 1913.¹¹ It is interesting that some Muslims, such as Hafuz Mustafa (the *mufti* of Paramithia) or Aqif bey Dino, took part in this Committee.

In March 1917, Ahmed bey Dino notified the French ambassador to the Serbian government in Corfu about the dramatic situation of Chams in the Filat and Margariti districts as a result of the grain requisitions made by Greek authorities at the expense of the Albanians. In his letter, he argued that a distinction should be made between them and the others, given that the blockade against Greece would not impact them in the same way.¹² These requests became more frequent during the short Italian occupation of Epirus in the summer of 1917.

11 Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères (hereafter cited as AMAE), Albanie D5, Télégramme du Comité de Défense nationale de Paramithia à Ministère des Affaires étrangères, 9 Dec. 1913, no. 284/8.

12 AMAE, Ahmed Dino à Auguste Boppe, 6 Mar. 1917, Légation de France en Serbie, no. 44.

On 28 July 1917, the Italian general commissioner in Ioannina received a delegation of Chams led by Mazhar bey Dino. They stressed that while the Ottoman Empire had left them in a state of backwardness for five hundred years, depriving them of schools, the worst suffering came under the Greek rule. Two days before, the Chams representatives from Ioannina Vilayet had pledged allegiance to the newly established Italian authorities, thanking them for treating all religions on equal terms, respecting their customs, and ensuring their safety as well as that of their property and shops.¹³

At the same time, in June 1917 Venizelist authorities criticized the replacement of Hellenic authorities by Muslim Albanians. This comment seems quite biased if we rely on the documentation. The eight members of the administrative board put in place by the Italians actually included only two Muslims (that is to say as many as the Jews) versus four Greeks (three royalists and one Venizelist).¹⁴ This discrepancy between the two Greek political factions may be the real root of the grievances of the Venizelists. However, it is true that the Italian occupation of Southern Epirus triggered a rebalancing of the situation that was favorable to the Chams. As demonstrated by the complaint of the Greek Legation in Paris regarding a public meeting in Filat on 28 July 1917, at which Muslim speakers insulted Greece, its representatives saw this as hidden proof of hostility towards them. Apart from these knee-jerk reactions, there were also underlying reasons that raised concerns, such as the actions undertaken by the delegates of the Muslim communities of Margariti and Paramithia districts, who requested a boundary revision to the benefit of Albania.¹⁵ Considering that at the time Italy was occupying the southwestern part of the country, adjacent to Chameria, we can imagine that Rome tacitly nurtured such initiatives.

Furthermore, the Italian authorities tried to instill a broader sense of albanity among the Muslim population. For that purpose, they recommended that pupils should be taught in their mother tongue, whether they were part of the majority community or not. Even if this decision was adopted too late to be implemented,¹⁶ the Italian government put in place other strategies to retain Chams. First, it offered scholarships for students eager to pursue post-secondary

13 Colonna di Cesaro, *L'Italia nell'Albania meridionale* (Foligno: F. Campitelli, 1922), 176–77.

14 AMAE, Vice-Consul de France à Ioannina à Ministre des Affaires étrangères, 1 July 1917, no. 37.

15 AMAE, Vice-Consul de France à Ioannina à Ministre des Affaires étrangères, 27 July 1917, no. 98.

16 Cesaro, *L'Italia*, 146–47.

studies in Italy.¹⁷ Secondly, it agreed to enlist numerous Chams in the Italian army and, more broadly, in the Albanian militia units serving alongside the Italian army in Albania.

Italy's backing of the Chams proved disastrous when the Conference of Paris ordered the country to return southern Epirus to Greece in August 1917. In the beginning of September, Italian authorities estimated that up to ten thousand people were likely to flee abroad, especially to the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸ In mid-September 1917, hundreds of them chose to flee to Albania, finding shelter in the Konispol area to avoid retaliation or conscription. These fears proved valid when Greek military units, supported by some irregulars and gendarmes, sent troops to villages that were allegedly sheltering refugees.¹⁹ Furthermore, the Italians disclosed many exactions such as cattle theft, expropriation, racketeering, bullying, abuse, and murder. Many of them were perpetrated by Christians against Chams in the Margariti and Paramithia districts, between the departure of the Italian administration, staggered between 5 and 9 September, and the arrival of Greek authorities on 12 September. Most of the subsequent exactions happened in the district of Filat, where Greek nationalists were protected by local authorities.

To calm the resentment of the Greeks, the Italians assured them that the people planning to leave for Albania did not intend to burn the property of Christians, and that they would protect it until the arrival of Greek troops.²⁰ On the other hand, Cham notables asked the Italian administration in Albania to honor its promises to protect their lives, honor, and goods against bands of irregulars.²¹ Others requested that the Italians conclude an agreement with Greece providing for financial compensations for their movable and immovable property, in the event of their resettlement in southern Albania. Lastly, some of them asked for an Italian protectorate, and once again demanded a revision that would have left them within Albanian boundaries.²² The unclear

17 Request made by Hysejn pasha Dino (from Preveza) to the Italian Consul in Corfu, for his son Nebil, at the International Institute of Torino (23 Sept. 1916).

18 ASDMAE/AG, Centro informazioni Parga a Capo Ufficio Politico Militare, Ioannina, 3 Sept. 1917, no. 128.

19 Armed bands of Kolovos, Jorgulakis and Cangiaras (ASDMAE/AG, Ufficio Politico Militare del XVI Corpo d'Armata, 14 Dec. 1917, no. 3626).

20 ASDMAE/AG, Comando Sottozona Zagori-Pindo à Commissaire du gouvernement hellénique en Epire, Ioannina, 6 Sept. 1917, no. 165.

21 ASDMAE/AG, Letter from Cham notables displaced in Corfu to General Ferrero, 8 Sept. 1917.

22 AMAE, Légation de la République française près le gouvernement albanais, 6 Sept. 1917, no. 32.

situation on the field drove General Ferrero to put the Italian military withdrawal on hold until Greek troops arrived.²³

All of the precautions taken by the Italians to lessen the risk of retaliation did not prevent the emergence of undeniable bitterness toward them. Those Chams who chose to go back home after temporarily following the withdrawal accused the Italians of placing them in an awkward situation with the Greeks. Meanwhile, the returned Venizelist authorities tried to approach these people by asserting that protecting minorities was one of their priorities.²⁴

This ambivalent situation continued for months, at least until the spring of 1918, when Greek authorities decided to soften their policy. This new approach strengthened with the end of the conflict. At this time, they started to take care of the Chams, as Athens wanted to connect with Rome, undermine the basis for Albanian complaints before the Paris Peace Conference, and show the Muslims of Northern Epirus that they had nothing to worry about with regard to its allotment to Greece. However, in the meantime the Italo-Greek rivalry in Epirus led Venizelists to apprehend Musa Demi and other notables opposing the mobilization, as was the case in Filat with support from the Italian officer acting there as consular agent.²⁵ From time to time they also caught family members of the Chams serving in militia units, leading Italian officials to canvas their Greek counterparts to release these people.²⁶ It is striking that both Greeks and Italians strove to politicize every issue, sometimes finding a local echo. Regarding the blood feuds still present in the region, a growing number of them were earmarked as politically motivated. For instance, the Italians were convinced that the murder of Mete Duçe and five of his fellows, on the Albanian side on 13 April 1918 by the *çeta* of Vasilis Kolovos (in retaliation for his own brother's murder the previous year), was performed with the blessing of the Filat deputy prefect and the chief of the police station.²⁷ On the contrary, the Greek side disclaimed any political dimension, arguing that such blood feuds did not specifically target Muslims or Italy, and that they had no irredentist connotation. Nevertheless, the Governor General of Epirus, Aristeidis Sterghiadis, deemed it appropriate to remove this *çeta* in early May, an act interpreted by the Italian Consul in Ioannina as proof that the Greek government

23 ASDMAE/AG, Comando Sottozona Zagori-Pindo à Commissaire du gouvernement hellénique en Epire, Ioannina, 8 Sept. 1917, no. 173.

24 AMAE, Vice-Consul de France à Ioannina à Ministre de France en Grèce, 3 Oct. 1917, no. 2.

25 AMAE, Vice-Consul de France à Ioannina à Ministre des Affaires étrangères, 22 Feb. 1918, no. 15.

26 ASDMAE/AG, D495, Consolato Generale d'Italia in Ioannina, 18 Apr. 1918, no. 593/71.

27 Ibid.

had no intention of catching it, regardless of what it said.²⁸ In any case, the collusion between public authorities, brigands and paramilitaries will practically reach an institutionalized level after the war, as the latests could perform sensitive tasks the state was officially unwilling or unable to undertake in order to change the ethnological make-up of the region for security purpose.²⁹

3 The Aftermath of World War I (1918–25)

After the return of Southern Epirus to Greece, the government decided to enforce the new agrarian law (authorizing sequestration and state management of their assets) against those who, in accordance with Article 4 of the Treaty of Athens, signed on 13 November 1913 (governing relations between the Ottoman state and Greece at the end of the Balkan Wars) had chosen Ottoman citizenship but were unable to leave the country owing to the outbreak of World War I. Nevertheless, the softening of Greek policy in mid-1918 led authorities to compel the Christian villagers to pay rent and taxes to the Muslims landowners, for the first time since the Ottoman Empire withdrew from Chameria.³⁰

In September 1923, Albanian authorities questioned whether some measures concerning the Turks within the framework of the Treaty of Lausanne should also apply to Chams, in particular those relating to asset forfeiture for the benefit of Greeks from Asia Minor; their settlement in their houses; crop requisitioning; and a prohibition to sell or rent real property. Moreover, they complained about the new agrarian law, which stipulated that the price of expropriated real property should be set on the basis of its value in drachme before the war, a strongly depreciated currency. The Albanian government asked for an independent authority (like the one established by the Treaty of Lausanne) to appraise the value of the assets on the grounds of a sound currency.³¹

Moreover, until the signing of the Protocol of Florence on 27 January 1925, the Albanian-Greek border was not delineated, and remained contested by both parties. Since the French and Italian armies left Albanian territory, respectively in June and August 1920, Greece occupied fifteen villages attributed to this

28 ASDMAE/AG, D495, Consolato Generale d'Italia in Ioannina, 6 May 1918, no. 694/81.

29 Spyros Tsoutsoumbis, "Land of the Kapedani: Brigandage, Paramilitarism and Nation-building in 20th Century Greece," *Balkan Studies* 51 (2016).

30 Forthcoming: Carnet Hypothèses "Consoli."

31 AMAE, Grèce 88, Délégation albanaise à la 4ème Assemblée de la SDN, 24 Sept. 1924, 119–21.

country,³² at the junction of the borders of Epirus and Macedonia, in addition to a few more villages in Northern Chameria.³³ The former ones were eventually returned to Albania on 30 October 1924.

The fierce political fighting over the Greek-Albanian border led Albanian authorities to revive their plea in favor of a Greater Albania – a project that was at the core of the Albanian national movement – rather than simply call for the recovery of the 1913 borders recognized by the London Conference. In a letter sent to the Italian delegate at the Peace Conference, the Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs declared solemnly ‘If the Paris Conference applies the principles of justice and self-determination, Chameria and Kosovo shall, undoubtedly, come back to us, even partly. The boundaries defined by the London and Florence Conferences constitute our lowest territorial claims.’³⁴

At the same time, the Cham issue obviously mobilized the Cham diaspora as well as a broader part of the Albanian spectrum. The *Çamëria* society, established in Worcester in early 1918, sent many wires and memoranda to the Peace Conference requesting that Chameria be attached to Albania.³⁵ In a similar vein, this society asked Italy to intervene with the Peace Conference to reconsider the London Treaty’s unfair decision to surrender this territory to Greece. Cham claims were endorsed by political elites, and were sometimes channeled through Cham representatives, who were indeed over-represented in the Albanian National Party (the first party created in the diaspora), which was established in Worcester in August 1917 by Kristo Dako. Its programme called for defending the territorial integrity of an ethnic Albania, and the party proved highly engaged in Albanian affairs since its creation. For instance in November 1917, during a rally in this city, Sevasti Qirjazi criticized the decision made by the Paris Conference in August to allow the reoccupation of Chameria by Greek troops, given that the region ‘has always been part of Albania, and its inhabitants are Albanians in custom, language, and feeling.’³⁶

32 These villages were related to the former Neutral Zone put in place by the French army in February 1917 to avoid contact between the Greek administration and the Albanian autonomist regime backed by them in southeastern Albania (with Korça as its main town).

33 Janjari, Perdika and Kakavija, as shown by the demarcation work in late 1923.

34 “Letter of Turhan Pacha to A. De Martino, the Italian delegate at the Peace Conference, 28 May 1919,” in Arben Puto, *Cështja shqiptare në aktet ndërkombëtare pas luftës I botërore (1919–1926)* [The Albanian Issue in the International Acts After the First World War] (Tirana: Albin, 2001).

35 Fatmira Rama, “Çamëria në vitet 1912–40,” in *Epiri I jugut, Çamëria* [Southern Epirus, Chameria] (Tirana: UET Press, 2014), 271–74.

36 The letter was sent to the French ambassador to the United States on 11 Nov. 1917.

This political assertion is in keeping with the identity debates that characterize national narratives. A memorandum sent to the Great Powers in 1919 by an important part of the Cham population – according to its initiator³⁷ – developed a rationale for establishing Albanian mores for the region. Firstly, it affirmed that the Chams were Albanian by race, language, and tradition, and that the small portion of the population that had converted to Orthodoxy retained all of these features, speaking only Albanian between them. Furthermore, it believed that while the harshness of Ottoman rule combined with the population's ignorance had temporarily led to national consciousness and feelings of oblivion, the prospect of a dismantling at the time of the Eastern Crisis rekindled them once again. Since then, all efforts converged on the granting of autonomy, a goal achieved with the creation of a specific *sanjak* by the Young Turks. Thirdly, not only did the dream of joining Albania vanish with the London decisions ending the Balkan Wars, but Greek authorities did not honor their commitment to respect property, the Albanian language, equality between religions and nationalities, and Ottoman laws, as had been agreed. On the contrary, the population coped with discrimination, with notables being imprisoned or compelled to go into exile, and their assets seized. Along the same lines, the Albanian government supported the idea that the Greek and Albanian populations were completely separate. During the session on 27 February 1919, Mehmet Konica, one of the Albanian delegates at the Peace Conference, argued that: 'In Chameria, there are a majority of Albanians, and not only Albanians but Muslim Albanians, which makes them averse to Greek national feelings. Out of a population of 60,000 inhabitants, there are approximately 40,000 Muslims, compared to 14,000 Orthodox Albanians and 6,000 Greeks.'³⁸

The politicization of the debate had consequences in Albania. The first post-war government did not question the sub-prefecture of Chameria created a few months earlier by the Italian occupation, in an effort to fuel Albanian irredentism in Epirus. On June 3, 1920, the Vlorë national defence committee even sent an ultimatum to the commander of the Italian troops in that city, requesting that authority over Chameria be handed over to the Tirana government, as was previously the case for the Tepelena and Vlorë regions. Secondly, Chams became even more engaged in Albanian internal affairs. For instance, Aziz

37 Mazhar bey Dino, Kasim Rusi and Çamis, the primary Commission members who organized the petition, claimed to have gathered signatures from 4,900 heads of household, ASDMAE/AG, D545.

38 Puto, *Cështja shqiptare*, 169.

Çami (a native of Filat) fought among the ranks of the Albanian gendarmerie to free Vlorë from Italian occupation, while the famous irregular Muharem Rushiti (a native of Koskë), who fought actively in the Filat area against the Young Turks as well as the Greeks, found definitive refuge in Sarandë in 1920. Qamil Izet Çami, a former elementary school director who graduated from the famous Zosimea gymnasium in Ioannina, and who had been displaced to the town of Berat, asked the Albanian ministry of education for a position.³⁹ The progressive settlement of Chams in southern Albania also led them to organize cultural societies, such as the '*Vëllazëria çame*'⁴⁰ association founded in Konispol on 24 July 1920.

This continuous trend led the Albanian state to offer even more support for Cham claims, especially in the international arena. In the early 1920s, the Cham issue was usually discussed in terms of the recognition and protection of minority rights. In his speech to the League of Nations on 25 June 1921, Fan Noli stated that the Chams were not allowed to have a single school teaching in Albanian, whereas the Greek minority in Albania had numerous ones at its disposal. The following month, on 11 July, he reported to the League the exactions to which the Cham population had been subjected. Later, on 2 October 1921, Albania asked the Council of the League for equal rights for the Greek and Albanian minorities in both states. This early request relied on the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, which was signed on 10 August 1920, but not ratified at that time. Athens refused to do so, alleging that it would compel Greece to grant equivalent rights to Slavic and Turkish minorities. After a few years, this open issue would take an unexpected turn within the framework of the Treaty of Lausanne.

Even though Article 2 of the Convention concerning the Exchange of the Greek and Turkish Populations, signed in Lausanne on 30 January 1923, mentioned only the 'Greek inhabitants of Constantinople' and 'the Moslim population of Western Thrace' (who enjoyed a derogatory regime excepting them from the general principle specified in Article 1 that applied to 'Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory'), the Cham had been an underlying issue since the beginning. This is demonstrated by the statement made on 19 January 1923 by Dimitrios Caclamano, the Greek delegate at the Lausanne Conference: 'Greece does not intend to proceed with the exchange of the Muslims of Albanian origin. The Albanians live in a well-defined region: Epirus. If they share the same religion with the Turks,

39 Mehmet Kaso, *Arsimi në Sarandë, Delvinë e Konispol (1920–1944)* [Education in Saranda, Delvina and Konispol] (Tirana: Geer, 2003), 23.

40 The "Cham brotherhood."

they don't have the same homeland.'⁴¹ The Turkish and Italian delegates were apparently of the same mind. Eleftherios Vénizélos, the Greek Prime Minister, confirmed this official position in a letter addressed to the League of Nations on 6 August 1923, two weeks after the Treaty of Lausanne was signed, stating that Greek citizens of Albanian race would not be considered Turks as part of the compulsory exchange.⁴²

That summer Greece requested the establishment of an international commission in charge of verifying the 'true origin' of those concerned. This issue had already been addressed during World War I through the conscription and mobilization of the populations from the disputed areas. Applying the principles of the Treaty of Athens, the authorities considered that only persons from southern Albania established in Greece after the signing of the Protocol of Florence⁴³ could be exempted from military service. On the other hand, the Consul of Italy in Ioannina felt that the criterion of place of residence could not prevail over that of origin. He believed that the population concerned should at least have the ability to choose among the different options.⁴⁴

This criterion of the 'true origin' being far from clear, Albanian authorities soon suspected their Greek counterparts of plans to limit the restrictions to people born on current Albanian territory.⁴⁵ The Council of the League of Nations first discussed this issue on 17 December 1923, when it brought to the Commission's attention the specific case of the inhabitants of Albanian origin. The latter decided in March 1924 to exclude from the compulsory exchange 'Greek citizens of Islamic faith and Albanian origin notably settled in Epirus.'⁴⁶ A sub-committee was set up the same month to 'collect in situ some elements that will help determine which are the people falling into this category.' Comprised of one Swedish diplomat and two Greek and Turkish delegates (both of whom spoke Albanian), this sub-committee conducted a one-month investigation during the spring of 1924. The survey encompassed the Muslims who settled in Greece long ago in Epirus, as well as those established more occasionally and recently in Macedonia. The meetings were organized either

41 Eleftheria K. Manta, "The Çams of Albania and the Greek State (1923–1945)," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 29 (2009), 4.

42 AMAE, Grèce 88, Lettre de Vénizélos au Secrétaire général de la SDN, 6 Aug. 1923, 122.

43 Signed on 17 Dec. 1913, the Protocol of Florence allotted the northern part of Epirus to Albania.

44 D685, Consolate generale d'Italia in Ioannina a Legazione d'Italia in Atene, 18 Oct. 1918, no. 1956/170.

45 AMAE, Grèce 88, Consul général d'Albanie en Suisse à SDN, Genève, 5 Dec. 1923, no. 396, 13–14.

46 AMAE, Société des Nations, Echange des populations grecques et turques, Musulmans d'origine albanaise en Grèce. Mémoire du Secrétaire général, 2 Sept. 1924, C.431.1924.I.

by Hellenic authorities or the local *muftis* and *muhtars*. The Albanian authorities could present individuals they believed should be heard. In its 2 June 1924 report, the sub-committee came to the conclusion that: 'The great majority of these populations, who expressed themselves freely and without pressure, without hesitation declared themselves being of Turkish origin, and expressed the wish to be part of the population exchange.'⁴⁷

Nonetheless, it also recognized that it was almost impossible to fix an intangible criterion, and recommended proceeding on a case-by-case basis. Considering that Pelasgic origin cannot be taken into account, as it could apply to the whole Epirotic population, the sub-committee recommended giving priority to the origin of an 'Albanian land.' Secondly, it deemed that requests to be excluded from the compulsory exchange should be clearly expressed, given that compliance with the treat was the rule, and exemptions should applied in a restrictive manner. It also noted the difficulty of taking the criterion of language into consideration, due to the spread of multilingualism. Habits and customs presented the same shortcomings, as they presented common features within the local Muslim and perhaps Christian populations. Reviewing this report in its 12 June 1924 plenary session, the Commission enacted the criteria that had to be taken into account when studying the Albanian origin of the populations. Place of origin, language, and national consciousness (if clearly expressed) were the main features listed.⁴⁸

The Albanian delegation believed that the word 'Muslim' employed by the Treaty of Lausanne could not refer to the Turks, as it is related to religion rather than race.⁴⁹ On 29 July 1924, the Albanian government sent a telegram to the secretary general of the League of Nations stating that the configuration of native ethnic Albanians in Chameria required a survey in order to establish its origin.⁵⁰ However, if deemed necessary, language should be the only criterion taken into account. The will of the population should not prevail, given that the exemption allowed by the law should not be understood in a restrictive way, and because the population was not truly free to express itself on account of pressure and abuse. Moreover, Albanian authorities questioned the sub-commission's neutrality, asking for the appointment of an Albanian

47 AMAE, Grèce 88, Rapport général de la délégation de la Commission mixte chargée de l'étude de la question albanaise, 2 June 1924, 179–83.

48 AMAE, Grèce 88, Lettre du Président de la Commission mixte au Secrétaire général de la SDN, Athènes, 19 June 1924, 176–78.

49 AMAE, Grèce 88, Délégation albanaise à la 4ème Assemblée de la SDN, 24 Sept. 1924, 116–17.

50 AMAE, Albanie D45, Gouvernement albanais à Secrétaire général de la SDN, Tirana, 29 July 1924, 27.

interpreter, and whether the Turkish language was truly a mother tongue. In its session held on 13 December 1924, the Council of the League of Nation endorsed the recommendation to appoint a figure of Albanian origin, preferably of Greek citizenship, to each sub-commission. At the same time, Albanian authorities kept reporting methods used by their Greek counterparts to affect the results, such as police pressure, internment, falsified declarations, the screening of notables met by the sub-commission, and the interest of Muslim dignitaries in promoting emigration towards Turkey. However, in August 1924 the Commission asserted before the League of Nation that no cases involving pressure had been demonstrated after review of specific cases mentioned by the Albanian government in the villages of Voshtina and Krisodhol (in Pogon district).⁵¹ At the same time, the latter expressed its intention to link the treatment of mutual minorities in both states, for instance by threatening to settle refugees in the homes of the Greek minority.

In its detailed letter sent to the League of Nations dated December 9, 1924,⁵² the Greek government rejected language as a decisive criterion, pointing out that a sizeable Albanian-speaking population lived throughout Greek territory and southern Italy, despite the fact that Greek was the only language used in daily life and trade. Greek authorities felt that national consciousness and personal will were the only clear proof of nationality. However, implementation of this principle does not appear to have been linear in the preceding years. Indeed, until the spring of 1918, authorities incorporated into the army people who had opted for Ottoman nationality in 1913.⁵³ Once the conflict was over, documents certifying Ottoman citizenship were even issued to the young Chams to exempt them from military service.⁵⁴ Greek authorities dismissed Albanian criticisms, touching on intra-Albanian rivalries in order to affect people's declarations. According to them, only people who committed criminal offences punished by law were subject to repression. Greek authorities nevertheless recognized that abuses had been exerted on the Muslim population, but they asserted that this was due to the weakness of the Greek state at the time of the resettlement of refugees from Asia Minor. Furthermore, they asserted that Greek populations would also suffer abuse at the hands of irregular troops.

51 AMAE, Grèce 88, Président de la Commission mixte à Société des Nations, Genève, 27 Aug. 1924, C.429.1924.L, 185–86.

52 AMAE, Grèce 89, Lettre du gouvernement hellénique au Secrétaire général de la SDN, Musulmans d'origine albanaise en Grèce, Genève, 5 Dec. 1924, 189–208.

53 One third of the Muslims may potentially have been in this situation. Consolate generale d'Italia in Ioannina à MAE, 8 May 1918, no. 708/82.

54 Consolate generale d'Italia in Ioannina à MAE, 29 Mar. 1919, no. 634/73.

In support of its position, the Greek government mentioned the neutrality of the Turkish delegate, as Ankara had no interest in hosting populations on its territory that were not Turks. In fact, in August 1924 the Commission and Turkish authorities refused to exclude Orthodox Christian Albanians established in Turkey from the compulsory exchange.⁵⁵ The same year, hundreds of Muslims included in the exchange were sent back to Albania.

This was notably the case in June 1924, when families from Vinani who were sent into exile in the Dardanelles asked for their repatriation to their village. Such requests can also be found in the village of Vishishta, and it appears that some families upon arrival in Istanbul called on the Albanian Consulate for their repatriation to Albania proper. At the end of August, the Prefect of Korça reported expropriation measures in the Albanian-speaking villages close to the Albanian border. The same month, Greece asserted that there was no need to put pressure on the population, as such departures were also registered in some villages attributed to Albania.

The Albanian authorities reacted in different ways, firstly by punishing the notables who incited the villagers to move abroad,⁵⁶ and secondly by trying to extend the enforcement of the derogatory system to the Albanian-speaking villages of Greek Macedonia (twenty-five, according to them). While some families sought refuge in Albania to escape the compulsory exchange, the Albanian delegate for the Neutral Zone (occupied by Greece as of the departure of the French troops in May 1920 until its retrocession to Albania on 30 October 1924) decided in November 1924 to establish a commission to conduct investigations in the Kastoria region.⁵⁷ The Greek and Turkish delegates refused to do so, arguing that only persons born within the borders of Albania should be banned from the exchange.

Beyond this official position, Greece did not hesitate to remove part of the Albanian Muslim population living in the former Neutral Zone. On 1 March 1924, before the Conference of Ambassadors, the Albanian government dismissed the right of Greece to change the demographic balance in an area attributed to Albania, namely by replacing natives with refugees from Asia Minor.⁵⁸ As a result, on 12 June the Conference ordered the boundary commission to

55 AMAE, Albanie D45, 41.

56 Coming from Shag (in Greece) and settled in Bozhigrad (in Albania), Neim Hoxha was interned after been accused by the Prefect of Korça of being paid by the Greeks. Arkivi Qëndror Shtetëror (hereafter cited as AQSh), F317, v, 1924, D82, 67.

57 AQSh, F317, v, 1924, D76, Prefektura e Korçës Ministrisë së Mbrendshme, Telegram No. 660, 28 Nov. 1924, 17.

58 AMAE, Grèce 88, Légation d'Albanie en France à Président de la Conférence des Ambassadeurs, 1 Mar. 1924, no. XA 66, 136.

investigate the exchange issue in the region of Korça. It prompted the latter to ask Greek authorities in Thessaloniki in November 1924 not to board 220 villagers from Rakicka to Turkey, until an official from the Albanian government had checked their willingness.⁵⁹

Conclusion

While focusing primarily on the initial phase of the Cham issue (corresponding to the emergence and entrenchment of a question systematically described as consubstantial with the Greek-Albanian rivalry, and that still fuels a bilateral dispute today), we have tried to underline the factors and mechanisms that led to the growing nationalization of a Muslim population settled at the margins of the Ottoman Empire at a time when it had to leave northwestern Greece. All state actors – including Albania, Greece, Italy, and even Turkey – had an interest in promoting this trend. It is quite clear that they did not spare efforts to reach this objective, perceived as the only way to secure their politics and possessions in the long term, using a great variety of tools such as pressure, retaliation, measures of assimilation, and displacement, among others.

The brutality of the measures profoundly changed the local balance between initially non-national communities that had to choose between new loyalties, leading them to assimilate or move abroad, sometimes overseas. One way or another, they all had to give up their regional particularisms, moving to a simplified identity enforced by public authorities and the actors backed by them.

Nevertheless, we have clear indications that these dynamics were neither always successful nor unavoidable or irrevocable, not only because part of these populations rejected and resisted those developments, but also because of the antagonistic Greek and Albanian nationalisms offered them a combination of identity criteria, with which they could identify depending on the political context or their personal needs. Of course, if this process expanded in stunning fashion in less than twenty years, it was far from being complete when the Greek-Albanian border was finally established in 1925. Despite periods of calm, the Cham issue continued to generate tensions between both states during the interwar period, culminating in World War II and its aftermath, the Greek Civil War.

59 Commission internationale de délimitation des frontières de l'Albanie à Monsieur le Président de la Conférence des Ambassadeurs, Koritza, le 3 novembre 1924, no. 1736.

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‘Unreliable Muslims’ out and ‘Loyal Subjects of the Tsar’ in?: Two Different Forms of Migration Envisaged by the Russian Authorities in the Southwestern Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia in World War I

Ozan Arslan

1 Ottoman Belligerency against Russia: A Sideshow Offering Prospects of Expansion for the Romanov Empire in the Near East

When the Ottoman Empire eventually launched its own war against the Russian Empire on 29 October 1914 (almost three months after the secret alliance treaty with the German Empire¹) through the naval bombardment of Russia’s Black Sea ports and bases,² this aggression and the consequent extension of the ‘Great War’ into the Caucasus and Western Asia created little concern among decision-makers in Petrograd. Although Russia was not immediately seeking a heated and open conflict with the Ottoman Empire at that early stage of World War I, it readily accepted the war with confidence. On the day of the naval raid, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Sazonov, confidently declared to the French ambassador in Petrograd, Maurice Paléologue, that ‘not

1 For the alliance treaty see Ulrich Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire 1914–1918* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1968), 16; for the same treaty and all the ensuing wartime secret accords, protocols, and military conventions between the Ottoman and German Empires during WWI, see also Ozan Arslan, “Lyudi, Korabli i Oruzhiye dlya Sultana, Personel, Suda i Vooruzheniye, Postavlennyye Germaney Turetskoy Armii i Flout” [Men, Ships and Arms to the Sultan: German Military Mission and Transfer of Personnel, Vessels, and Weapons to the Ottoman Army and Navy], in *Porokh, Zoloto i Stal’, Voenno-tehnicheskoye sotrudnichestvo v gody Pervoy mirovoy voyny* [Gunpowder, Gold and Steel, Military-Technical Cooperation during the First World War], ed. Andrey Pavlov (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo RKHGA, 2018), 117–19.

2 See Ozan Arslan, “The Black Sea and the Great War, the Naval Forces and Operations of the Ottoman and Russian Empires,” *New Europe College Yearbook Europe Next to Europe Program 2014–2015* (2018), 193.

a man would be withdrawn from the German front,' and Russia was to 'keep at a minimum the forces required for defense against the Turkish fleet and army.'³

The French ambassador commented in his report to the Quai d'Orsay that the Imperial Russian government had received news of the Ottoman aggression without concern, adding to his cable that 'as for the Russian people, they seem to be very exalted by the prospect of finally realizing their Eastern dream.'⁴ On the very same day, Sazonov repeated to the British ambassador in Petrograd, George Buchanan, that 'no troops would be diverted from the German frontier and that Russia would remain on the defensive [against the Ottoman Empire]'. The Russian diplomat also 'remarked that the whole Eastern question would be opened by Turkey's action and that the question of the Straits would have to be finally settled.' Buchanan later cabled the Foreign Office to share his conviction that 'a large section of the Russian public welcomed war with Turkey for this reason, as it was feared that war with Austria and Germany would bring no solid advantages to Russia.'⁵ The conflict with the Porte was seen as a potentially glorious and ultimately beneficial war by several high-ranking members of the Russian administration, which at first involved mainly the 'Straits Region,' but later Eastern Anatolia as well. The Tsar himself was overconfident about victory, and in a prompt declaration promised his imperial subjects a new triumph against the 'Turkish horde,' the traditional 'enemy of Christianity and Slavdom,' a fatal blow to the Ottoman Empire to 'open up Russia's path towards the realization of the historic task of her ancestors along the shores of the Black Sea.'⁶

In similar fashion, the General Staff of the Imperial Russian Army (the *Stavka*) took victory over the Ottoman Empire for granted, and saw it as an eventual outcome – rather than an urgent task – of the Great War. In fact, prior to the outbreak of World War I, the *Stavka* had prepared three different war plans for the Caucasian Military District based on different scenarios. The

3 *Archives du Ministère français des Affaires étrangères (AMFAE), Correspondance politique et commerciale Guerre 1914–1918*, Vol. 847, Doc. No. 201, Paléologue to Delcassé, 29 Oct. 1914. See also Maurice Paléologue, *La Russie des Tsars pendant la Grande Guerre*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1921), 181–82.

4 *AMFAE, Correspondance politique et commerciale, Guerre 1914–1918*, Vol. 847, Doc. No. 201, Paléologue to Delcassé, 29 Oct. 1914.

5 *AMFAE, Correspondance politique et commerciale, Guerre 1914–1918*, Vol. 847, Doc. Nos. 212–13, Bertie [British Ambassador to France] to Delcassé [On the Report of Buchanan to London], 29 Oct. 1914.

6 For the full text of the Tsar's declaration of 2 Nov. 1914, see Evgeny Maslovsky, *Mirovaia voina na Kavkazskom fronte, 1914–1917 goda: Strategicheskii ocherk* [The World War on the Caucasian Front, 1914–1917: A Strategic Outline] (Paris: La Renaissance-Vozrozhdenie, 1933), 20–21. For a paraphrased version, see also Paléologue, *La Russie des Tsars*, Vol. 1, 182–83.

third and final war plan was for a non-simultaneous war against the Germanic Powers and the Ottoman Empire, pitting Russia first against the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires on its western frontier, before an eventual opening of hostilities in the Caucasus. Under such circumstances, which would become a reality by November 1914, the Caucasian Military District was bound to make an initial and rapid deployment of two of its corps to Russia's Western Front.⁷ The Caucasian Front was ostensibly not a priority in the war plans and objectives of the *Stavka*.⁸

Indeed, the governor general of the Caucasus Viceroyalty, Count Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov,⁹ offered a reminder – in late-November 1914 from Tbilisi, after the early battles of Köprüköy and Azap – to General Georgy Bergman, commander of 1 Caucasian Corps on the front, that with their understrength army, their duty was 'to constantly frustrate Turkish attempts to succeed until victory on the Western Front would give them the possibility to take decisive action' in the Caucasus.¹⁰

Even in the aftermath of the ill-fated Sarıkamış Offensive of the Ottoman III Army, the commander-in-chief of the Imperial Russian Army, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich, assured his French counterpart General Joseph Joffre on 15 January 1915 that the Russian forces in the Caucasus were 'down to a minimal level, in order not to weaken Russian armies in the principal theatre of the war.'¹¹ The victory at Sarıkamış was not followed up by the Russian Caucasian Army.¹² Contrary to the expectations of the German Imperial High Command, the *Stavka* did not transfer troops from Russia's Western Front to the Caucasus,

7 For Russian war plans concerning the Caucasus see Maslovsky, *Mirovaia*, 30–31, and Anton Kersnovsky, *Istoria Russkoi Armii* [History of the Russian Army], 2nd edition (first edition published in 4 Volumes in Belgrade between 1933 and 1938), (Moscow: Direkt-Media, 2014), 998.

8 Ahmet İzzet Furgaç, *Feryadım* [My Outcry] (a Turkish-language edition of *Denkwürdigkeiten des Marschalls İzzet Pascha: ein kritischer Beitrag zur Kriegsschuldfrage* [Memoirs of [Field] Marshal [Ahmed] İzzet Pasha: A Critical Contribution to the War-Guilt Question]), ed. Süheyl İzzet Furgaç, Vol. 1 (Istanbul: Nehir Yayınları, 1992), 200.

9 The viceroy (*namestnik* in Russian) Vorontsov-Dashkov was nominally also the commander-in-chief of the Russian Caucasian Army.

10 Vorontsov-Dashkov to Bergman, 28 Nov. 1914, Telegram No. 2809 cited in Maslovsky, *Mirovaia*, 72.

11 Maurice Larcher, *La Guerre turque dans la guerre mondiale* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1926), 82.

12 See [Ismail] Hafız Hakkı, *Hafız Hakkı Paşa'nın Sarıkamış Günlüğü* [Sarıkamış Diaries of Hafız Hakkı Pasha], ed. Murat Bardakçı, (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2014), 96, 101, and 106.

despite the Ottoman offensive.¹³ However, the overambitious Ottoman winter offensive risked triggering a large-scale expulsion of Russia's Muslim subjects from the Southwestern Caucasus by Russian authorities in 1915.

2 After the Ottoman Invasion of the Southwestern Caucasus: A Large-scale Forced Displacement of the Region's Muslim Population by Russia?

In the previous Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, the Ottoman Caucasian border prefectures (*sandjak* or *liva* in Ottoman Turkish) of Kars, Çıldır, and Batum were lost to the victorious Russian Empire. The 1878 annexation of the three Ottoman *sandjaks* by the Russian Empire also introduced a formal procedure allowing individuals in the annexed population to opt for the subjecthood of their choice.¹⁴ 'Article 7' of the Treaty of Constantinople of 1879 clarified the new *régime* of subjecthood in the three former Ottoman prefectures.¹⁵ The accord set a period of six months during which residents of the annexed territories were allowed to decide the country and subjecthood of their choice.¹⁶ Those residents opting to retain their Ottoman subjecthood were given three years after ratification of the treaty to sell their property in the annexed territories and emigrate to the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷ While the clause paved the way for

13 See the memoirs of the German chief of staff of Ottoman III Army, 1914–17: Felix Guse, "Büyük Harpte Kafkas Cephesindeki Muharebeler" [Battles on the Caucasian Front during the Great War], trans. from the German-language first edition *Der Kaukasusfront im Weltkrieg bis zum Frieden vom Brest* published in 1930 in *Askeri Mecmua* 79 (Supplementary Volume of History no. 20, 1931), 46. The *Stavka* still asked for quick British assistance in the war against the Porte, which soon culminated with the Gallipoli Campaign.

14 This procedure of choosing one's subjecthood/citizenship was fairly common in Europe during the long nineteenth century. See Beate Althammer, "Verfassungsstaat und bürgerliches Recht: Die Stellung von Fremden im Europa des langen 19. Jahrhunderts (1789–1914)" In *Fremd und rechtlos? Zugehörigkeitsrechte Fremder von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart. Ein Handbuch*, eds. Altay Coşkun and Lutz Raphael (Cologne: Böhlau, 2014), 301–330.

15 For the Treaty of Constantinople of 1879 see Nihat Erim, *Devletlerarası Hukuku ve Siyasî Tarih Metinleri, Cilt 1, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Andlaşmaları* [Texts of International Law and Diplomatic History, Vol. 1, Treaties of the Ottoman Empire] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1953), 425–27.

16 Eric Lohr, *Russian Citizenship: From Empire to Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2012), 39–40. The practice of granting residents of the newly annexed territories the option of retaining their prior subjecthood/citizenship and leaving the region by a set deadline had already been granted to residents of Alsace-Lorraine at the end of the Franco-Prussian War, under 'Article 2' of the Treaty of Frankfurt (see Lohr, *Russian Citizenship*, 40).

17 Candan Badem, *Çarlık Yönetiminde Kars, Ardahan, Artvin* [Kars, Ardahan and Artvin under Tsarist Administration] (Istanbul: Aras, 2018), 55.

the departure of a non-negligible part of the Muslim population of the three prefectures for Ottoman Asia Minor, a larger number of them remained and were naturalized as the Tsar's subjects by the early 1880s.

Upon the Russian Empire's entry into World War I, the initial stance of – former Ottoman subject – Russian Caucasian Muslims (Turks, Kurds, and Adjaras) towards Russia's war against the Central Powers varied between indifference and a limited display of patriotism through donations to the Russian Red Cross, and halfhearted offers to form volunteer cavalry squadrons for the Imperial Russian Army.¹⁸ As Muslims (and former Ottoman subjects) of the relatively recently conquered domains of the Romanov Empire, they were not seen as 'sufficiently reliable subjects' of the Tsar, and were therefore exempt from military service in the Imperial Russian Army, just like the other Muslim peoples (conquered prior to them) in the Russian Caucasus.¹⁹

However, after the Ottoman entry into World War I against the Russian Empire, unrest slowly grew among some Muslim communities on the border, culminating in a Muslim insurgency against the Russian administration in the Ardahan region in late November and December 1914, eventually supporting the ill-fated Sarikamış offensive.²⁰ In the first months of the Russo-Ottoman

18 Badem, *Çarlık Yönetiminde*, 424.

19 In the Russian Caucasus, Armenian and Georgian subjects of the Romanov tsars had been subject to military service in the Imperial Russian Army since 1886, while Muslim nationalities were not. See Gabriel Korganoff, *La participation des Arméniens à la guerre mondiale sur le front du Caucase* (Paris: Imprimerie Massis Editions, 1927), 9. Eventually, the only military unit consisting of Caucasian Muslims fighting in the Imperial Russian Army in World War I was the elite 'Caucasian Native Mounted Division' better known as the 'Savage Division.' This cavalry division consisted of volunteers (Chechens, Ingushs, Karachays, Circassians, Balkars, Daghestanis and Azeris) from the North and South Caucasus, and was deployed on Russia's western theatres of war between 1914 and 1917 (for the formation of the division see Naki Keykurun, *Azerbaycan İstiklâl Mücadelesinden Hatıralar, 1905–1920* [Memoirs of Azerbaijan's Struggle for Independence] (Ankara: İlke Kitabevi Yayınları, 1998), 43–45 and 46–49; and Joseph Pomiankowski, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Çöküşü, 1914–1918 1. Dünya Savaşı* [The Collapse of the Ottoman Empire, 1914–1918 World War I], trans. by Kemal Turan from the German-language first edition *Der Zusammenbruch des Osmanischen Reiches. Erinnerungen an die Türkei aus der Zeit des Weltkrieges*, published in 1928 (Istanbul: Kayihan Yayınları, 1990), 296).

20 See Badem, *Çarlık Yönetiminde*, 426–35. After World War I broke out in Europe and the Porte signed a secret alliance treaty with Germany in early August 1914, the Ottoman Empire began to dispatch agents to provoke the Muslim populations against the Russian administration within the Caucasus Viceroyalty and Russian-occupied Northwestern Persia, even before the official opening of hostilities between the Ottoman and Russian empires. See Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide, Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), 73–75, and Candan Badem, "The War at the Caucasus Front: A Matrix for Genocide," in *The End of*

clashes, including the ‘Sankamış Operation,’²¹ many of Russia’s Muslim subjects fought as paramilitaries on the side of the Ottoman regular and irregular forces. Ottoman and Russian Muslim irregular forces advancing into Adjara killed native and Russian Christians.²² When Russian troops returned to the region in January 1915, they marauded, looted, and raped in the Muslim villages around Ardahan, killing approximately 400 Muslims.²³ When Russian units recaptured the town of Ardahan, they burned the Muslim quarter, pillaged the market, and also killed Russia’s Muslim subjects residing there. The correspondent for the daily newspaper *The Manchester Guardian* from Allied Britain was appalled by the scope of the anti-Muslim violence perpetrated by Cossacks from Batumi to Artvin through the Çoruh valley.²⁴ The local Christian population in Kars also accused the native Muslims of collaboration with the Ottoman enemy, lynching suspects,²⁵ and looting and pillaging their property. Anti-Muslim violence in 1915 ultimately led to over 200 cases being opened by Russian authorities against Christian subjects in the region.²⁶

the Ottomans. The Genocide of 1915 and the Politics of Turkish Nationalism, eds. Hans-Lukas Kieser et al. (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2019), 52–53.

- 21 For the ‘Sankamış Operation,’ which eventually came to be known as the most infamous Ottoman military disaster of World War I see Ozan Arslan, “La Bataille de Sankamış: Un ‘Tannenberg’ manqué dans les montagnes?” in *Guerre des Vosges et guerres de montagne, 1914–1918*, eds. François Cochet and Jean-Noël Grandhomme (Paris: Bernard Giovanangeli Editeur, 2016), 331–45.
- 22 See Badem, “The War at the Caucasus Front,” 47–66.
- 23 See Badem, *Çarlık Yönetiminde*, 456–57 and 460–61.
- 24 The British war correspondent reported his observations in the following words: ‘General [Vladimir Platonovich] Liakhov accused the Muslim natives of treachery, and sent his Cossacks from Batumi with orders to kill every native at sight, and burn every village and every mosque. And very efficiently had they performed their task, for as we passed up the Çoruh valley to Artvin not a single habitable dwelling or a single living creature did we see.’ See Morgan Philips Price, *War and Revolution in Asiatic Russia* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1917), 223–24; Peter Holquist, “Forms of Violence during the Russian Occupation of Ottoman Territory and in Northern Persia (Urmia and Astrabad), October 1914–December 1917,” in *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands*, eds. Eric Weitz and Omer Bartov (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2013), 350; Peter Holquist, “The Politics and Practice of the Russian Occupation of Armenia, 1915–February 1917,” in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Ronald Grigor Suny et al. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 159; Grigor Suny, “*They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else*”: A History of the Armenian Genocide (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2015), 232. For the massacres perpetrated against the Muslim Adjara and Laz population of the Çoruh valley by the Cossack troops of General Liakhov, see also David Marshall Lang, *A Modern History of Soviet Georgia* (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 185.
- 25 See Badem, *Çarlık Yönetiminde*, 470–471.
- 26 Holquist, “The Politics and Practice of the Russian Occupation,” 162.

Upon the Russian reoccupation of the region in January 1915, several troop commanders from the Caucasian Army began dispatching parties of Russia's Muslim subjects suspected of helping the Ottoman army in their areas to the regional administrative centers of Kars and Batum for detention.²⁷ Even elderly men as old as seventy, as well as women and children, were among the Muslims from border areas declared 'prisoner of war' by Russian military authorities.²⁸

Anxious about the arrival of an increasing number of detained suspects – and emphasizing the recent deportation of the entire male population of two Muslim villages – the governor of Kars *oblast*, Colonel Alexei Podgursky, requested on 21 January 1915 that the military cease dispatching suspects to Kars. The governor complained about the lack of adequate detention facilities, and warned of the difficulty of protecting arriving Muslim deportees against lynching attempts in the city of Kars. The Caucasian Army High Command recommended that the governor retain in Kars only those suspects against whom there was sufficient judicial evidence for a court martial. Other 'harmful individuals' who did not fit into this category, estimated to be more than five thousand people, could be expelled to the inner provinces of Russia in the north.²⁹ Soon the Ministry of the Interior came up with clearer instructions for the expulsion of the Muslims of Kars and Batum *oblasts* suspected of collaborating with the Ottoman army, and directed Russian authorities in the Caucasus to deport them to Kharkov, Kursk, Orel, Tula, and Nizhny Novgorod provinces in the north.³⁰

Before long, Russian authorities in the Caucasus proposed a more far-reaching and comprehensive plan. In late January 1915, the viceroy's deputy for civilian affairs,³¹ Nikolai Peterson, sent a proposal to the Council of Ministers to deport, in the short term, the entire Muslim population of the former Ottoman border prefectures (even those for whom there was insufficient evidence of collaboration with the Ottoman enemy) to the Russian interior (a fairly similar approach to combatting 'unreliable elements'³² that Petrograd brutally carried

27 Ibid., 159.

28 Badem, *Çarlık Yönetiminde*, 427.

29 Ibid., 479.

30 Holquist, "The Politics and Practice," 159–60.

31 Peterson was the head of the viceroy's office of civil administration.

32 In many belligerent countries of World War I, national subjects/citizens from different ethnic and/or religious minorities, in addition to millions of resident foreigners, were seen as individuals whose loyalty had to be constantly monitored and scrutinized in the name of 'security concerns' and 'nationalist mobilization,' in addition to the spread of 'paranoia and spy fever.' See Daniela Luigia Caglioti, "Aliens and Internal Enemies: Internment Practices, Economic Exclusion and Property Rights during the First World War. Introduction," *Journal of Modern European History* 12 (2014), 448. Caglioti defines

out against the Jewish population of Galicia),³³ as well as to confiscate their property and permanently revoke their Russian ‘citizenship,’ with the ultimate goal of their permanent expulsion from Romanov territorial domains at the end of the war.³⁴ According to Peterson, the short-term aim of the Russian Empire was supposed to be ‘removing an unreliable element from the region of military operations’ to the inner regions of Russia, and the longer-term one colonizing the Caucasian borderlands ‘with a Russian population.’³⁵

In the meantime, the dispatching of Muslim deportees from the Southwestern Caucasus to the north sparked almost immediate protests in February 1915 from some Russian high-ranking civilian and military administrators. These objections were not necessarily because of humanitarian concerns, but practical reasons such as accommodation capacity in the regions of destination, and fears of spreading contagious diseases due to the large number of the prospective deportees. In early 1915 there was already a typhus epidemic in Kars. Duke Alexander of Oldenburg, the supreme chief of the medical service of the Russian military and naval forces, and a medical doctor himself, objected to the transfer of deportees to the inner provinces of the Russian Empire due to the risk of spreading epidemic.³⁶ The governor of Kharkov *oblast* complained that scores of dispatched deportees died or were hospitalized en route to Kharkov, while those arriving were too weak to work or support themselves and were potentially carrying typhus as well. He also emphasized the lack of adequate detention facilities, and requested that the Caucasus Viceroyalty cease sending Muslim deportees to Kharkov.³⁷

The Viceroyalty’s radical proposal nevertheless received general support in the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 28 April 1915, despite the objections of two influential cabinet members.³⁸ However, a mass forced migration of the Muslim population of the Southwestern Caucasus was eventually scaled back due to three consecutive and partially interconnected reasons.

First, the two objectors in the cabinet, Sazonov and the Minister of Justice, Ivan Shcheglovitov, persisted in their resistance to the radical plan of forced

the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 as a ‘turning point in policies designed to affect civilians, in particular civilians of enemy nationality, in wartime.’ See Daniela Luigia Caglioti, “Waging War on Civilians: The Expulsion of Aliens in the Franco-Prussian War,” *Past & Present* 221 (2013), 161.

33 Following the reoccupation of Galicia by the Austro-Hungarian army in 1915, the Dual Monarchy embraced a similarly brutal approach to combatting ‘unreliable elements’ among its Ruthenian and Jewish subjects in the region.

34 Badem, *Çarlık Yönetiminde*, 483.

35 Holquist, “The Politics and Practice,” 160.

36 *Ibid.*, 161.

37 Badem, *Çarlık Yönetiminde*, 482.

38 *Ibid.*, 483.

relocation, and insisted on furthering their argument that international law did not allow for such mass unilateral denaturalization and confiscation of property. In a compromise deal, the cabinet decided that the proposed plan would be scaled down to a deportation of the suspect population, without revoking their Russian citizenship.

Second, Georgian deputies in the Russian State Duma quickly organized an orchestrated effort to oppose the proposed plan. They protested that many of the Muslims that had already been deported, as well as the vast majority of those targeted by the proposal, were not ethnic Turks or Kurds, but rather Adjaras, and as such were 'Georgian despite their Muslim religion,' and hence loyal Kartvelian subjects of the Tsar.

Third, in mid-May 1915, Nicholas II received a petition from his cousin once removed, Grand Duke Georgy Mikhailovich, who called the proposed punitive measures against the Muslim population in question excessively harsh and unjust.³⁹ He appealed to Nicholas II to appoint an individual to conduct a special investigation. The Tsar consequently suspended the decision of the Council of Ministers of 28 April 1915, and dispatched his own delegate to the region to determine the guilt or innocence of the population. The army general assigned to conduct the investigation eventually determined that while there had been individual cases of collaboration with the Ottoman enemy, the local Muslim population had actually not engaged in any organized hostile actions toward Russian forces. The investigation came to the conclusion that 'the reckless charge that the Muslim population engaged in rebellion and treachery against the [Russian] state should be dropped.'⁴⁰

Although the radical proposal of forced relocation was not fully implemented and eventually greatly trimmed down, thousands of Muslims from the Southwestern Caucasus were still deported, and many more were subjected to abuse. Many of them were tried by Russian courts on charges of collaboration or high treason.⁴¹ Their dire situation was reported on in the Muslim press, and soon the deportees themselves appeared in the Eastern Caucasus.⁴² For public health reasons, relatively few were exiled to the inner regions of the Russian Empire.⁴³

39 Grand Duke Georgy Mikhailovich of Russia had personally toured the Caucasian front and met with representatives of the local Muslim communities in February 1915.

40 See Holquist, "The Politics and Practice," 161–62.

41 Badem, "The War at the Caucasus Front," 65.

42 Betül Aslan, *Kardeş Kömeği (Yardımlı) ve Bakü Müslüman Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* [The Fraternal Assistance and the Islamic Charitable Society of Bakü], (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2000), 79–80.

43 Badem, "The War at the Caucasus Front," 65.

Approximately six thousand of Russia's Muslim subjects were deported from Kars and Batum *oblasts* to the Eastern Caucasus, many of them to the infamous desert island of Nargin in the Caspian Sea.⁴⁴ Just like the Ottoman prisoners of war, they were transported by rail first to Baku via Tbilisi, and then ferried to the island off the coast of Baku. The barren island of Nargin, with almost inexistent infrastructure and facilities,⁴⁵ was used as both a prisoner-of-war camp for Ottoman military personnel and as a detention center⁴⁶ for deported Muslim civilians from the Russian-Ottoman borderlands, including for the elderly and children.⁴⁷

Despite considering comprehensive expulsion plans in early 1915 for the Muslim population of Kars and Batum *oblasts*, which was prematurely accused of having sided *en masse* with the Ottoman enemy during the ill-fated Ottoman winter offensive of late December 1914, the Russian imperial government eventually abandoned this radical program and scaled back its punitive

44 Lohr, *Russian Citizenship*, 41.

45 The 'camp' on Nargin, built in the nineteenth century, consisted of wooden shacks without windows and proper latrines, and was thus inadequate to accommodate a large number of prisoners and deportees. See Qılman İlkin, *Türk ordusu Bakıda: Xatirələr* [The Turkish Army in Baku: Memoirs], ed. Şəmistan Nəzərli (Baku: Azərbaycan'da Atatürk Merkezi Yayınları, 2003), 13.

46 Betül Aslan, "I. Dünya Savaşı Esnasında Nargin Adası'nda Türk Esirler [Turkish Prisoners on the Island of Nargin during World War I]," *Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* 42 (2010), 285.

47 See Akif Aşırılı, *Nargin adasında Türk esirleri* [Turkish Prisoners (of War and Internees) on the Island of Nargin] (Baku: Elm və təhsil, 2011), 52–54. One of the very first major engagements of the 'Islamic Charitable Society of Baku (*Baku İslam Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*)' – a prominent Azeri benevolent society – in World War I was to offer aid and assistance to the Muslims of the Southwestern Caucasus after Russian authorities designated them as 'unreliable elements' and started to deport them. When the Eastern Caucasian cities started to receive Muslim deportees, the Baku society and Muslim activists in the Caucasus immediately organized fundraising campaigns (see Halit DüNDAR Akarca, *Imperial Formations in Occupied Lands: The Russian Occupation of Ottoman Territories during the First World War* (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2014), 138). They later simultaneously assisted both civilian deportees and Ottoman prisoners of war detained under miserable conditions on the island of Nargin. By 1916, following the Russian invasion of a large swath of territories in Ottoman Eastern Anatolia, the Islamic Charitable Society of Baku insisted on operating in the occupied territories, just like Russian Armenian relief agencies. Upon the approval of Russian authorities, their officials began to collect Muslim orphans from the Russian occupied territories of Ottoman Eastern Anatolia and brought them to Baku to provide them with food and shelter in orphanages run by Azeris (see Ali Asker, "I. Dünya Savaşı'nda Rusya: Toplum ve Elitler [Russia in World War I, the Society and the Elites]," in *I. Dünya Savaşı'nda Karadeniz ve Kafkasya, Askerî, Siyasî ve Sosyal Gelişmeler* [Black Sea and Caucasus in World War I, Military, Political and Social Developments], eds. Mehmet Okur et al. (Trabzon: KTÜ Matbaası, 2017), 547).

measures. Facing prompt objections – albeit with different motives, reasons and arguments – from both high-ranking Russian state officials and Russia's Muslim political elite, the forced migration program was greatly trimmed down by late spring 1915. While the premature punitive measures of the Viceroyalty and the prevailing anti-Muslim sentiment – particularly among some of its Cossack and Armenian combatants and populace – certainly brought considerable suffering to a portion of the Muslim population of the Southwestern Caucasus in 1915, the imperial Russian mindset and experience of governance in multi-ethnic and multi-confessional environments restricted excess, and ultimately required a certain degree of moderation.

3 **After the Russian Invasion of Eastern Anatolia: A Question of Annexation and Colonization of the Occupied Territories**

Despite the great interest and emphasis that Russian imperial authorities demonstrated in 1914–15 on the Straits Question and the political future of the city of Istanbul, the territories under Russian occupation actually expanded in 1915–16 in the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

Russian control over the Straits region was almost taken for granted, with new planning for further Russian territorial gains focusing on Eastern Anatolia. Even the most minimalist Russian approach in 1915 – that is before Russian military victories and the invasion of Eastern Anatolia – to the postwar Russo-Ottoman border in the Caucasus envisaged the incorporation of the Eleşkirt and Bayazid valleys into the Tsar's realm.⁴⁸

3.1 *Early Considerations and Projects for Annexation and Colonization by Various Russian Civilian and Military Authorities*

While an annexationist approach did not prevail at this earlier stage of the war on the Caucasian front, it existed among high-ranking Russian bureaucrats beginning in early 1915. The former Minister of War, General Alexei Kuropatkin,⁴⁹ was invited in early 1915 to a private meeting at the Russian Foreign Ministry with a selected group of officials – including the former ambassador to Istanbul Giers, and headed by Sazonov – to discuss Russian aspirations in the Straits region.⁵⁰ He was later given the task of preparing the

48 Akarca, "Imperial Formations," 56.

49 In 1915 Kuropatkin was a member of the 'State Council of the Russian Empire.'

50 Ronald P. Bobroff, *Roads to Glory: Late Imperial Russia and the Turkish Straits* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 127–28.

future annexation and administration of Eastern Anatolia and the Eastern Anatolian Black Sea coastline. According to Kuropatkin's proposed plan, the Russian government would create 'general-governorships'⁵¹ for Erzurum and Sivas for their eventual annexation into the Russian Empire. In February 1915, another important report on the administration of the prospective territorial acquisitions in Asia Minor was prepared by Colonel Evgeny Vyshinsky.⁵² This second plan proposed the annexation of Northwestern Anatolia and the creation of Russian protectorates in Anatolia's southern and Armenian and Kurdish-populated regions, the acquisition of the port city of Alexandretta on the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean, connecting all of these regions through a Russian-built railroad.⁵³

Another important state official, Minister of Agriculture Alexander Krivoshein, proposed in a letter to Sazonov on 13 March 1915 to annex and divide Ottoman Eastern Anatolia into two zones,⁵⁴ geographically rather than along demographic or ethnographic lines, with a special emphasis on each zone's use for agricultural purposes, as well as their most productive exploitation.⁵⁵ In addition to the Ottoman Eastern Black Sea coast,⁵⁶ Krivoshein proposed

51 The general-governorship of Erzurum would include the Ottoman *vilâyets* of Erzurum, Mâmuret-ül Aziz, Bitlis, Van, Diyarbekir, and Trabzon (but not the *sandjak* of Canik in the west), while the governor-generalship of Sivas would consist of Sivas, Kastamonu vilâyets, and the sancak of Canik. See Halit Dündar Akarca, *The Russian Administration of the Occupied Ottoman Territories during the First World War: 1915–1917* (Master's thesis, Bilkent University, 2002), 11–12. In the same year of 1915, the staff of the Russian Caucasian Army produced dozens of very detailed maps of all six of these Ottoman provinces, and reproduced several Ottoman-made maps of the same territories. For a very comprehensive set of these maps brought to the General Staff of the French Army (*Etat-major de l'armée de terre*) at the end of World War I by the French Military Mission to the Caucasus, see *Archives du Service Historique de la Défense (S.H.D.)*, Collection No. 17 N 590.

52 Vyshinsky was a former military attaché at the Russian consulate in Erzurum (1908–14), and later the personal secretary (1914–15) of General Yuri Danilov, chief of operations of the *Stavka*.

53 See Akarca, "Imperial Formations," 54–56.

54 In his proposed plan, Krivoshein also suggested dividing Russian-occupied Northwestern Persia into two.

55 See Armen Marukian, "Politika rossii na zanyatykh territoriyakh Zapadnoy Armenii v 1915–1917 goda [Russian Policies in Occupied Territories of Western Armenia in 1915–1917]," in *Proceedings of the International Conference "Caucasus in the First World War"* held in Pyatigorsk on 28–30 Nov. 2014 (Stavropol: Izdatel'stvo SKFU, 2015), 63.

56 Krivoshein argued that the Black Sea coastline from Batumi in the east to Trabzon in the west was just an extension of Adjara, with an even milder climate offering fertile lands for several agricultural products, as well as suitable locations for summer resorts.

annexing the mineral-rich region along the headwaters of the Euphrates and Araxes Rivers in Eastern Anatolia.⁵⁷

In the spring of 1915, General Nikolai Yudenich, chief of staff of the Caucasian Army, also developed a proposal to settle Cossacks in the Eleşkirt, Diyadin, and Bayazid valleys on lands abandoned by local Muslims,⁵⁸ in order to bring the land into immediate cultivation in an effort to support units of the IV Caucasian Corps operating in the region (Yudenich would repeat the same proposal in April 1916). The region's local Muslim population, largely consisting of Kurds, had already been intimidated and persecuted by the Caucasian Army's Cossack⁵⁹ combatants for some time.⁶⁰

The initial unpreparedness of the Russian bureaucracy to administer the occupied Ottoman territories in early 1915 led the Caucasus Viceroyalty to temporarily accept the assistance of Russian Armenian politicians such as Sirakan Tigranian⁶¹ as administrators, first in Eleşkirt and Bayazid valleys, and later in Van. However, Yudenich soon ordered – in mid-April 1915 – the commander of IV Caucasian Corps to expel Tigranian and his associates from the occupied regions. Another top brass of the Caucasian Army, its quartermaster-general (chief of operations) General Leonid Bolkhovitinov, reminded the commanding general of IV Caucasian Corps that only Russian military personnel would control administration of the occupied territories. Bolkhovitinov also wrote

57 Krivoshein had already expressed, in the late summer of 1914, his hope that rumors of the Porte's anti-Russian diplomacy and Ottoman agitations along the Caucasian border were true, as this would allow Petrograd to wage war against the Ottoman Empire and resolve the Eastern Question in Russia's favor. He had also launched efforts with Sazonov in late September 1914 to convince the French and British ambassadors in Petrograd to agree to Russian ambitions concerning the Straits and Istanbul in any final peace treaty concluding the ongoing European conflict.

58 See Manoug Joseph Somakian, *Empires in Conflict, Armenia and the Great Powers, 1895–1920* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995), 109.

59 For the deployment of Cossack troops – both in the form of local 'Caucasian' (Kuban and Terek Cossacks) and transferred 'Asiatic' (Transcaspian and Siberian Cossacks) hosts, as well as that of 'mounted squadrons' (*sotni*) or 'foot battalions' (*plastuni*) – by the Imperial Russian Army on the Caucasian front, see Ozan Arslan, "The 'Bon Pour L'Orient' Front: Analysis of Russia's Anticipated Victory over the Ottoman Empire in World War I," *Middle East Critique* 23 (2014), 179–84.

60 See the memoirs of Fyodor Ivanovich Eliseev, a Kuban Cossack cavalry officer from the Russian Caucasian Army in World War I and later a White Army Cossack colonel during the Russian Civil War: Fyodor Eliseev, *Kazaki na Kavkazkom fronte, 1914–1917: Zapiski polkovnika Kubanskogo kazakhego voiska v trinadtsati broshurakh-tetradiakh* [Cossacks on the Caucasian Front, 1914–1917: Notes of a Colonel of the Cossack army of Kuban in 13 brochures-notebooks] (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo, 2001), 143–44.

61 Tigranian was a member of the nationalist *Dashnaksutyun* party and future Minister of War (1918–19) of the independent 'Armenian Democratic Republic' (1918–20).

to Yudenich, emphasizing that the presence of the Armenian intelligentsia in the recently occupied Ottoman territories would hinder the realization of the Cossack settlement project proposed by Yudenich. By early summer 1915, Tigranian and his associates, as well as representatives of other Armenian national organizations, were ordered by Russian military authorities to leave the region, and in the fall of 1915 the activities of Armenian refugee relief organizations in the occupied Ottoman territories were severely restricted, and were denied any responsibility in the settlement of the Armenian refugees and other administrative tasks.⁶² Despite the aforementioned wishes of Russian military and civilian authorities to annex and colonize the occupied Ottoman territories in early World War I, those ambitions had not yet been adopted as the official policy of the Russian Empire in 1915. This was largely due to the Armenian nationalist movement, which already existed within the pre-World War I borders of the Russian Empire in the Caucasus, had made the Russian imperial government hesitant to seize additional territories with large Armenian populations. In March 1915, the Russian ambassador to Britain, Alexander von Benckendorff, informed the British Foreign Office that the Tsar did not wish to annex the Eastern Anatolian provinces.⁶³ Ruling over antagonistic Muslim populations of Turks, Kurds and Laz, or the nationalistic Armenians whose loyalty to Russia was perceived as being dubious by the top brass of the Russian Imperial High Command such as Danilov⁶⁴ (who was practically 'third in command' of the Imperial Russian army from the start of World War I to August 1915), was seen as a significant challenge. Once at war with the Ottoman state, the Russian Empire made an effort to secure the commitment and devotion of Russian Armenians to the Russian state at war, as well as to win over the Armenian population of Eastern Anatolia with intentionally vague statements of autonomy. However, Sazonov still noted in early 1916 that of all the heterogeneous populations that the Romanov Empire had to rule, the Armenians were the most difficult, and he did not favor the detachment of Eastern Anatolia from the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁵ During the same period in 1916, Nicholas II confided to Paléologue that 'personally, [he] did not dream of any conquest in Armenia, other than [that of] Trabzon and Erzurum, the possession of which,' he emphasized, was 'a strategic necessity for the [Russian-controlled] Caucasus.'⁶⁶

62 Akarca, "Imperial Formations," 65–67.

63 Holquist, "The Politics and Practice," 155.

64 Akarca, "Imperial Formations," 58.

65 Holquist, "The Politics and Practice," 156.

66 Paléologue, *La Russie des Tsars*, 214.

4 The Continuous Expansion of Russian-occupied Territories in Eastern Anatolia, Projects of Annexation and Colonization Re-emphasized

There was a relative enlargement of the Caucasian Army by the fall of 1915.⁶⁷ Russian forces made steady progress into Anatolia in the first half of 1916 and captured Erzurum, Rize, Bitlis and Trabzon one after another, with Erzincan following in July 1916.⁶⁸ As Russian troops advanced into Eastern Anatolia, the Ministry of Agriculture offered the help of its ministerial staff, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for the actions needed to exploit the acquired fields. The new Minister of Agriculture, Alexander Naumov, cabled the viceroy of the Caucasus on 19 March 1916, and proposed the appointment of an experienced officer from the Colonization Department to work on the ultimate incorporation of the conquered territories.⁶⁹ His nominee to examine colonization in the region was the deputy for the chief of the Central Administration of Colonization, Alexei Tatishchev, who 'had successfully organized the colonization programs in the Far East and Turkestan.'⁷⁰ Naumov

67 Combat troops of the Russian Caucasian Army reached approximately two hundred thousand combatants toward the end of 1915, although this army still constituted a very small portion of Russia's fighting force. This increase was mainly due to two factors: Russia's slow and gradual mobilization, which was proceeding in the Caucasus Military District as it was elsewhere in Imperial Russia; and Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich, who was relieved from his post as commander-in-chief of the Imperial Russian Army in Summer 1915, arrived at the peripheral Caucasian front in the fall of the same year to personally take command of the Russian forces there (see Furgaç, *Feryadam*, Vol. 1, 208). Although the Imperial Russian Army general Gustaf Mannerheim, the future marshal of independent Finland, found the Tsar's decision to relieve his cousin of his command 'very untimely and unwise' for the Russian war effort (see Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim, *Les mémoires du maréchal Mannerheim, 1882-1946* (Paris: Hachette, 1952), 45), the latter's arrival in the Caucasus was undoubtedly a boost to morale for the Caucasian Army, and was accompanied by new combat and auxiliary units. The Romanov grand duke kept the capable General Yudenich as chief of staff of the Russian Caucasian Army, who embraced a more offensive posture with their relatively strengthened army, and launched the ambitious winter offensive of 1916.

68 For the 'Yudenich Offensive' and the military operations of the Russian Caucasian Army in Eastern Anatolia in the spring and summer of 1916, see Fevzi Çakmak, *Birinci Dünya Savaşında Doğu Cephesi* [The (Ottoman) Eastern Front in the First World War] (Ankara: Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2005), 110-228.

69 Akarca, "The Russian Administration," 33-34.

70 Tatishchev had previously served as the head of the resettlement administration in the 'Maritime Region' (*Primorskaia oblast*) in the Russian Far East, before being appointed in 1912 the head of the administration of land use and agriculture in Russian Turkestan, where he also had to deal with the settlement of the refugees coming from the Russian Western front in early World War I.

warned the grand duke of the immediate danger of speculative acquisitions of land, and emphasized that after a fair distribution of land to the local population, there would still be a significant amount of territory available for the settlement of Russian colonists, especially participants in the current war. On 23 March 1916, the grand duke approved the appointment of Tatishchev to conduct research for colonization programs; the latter was entrusted with exploring the conditions of colonization in the occupied regions of 'Sarıkamış, Köprüköy, Erzurum, Hınıs, Malazgirt, Muş, Eleşkirt, Bayazid, Van, and if possible, the coastal region of the Black Sea' of the Ottoman Empire. In May 1916, Tatishchev presented his report to the grand duke and his staff at a special conference held in Tbilisi, and suggested that the land needs of the refugees be strictly controlled and supervised by Russian authorities, and that a land fund from which the state was to distribute lands to the incoming Russian colonists be established for the occupied territories in Eastern Anatolia. The grand duke considered the proposal to be untimely but important and valuable, and asked the Ministry of Agriculture to send experts for a preliminary survey of the region to estimate available arable land and pasturage.⁷¹ In the meantime, in April 1916 Yudenich – nominally the chief of staff, but the *de facto* commander-in-chief of the Caucasian Army, since he was given a free hand by the Romanov viceroy – repeated his proposal of settling Cossacks in the Eleşkirt, Diyadin and Bayazid valleys on lands abandoned by local Muslims.

5 The Sykes-Picot Agreement, Russia's Growing Commitment to Annexation and the Prospects of Colonization

By the spring of 1916, a policy of annexationism for the Russian-occupied territories of Eastern Anatolia began to prevail, firstly due to Russian military successes on the Caucasian front, and secondly due to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which officially divided the Near East into zones of influence for the Powers of the Triple Entente. In discussions regarding the options for Russian territorial acquisitions in Eastern Anatolia in connection with the Sykes-Picot Agreement of Britain and France, Russian territorial demands followed Sazanov's 14 March 1916 memorandum to the Tsar, in which the Minister proposed that

71 Akarca, "Imperial Formations," 82–86. The chief of the Colonization Department, Gennady Chirkin, had already approved Tatishchev's nomination, but recommended he be appointed as a representative of the Russian Red Cross instead of the Colonization Department, in order to avoid any disturbance among the local population.

'the entire territory between the Black Sea and a line beginning at Urmia province, [running] through Van, Bitlis, Muş, and Harput up to the mountain range of Tavra and Antitavra (near Sivas),' had to be placed at Russia's disposal.⁷² The Russian demands were presented to the British and French on 26 April 1916.

The Russian Empire had thus officially declared its intention to annex the Erzurum, Trabzon, Van, and Bitlis *vilâyet*s of the Ottoman Empire. According to Mark Sykes, in 1916 the Imperial Russian government desired 'as few Armenians as possible in Russian territory,' and believed that a future French protectorate for Armenians in Cilicia would relieve Russia 'of Armenian nationalist responsibilities,' as Russians can say to Armenians, 'if you wish to be independent, migrate to the Armenian State where there is ample room.'⁷³

Following Russia's admission to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and after extensive bureaucratic correspondence with the concerned Russian imperial organs, on 5 July 1916 Nicholas II ratified a 'Temporary Statute on the Administration of the Turkish Territories Seized by the Right of War.' The regulation created a provisional military general-governorate, which would also be responsible for civilian affairs of administration (the general-governorate was divided into four *oblasts*, which were all subdivided into *okrugs*, *rayons*, *uchasts* and *selskih obschins*, where the administrative language was Russian, although important directives could also be promulgated in local languages). The governor general, General Nikolai Peshkov, was to report directly to the viceroy of the Caucasus. The conquered territories were simply considered to be an extension of the Russian Transcaucasus.

The general-governorate and its four *oblasts* had a total of twenty-nine *okrugs* on the eve of the February Revolution in 1917, each of which was administered by a Russian army colonel or brigadier general. The text of the regulation categorically avoided any terminology such as 'Western Armenia,' and its wording was carefully drafted to leave no hope for Armenian autonomy, at least in the foreseeable future.⁷⁴ Armenian nationalists could not even hope for a semi-autonomous region.⁷⁵ An examination of the general-governorate's correspondence and promulgations actually reveals that the occupied territories were seen as new imperial domains of Russia to be ruled from Petrograd.

72 Sean McMeekin, *Russian Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 2011), 208.

73 Holquist, "The Politics and Practice," 157.

74 Marukian, "Politika rossii," 63–71.

75 Somakian, *Empires in Conflict*, 108.

During the Russian occupation of the Ottoman Eastern Anatolian provinces, there were many economic, demographic, and scientific undertakings and activities by the new Russian administration, including archaeological and ethnographical study;⁷⁶ the construction of roads, railways, and ferryboat ports;⁷⁷ the exploration and exploitation of natural resources such as oil and coal;⁷⁸ agricultural feasibility studies; and projects to distribute occupied lands to settlers from Russia.⁷⁹

In August 1916 General Yudenich banned the return of Armenian refugees to the occupied Ottoman territories of Eastern Anatolia,⁸⁰ arguing that it would complicate the already difficult issue of food supply. Yet in the spring of 1915, Yudenich had already developed a proposal to settle Cossacks on the abandoned lands of the native Kurds in the Eleşkirt, Diyaradin, and Bayazid valleys, and repeated his project in April 1916 without worrying about the food supply for the newcomers. The acting commander-in-chief of the Caucasian Army clearly preferred Cossack settlers over the native Armenian and Muslim populations. Although the Romanov viceroy, like Vorontsov-Dashkov before

76 In the first three years of the war, there were several academic expeditions to Northeastern and Eastern Anatolia ranging from Trabzon to Van, some of which were led by members of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Akarca, "The Russian Administration," 86–116). Akarca also notes that the first Russian scholars to arrive in the occupied territories were geographers and botanists instructed to 'study the colonization prospects of the region' (Ibid., 86). The Russian academic expeditions went on even after the February Revolution of 1917. See the memoirs of Lev Bykovsky, an Imperial Russian army engineer of Ukrainian origin who served on the Russian-occupied Ottoman Black Sea coast in 1916–17: Lev Bykovsky, *Na Kavkazsko-Turetskomu Fronti: Spomyny z 1916–1918 rr.* [On the Caucasian – Turkish Front, Recollections from 1916–1918] (Winnipeg-Denver: Pratsi Instytutu Doslidiv Volyni, 1968), 61.

77 The Russian administration built several ports around Lake Van, and launched a regular ferry service with steamboats brought from Russia (see Fahri Belen, *Birinci Cihan Harbi'nde Türk Harbi, Cilt iv* [Turkey's War in the First World War, Vol. iv] (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1964), 192; and Behiç Erkin, *Hâtırât, 1876–1958* [The Memoirs, 1876–1958] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2010), 299).

78 The Imperial Russian Ministry of Trade and Industry appointed a geological engineer to the Caucasian Army as early as December 1914, and by the summer of 1916, several coal mines around Erzurum, Hasankale, and Aşkale were being operated by the Russian administration in occupied Ottoman territories (Akarca, "The Russian Administration," 43). In 1916–17, there were similar undertakings on the part of Russian authorities around Hınıs, south of Erzurum, to explore and exploit local oil deposits, although the latter proved to have only modest reserves (Akarca, "The Russian Administration," 44).

79 Regarding the colonization plans for the occupied Ottoman territories, see also Alan Bodger, "Russia and the End of the Ottoman Empire," in *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Marian Kent (London: Frank Cass, 1982), 93; and Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*, 140 and 160.

80 Somakian, *Empires in Conflict*, 107.

him, approved Yudenich's program in principle, he found that 'it was as yet premature' to act on it and therefore put it on hold.⁸¹

In any case, by the end of 1916 the project of settling Cossacks and creating a new 'Euphrates Cossack host' in Eastern Anatolia started to gain momentum. Boghos Nubar, chairman of the 'Armenian National Delegation,' learned that the conquered Ottoman provinces were to be colonized with Russian and Cossack immigrants, excluding the Armenians.⁸² Settling Cossacks would offer two major advantages for Russian rule in the region: the new Cossack host would provide both the much-needed military contingent to police and defend the conquered land, as well as the much-desired presence of 'reliable subjects of the Tsar' on this volatile borderland.⁸³

In the earlier centuries of the Russian Empire, the establishment of Cossack hosts always played a significant role in the expansionist colonial policy of the Tsarist regime in non-Slavic conquered lands. Not all but many of the Cossack hosts were traditionally named after the major rivers of their region of settlement, such as the 'Don,' 'Kuban,' 'Terek,' 'Amur,' and 'Ussuri' Cossack hosts. New hosts were created from parts of existing hosts, as some of the Cossacks taking part in the conquest of a borderland were generally given the right to settle there with their families. Some of the non-Slavic – and sometimes also non-Christian – local peoples (such as many native Circassians and Ossetians in the Northern Caucasus, who joined the ranks of the Kuban and Terek hosts in the nineteenth century) would eventually be assimilated into the Cossack culture – and hence 'Cossackized' – thereby becoming part of the new host. In the hypothetical case of the occupied Ottoman lands in Eastern Anatolia being officially annexed and colonized by a victorious Romanov Empire at the end of World War I, one can argue that poorer Cossack combatants, the infantrymen known as *plastuni*,⁸⁴ from the Kuban and Terek hosts would have been among the first to settle with their families in the fertile lands of Eastern Anatolia left by local Muslim and Armenian communities. The new Euphrates Cossack Host was not to be recruited only among Cossacks, but from all volunteering Orthodox Christian combatants of the Caucasian Army, including Armenians.⁸⁵ Some Kuban Cossack officers even expected an eventual 'Cossackization' of some of the Kurds of the Eleşkirt valley after the annexation of the region by the Russian

81 Holquist, "The Politics and Practice," 169–70.

82 Somakian, *Empires in Conflict*, 108.

83 Marukian, "Politika rossii," 63.

84 *Plastuns* were atypical Cossack foot soldiers; their units were formed from among the Kuban and Terek hosts with impoverished Cossacks who could not afford a cavalry steed and horse tack. The *Stavka* deemed them fit for service mainly on the Caucasian front in World War I (Arslan, "The 'Bon Pour L'Orient' Front," 182).

85 Kersnovsky, *Istoria Russkoi Armii*, 1075.

Empire.⁸⁶ In January 1917, preparations to form a new Cossack host in Eastern Anatolia began,⁸⁷ but they soon came to a halt due to the two revolutions taking place in the Russian mainland that year.

Conclusion

The state is a complex set of institutions, and state policies can change over time depending on the variables of domestic and international politics, and even more so in wartime, as demonstrated by the evolution of the two resettlement projects during World War I. Russian policy toward the administrative, demographic and economic future of the Southwestern Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia cannot be described as being uniform and constant during WWI. It was also internally fractious, and sometimes even uncoordinated. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for determining official Russian government policies toward borderlands and occupied territories, as was the Ministry of Agriculture for their eventual exploitation and colonization in the event of annexation. However, the institution that actually administered the occupied territories during wartime was the Caucasian Army.

Despite considering comprehensive expulsion plans in early 1915 for the Muslim population of Kars and Batum *oblasts*, which was prematurely accused of having sided *en masse* with the Ottoman enemy, the Imperial Russian government eventually abandoned this radical program and scaled back its punitive measures. The bureaucratic and rational functionalism of Russian state institutions prevailed over the anti-Muslim sentiment of certain local Russian officials and indigenous Christian elements of the South Caucasus, with the forced migration program being greatly trimmed down by the spring of 1915. The Romanov state's imperial and pragmatic mentality, as well as the requirements and experience of ruling over multi-national and multi-confessional populations, ultimately necessitated a certain degree of moderation.

Just like the question of the political and demographic future of Eastern Anatolia, in 1915 there was neither an official plan adopted by Russian state officials for its administration, nor an official agreement made with Russia's allies for its annexation. Yet by 1916, the Russian-occupied zone in Eastern Anatolia was continuously expanding, an agreement on the partitioning of large swaths of Ottoman lands in Western Asia was reached among the Powers

86 Eliseev, *Kazaki na Kavkazkom fronte*, 71.

87 Kersnovsky, *Istoria Russkoi Armii*, 1075.

of the *Triple Entente*, and territories under Russian occupation were slowly but progressively becoming a part of the Russian Empire. Even before the official adoption of a policy of annexation, the presence of a growing Russian military force, the establishment of Russian administration, implementation of mining and agricultural feasibility studies, and numerous construction projects had already begun to gradually transform Eastern Anatolia into an extension of the Russian Empire. Diverse Russian state institutions and authorities began to envisage projects of resettlement and colonization in this extended corner of the Russian Viceroyalty, aiming at an eventual transformation of this volatile borderland into a stabilized administrative region of the Romanov realm.

Nonetheless, in spite of the decision to eventually annex Eastern Anatolia, there was no coordinated official policy to prevent the return of Armenian refugees in 1916, although by the end of that year preparations were underway for the arrival of Cossack settlers from the Northern Caucasus and for the establishment of a new Cossack host in Asia Minor. The Russian revolutions of 1917 ultimately left this far-reaching project unrealized.

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PART 3

Reinterpreting Population Displacements



The Ottoman Era in Yemen and Jewish Emigration (1881–1914)

Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman

Jews lived in Yemen continuously since pre-Islamic period, however, a migration trend that began in late nineteenth century, led to the gradual diminishing of this community. This paper argues that the Ottoman era in Yemen (1872–1918) contributed and even promoted the course that led to the emigration of almost all the Jews from Yemen. The discussion includes the various stages of this migration process, its uniquely Jewish characteristics, and the social disruptions – political, societal and economic – that promoted Jewish – as well as Muslim – emigration. The penetration of the great powers into the Red Sea basin – Great Britain in Aden in 1839, the Ottoman Empire in Yemen in 1872 and Italy in Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1885 – is presented as a major factor leading to the aforementioned disruptions. Consequently, Yemen became connected to the global economy, thus undermining the traditional Yemeni Jewish economy, which was based on the crafts and cottage industry. Jews lost their livelihood also as a result of the revolts against the Ottoman occupiers and various ecological disasters. Many of these Jews were pushed to immigrate to Aden, East Africa, India and then to Palestine. The above disruptions fused with pull factors that transformed Palestine into a favorable destination. Among them, intense religious attachment to the Holy Land, its accessibility since becoming one political entity with Yemen whose citizens could travel freely within a huge empire, political liberties of equal civil rights enforced by the Ottomans that were unheard of in Yemen. Furthermore, during the Ottoman period in Yemen and throughout the British Mandate period in Palestine, Yemeni immigrants in Palestine encouraged their brethren in Yemen to join them. The newcomers found vibrant social networks and economic resources that supported their absorption, thus encouraging further immigration. This article's analysis emphasizes that at least up to the establishment of Israel in 1948 Jewish emigration from Yemen was unrelated to the Zionist movement, its emissaries or its institutions. Nevertheless, the processes that began in nineteenth century Ottoman Yemen matured in 1949 and led to the great immigration wave to Israel and the virtual voluntary extinction of the Yemeni Jewish community.

Jews have lived in Yemen¹ continuously since the pre-Islamic period, although a migration trend that began in late nineteenth century, shortly after the Ottoman occupation in 1872 led to the gradual decline of the population of this community. This article will discuss certain aspects of Jewish life under the Ottomans, using mostly Jewish sources to explain the events that led to their emigration from Yemen, which ultimately led to the uprooting of practically the entire community and its resettling in Israel.

Like the Muslim population, the Jews were dispersed throughout the country, settling primarily in tribal-rural areas in hundreds of small settlements. Only approximately fifteen per cent of the Yemeni Jews resided in towns. The Jews were the only religious minority of any numerical importance in Muslim Yemen.² Until the Republican Revolution in 1962, their legal and civil status derived from Islamic law (*sharia*), which served as the state constitution, and defined them as protected minorities, *dhimmis*. The state granted *dhimmi* Jews freedom of religion, and extended its protection over their personal security and property in exchange for their acknowledgment of Muslim political and social superiority. This recognition had two central expressions: payment of the *jizya* or poll tax, and adherence to discriminatory rules. For example, Jews in Yemen were required to differentiate their clothing from that of Muslims. They were forbidden from wearing colorful clothing, bearing arms, and riding horses, and had to ride sidesaddle on pack animals. Their houses could not be higher than those of Muslims. Inasmuch as *sharia* law continued to be the constitutional basis of the Yemeni state until the mid-twentieth century, the discriminatory regulations against Jews continued to be an obligatory part of national law. However, Jewish life in the tribal areas – where, as stated above, the majority of Jews lived – functioned primarily according to tribal patronage laws and other customary laws (*urf*). These laws ignored and did not enforce some of the *sharia* regulations that discriminated against Jews.

1 'Yemen' in this article refers to the territory located in the southernmost part of the Arabian Peninsula. Its southern border runs along the Gulf of Aden, but does not include the area that was known as the Protectorate of Aden, which came under British influence when they conquered the port city of Aden in 1839. After the British evacuation in 1967, the southern border was delineated along the length of the country, and was known as South Yemen. In 1990 the two countries of North and South Yemen united as the Republic of Yemen. This paper addresses what was known until 1990 as North Yemen, where the majority of the Jewish settlement was concentrated.

2 During the first half of the twentieth century, the population of Yemen was estimated to be between 3.5 and 4 million people. The number of Jews during the same period stood at around 65,000. The first census in Yemen was carried out in 1975 and counted 4,705,336 individuals; see Manfred W. Wenner, *The Yemen Arab Republic: Development and Change in an Ancient Land* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 19–20.

Yemen was principally an agricultural economy, and the tribesmen farmed the land. The majority of Yemen's Jews made their living through handicrafts and small industries. In Sanaa and other towns, Jews owned craft workshops and stores in the Jewish quarter, or in the city's Arab market, where they sold their products alongside other merchants. However, the primary economic basis of tribal Jewish life was the *'umla* system, in which the artisan supplied the farming family with all required handicrafts and services throughout the year, and then in the harvest season received payment in the form of produce from the farmer's fields.³

In explaining Jewish migration from Yemen, I will use certain concepts developed in migration studies over the past twenty years. These concepts maintain that migration movements in different places and periods are promoted by various direct or indirect social disruptions, such as political conflict, religious or ethnic confrontation, occupation, economic crisis, and environmental disaster. This line of thought points to the complexity of the act of emigrating, maintaining that it does not solely depend on factors of disruption. Migration is also linked to the community's social and economic resilience or vulnerability to disruption, to the considerations of individuals and families whether to stay or leave, and the availability of 'social capital,' which is to say informal social networks that support immigrants, and encourage the arrival of new ones. Scholars in migration studies also emphasize the importance of pull forces that attract migrants to a specific receiving society, such as demand for labor, economic opportunities, and political liberties. Additionally, the host society sometimes encourages people to emigrate, even when push factors from the country of origin are moderate.⁴

3 For more on the historical, social, and economic background of Jewish life in Yemen, see Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, *Traditional Society in Transition: The Yemeni Jewish Experience* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1–19.

4 See for example Takeyuki Tsuda, Brenda J. Baker et al., "Unifying Themes in Studies of Ancient and Contemporary Migrations," in *Migration and Disruptions: Toward Unifying Theory of Ancient and Contemporary Migrations*, eds. Brenda J. Baker and Takeyuki Tsuda (Gainesville, FL: Univ. Press of Florida, 2015), 15–30, 296–331; Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 3rd edition (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 7–30; Stephen Castles, *Ethnicity and Globalization: From Migrant Worker to Transnational Citizen* (London: Sage, 2000), 23–24; Patrick Manning, "Cross-Community Migration: A Distinctive Human Pattern," *Social Evolution & History* 5 (2006), 24–54. Manning emphasizes social developments as motivating migration, and suggests that the conduct of immigrants before and after migration is the most important factor for the process of relocation.

This paper argues that social disruptions increased during the Ottoman era, affecting both Jewish migration trends and Muslim emigration from Yemen. My analysis differs from the Zionist meta-narrative regarding Jewish immigrations to Palestine and later Israel from Muslim countries. The Zionist narrative explains this immigration in an almost unified manner, as the result of twentieth-century political developments, rising friction between Jews and Arabs, and Zionist ideology. My research also questions the Zionist immigration narrative with regard to other Jewish communities in the Muslim world, and bases its account on the unique circumstances of each. Below I will examine a few of the major developments that took place under the Ottomans in Yemen, and that contributed to Jewish migration trends.

1 The Ottomans in Yemen

The strategic importance of the Red Sea as a waterway to Eastern Africa and the Far East has long been known, and became even more important after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. In 1839 the British captured the port city of Aden, transforming it into a major base on the way to India,⁵ and the French controlled Djibouti since the early 1860s. The Ottoman Empire, fearful of the growing European presence in the area, particularly the British, conquered the Tihama (the Yemeni Red Sea coastal plain) in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1872, the Ottomans expanded their rule from Hudayda on the Red Sea coast to the capital city of Sanaa and gained control over central Yemen, remaining there until late 1918.⁶ Italy also became a major player in the region in the 1880s, following the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. In 1885, Italian forces captured the Ethiopian port town of Massawa, and in 1890 completed the conquest of the Ethiopian Red Sea coast and established the colony of Eritrea. The involvement of these world power in the Red Sea region in the nineteenth

5 For the commercial and strategic importance of Aden in medieval times, see Roxani Eleni Margariti, *Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade – 150 Years in the Life of a Medieval Arabian Port* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2007); for consolidating British presence and interests in Aden and its vicinity during the 19th century, see John M. Willis, *Unmaking North and South: Cartographies of the Yemeni Past, 1857–1934* (London: Hurst & Company, 2012), 17–103.

6 For the growing interest of world powers during the nineteenth century in the Red Sea region, see Isa Blumi, *Chaos in Yemen: Societal Collapse and the New Authoritarianism* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 46–58; Alexis Wick, *The Red Sea: In Search of Lost Space* (Oakland, California: Univ. of California Press, 2016), 44–45. On the Ottomans interests in Yemen and their role as occupiers, see Caesar E. Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen: Nineteenth-Century Challenge to Ottoman Rule* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).

century and first half of the twentieth brought new activity to the area, and strengthened relations between the two coasts. Foreign troops and administrators stationed in Aden, Yemen, and East Africa were joined by foreign and local merchants, both Jewish and non-Jewish, and fostered economic endeavors. These developments were followed by labor migrants.

Throughout their rule in Yemen, the Ottomans had to deal with tribal uprisings led by the Zaydī imams, who were based in the northern reaches of the country.⁷ In one of the rebellions in 1904, Imam Yahyā ibn Muhammad Hamīd al-Dīn (r. 1918–48) captured Sanaa following an extended siege.

With the Ottoman conquest of central Yemen in 1872, this area, which had existed for hundreds of years in relative isolation beyond the direct influence of world powers, became an Ottoman province and part of a large empire in which traders, products, information, and new ideas all traveled freely. In the regions of their dominance, the Ottomans contributed to the appearance of certain modernization processes, brought new methods of governance, modern approaches to education, and technological means that were previously unknown. For example, the Ottomans established a telegraph network that linked Sanaa with the centers of the empire, founded a regular postal service that brought mail from outside the country, and built roads. The new approaches to government affected the Jewish community in a number of areas. Some of the Ottoman objectives regarding the Jews failed while others were successfully realized, with additional developments being an unintended by-product of their rule.

2 The Legal Status of Jews

The Ottomans made an effort to better the legal and actual status of Jews in Yemen. As we know, with the *Tanzimat* reforms the Ottomans promulgated edicts in the mid-nineteenth century (1839 and 1856) that formally granted

7 The population of Yemen is divided into two principal religious groups: the *Zaydīs* and the *Shāfiʿīs* (*Sunnīs*). The *Zaydīs* are a moderate branch of *Shiʿī* Islam and for hundreds of years maintained political rule over Yemen. The *Zaydī* state was established in the northern areas of Yemen at the end of the ninth century, and over time succeeded in gaining control over much of the rest of the country. At the head of the *Zaydī* state stood the imam, a figure possessing both religious and political authority. The Ottomans conquered Yemen in 1530, but were expelled in the 1630s by the *Zaydī* dynasty of the *Qāsimīs*, which ruled the country almost continuously until the mid-twentieth century. For the *Zaydī* and *Shāfiʿī* communities, their religious differences and its social and political implications, see Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: Univ. of California Press, 1993).

equal rights to the *dhimmi*s and improved their legal standing in numerous fields.⁸ Ahmad Mukhtar Pasha, the first Ottoman *vali* of Yemen, accordingly sought to match the legal position of Yemeni Jews to that of Jews in other parts of the empire; in other words, he sought to annul their legal status as *dhimmi*s. However, Yemeni Muslims, led by religious scholars, fiercely opposed this change, which in their eyes ran counter to both national custom and religious law. Their opposition forced the Ottomans to abandon their attempt at reform, which was most evident in their inability to cancel the *jizya* tax (levied on non-Muslims only). Another example was the inability of the Ottoman governor (in 1874) to annul the “Latrines Decree,” which beginning in the eighteenth century imposed upon the Jews of Sanaa and other towns the occupation of gathering and disposing human excrement, as well as removing animal corpses from the public space.⁹

Additionally, following the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, the slogans of justice, equality, freedom, and independence voiced by proponents of the revolution reached Yemen. Numerous Jews, who knew that in other parts of the empire Jews enjoyed equality before the law, hoped that the new regime would apply this principle to them. In particular, they expected the annulment of the *jizya* tax and the cancellation of *sharia* law that barred Jews from testifying against gentiles, but they were once again disappointed.¹⁰ Following the revolution, in an attempt to disrupt the existing order, some of Sanaa’s Jews replaced their traditional Yemeni Jewish clothing with European dress, and even began to wear the fez in the style of the Ottoman Turks. This change in Jewish attire was not welcomed by Yemeni Muslims.

8 On the *Tanzimat* era of reforms, see M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2008), 72–108; on the *Tanzimat* in Yemen, see Thomas Kuhn, *Empire, Islam and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849–1919* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2011), 31–52.

9 For the *Latrines Decree*, the Ottoman failure to annul this statute, and opposition by Jewish excrement collectors who were concerned about losing their jobs, see Yehuda Ratzaby, “*Yehudei Teman tahat shilton ha-Turkim (ha-gzerot shel 1873–1876 le’or te’udot hadashot)*” [The Jews of Yemen under Turkish Rule (The Decrees of 1873–1876 in View of New Documents)], *Sinai* 64 (1969), 54; Amram Qorah, *Se’arat Teman* [The Storm of Yemen] (Jerusalem: privately published, 1954), 26–27; Bernard Haykel, *Revival and Reform in Islam: The Legacy of Muhammad al-Shawكاني* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 125–26; Mark S. Wagner, *Jews and Islamic Law in Early 20th-Century Yemen* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 2015), 40, 98.

10 See “A letter from *Beth Din* Sanaa to *hahambaşı* Rabbi Nahum in Istanbul,” published in *Ha’olam*, 9 February, 1909. The letter conveys the Jews’ request for equality before the law, as stated in the constitution; see also Ratzaby, “The Jews of Yemen,” 54.

3 Nurturing Ties with the Jewish Diaspora

As Yemen became an Ottoman province (*vilayet*), gentile and Jewish traders, messengers and journeymen travelled easily; letters, newspapers, and books in Hebrew arrived in Yemen, primarily via Palestine and Egypt; and Yemeni Jews became better informed of developments in the Jewish diaspora. This literature attracted readers and brought some of the ideas of the Jewish Enlightenment (*haskala*), which had been in progress since the eighteenth century. Some of the new ideas – especially the aspiration to improve education and incorporate secular subjects in the curriculum – found a receptive ear among many of Sanaa’s Jews and their rabbis.¹¹ This leadership, which had never before contacted outside Jewish organizations, appealed for the first time to the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU) in Paris and the Anglo-Jewish Association in London for assistance in establishing a modern school. After the heads of the community in Saana became disenchanted with the Jewish organizations, which were slow in offering assistance to erect a modern school, they asked Ottoman authorities to establish one for them. Nowhere else in their Empire had the Ottomans engaged in establishing special schools for the Jews; however, since they had failed in Yemen to impose Ottoman modern public schools (*maktab rushdiyya*) for both Muslims and Jews, in 1910 they established a specific Ottoman Jewish school (*maktab*), which was the first modern school for the Jews of Yemen.¹²

Moreover, the Ottomans changed the governance of the Jewish community by connecting it to Istanbul. In Yemen, the Sanaa *bet din* (Jewish court) was acclaimed as the most prominent legal court, but it possessed only moral authority over other communities. Even in mundane matters there was no single Jewish leadership recognized by all. The Ottomans, in line with their wish to standardize their administration, established the position of *hahambaşı* (chief rabbi) in 1872, which unified the Jewish religious and political leadership in one office. This office became subordinate to the *hahambaşı* of Istanbul, who was regarded as the supreme office in the hierarchy of chief rabbis of all of the

11 On the Jewish Enlightenment in Yemen and the dispute over the study of the *Kabbala* (Jewish mysticism), see Eraqi Klorman, *Traditional Society in Transition*, 20–69.

12 This school represented a true revolution in educational methods and curriculum – the study of languages (Turkish, Arabic and Hebrew) and secular subjects alongside religious ones – and it attracted numerous students. However, following an intracommunal dispute over the study of the *Kabbala*, the school was closed in 1915.

communities in the Ottoman Empire.¹³ This innovation created a formal and continuous link with the Jewish center in Istanbul, and helped to strengthen ties between the Jews of Yemen and those in the rest of the Ottoman Empire.

4 Environmental and Political Disruptions

Following the Ottoman occupation, Yemen experienced internal disorder resulting from tribal revolts and insurrections against the foreign regime. In addition, natural disasters, such as the 1903–05 drought, caused starvation, epidemics, and great human suffering. The writings of Abraham ‘Arusi, a contemporary Jewish writer, reveal the great rupture of social and communal cohesion. He describes people wandering the country in search of food, many ‘dying of hunger on the roads, in houses, streets, markets and deserts.’ In desperation, ‘a father would not have mercy on his son and a son would not have mercy on his father. Each would care for his soul, to fill his stomach because he is starving.’¹⁴ This environmental disaster coincided with the rebellious attacks against the Ottomans, and the siege of Sanaa by Imam Yahyā Hamīd al-Dīn in late 1904. Food scarcity in the city brought terrible famine and death to thousands. ‘Arusi’s writings and Sulayman Habshush’s chronicle recount people selling everything they owned for food, and even eating donkeys, dogs, cats and rats. Cases of cannibalism and the eating of infant flesh are recorded.¹⁵

13 Stanford J. Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1991), 149–55; Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, *Yehudei Teman: historia, hevra, tarbut* [The Jews of Yemen: History, Society, Culture], Vol. 3 (Raanana: The Open Univ. Press, 2008), 14–15.

14 Abraham ‘Arusi, *Qore ha-Dorot*, a manuscript written circa 1928–1930, printed by Sagiv Mahfud, (Bene Braq: Sagiv Mahfud and the Association for Cultivating Society and Culture, 2019), 319; for mass internal migration in Yemen due to ecological disasters during the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, see Blumi, *Chaos in Yemen*, 54.

15 ‘Arusi, *Qore ha-Dorot*, 320; Sulayman Habshush, “Sefer eshkoloth merurot – A chronicle of the events in Sanaa in 1904–1905,” in *Ha-Temanim: Historia, Sidrei Hevra, Hayei Ruah*, ed. Menahem Ben Sasson (Jerusalem: Makhon Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1983), 175–76, 181. For other instances of the consumption of dogs, cats, rats, corpses and even infant cannibalism in Ottoman Syria and Lebanon during the travails of World War I, which were accompanied by multiple locust infestations, see Najwa al-Qattan, “When Mothers Ate their Children: Wartime Memory and the Language of Food in Syria and Lebanon,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46 (2014), 719–36.

Wasi'i, a Yemeni historian, estimates that close to half of the city's inhabitants perished of hunger.¹⁶

Saana surrendered to the imam's forces in around April 1905,¹⁷ only to be recaptured by the Ottomans in September. This prolonged warfare ended only in 1911 with the Treaty of Daan, which was signed by Imam Yahya and the Ottoman *vali* Izzet Pasha, and granted the imam the authority over the Zaydi populated areas of Yemen, including responsibility over the affairs of the Jews.¹⁸ These environmental disruptions and political disorders temporarily prompted movements of people from one part of Yemen to another, as well as permanent internal migration and emigration.

5 Deterioration of the Jewish Economic Base

During the period of Ottoman rule, there was an increase in economic activity due to population growth in the country's center, and the presence of large military corps and bureaucratic clerics and their families, who brought customs of consumption, new types of commodities, and even substantial means of payment. A great many merchants, Jews among them, came to Yemen in the wake of the Ottoman army, and developed trading ties between it and other countries. Some Yemeni Jews from the center of the country even adapted to

16 Abd al-Wasi' ibn Yahya al-Wasi'i, *Tarikh al-Yaman* (Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Salafiyah, 1927), 205; see also Yom Tov Tsemah's travel log, who during his 1910 visit to the Jewish community of *Sanaa* recorded tales of famine related to the 1904 drought and siege, published by Abraham Almaliyah, "Masa' Yom Tov Tsemah le-Teman" [Yom Tov Tsemah's Journey to Yemen], in *Shevut Teman* [Returnees from Yemen], eds. Yisrael Yesha'yahu and Aharon Zadoc (Tel Aviv: mi-Teman le-Zion Press, 1945), 280–81.

17 The literature gives conflicting dates for the surrender of *Sanaa Qorah*, the last chief rabbi of *Sanaa*, indicates the eve of Passover, April 1905, which is also the date mentioned by Sulayman Habshush, "Sefer eshkoloth," 186, and Tsemah, in *Almaliyah*, "Yom Tov Tsemah," 282. However, Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen*, 216 and 345, note 19, indicates three additional dates in 1905: 5 March, 20 March, and 30 April.

18 Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen*, 271–72; Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, 176–77; Thomas Kuhn, "Shaping and Reshaping Colonial Ottomanism: Contesting Boundaries of Difference and Integration in Ottoman Yemen, 1872–1919," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27 (2007), 315–31; *ibid.*, *Empire, Islam and Politics*, 201–46; Willis, *Unmaking*, 115–17; for internal factors that pushed Imam Yahya to sign the Daan agreement, see Blumi, *Chaos in Yemen*, 62–64. The imam's responsibility over the Jews and their treatment under *sharia* law, and not according to the modern changes of the Ottoman reforms, was stipulated in the sixth clause of the secret portion of the Treaty of Daan. A copy of the text of the secret agreement was given to me in Princeton in October 2011 by M. Şükrü Hanioglu.

the expanding economic activities. They supplied services to the Ottoman administrative apparatus and military forces, and more Jews began to engage in trade. As the Ottoman residence in Sanaa was in close proximity to the Jewish quarter, Ottoman administrators and military men often visited the Jewish market and bought supplies.¹⁹ The amelioration of the welfare of Sanaa's Jews attracted Jews from neighboring villages, to the extent that the Jewish quarter had to be enlarged just four years after the Ottoman conquest.²⁰

Despite this, under Ottoman rule Yemen became increasingly linked to the global economy, and experienced the opening of its markets to imported industrial products that competed with local goods in both quality and cost. This process undermined the traditional infrastructure of the Jewish economy, which was based on crafts and cottage industries, and centered on supplying products to Muslim neighbors. By the end of the nineteenth century, Jews were being pushed from crafts into retail trade, peddling in particular.²¹ The Jewish peddler wandering for weeks across tribal territory in search of a livelihood became a familiar phenomenon. The absence of these artisans, who came home only for the Sabbath or Jewish holidays, lessened the production capacity of the family unit, and further weakened its economic structure.

6 Increased Pressures toward Labor Migration

In addition to significant internal migration, the aforementioned social and economic disruptions led to widespread labor migration by Jews and Muslims who became aware of economic opportunities elsewhere. Aden, which was the main crossroads for the movement of commodities to and from Yemen, became a major destination for such migration. In addition, this city had many small factories based on more advanced technologies than in Yemen, and attracted cheap Yemeni labor. Across the Red Sea there were other locations that attracted Jewish and Muslim migrant labor: Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Egypt, which like Aden were ruled by Western colonialist powers.²² At that time, British-ruled India, which had historical ties with

19 Eraqi Klorman, *The Jews of Yemen*, 24–25.

20 Qorah, *Se'arat Teman*, 43.

21 Tsemah, in Almaliyah, "Yom Tov Tsemah," 301.

22 On Aden turning into a commercial center that attracted foreign merchants and laborers, see Scott S. Reese, *Imperial Muslims: Islam, Community and Authority in the Indian Ocean, 1839–1937* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2017), 56–65. For Yemeni Muslim migration to East Africa, see Iain Walker, "Hadramis, Shimalis and Muwalladin: Negotiating

Jewish centers in Yemen, also became a destination for Jewish migration. Yemeni Jewish immigrants settled mainly in Kochi (*Cochin*) and Calcutta, and participated in the international commercial network between the Far East and the Mediterranean basin.²³

Some of the Yemeni Jewish migrants joined Adeni Jewish settlements, which were created in East Africa. A number of Adeni Jews entered the Indian-British commercial network, and later expanded their commercial activities to the coast of East Africa.²⁴ Being British subjects and utilizing business ties and family relations, these Jews developed commercial ventures with other Red Sea centers in Yemen, Sudan, Egypt and elsewhere. Adeni Jews are recorded as founding commercial colonies in Eritrea in the 1890s, and formed thriving trading communities in the port town of Massawa and in Asmara. These Adeni settlements attracted Jewish migrants from inland Yemen, who worked there as artisans, peddlers, and religious functionaries. Jewish craftsmen increasingly traveled to East Africa, working for several months or years before returning home. However, some remained in Africa, mainly in Eritrea, creating satellite Yemeni Jewish communities there.²⁵

The migration of Jewish workers, who were part of a familial network of production, further hurt the family-run crafts shops, and fueled the search for solutions to economic hardship. This process was reinforced by the immigration of Yemeni Jews to Palestine.

Cosmopolitan Identities between the Swahili Coast and Southern Yemen," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2 (2008), 44–59; Samson A. Bezabeh, *Subjects of Empires/Citizens of States: Yemenis in Djibouti and Ethiopia* (Cairo: American Univ. in Cairo Press, 2016).

- 23 On Yemeni Jewish migrants in India, see Walter J. Fischel, *ha-Yehudim be-Hodu: helqam ba-hayyim ha-kalkaliyim ve-ha-mediniyim* [The Jews in India: Their Contribution to the Economic and Political Life], in Hebrew (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1960), 40, 54, 109, 196; Mordechai Abir, "ha-Sahar ha-ben-le'umi ve-ha-yehudim be-Temen ba-me'ot ha-15–19" [International Commerce and Yemeni Jewry – 15th to 19th Centuries], *Pe'amim* 5 (1980), 5–28, in Hebrew; Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, "Testament and Inheritance Reflecting Family Dynamics in Jewish Yemen in the 19th Century," *Journal of Family History* 39 (2014), 61–71.
- 24 On the Jews of Aden, see Joseph B. Schechtman, "The Jews of Aden," *Jewish Social Studies* 13 (1951), 133–48; Rickie Burman, ed., *The Jews of Aden* (London: London Museum of Jewish Life and Kadimah Youth Movement, 1991); Reuben Ahroni, *The Jews of the British Crown Colony of Aden* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 1994).
- 25 For further discussion of Jewish migration to East Africa, and to Eritrea in particular, see Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, "Yemen Aden and Ethiopia: Jewish Emigration and Italian Colonialism," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (JRAS)*, Series 3, 19 (2009), 415–26; see also Menashe Anzi, "Yemenite Jews in the Red Sea Trade and the Development of a New Diaspora," *North African Studies*, 17, no. 1 (2017), 79–104.

7 Immigration to Palestine (1881–1918)

Large-scale emigration from Yemen to Palestine began in 1881, some years after the Ottoman conquest. The political change generated the new context of a large empire whose citizens could travel unhindered from one place to another within its borders, and who could make use of the improved routes of transportation under the Ottomans. Awareness of the development of a Jewish settlement in Palestine, and especially in Jerusalem, stirred great interest among Yemeni Jews. The factors of disruption that had encouraged Jewish emigration from Yemen combined with the traditional and religious attachment of Yemeni Jews to the Holy Land, which now seemed more realistic than ever. The desire to reach the Land of Israel was partly colored by messianic hopes. Some Jews explained immigration due to political changes in Yemen and developments in Palestine being a reflection of signs from heaven that redemption was at hand.²⁶

Immigration to Palestine began as a spontaneous and organic development and continued almost unimpeded during the Ottoman period, depending almost entirely on a person's ability to organize and finance the journey. After a few individuals arrived in Jerusalem, and following their inspiring letters to their relatives, approximately fifty families from Sanaa and its vicinity organized and departed for Palestine. Abraham al Naddaf, who was sixteen years old at the time, noted that Muslim leaders wrote to the governor of Hudayda demanding that the travelers be sent back to Saana. Naddaf explains that the Muslim population was alarmed that if all the Jews left, there would be no artisans left in town.²⁷ The governor sent for clarifications from Istanbul, and in the meantime detained this group of migrants in Hudayda. At the same time, Rabbi Sulayman Qara, the Head of the Jewish court of Sanaa and the *hahambaşı*, wrote to Istanbul. He requested that the Yemeni Jews, who were Ottoman subjects, be allowed to travel within the empire with no restrictions. The matter was clarified when a *firman* (edict) from Istanbul was issued and read in public in Sanaa, confirming that all Yemeni Jews had free passage throughout Ottoman territory.²⁸

It is important to note that in contrast to immigration from Yemen, beginning in 1882 the Ottomans often hampered Jewish immigration to Palestine

26 Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, *The Jews of Yemen in the Nineteenth Century: A Portrait of a Messianic Community* (Boston and Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 165–87.

27 Yehuda Ratzaby, "R. Avraham al-Naddaf 'al aliyat rishonim" [Abraham al-Naddaf – Memoirs of the first Immigration], *Sinai* 80 (1977), 141–50.

28 Yehuda Ratzaby, "Zikhronot Rabbi Yoshef Halevi 'al 'aliyyat rishonim" [Rabbi Yosef Halevi Memoirs on the first Immigration], *Qathedra* 17 (1981), 140; Ratzaby, "Avraham al-Naddaf," 144–45.

from European countries, especially from Russia and Romania. They recognized the Zionist national aspirations of some European Jews, and were concerned by the possible creation of another national problem within their empire. Additionally, the growing number of European subjects enjoying the extraterritorial rights of the Capitulations conflicted with Ottoman interests.²⁹ As a result, authorities demanded that European travelers give assurances that the purpose of their visit was only for tourism, to visit Jewish holy sites. In 1890, in line with the further tightening of restrictions on European Jewish immigration, the Ottomans forbade Jews to leave Yemen for Palestine; however, this prohibition was soon removed, while restrictions on Jewish immigration from other countries remained in force until the Young Turk revolution in 1908.³⁰

The first groups of immigrants to Palestine came from Sanaa and the settlements in central Yemen, which were most affected by the upheavals of the time. They settled primarily in Jerusalem. Beginning in 1906, Jews also began to emigrate from the northern parts of Yemen, and soon thereafter from southern Yemeni regions as well. These newcomers to Palestine made their homes in the agricultural colonies (*moshavot*) that had been founded there.

The arrival of the first immigrants and their settlement in Palestine demonstrated to the remaining Jews in Yemen that the possibility of living in the Holy Land was quite real, and that more of them could arrive. Furthermore, for the first time the immigrants enjoyed civil rights they had never had in their homeland, and equality before the law like all subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Similar to most migration movements, the letters that Jews in Yemen received from their relatives in Palestine encouraging them to come were an important factor in motivating them to immigrate. One such letter, dated January 1888, was written by Salem al-Jamal (and his brother Yosef), young immigrants in

29 The Capitulations were commercial and judicial privileges that the Ottomans had unilaterally granted to European powers since the sixteenth century. According to agreements, European subjects residing in Ottoman lands remained under the laws of their country, and were exempted from all Ottoman taxes and duties. See for example Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 78–79.

30 Responding to European pressure, the Ottomans permitted Jewish immigration from Europe provided that the immigrants would come as individuals and not as part of a large party. The prohibition for European Jewish immigration was renewed following a considerable wave of immigrants who fled Russia due to a series of persecutions. See Yehoshua Porat, *Tsemihat ha-tenu'a ha-le'umit ha-'aravit ha-Palestina'it 1918–1929* [The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918–1929], (Jerusalem: The Hebrew Univ. in Jerusalem, 1971), 18; David Kushnir, “ha-Dor-ha-’aharon le-shilton ha-othmanim be-’Eretz-Yisrael, 1882–1914” [The Last Generation for the Ottoman Rule in Palestine, 1882–1914], in *Toldot ha-yishuv ha-yehudi be-Eretz Yisrael me’az 1882* [The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz-Israel Since 1882], vol. 1, eds. Moshe Lissak and Gabriel Cohen (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1989), 60–70; Qorah, *Se’arat Teman*, 49.

Jerusalem. The author sent the letter to his mother Rumya, daughter of Salem, and his other relations in Yemen. He urged his mother, who seemed reluctant to immigrate to Jerusalem with her daughters and sons-in-law, to take the long journey and join him.

I wish that you see, my mother, how Jerusalem is like real heaven.... do not feel sorry for leaving behind property [...]. In Jerusalem you will relax peacefully, you will have food, clothing and much respect. We do not worry here about housing, despite the fact that we are renting – all because of wonderful Jerusalem and because loving her conquers all.

The author then addressed his brothers-in-law, asking them to notify him as soon as they left Yemen, so that ‘we will prepare the house for you and welcome you as best as we can. And even if you arrive without a penny, we will support you for a while, with God’s help.’³¹

The Yemeni Jewish immigrants thus cultivated interconnections across geographical boundaries, and served as absorbing agents for newcomers. At times, when receiving conditions were not amenable, the immigrants in Palestine sent their relations messages that they should stay in Yemen and wait for a better time.³² My analysis of Jewish immigration from Yemen to Palestine emphasizes its independence from the Zionist movement and its emissaries and institutions. Chronologically speaking, the onset of Yemeni immigration was simultaneous with the beginning of Zionist immigration to Palestine from Eastern Europe. However, national-Zionist ideals played no part in the Yemeni case. The Zionist movement arose as a response to the distress of Eastern European Jewry. It sought to provide an answer to the failure of the emancipation movement, modern anti-Semitism, the oppression of Jews, and pogroms; it was couched in secular terms and strove for a political solution to Jewish existence, one that coalesced with the migratory trends of Eastern European Jewry, which were rooted in social, economic, and political transformations shaped by the forces of modernity. These trends increased following the oppression and pogroms against the Jews of Russia in 1881–84 (‘Storms in the Negev’).³³

31 “A letter from the Land of Israel to Yemen – Judeo-Arabic Text and Hebrew Translation,” in Yehuda Levi Nahum, *Mitsfunoth Yehudei Teman*, ed. Shimon Greidi (Tel Aviv: Afiqim, 1986), 267–68 (my translation).

32 “Yom Tov Tsemah,” in *Almaliyah*, 298.

33 Most of the immigrants set out for Western Europe and the United States in particular. A minority set their sights on Palestine. See Yoav Peled, *Othonomia tarbutit u-ma’vaq ma’madi: hitpathut ha-matza’ ha-le’umi shel ha-bund* [Class and Ethnicity in the Pale: The Political Economy of Jewish Workers’ Nationalism in the Late Imperial Russia]

In Yemen things were entirely different. Emancipation had not reached the country, modern anti-Semitism was unknown, and secularization trends were as alien to the Jewish population as they were to Muslims. During the period under consideration, the Jews remained *dhimmis* with all that this status implied, but they were not subject to oppression by the authorities or local inhabitants.³⁴ Throughout the entire period of the Jewish presence in Yemen, no local Zionist organizations were active within Yemen, and the Zionist movement never had a permanent outpost there. In 1911, the Palestinian Bureau sent Shmuel Yavne'eli on a mission to encourage the immigration of Jewish workers from Yemen.³⁵ However, it would not be accurate to call the Yavne'eli immigration a Zionist movement.³⁶ The Zionist Organization's chief involvement in Yemeni immigration was via an immigration bureau in the British Colony of Aden established in 1928. The bureau assisted immigrants with travel arrangements and distributed immigration certificates to Jews who had already left Yemen and arrived in Aden, and were waiting for their turn to immigrate.

Jewish immigration to Palestine thus stemmed firstly from general migration trends initiated during the Ottoman era, which also affected the Yemeni Muslim population. This wave of immigration reflected social disruption such as political unrest, warfare, environmental disasters, and economic distress. Most of the Jewish communities in Yemen were very small, poor, and incapable of supporting the needy and distressed. Even the largest Jewish community of Sanaa did not have institutional resources and strong leadership

(Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1997), 29–34; Mordechai Eliav, *Eretz Israel ve-Yishuva ba-me'a ha-19, 1777–1917* [Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv in the 19th Century, 1777–1917] (Jerusalem: Kether, 1978), 278–83; Gur Alroey, *Imigrantim: ha-Hagira ha-yehudit le-Eretz Yisrael be-reshit ha-me'a ha-esrim* [Immigrants: Jewish Immigration to Palestine in Early Twentieth Century] (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2004), 113–33, in Hebrew.

34 Yaaqov Goldman met the Yemeni immigrants in Jerusalem in 1882, and explored the reasons that had brought them there. In an article written in 1885 for the newspaper *Ha'asif*, he stressed that immigration to Palestine had not been motivated by pressures in the Yemeni environment: "It is a common misconception among many of the writers, who pronounced that the unbearable yoke of exile had aroused the hearts of these our brethren to leave their homeland and go up to Zion. For when we investigated the matter from the reports of the Yemenis themselves, we came to realize that ever since the kingdom of Sanaa came under the rule of the Sultan of *Togarma* [Turkey], the Jews have known no trouble, and they suffer no deprivations of any of the rights of the Mohammedans, the residents of that country." Cited in Avraham Yaari, "Aliyyat yehudei Teman le-Eretz-Israel" [The Immigration of the Jews of Yemen to The Land of Israel,] in *Shevut teman*, eds. Israel Yesh'yahu and Aharon Zadoc (Tel-Aviv: mi-Teman le-Zion 1945), 20.

35 The Palestinian Bureau was created in 1908, and headed by Arthur Ruppin, as the executive arm of the World Zionist Organization in Palestine.

36 For more about Yavne'eli's mission to Yemen see Eraqi Klorman, *The Jews of Yemen*, 224–30.

to rely upon. These factors combined with pull factors attracting Jews to Palestine, including intense religious attraction of Palestine, its accessibility as an Ottoman province, political liberties of equal civil rights for all inhabitants, and the impact of Yemeni immigrants who settled there and sent encouraging letters to their families back in Yemen to join them. The Yemeni Jews created informal migrant networks based on family and communal acquaintances, and even Yemeni regional affinities. Such links provided vital resources for the newcomers in social and economic matters. They helped provide shelter for the initial period, gave support in personal matters, and assisted in coping with the *Yishuv's* institutions.³⁷

These factors led to approximately eight per cent of the total number of Yemeni Jews (about five thousand people) making their way to Palestine in 1914, a figure unmatched by any other Jewish community. In 1918, they accounted for 7.9 per cent of all Jews in Palestine (which numbered 88,000 out of a total population of 770,000).³⁸

Formed during the Ottoman era, the large Yemeni Jewish community became a social network and anchor that attracted other migrants in the years to come. Jewish immigration to Palestine continued after World War I during the British Mandate Government of Palestine.³⁹ This movement paralleled significant Muslim emigration from Yemen,⁴⁰ which culminated during the 1940–44 famine. After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and following Imam Ahmad's (r. 1948–62) permission to leave in May 1949, the majority of the Jews (nearly fifty thousand) left Yemen and immigrated to Israel between 1948 and 1951.⁴¹

37 On the importance of migrant social networks, see Castles and Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 26–29.

38 Hanna Herzog, *ʿAdatīyut politit – dimuy mul metzʿūt: nituakh sotziologi-histori shel ha-reshimot ha-ʿadatīyot le-ʿasifat ha-nivharim ve-la-kneset (1920–1984)* [*Political Ethnicity – The Image and Reality: Socio historical Analysis of the 'Ethnic' Lists to the Delegates Assembly and the Knesset (1920–1984)*] (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1986), 34.

39 See Eraqi Klorman, *Traditional Society in Transition*, 91–112.

40 Muslim emigration from Yemen headed to various destinations among them Aden, other areas in the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa, Egypt, Europe and the USA.

41 For more on Yemeni Jewish immigration to Israel, see Tudor Parfitt, *The Road to Redemption: The Jews of Yemen 1900–1950* (Boston and Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 178–285; and Eraqi Klorman, *Traditional Society in Transition*, 112–16; Esther Meir-Glitzenstein, *The "Magic Carpet" Exodus of Yemenite Jewry: An Israeli Formative Myth*, Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, Portland and Toronto 2014.

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Flags and Blood: European Jews, Refugee Restrictions, and Rioting in 1929 Palestine

Sarah Shields

During the week that began on Friday, 23 August 1929, 133 Jews and 116 Arabs were killed in a convulsion of violent incidents in Palestine. Rioters burned homes, desecrated synagogues, and destroyed mosques from Jerusalem to Hebron, Jaffa to Safed. Arab residents massacred their Jewish neighbors in Hebron, Nablus, and Safed.¹ These riots were transformative, effectively polarizing the population of mandate Palestine with consequences reaching far into the future. Some historians have argued that the violence actually consolidated the categories of combatants for decades to come, while Hillel Cohen has referred to the riots as Year Zero.²

Even though most of the violence took place outside Jerusalem, historians usually begin the story in the city with the annual *Tisha B'Av* prayers commemorating the destruction of the ancient Temple. On that day, a group of nationalist Jewish activists from Tel Aviv received permission from British authorities for a quiet demonstration in Jerusalem and at the Western Wall of the ancient Temple. The approved plan included a procession to the Government House to hand over their statement demanding continuous and unrestricted access to the holy site, and would be followed by a stop at the Wall itself, which the British insisted be unprovocative. Instead, when they reached the wall the youth read their demands, unfurled Zionist flags, chanted slogans, and sang “Hatikvah,” the song that would become Israel’s national anthem.

The events at the wall threw fuel on a fire that had been burning for months. Skirmishes between local Arabs and Jews had continued intermittently since the events of the previous September, when British police clumsily interrupted Jewish prayers on the holy day of Yom Kippur. Jewish officials objected to a building project on the Haram-i Sharif, the area above the remaining wall of the ancient Temple that housed a number of important mosques and holy sites.

1 Great Britain and Walter Shaw, Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929 (London: H.M.S.O., 1930), 63, 65, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015066430987>.

2 Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929*, trans. Haim Watzman (Waltham, MA: Brandeis Univ. Press, 2015).

Technicalities of law and custom came to the fore, as each group interpreted the other's intentions as efforts to exclusively claim the shared holy sites.

On Friday, 16 August, the day after the flying of the flag, Muslims gathered to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. After worship services some moved to the street in front of the wall, and destroyed Jewish holy books that had been left there. The riots began on 23 August, just one week later. Cohen summarized them in the following manner: 'There are lynchings of Arabs and Jews along the margins of the Old City, Arab attacks on Jewish neighborhoods, and many casualties.'³ Rumors flew as attacks began, and grew so quickly in scope and inaccuracy that people as far away as Hebron and Safed 'knew' that Jews/Arabs were killing one another, and began their own attacks in retaliation. Arabs massacred Jews in Hebron and attacked Haifa on the 24th, and by the 25th they were attacking Jews in Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and outlying settlements. The Safed massacres took place on the 29th.

Historians and contemporary officials alike have attributed the riots to local and regional causes. The British government in charge of the Palestine Mandate carried out two extensive studies to ascertain the origins of the riots, and their reports emphasized economic hardship.⁴ These reports and extensive Zionist lobbying led the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission to revise its view of the Palestine mandate.⁵ Zionist leaders attributed these attacks to the same sources as the ongoing anti-Jewish pogroms in Europe, namely existential Arab hatred of Jews – which became an integral part of the founding historical narrative of the state of Israel. In an Israeli state convinced that anti-Semitism would rear its head for no apparent reason at any time, the Hebron and Safed massacres were portrayed as a clear illustration that only a strong and powerful Jewish state could ensure the safety of Jews. At the same time, for Arabs in Mandate Palestine, British refusal to protect them reinforced the betrayal of European wartime commitments that had promised them self-government.⁶

This article aims to build on the impressive and extensive scholarship on Palestine under the Mandate and the 1929 riots.⁷ Like the other contribu-

3 Ibid., xviii.

4 Sir John Hope Simpson, "Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development," Oct. 1930, <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/E3ED8720F8707C9385256D19004F057C>; Great Britain and Shaw, *Report of the Commission*.

5 Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2015).

6 Michelle Ursula Campos, "Remembering Jewish-Arab Contact and Conflict," in *Reapproaching Borders: New Perspectives on the Study of Israel-Palestine*, eds. Mark Levine and Sandy Sufian (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 41–65; Cohen, *Year Zero*.

7 Avraham Sela, "The 'Wailing Wall' Riots (1929) as a Watershed in the Palestine Conflict," *The Muslim World* 84 (1994), 60–94, provides a list of historical analyses of the riots published

tions to this collection, this paper will focus on the role of displacement in the postwar period; it was this broader focus that encouraged me to go beyond the local and regional contexts in which the riots are typically viewed. I will argue that violence in Palestine in 1929 must be placed within the context of global ideologies of blood and flags, race and belonging, settlement and colonization. This article links the local – and largely economic – causes the British identified in their reports with the global contexts that exacerbated local violence: the end of empires, the ‘unweaving’ of populations, and the notions of biology that came to equate flags with blood.

The upheaval in August 1929 surprised the government of the Palestine Mandate. Just two months earlier, the British High Commissioner for Palestine had told the League’s Permanent Mandates Commission:

I think I can say that the relations between the two communities continue to improve. There has been little open friction between them ... Apart from the controversy as to the Wailing Wall, my general statement as to the improvement in the relations of the two races holds good ... It has been made clear to me that the Arab population still resents the Balfour Declaration and is hostile to the policy of setting up a national home for the Jews in Palestine. Their hostility is perhaps less marked than it was, but it is still there. The apprehensions of the Arabs that their country would come under the domination of the Jews are abating and the more intelligent of them are realising the advantage accruing to all sections of the population from the influx of Jewish capital and industry.⁸

Despite the High Commissioner’s testimony demonstrating how little British officials understood the situation on the ground, the final Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929 (commonly known

before the early 1990s. More recent work, which is too numerous to list comprehensively, includes: Shira N. Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State* (Redwood City: Stanford Univ. Press, 2013); Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1996); Nina S. Spiegel, *Embodying Hebrew Culture: Aesthetics, Athletics, and Dance in the Jewish Community of Mandate Palestine* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 2013); James Renton, “Flawed Foundations: The Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate,” in *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, ed. Rory Miller (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 15–38; Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2011); Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948*, trans. William Templar (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992); Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Palo Alto: Stanford Univ. Press, 2015).

8 League of Nations, “Permanent Mandates Commission, Minutes of the Fifteenth Session, Held at Geneva from July 1st to 19th, 1929.” Geneva: League of Nations, 1929.

as the Shaw Commission report) absolved British officials of any blame for the violence. The Shaw report identified immigration and land ownership as the two most important issues leading to the riots. Immigration had indeed peaked in 1925, which saw the arrival of almost 34,000 new immigrants.⁹ The Shaw Commission found that the Arabs in Palestine feared that continuing high levels of Jewish immigration from Europe would disrupt their own lives and livelihoods.

Many scholars have pointed to the common existence of mixed religious communities within late Ottoman Palestine. Although hardly a halcyon period devoid of conflict, especially for Armenians and other Christians, the last centuries of Ottoman rule in Palestine were marked by various groups of Jews living without interreligious violence. Jews did not even constitute one unified community set apart from the other residents of Ottoman Palestine. 'Palestine had probably the world's most diverse Jewish social landscape in ethnic, cultural, and linguistic terms,' according to historian Yair Wallach.

Different Jewish ethnic communities retained their uniqueness, in terms of everyday language, clothes, food and religious customs, as well as communal organization. Each community spoke its own language ... The communities kept separate synagogues, traditional schools, hospitals, butchers, burial services, soup kitchens and old people's homes. The large Ashkenazi Orthodox population, while sharing Yiddish as a language of speech and cultural practices, was itself composed of several communities and was far from a single community.¹⁰

Historians of the Ottoman period have been documenting the rich cultural, religious, and political diversity of these various Jewish groups. Jews participated in the new celebrations for the 1908 Constitution and took part in parliamentary elections,¹¹ even 'Zionist' Jews advocated cultural or geographic autonomy under the Ottoman umbrella through the end of the empire.¹²

9 Great Britain and Shaw, *Report of the Commission*, 101.

10 Yair Wallach, "Rethinking the Yishuv: Late-Ottoman Palestine's Jewish Communities Revisited," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 16 (2017), 278.

11 Michelle Ursula Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Palo Alto: Stanford Univ. Press, 2011); Wallach, "Rethinking the Yishuv."

12 Wallach, "Rethinking the Yishuv," 288. Yuval Ben-Bassat, "Rethinking the Concept of Ottomanization: The Yishuv in the Aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45 (2009), 461–75.

It was only with the defeat of the empire in the context of global nationalism coupled with the betrayal of imperial promises that Arabs began to mobilize against Zionist demands. Abigail Jacobson argues that Arab nationalists before 1914

favored a certain kind of cooperation with the Zionists ... The Arabs' arguments against the Zionists originated from what they perceived as a Zionist attempt to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Their arguments were mainly related to the separatist tendencies of the Zionist movement and the failure of the Zionists to integrate into the local population, to learn its language, and to adopt Ottoman citizenship.¹³

Jacobson argues it was not so much that non-Jews rejected Jews as Jews, but rather they feared that efforts by Jews to establish their own state would displace the existing non-Jewish population. For Arabs, a Jewish state would be a continuation of foreign control. The Zionists' continuing insistence that their presence did not constitute a threat seemed disingenuous at best. Hillel Cohen captured the incongruity succinctly by quoting one of the Jewish fighters in 1929, who in trying to pass a local Arab during the conflict, told him: 'We mean no harm to you, let us pass,' adding 'But the Land of Israel will be ours no matter what.'¹⁴

Their anxiety about the effects of new Zionist immigration were quite well justified, according to Sir John Hope Simpson's report on land tenure under the British mandate.¹⁵ For the Zionist project to succeed, immigrating Jews needed to find employment. The Third Aliyah (1918–23) consisted largely of young, urban, Central and Eastern European Zionists with minimal agricultural training or experience. In order to make sure they remained in Palestine, the Yishuv needed to provide jobs, but Zionist leaders recognized that untrained immigrant workers could not compete on the labor market with seasoned local Arab agricultural workers.¹⁶ Even in urban settings, Arab labor was much cheaper than the wages, conditions, and benefits demanded by Jewish immigrants from Europe. High-demand immigrant workers could not compete in a

13 Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire*, 12. Cohen traces the suspicion earlier to the mid-nineteenth century, as European powers began to interfere in the Ottoman Empire and offer "protection" to local minorities. See Cohen, *Year Zero*, 16.

14 Cohen, *Year Zero*, 28.

15 Simpson, "Palestine."

16 David Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs. David Ben-Gurion* (Cleveland: the World Publishing Company, 1970), 50–51.

free labor market. The success of the entire Zionist project apparently would depend on what came to be known as the ‘conquest of labor.’¹⁷

The context was neither religious nor ethnic, as both Arab and Jewish landowners and factory owners preferred hiring the cheaper and more experienced Arab labor they had always employed. The situation proved endlessly frustrating for labor leader (and later President) David Ben Gurion, who even suggested that Jewish orchard owners were engaging in ‘economic anti-Semitism.’ The only way that labor Zionist leaders could create – and protect – jobs for Jewish immigrants would be to prohibit the hiring of Arabs.

The practice of exclusion was not, of course, depicted or understood as such by those who engaged in it, or as constituting the kind of discrimination from which many of these Jewish immigrants had themselves suffered in their countries of origin. Nor was the conflict this practice entailed seen as ethnic or national in essence. Rather, the Jewish workers ... were engaged in a defensive battle to protect the rights and gains of ‘organized’ (that is, Jewish) [labor] against the threat of ‘unorganized’ (that is, Arab) labor.¹⁸

As the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund purchased land, often from absentee owners, they insisted that only Jewish labor could be employed on these new lands.¹⁹

The results were predictable; hiring only Jewish immigrants necessarily displaced previous workers. As Nablus mayor Sulayman Tuqan explained, this new wave of immigrants had immediate consequences for the livelihoods of the existing population.

17 Zachary Lockman, “Exclusion and Solidarity: Labor Zionism and Arab Workers in Palestine, 1897–1929,” in *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, ed. Gyan Prakash (Princeton Univ. Press, 1994), 211–40.

18 *Ibid.*, 220.

19 Simpson, “Palestine,” 53 quotes The Constitution of the Jewish Agency: Land Holding and Employment Clauses, “The Constitution of the Jewish Agency for Palestine was signed at Zurich on 14th August, 1920. Article 3 (d) and (e) read as follows: (d) Land is to be acquired as Jewish property and subject to the provisions of Article 10 of this Agreement, the title to the lands acquired is to be taken in the name of the Jewish National Fund, to the end that the same shall be held as the inalienable property of the Jewish people. (e) The Agency shall promote agricultural colonisation based on Jewish labour, and in all works or undertakings carried out or furthered by the Agency, it shall be deemed to be a matter of principle that Jewish labour shall be employed ...’

In the early days the Jew who came worked on his land and employed Arab labor. Since immigration commenced in large numbers these Jewish employers have turned away the Arab laborers and have employed Jews in their place thereby throwing out of work a large number of Arabs ... Great harm has been caused to the country by the sale to Jews of large estates ... and this throws out of employment a large number of Arabs. I understand, as all Arabs understand, that the Zionist policy is to dispose of the Arabs in every possible way and to replace them with Jews.²⁰

While Zionist leaders argued publicly that the new industries would add jobs to the overall economy, they used Jewish donations to create new industries, which were to be run by Jewish collectives and worked by members of new Jewish labor unions. However, by 1921 it had become clear to both Jewish and Arab workers on the new Haifa Railway project that they would have to organize together if they were to get decent wages and working conditions. Arab workers asked their unionized Jewish co-workers if they, too, could join the General Organization of Hebrew Workers in the Land of Israel, or Histadrut, which provided not only bargaining strength but also health care, loans, and access to consumer cooperatives. Arab workers' interest in joining the Histadrut pitted the two founding ideologies of the labor Zionists who controlled the Yishuv against each other: would class solidarity triumph, or nationalist exclusivity? The Histadrut rejected Arab membership, offering instead to help Arab workers unionize themselves while preserving the Jewish identity of the organization, which was required to carry out their efforts to settle the land and develop its economy with exclusively Jewish labor.²¹

The Shaw Commission report attributed the 1929 riots to the local population's fear that new immigrants would displace them and threaten their economic survival (though the one dissenting voice on the commission insisted that the answer was for the Arabs to turn away from their exaggerated fears and change their attitudes toward the immigrant Zionists).²² Global conditions exacerbated local problems: the Great Depression was ravaging Palestine by 1927, when economic conditions were so dire that more Jews left Palestine than entered. Work was hard to find – unemployment hit forty per cent in

20 Great Britain and Shaw, *Report of the Commission*, 113.

21 Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*. Zachary Lockman, "Railway Workers and Relational History: Arabs and Jews in British-Ruled Palestine," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35 (1993), 612–13. Ultimately two unions were formed, one including both Jews and Arabs, but neither was strong enough to wring concessions from management.

22 Great Britain and Shaw, *Report of the Commission*, 174–75.

Tel Aviv in February – and the six-year-old Histadrut-controlled construction company went bankrupt. Zionist leaders behaved exactly like European leaders had in hard economic times, circling the wagons and protecting ‘their own.’ In the face of the global depression, it seemed more important than ever to reserve employment for Jews if the Zionist experiment was to succeed.²³ The restrictions Jews had long faced in Europe had been reversed – now, instead of being denied employment, they were denying it to others.

The Shaw Commission recognized that economic conditions were threatening the population. The report exonerated the British Government in the mandates, and eschewed sweeping changes, instead reemphasizing the solution that had been proposed after riots at the beginning of the mandate: immigration must be restricted to the number of people the economy could absorb without displacing current residents (‘Economic Absorptive Capacity’).²⁴ This is the context in which most of the analyses of causation have been situated: a local population facing massive immigration by colonial settlers from Europe; betrayed by the European governments that had promised them independence; afraid of losing their land, livelihoods, and control over their territory; and rioting against the immigrants and their European protectors.

1 The Significance of Global Contexts

However, many of the victims in 1929 were not Zionist Jewish immigrants from Europe. They were local Jews whose families had lived, worked, traded, mourned, and celebrated among their Christian and Muslim neighbors in Palestine for centuries. As integral members of their communities for many generations, they were shocked at being targeted by angry Arab mobs at risk of losing their livelihoods.

Interpreting the riots of 1929 has been central to consolidating a Zionist national history: the innocence of the victims and the nature of the massacres have been presented as compelling evidence for the foundational narratives of the emerging state. Zionist writers have used these brutal Arab attacks on apolitical, non-immigrant Jews to argue that the mobs were motivated simply by racial or religious hatred. For them the massacres of innocent Jews in places like Hebron and Safed were no different than pogroms in Europe, and

23 Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, chapter 2.

24 “The Avalon Project: British White Paper of June 1922,” accessed 1 August 2020, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1922.asp.

illustrated the impossibility of Arabs and Jews ever coexisting peacefully. Hillel Cohen has masterfully dismantled this narrative by showing the complexity of the situation on the ground. Jews were also found guilty of killing innocent civilians. In some places, British troops protected Jews and Arabs, and in others they participated in the violence. Horrific massacres took place, and Arab neighbors protected Jews from other Arabs.²⁵

The complexity of the violence still does not answer the basic questions of causation, which requires a wider lens. The broader context suggests that while the riots were linked to local conditions, as reported by the British, the violence also reflected global contexts that consolidated and reified animosities. These animosities played an enormous role in sparking the violence of 1929. The riots in 1929 Palestine were rooted in three global trends, all of which were the consequence of a post imperial moment: claiming territory based on identity (nationalism), scientific efforts to substantiate that identity (race), and systematic efforts to purify the resulting collective (flags). In short, they were based in the deadly emerging connection between flags and blood.

The 1923 Lausanne Treaty does not mark the end but rather a midpoint of what Donald Bloxham has called the ‘unweaving’ of peoples.²⁶ As the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires dissolved under economic, political, and military stress, their diverse component populations sought new forms of legitimacy. The new legitimizing norm had become nationalism, the idea that a group of people sharing a common history, identity, language, and culture should live together in their own state. However, in the chaotic aftermath of the war that ended these multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious empires, it proved impossible to neatly demarcate territories into homogenous, exclusive nation-states. Too many people were still on the move, and too many borders remained poorly defined or even undefined. If nations were indeed the organizational future after World War I, then creating and policing national boundaries on the ground – and defining and instrumentalizing collective identities within the new states – would become more crucial than ever.

25 Campos, “Remembering Jewish-Arab Contact.” This interpretation continues into the present, and has been extended by Cohen’s new book, *Year Zero*.

26 Donald Bloxham, “The Great Unweaving: The Removal of Peoples in Europe, 1875–1949,” in *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World*, eds. Richard Bessel and Claudia B. Haake (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009).

2 Nationalism

The Zionist immigrants entering Mandatory Palestine in the postwar years were among the casualties of this policing of boundaries and definition of populations. In the decade preceding the riots, over forty per cent of new Zionist immigrants were from Poland, twenty-seven per cent from Russia, and the remaining third from Eastern and Central Europe, the Balkans, and elsewhere.²⁷

Three major push factors led Jews to Palestine in the immediate postwar period. First, counterrevolutionary white armies carried out pogroms during the Bolshevik Revolution, killing Jews they considered sympathetic to the Bolsheviks. Jews were also massacred simply as ‘others’ in an era of population definition. According to Budnitskii, collective attacks against Jews in the Ukraine between 1918–21 took place in some 1,300 locations. Anywhere from fifty-thousand to two hundred thousand Jews were killed in the pogroms, and just as many were raped and wounded. While he considered socioeconomic rivalries and other underlying causes, Budnitskii emphasized the status of Jews as outsiders.

The image of the Jews as traitors and spies became firmly settled in the mind of the average citizen, and especially in the minds of the military. The archetypal act of treason, the symbolic ‘stab in the back,’ materialized in the motif of gunshots fired at retreating forces ... The identity of the Jewish perpetrators varied according to circumstances: they might be Bolsheviks or counterrevolutionaries, bourgeoisie or commissars.²⁸

27 Great Britain and Shaw, *Report of the Commission*, 103. Zionist history refers to them as the third and fourth immigrations (aliyot). The first, from 1918 to 1924, consisted of ideological migrants, laborers who were convinced of the dream of building up the land and establishing the ‘national home’ that had been written into the League of Nations mandate. They were the people who set up the collective farms and established a massive labor infrastructure (the Histadrut). The fourth Aliyah was generally considered to be a group of middle-class business people who brought enough of their own wealth to set up in their new home. See also Jacob Metzer, “Jewish Immigration to Palestine in the Long 1920s: An Exploratory Examination,” *Journal of Israeli History* 27 (2008), 221–51.

28 Oleg Budnitskii, “Shots in the Back: On the Origin of the Anti-Jewish Pogroms of 1918–1921,” in *Jews in the East European Borderlands: Essays in Honor of John D. Klier*, eds. Eugene M. Avrutin and Harriet Murav (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2002), 187, 196, 200–01.

Regardless of the case, Jews were viewed as outsiders and people who did not belong, as traitors to the values and the collective they could never be truly part of.²⁹ Attacks on Jews became part of the bigger project to protect the Ukraine and purge outsiders. Flags and blood.

Second, demarcating the borders between Poland and the Ukraine at the end of World War I extended violent conflict by at least eight months. Looting, assaults, and the killing of Jews began in November 1918, and spread rapidly following a consistent pattern, according to Carole Fink. Authorities disarmed Jewish soldiers, priests preached anti-Communist and anti-Jewish sermons, and rumors spread claiming Jews were loyal to the Bolsheviks rather than the Poles. When Jews insisted on neutrality in the border conflict between Poland and Ukraine, both sides took their neutrality as proof of disloyalty. Carole Fink has described a massive riot in November 1918 in Lemberg (where Jews made up nearly one-third of the population with diverse economic and political affiliations) as the ‘most prolonged and extensive carnage against civilians in Eastern Europe since 1906.’ The attacks left seventy-two dead, 442 wounded, thirty-eight homes destroyed, and three synagogues burned.³⁰ Jews’ refusal to participate in defining the border cemented their status as ‘outsiders,’ as flags and identity became intertwined.

Finally, economic crisis connected to general postwar chaos, global depression, and Poland’s political disorder in the early 1920s resulted in high taxes, skyrocketing inflation, and massive unemployment.³¹ The Fourth Aliyah (1924–28) brought a large influx of middle-class Jewish professionals, shopkeepers, and artisans to Palestine, Jews who had been pushed out of Europe by pogroms, border wars, and economic crisis, all of which were exacerbated by their outsider status.

Ongoing postwar violence linked to defining the nature of the state (the Russian Civil War), establishing borders (Ukraine and Poland), and recovering from the ravages of World War I (Poland) all emphasized the importance of belonging. Border-defining and identity-policing required populations to conform to national ideologies, characteristics, or identities, thereby exacerbating preexisting suspicions of outside ‘others.’ The Jews, long considered outsiders in Eastern and Central Europe, continued to be victims, as states sought homogeneity in the post-imperial, nation-state world.

29 Ibid.

30 Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), 101–13.

31 Joseph Rothschild, “The Ideological, Political, and Economic Background of Pilsudski’s Coup D’Etat of 1926,” *Political Science Quarterly* 78 (1963), 238–49.

TABLE 7.1 Destinations of Jewish refugees

Year	United States	Argentina	Canada
1920	14,292	2,071	116
1921	119,036	4,095	2,763
1922	53,524	7,198	8,404
1923	49,719	13,701	2,793
1924	49,989	7,799	4,255
1925	10,292	6,920	4,459
1926	10,267	7,534	3,587

Refugees fleeing the pogroms and persecution of the postwar years needed to find new places to settle. A memorandum submitted by the Zionist leadership in Palestine to the League of Nations' Permanent Mandates Committee provided a table illustrating the escalation of Jewish migration since the end of World War I.³² The United States far outpaced other countries in Jewish immigration.

3 Racism

Within a short time, Jewish refugees from Europe found that exclusionary policies played a major role across the Atlantic as well.³³ Racial quotas were hardly new in the United States; the Chinese Exclusion Act, for instance, dated from 1882. The geographer Jeremy Crampton has argued that eugenicists played a major role in these immigration laws – a precursor to recent US politics. Influential eugenicists insisted that Jews and other immigrants from southeastern Europe were ‘degrading the Nordic stock of America, and special

32 The table is included on p. 28 of the “Memorandum Submitted through His Excellency the High Commissioner of Palestine to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations by the National Council of the Jews of Palestine, June, 1930,” League of Nations Archives R 2285. The text also mentions South Africa and England as destinations, although they were not included in the table.

33 Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 310–15.

vigilance was required to prevent “race-crossing” or inter-marriage between southeastern Europeans and white Americans.’ Such intermixing could dilute ‘the good qualities of the one stock by the degeneracy of the other.’ To preserve the superior qualities the white Europeans brought to the United States, ‘special concern’ must be paid to Europeans from the compromised southern regions.³⁴

Blood would tell, as twenty-first-century presidential candidates and Victorian aristocrats would both agree. With the US Emergency Quota Act of 1921, policy-makers sought to return to the imagined purer – whiter – blood of earlier Americans. They based their biological calculations on the 1890 census, and together with some fancy arithmetic assumptions, policy makers developed a baseline for proper whiteness for the United States. The new quotas encouraged immigration that would reinforce the predominance of white Americans of northern European origin, while dramatically reducing quotas for people from other world areas. According to one historian:

These new laws were a grand experiment in statecraft and social engineering. They attempted to codify a precise formula for American unity. They applied to European immigrants, albeit less harshly, a nation- and race-based principle of exclusion similar to that which had been pioneered with Asian immigrants. The quotas were calculated to stem the influx of the poor “racial stock” that nativist activists and lawmakers argued made up the recent immigration from southern and eastern Europe, which they contended posed a grave threat to the physical and civic fitness of the nation. The quotas were intended, as well, to keep out dangerous “Bolsheviks” and others who might foment political unrest, types deemed to be overrepresented among the newer immigrants. Those southern and eastern Europeans, who were lazy and dirty, were no longer welcome.³⁵

The results were dramatic: 805,228 immigrants entered the US legally in the year before the 1921 Emergency Quota Act, including 119,036 Jews. In the year

34 Jeremy W. Crampton, “Maps, Race and Foucault: Eugenics and Territorialization Following World War I,” in *Space, Knowledge and Power. Foucault and Geography*, eds. Stuart Elden and Jeremy W. Crampton (New York: Routledge, 2016), 223–44.

35 Libby Garland, *After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921–1965* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2014), 15.

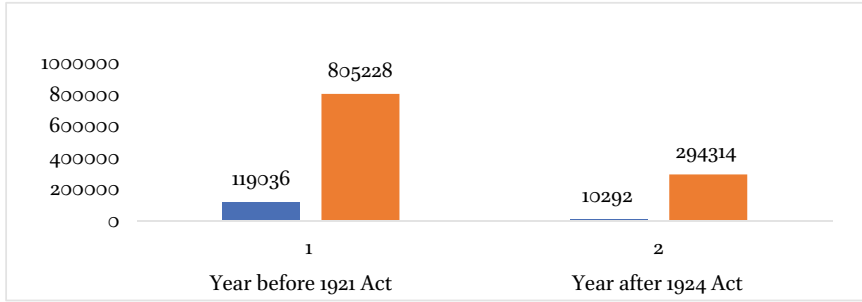


FIGURE 7.1 Immigration to the United States. Orange is total immigrants, blue is Jewish immigrants

after the 1924 Quota Act was instituted, just 294,314 immigrants entered the US legally, only 10,292 of whom were Jews.³⁶

Unable to remain in an increasingly exclusionary, nationalistic, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic Europe, Jewish refugees found themselves unwelcome in the United States, which was working to enforce its own notions of racial purity. By 1925, Jews were entering British Mandatory Palestine in unprecedented numbers. Jacob Metzer summarized this shift in *The Journal of Israeli History*:

The US received about 50 per cent of the entire Jewish international migration between 1920 and 1930, but this substantial weight averages two very different orders of magnitude. In 1920–24, 67.5 per cent of all Jewish international migrants (424,700) reached the US, but only 24 per cent (out of 282,000) did so in 1925–30. This gap reflected mainly the severe new federal restrictions on immigration that were put into law in 1924 ... Moreover, Palestine in receiving about 52 per cent of the entire Jewish international migration (of 66,000) in 1925 (compared to the US share of merely 15.6 per cent in that year) may have been the alternative destination of choice for prospective Jewish emigrants (mainly from Eastern Europe) who were barred from entering the United States in the mid-decade.³⁷

36 The chart is based on Garland; Jewish and total immigration, Garland, *After They Closed the Gates*, 4.

37 Metzer, "Jewish Immigration to Palestine in the Long 1920s," 233. The table is from Great Britain and Shaw, *Report of the Commission*, 101. They note: "The emigration returns for the period 1919–1921 are not complete, but the number of unrecorded departures is not through to have been large."

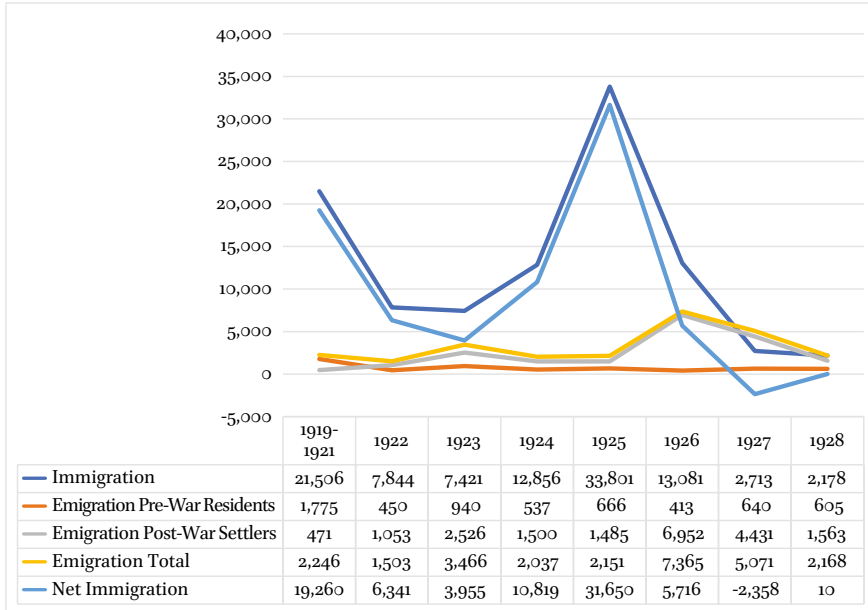


FIGURE 7.2 Immigration and emigration, 1919–1928. The table is from the Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929, p. 101

4 Carrying the Flag

Although their deaths have been mobilized to suggest that Arab violence was anti-Semitic and reflected an essentialist Arab hatred of all Jews, the more complicated facts on the ground – and the great diversity with which both Jews and Arabs responded to the violence – suggest that the fury behind these massacres was much more complex.³⁸ Arabs saved hundreds of Jews during those horrible days, protecting them owing to years of shared existence and traditions of faith, tolerance, and culture. How, with such a well-documented history, could local Arab residents have carried out such horrific attacks?

Global racialized nationalism exacerbated the situation in Palestine in two ways. First, Jews seeking escape found more and more doors closed to them, increasing Jewish immigration to Palestine. Second, Zionists adapted European racialized nationalism for their own projects. The massacres were

38 Cohen, *Year Zero*; Vincent Sheean, *Personal History* (New York: Doubleday, 1935); Maurice Samuel, *What Happened in Palestine; the Events of August, 1929, Their Background and Their Significance* (Boston: The Stratford Co., 1929); Campos, “Remembering Jewish-Arab Contact.”

a consequence of the toxic cocktail of racialized nationalism and colonialism that characterized the world at the end of the war. These dual elements account for the conflagration, which culminated in the massacre of Jews who were in no way related to immigration or the projects of Zionist economic exclusion.

Jews had indeed become the enemy for a segment of the Arab population of Palestine, but not because of their religion – Jews had been living alongside non-Jews in the region for centuries, a coexistence that had been well documented.³⁹ Instead, by 1929 Jews increasingly came to represent European intervention and betrayal. The process may have begun in the mid-nineteenth century when Europeans exploited Ottoman weaknesses by taking religious minorities as protégés, but it was escalated by the very nature of Zionism. These European Jews advocated a Jewish national project at precisely the same moment that Arabs throughout the Middle East were rejecting any European presence. Before the 1929 riots, Palestine's population had already taken note of Iraqi efforts to eject Britain in 1920, as well as the war to expel Spain from the Rif Mountains. They had witnessed brutal French repression of neighboring Syrians rebelling against colonial control. The British Palestine Mandate was increasingly seen as a betrayal of the promise of self-government, and the Balfour declaration – in addition to growing European Jewish immigration – tied the Zionist project clearly to Europe.

The Zionists' own actions and ideologies reinforced that connection to Europe, and emphasized their self-identity as European. Instead of continuing centuries of shared civic life, 'the Zionist leadership strove to separate the two peoples.' Zionist leaders 'repudiated what they regarded as this unhealthy Levantinism. Both they and Palestinian nationalists exerted considerable efforts to impose separation on Arab and Jewish workers during the British Mandate period.' They were assisted in this effort by the British, whose propensity to 'scientifically' divide their colonial subjects has been well documented.⁴⁰

39 Ussama Makdisi, *Age of Coexistence: The Ecumenical Frame and the Making of the Modern Arab World* (Oakland, California : Univ. of California Press, 2019); Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*; Avigdor Levy, *Jews, Turks, Ottomans: A Shared History, Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2002); Wāṣif Jawhariyyah et al., *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1948* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2014).

40 Joel Beinin, "Mixing, Separation, and Violence in Urban Spaces and the Rural Frontier in Palestine," *The Arab Studies Journal* 21 (2013), 16, citing Azoulay. Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire*, 19. According to Lockman, this project was only successful after 1948. There is an extensive bibliography on Britain's propensity to "scientifically" classify its subjects, for example C.J. Fuller, "Colonial Anthropology and the Decline of the Raj: Caste, Religion and Political Change in India in the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26 (2016), 463–86.

Zionists were nationalists, ideologically committed to homogeneity and the ideology of difference that was the hallmark of the era's European nationalisms. While pogroms in Europe had attacked Jews as the non-belonging 'other,' Jews in Palestine – who were nevertheless a minority – cast Arabs as outsiders. As we have seen, growing Jewish immigration to Mandatory Palestine included an economic ideology that froze out existing workers. Their policies contributed to the local population's growing worry about their livelihoods, especially in the context of an ongoing global depression. That worry was exacerbated as the immigrants adopted the exclusionary practices of their former tormentors. Blood and flags had excluded Jews from the competition for land, borders, and identities in Europe, and then prohibited their immigration to an increasingly racist United States. Paradoxically, the Zionist community in Palestine adopted some of those same practices, and responded with their own evolving policies based on blood and flags.

They brought with them the same emphasis on racialized nationalism from which they had escaped. They created collective farms that would only welcome Jews, displaced agricultural workers by requiring Jews to hire only Jewish labor, imposed new language restrictions, and created exclusively Jewish labor unions and institutions. Consequently, the 1929 riots were not caused solely by immigration, but were also the result of a European immigrant community in the Middle East imposing exclusionary European ideologies of blood purity, economic privilege, and national belonging on the existing population.

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PART 4

Lives beyond Borders



Migrating Economic Identities in the Ottoman Empire: Regional Expressions of the Global Market in the Greek Banker's Andreas Syngros *Autobiography*

Catherine Brégianni

The paper analyzes human mobility in the context of market evolution during the long nineteenth century¹ through close study of the autobiography of Andreas Syngros,² a Greek merchant and banker who was active in Constantinople³ beginning in 1845 and who settled in Athens after 1872. A historiographical approach to Syngros as an economic actor reveals the forms that banking activity took in the final decades of the nineteenth century. His transformation from a regional Galata banker active in the Ottoman Empire to an agent involved in international transactions – via Ottoman debt instruments – was in keeping with nineteenth century capital flows and the role of global financial centers,⁴ and reflected the differences among various economic and cultural environments with regard to the creation of integrated markets.⁵

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- 1 The forced exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey following the failed Greek military expedition to Asia Minor in 1919, which were imposed by the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, should be situated in a very different context of migration within Greek and ex-Ottoman territory. The economic aspect of the refugees settlement in Greece was examined in the paper “Institutions Internationales et acteurs locaux: Établissement rural de la population chrétienne échangée et réseaux socio-économiques en Grèce du Nord dans l’entre-deux-guerres,” presented at the *War and Displacement in the Ottoman Empire, 1890s–1923*, University of Lausanne. Conference held in Lausanne (26 Oct. 2018).
 - 2 Andreas Syngros, *Αυτοβιογραφία* [Autobiography], ed. A. Angelou and M. Chr. Chatziioannou, 3 vols (Athens: Estia. Nea Elliniki Vivliothiki, 1998) [first published: Athens: Vivliopoleion tis Estias, 1908].
 - 3 Henceforth Istanbul: The official name of the city changed in 1930 by law of the Turkish Republic, while during nineteenth century international diplomatic acts referred to the city as Constantinople.
 - 4 Youssef Cassis, *Les capitales du capital. Histoire des places financières internationales* (Genève: Slatkine, 2006).
 - 5 Regarding the Ottoman Empire's integration within the global economic system, cf. Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820–1913. Trade, Investment and Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), 131–32.

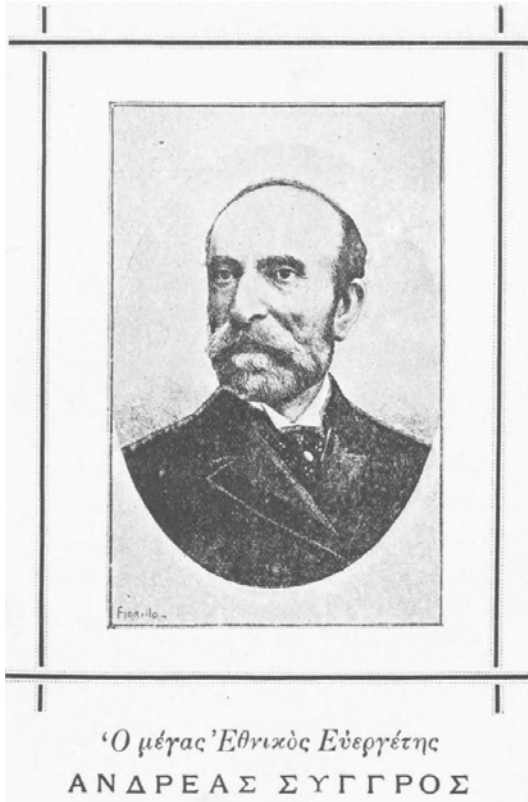


FIGURE 8.1
Andreas Syngros
SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS

Syngros's *Αυτοβιογραφία* [Autobiography] is considered to be a reflection of the *Homo Economicus* paradigm as a self-identity, and simultaneously allows for mapping an enlarged Greek diaspora network, whose economic performance extended to the Ottoman Empire, as well as Eastern and Western Europe. In addition to the importance of the autobiography under examination for economic history, there is the practice of self-observation as a common cultural practice in nineteenth century Europe;⁶ the emergence of multiple autobiographical performances during this period coincided with the intensification of the individual's role in the social and economic sphere.

This article uses the autobiographical narration of the important economic actor A. Syngros, by considering an autobiography as source material for exploring the avenues of market integration during the first era of globalization – the last decades of the nineteenth century – and the intermediary role that

6 Cf. Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. P. Camiller (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014), 3–24.

diasporic networks played within it.⁷ Our underlying principle is that autobiography has an intermediary narrative function, in that the author treats his personal history as if it were the history of another.⁸

1 The *Autobiography* as a Perpetual Movement from Ottoman to Greek Territory, and *Vice Versa*

A broad outline of Syngros's life story is needed to better understand his complementary economic activity in Ottoman and later Greek territory, ranging across international financial centers as well. This will underscore the key aspects of his life, and highlight his continuous movement between the Ottoman Empire and Greece. Syngros was born in Istanbul in 1830 to parents who were originally from the island of Chios; they moved from the island after the Chios massacre of 1822,⁹ a major event of the Greek Revolution launched in 1821. Soon after his birth, his family migrated to Greece, and Syngros received his primary and secondary education on the island of Andros and then Syros, one of the most important Greek ports at the time. He moved to Istanbul in 1845 at a young age, where he worked for an important commercial firm with branches in the Black Sea and Mediterranean ports; he was promoted to its First Secretary in 1847 and soon afterwards, in 1852, he became an associate. After 1860 he expanded his activities to banking, first in the Ottoman Empire and then in Greece. In 1872 he left Istanbul and settled permanently in Athens, where he continued to invest and became active in public benefit works. At the same time, he collaborated with French and British banking firms – as he

7 For autobiographical sources as they relate to economic mentalities, cf. Spyros I. Asdrachas, *Βίωση και καταγραφή του οικονομικού. Η μαρτυρία της αυτοβιογραφίας* [Economy Experienced and Narrated: The Testimony of Autobiography Economy], ed. E. Liata, A. Mathaiou, and P. Polemi (Athens: ΠΕ/ΕΠΕ, 2007).

8 Paul Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 138–39. Aside from this brief comment, the present article does not include any further theoretical interpretation. Cf. Cathérine Brégianni, “Η αφήγηση της επτανησιακής ταυτότητας κατά τον 19^ο αιώνα: αυτοβιογραφικοί τόποι και κοινωνικές ταυτότητες και κοινωνικές αυτοσημάνσεις,” [Ionian Autobiographies and Local Identity during the Nineteenth Century: Autobiographical Territories and Social Patterns of the Self] in *Η Διεθνής Πανιώνιο Συνέδριο. Πρακτικά* [Proceedings of the VIII Panionian International Conference], ed. Hetereia Kytheraikon Meleton (Athens: Hetereia Kytheraikon Meleton, 2009), vol. 2b, 118–37. Cf. in this article for further analysis and relevant literature.

9 For the Chios massacre, cf. Vahakn Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide: Key Elements of Turkish-Armenian Conflict* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 153–54, and William St Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free: The Philhellenes in the War of Independence* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 79–80.

had done earlier with Ottoman finances – dealing with the finances of the Greek state. He served as a deputy in the Hellenic Parliament from 1885 until his death in Athens in 1899. Some years before his death he began to write his autobiography, which remained unfinished.

Syngros sought social acceptance from late nineteenth century Athenian society, which is probably why he decided to expose his economic life (and a selection of fragments from his social life). While he notes in his introduction¹⁰ that he wrote in response to requests from his social circles to recount his life, it is obvious that he aimed also to document his own economic activity, which anticipated the profound changes of economic structures during his era. Given this context, it is quite clear to the reader that he selected the aspects of his social life and economic career that he wanted to describe.

The autobiography was first published in 1908 by the publisher *Βιβλιοπωλείον της Εστίας* [Estia Bookstore] and it was edited by the *Σύλλογος προς Διάδοσιν Ωφελήμων Βιβλίων* [Association for the Diffusion of Valuable Books]. Syngros's widow, Iphigenia, financed the editing and printing. As the novelist Georgios Drosinis describes in his own autobiography, he and Dimitrios Vikelas, the founder of the Association, – who were the first editors of Syngros's autobiography – found the text surprisingly well written.¹¹ Indeed, the language of Syngros's text is not the formal Greek of nineteenth century Greek elites, and often presents a sarcastic and even self-sarcastic style. It should be noted that despite finding the autobiography interesting and well written, Drosinis and Vikelas initially hesitated to accept Iphigenia Syngros's proposal to publish it. They ultimately decided to edit the text and supervise printing, but the Association's brand would not appear on the book's cover page.¹² This hesitation must have been connected to Syngros's reputation as speculator, a stigma that was not counterbalanced by his philanthropic activity in 1880s and 1890s Athens. Syngros's disrepute might be the cause of the limited historiographical use of his *Autobiography*, despite the source's importance for Greek and European economic history.¹³

10 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 1.

11 Alkis Angelou and Maria Christina Chatziioannou, "Introduction," in Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 1, 27–28.

12 Ibid.

13 For a major historiographical use of the *Autobiography*, cf. Georgios Dertilis, *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Κράτους, 1830–1920* [History of the Greek State, 1830–1920], 2 vols, 2nd edition (Athens: Vivliopoleion tis Estias, 2010). Cf. in this study for references in Syngros's *Autobiography* concerning specifically the Lavrion affair (vol. 1, 464–70), and the analysis of the Greek diaspora's entrepreneurial activity in the mid-nineteenth century

The *Autobiography* was initially published in three volumes, with their content following the turning points in the author's life and the relocation of his business headquarters, which was based respectively in Istanbul and Athens. The first volume presents his childhood in Greece, and his exclusively Istanbul period up to the late 1850s. Volume 1 describes Ottoman trade as seen by a non-occidental actor,¹⁴ with its historiographical use potentially highlighting the economic interconnections between the Ottoman Empire and the West.¹⁵ Unsurprisingly, the volume closes with his first long voyage to Western Europe, which was more than a business trip: a journey of openness to the world, and for pleasure. The second and third volumes, from the early 1860s to the end of the nineteenth century, cover a period that appropriately coincides with the first era of globalization. An overall picture could emerge from Syngros's recitation of his own mobility among international financial centers, the Ottoman Empire, and his permanent establishment in Athens. All of these topics are respectively explored in the second and third volumes of the *Autobiography*.

We can now focus on Syngros's life story, which is the story of a businessman, as well as an abstraction of market evolution during the nineteenth century. His entrepreneurial role was marked by major turning points: the transition from being a merchant and banker of the Sultan to an international entrepreneur; involvement in Greece's finances and relations with the state's

(vol. 2, 777–80). Also, *inter alia*, cf. Ioannis Kokkinakes, *Νόμισμα και πολιτική στην Ελλάδα, 1830–1910* [Currency and Politics in Greece, 1830–1910] (Athens: Alexandria, 1999); Kostas Vergopoulos, *Κράτος και Οικονομική Πολιτική στον 19^ο αιώνα: Η ελληνική κοινωνία* [State and Economy in the XIX^e Century: Greek Society] (Athens: Exantas, 1977); Konstantinos Tsoukalas, *Εξάρτηση και αναπαραγωγή: Ο ρόλος των εκπαιδευτικών μηχανισμών στην Ελλάδα (1830–1922)* [Dependence and Reproduction: The Role of Educational Mechanisms in Greece (1830–1922)] (Athens: Themelio, 1977). Syngros had included in his autobiographical text biographical information for several figures from his era, thereby making his narration a prosopographical source as well. Cf. for example, D.P. Paschalis, *Θεόφιλος Καΐρης* [Theophilos Kairis] (Athens: Vivliopoleion tis Estias, 1928).

14 It is hence an important source for examining the Ottoman economy from a non-Eurocentric perspective. Concerning the excessive use of occidental sources in the analysis of Ottoman commerce, cf. Suraiya Faroqhi, Bruce McGowan, Donald Quataert et. al., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, 1600–1914, 3rd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 824.

15 The first volume of the *Autobiography* has already been explored from this point of view. Cf. Catherine Brégianni, “The Ottoman Empire and the West in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Greek Bankers and Merchants in Istanbul, Observed by Andreas Syngros in his Autobiography,” in *When Orient and West Meet*, ed. G. Depeyrot (Wetteren: Monetta, 2014), 37–48.

international creditors, especially during the 1893 Greek default; and unofficially as a participant in trading debt with Greece's creditors in 1897.

This geographical shift from the 'globalized'¹⁶ Ottoman Empire to the Greek state, which was undergoing a process of national homogenization, reflects a collective phenomenon characteristic of Greek diasporic elites in general, including those who were Ottoman subjects.¹⁷ Private investments in Greece by the diaspora from the 1870s onward was a distinct phase of national economic evolution, during which there was an acceleration of efforts to create new banking and financial institutions in the kingdom.¹⁸ This aspect, as well as a gut reaction by autochthonous citizens who 'feared' the imagined invader, provoked public mistrust for the wealthy members of the Greek diaspora established in Greece, who were pejoratively called 'gold beetles.'¹⁹ But this division between 'autochthonous' and 'heterochthonous' (i.e. Greek citizens established in the country from abroad) was an internal element connected to national history rather than a global perception of market mechanisms.

16 This term is used to describe the multicultural society of nineteenth century Istanbul, which was hierarchically organized by religious criteria. For the role of religion in the institutional organization of the Ottoman Empire, cf. Ö.L. Barkan, "Caractère religieux et caractère séculier des institutions ottomanes," in *Contributions à l'histoire économique et sociale de l'Empire Ottoman*, ed. J.L. Bacqué-Grammont and P. Dumont (Leuven: Peeters, 1983), 11–58, and E. Eldem, "Istanbul: From Imperial to Peripherized Capital," in *The Ottoman City between East and West*, ed. E. Eldem, D. Goffman and B. Masters (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 135–206. Cf. also, Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Religion and Politics in the Orthodox World. The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Challenges of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2019), passim.

17 This process is confirmed by another autobiographical source, that of the politician and writer Alexandros Rizos Ragabés, who was also a member of the Greek Diaspora. In 1869, during his mandate as Ambassador in Istanbul, he managed to secure 'recognition as Greek citizens for all those that truly migrated from Turkey and permanently settled in Greece. Many ... returned to Turkey after being registered as Greek citizens.' A. Rizos Ragabés, *Αυτοβιογραφία [Autobiography]*, vol. 3 (Athens: Pyrsos, 1930), 441, my translation. All the quotas in this article are translated by the author.

18 On this topic cf. Georgios Dertilis, *Το ζήτημα των τραπεζών: Οικονομική και πολιτική διαμάχη στην Ελλάδα του 19^{ου} αιώνα [The Banks' Issue: Economic and Political Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Greece]* (Athens: ΜΙΕΤ, 1989), passim.

19 According to a definition by the Greek author Emmanuel Roidis. For further analysis of the division between 'autochthonous' and 'heterochthonous', cf. Elli Skopetea, *Το πρότυπο Βασίλειο και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα: Όψεις του εθνικού ζητήματος στην Ελλάδα [The "Model Kingdom" and the Great Idea: Aspects of the National Issue in Greece (1830'–1880')]* (Athens: Proskinio, 1988), passim.

2 Promoting the Market: A ‘New School’²⁰ in Ottoman Banking

As already demonstrated in earlier research,²¹ Syngros was more active as an agent for the Ottoman state’s financial operations after he dissolved his commercial firm in 1860. He was also approved as leaseholder of net proceeds.²² In fact, the alteration of the Ottoman market in the early 1860s – due to the monetary crisis in Istanbul and the conversion of the floating Ottoman debt to be consolidated, which was henceforth negotiated in Europe – led to the elimination of the role of micro finance, with all bank and credit transactions previously being completed by Galata money changers.²³ In this context, Syngros reaffirmed his relations to important members of the Greek diaspora and the Camondo family,²⁴ which was still active in Istanbul.

This adjustment of Ottoman finances was also reflected through the founding of the Imperial Ottoman Bank in 1863, as a joint venture with the participation from all of the important local bankers in Galata such as Isaac Camondo, Tubini Corpi, and Aristide Baltatzi. The main objective of the Ottoman Bank



FIGURE 8.2

5 para coin, 1876

SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS

20 This is a term used by the autobiographer himself.

21 Brégianni, “The Ottoman Empire and the West.”

22 For the *malikâne* system in the Ottoman Empire’s post-classical era, cf. Linda T. Darling, “Public Finances: The Role of the Ottoman Center,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 3: *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839*, ed. S. Faroqui (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 128–29.

23 V. Eldem, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun İktisadi Şartları Hakkında Bir Tetkik* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1970), 229, English trans. cited in *Turkish Financial History from the Ottoman Empire to the Present*, ed. H. Kazgan, T. Ateş, O. Tekin et al. (Istanbul: Istanbul Stock Exchange, 1999), 270.

24 Nora Seni, “The Camondos and Their Imprint on Nineteenth-Century Istanbul,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 4 (1994), 663–75, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074380006116X>.

was to ‘westernize’ Ottoman banking activity and concentrate the temporary loans that appeared again once the funds for the conversion of the Ottoman debt had been consumed.²⁵ It was the Ottoman central bank that issued, among other activities, banknotes freely convertible in metallic (gold or silver) currency.²⁶ The new bank was actually a re-founding, as the Ottoman Bank had already been established in London with British capital in 1856. After being renamed to Imperial Ottoman Bank, French interests and bankers were added alongside its British founders.²⁷ Efforts to adjust the finances of the Ottoman state were also based on imported expertise: for instance, Syngros mentions the case of a French technocrat who was invited by the Ottomans in the early 1860s to regulate state finances, and who ‘left Turkey without regulating them, but with the obligation to – by all means – speak well about them.’²⁸ He remarks that ‘such administrators were often invited by Turkey to blow smoke to the French.’²⁹

From another point of view, financial and banking activity can be seen as a domain of interaction within the Ottoman state,³⁰ but also as an intermediary between Ottoman Greeks, Armenian, Jewish, and Muslim subjects.³¹ It was hence a factor of secularization, as non-Muslim bankers performing in the Ottoman Empire can be considered as intermediaries between international and local markets, as well as agents or ‘vehicles’ of a secular mentality (more adapted to market mechanisms than the Muslim religion, which demonized loan interest) in the Ottoman territory. The aim of this paper is not to analyze how religious beliefs interacted with banking activity during the nineteenth century in the context of the Ottoman Empire, although this element should nevertheless be taken into consideration as a cultural aspect,

25 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 79.

26 Kazgan et al., *Turkish Financial History*, 267–68.

27 Seda Ozekicioglu and Halil Ozekicioglu, “First Borrowing Period at the Ottoman Empire (1854–1876), Budget Policies and Consequences,” *BEH-Business and Economic Horizons* 3, no. 3 (October 2010), 28–46, <https://ideas.repec.org> and Eldem, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun İktisadi*, 229. For the history of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, see André Autheman, *La Banque Impériale Ottomane* (Paris: Comité pour l’histoire économique et financière de la France, 1996), *passim*.

28 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 304.

29 *Ibid.*

30 On this point cf. also Haris Exerzoglou, “The Development of a Greek Ottoman Bourgeoisie: Investment Patterns in the Ottoman Empire, 1850–1914,” in *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism. Politics, Economy and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. D. Gondicas and Ch. Issawi (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1999), 89–114.

31 Timur Kuran, “The Economic Ascent of the Middle East’s Religious Minorities: The Role of Islamic Legal Pluralism,” *Journal of Legal Studies* 2 (2004), <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/422707>.



FIGURE 8.3 Tobias Conrad Lotter – Nova mappa Maris Nigri et freti Constantinopolitani.
1772
CREATIVE COMMONS

while entrepreneurial action can more importantly be seen as a factor of secularization in Ottoman society.

In general terms, the economic activity of different religious groups in Istanbul (Armenians, Orthodox Ottoman Greeks, Levantines and Jews) was developed following the 1839 *Tanzimat* decrees, a period of reforms in the Ottoman Empire which guaranteed the property rights of the Sultan's subjects independently of their religion, and which is considered as 'the starting point of a conscious and state-driven process of modernization and Westernization.'³²

32 Edhem Eldem, "Plurality, Cosmopolitanism, and Integration: The Dangers of Comparing the Incomparable," in *The Economies of Urban Diversity: The Ruhr Area and Istanbul*, ed. D. Reuschke, M. Salzbrunn, and K. Schönhärl (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 49.

Because financial activity was a crossroads for inter-communal relations in Istanbul,³³ there was much space for transactions among the state and local agents. Despite his belief that it was a conservative system, in 1860 Syngros saw his 'banking' transactions with the Ottoman state as a last resort for dealing with the ongoing globalization of transit trade, and the consequent weakened position of the oriental merchant dealer. His banking activity concentrated on payments for debt securities, an area in which he monopolized – in his own words – financial transactions in Istanbul, especially those with the Ministry of Finance.³⁴ Speculation on money storage in Istanbul was considered a banking practice even after the creation of the Imperial Ottoman Bank. However, this regional banking activity, based on personal relations and the validity of long-term family rights, did not exclude the possibility of an eventual entrepreneurial integration to the open market, as Syngros mentions the desire to collaborate with European bankers from the early 1860s onward.

His banking activity actually coincided and evolved with the Ottoman Empire's integration with European capital flows.³⁵ In 1868 he founded a limited partnership, according to him on the recommendations of Nessim Camondo³⁶ – a member of the Isaac Camondo & Cie bank, which was a leading firm in Ottoman territory –: Syngros was among Camondo's partners in several transactions with the Ottoman state. As the Ottoman Empire had contracted new international loans in that period, a major activity for Syngros's own firm was transfers on the Ottoman floating debt titles and relative loans advances to the Ottoman state, while those titles were traded in Paris and London.³⁷

An important point in Syngros's *Autobiography* is the emphasis placed on the role of actors (individuals and firms) in the field of banking and financial activity in the Ottoman Empire. He depicts at least three stages of activity with regard to Ottoman debt: local agents in the Istanbul market, like Syngros himself; regional players such as the Camondo Bank; and actors in the financial centers, primarily in Paris and London, divided between banking corporations and agents of the unofficial market. The integration of the Ottoman Empire into global capital flows via expanded public lending intensified the role of financial centers, while some local actors became intertwined with global capital.

33 Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 174.

34 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 262.

35 Deniz T. Kiliçoğlu, *Economics and Capitalism in the Ottoman Empire* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015), 85–124.

36 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 157–59.

37 *Ibid.*, 197, 204.

Syngros's case demonstrates this evolution, for it was also related to the historical context. As a result of the Franco-Prussian war in the early 1870s, the value of Ottoman securities was considerably reduced in the London and Paris markets:³⁸ with securities being introduced in the capital markets of European financial centers, Ottoman finances were subsequently submitted to market destabilization sparked by the war. Because of his transactions with the *devlet*, Syngros's firm was exposed to Ottoman debt titles, and so he traveled to Paris and London to postpone the financial catastrophe for his firm that would have resulted from an eventual Ottoman default. Having personal relations with the Camondo firm (established in Paris in 1869), but simultaneously acting within the unofficial Paris capital market, he managed to transfer the Ottoman securities to the London Stock Exchange. In London he contracted a temporary loan with a securities guarantee, while the bonds were transferred to and via private firms and agents. The transfer of his transactions via the unofficial market to the official market in London is demonstrated by his cooperation with the Bischoffsheim and Goldsmith firm, for his purpose was to concentrate Ottoman securities in a limited number of holders.³⁹ This cooperation with Bischoffsheim and Goldsmith⁴⁰ was an economic comportment shared by other members of the Greek diaspora. As Xenophon Balis instructed him after their meeting in London's Baltic Club:⁴¹ 'Try to open the door of a prosperous Jew so as to cooperate with him in financial transactions, and let the Greeks drift with their so-called 'commercial' activities, which have become a rather dangerous game today.'⁴² Through such means the settlement rate of the Ottoman securities was concluded at 70 per cent of their nominal value. In addition, via these transactions he inaugurated a permanent collaboration with Bischoffsheim & Goldsmith, as he participated in various funding projects by the firm, such as loans for the construction of railways in North and South America.⁴³

Syngros's transition from a regional banker in the context of the Greek diaspora's intermediary role within the Ottoman Empire to an agent connected

38 Ibid., 214.

39 Ibid., 258 and 261.

40 Syngros personally collaborated with Henry Bischoffsheim, son of Louis-Rafael, who founded the Bank.

41 For the history of the Baltic Club see Stuart Burch, "An Unfolding Signifier: London's Baltic Exchange in Tallinn," in *Contested and Shared Places of Memory: History and Politics in North Eastern Europe*, ed. J. Hackmann and M. Lehti, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315876085>.

42 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 245.

43 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 3, 303–04.

to global financial centers also bears a cultural dimension: he reveals a transcultural mentality refined among bankers and *hommes d'affaires* during the *Belle Époque*, one marked by cosmopolitanism. This mentality had common features that surpassed nationalities, and is broadly characterized by access to colonial merchandise, cultural products like theater, music, and opera performances, and common spaces of recreation, among others. Syngros participated in this cosmopolitan cultural world, which was related to processes of economic globalization during the last decades of the nineteenth century. A considerable part of his autobiography after the 1860s covers a selective description of his social life, in which social meetings with *hommes d'affaires* or political personalities, in addition to targeted visits to international expositions (such as the one in Paris in 1867), opera houses, and theaters played an important role.

As a supranational cultural attitude, these cosmopolitan social practices coincided with his opinion that the commercial role of the Greek diaspora no longer existed after the 1860s, as the structure of international trade was changing.⁴⁴ His integration into global capital mechanisms, and his simultaneous acceptance of the conditions of competitiveness, made him mistrustful toward the traditional entrepreneurial activity of the Greek diaspora. Describing the new conditions during the second phase of the Industrial Revolution, Syngros noted that in the early 1860s, shrinking import and export oriental trade was due to the application of sophisticated commercial methods by the West – by English trade in particular – as well as the opening of new commercial ports for international trade activities scattered across the globe. Naturally, the globalization processes of transnational commerce cannot solely be associated with the widespread availability of transport and increased competition in the market. It also had a strong connection to the conditions of free trade in Europe, which had precisely prevailed since the early 1860s, and was generally characterized by capital market expansion, the stabilization of effective monetary standards, and extrovert entrepreneurial activity. In addition, Syngros also noted the concentration of rural production and the commercialization of colonial products by powerful corporations, which made the interference of the isolated Greek merchants impossible. These global conditions reversed the role of the Eastern Orthodox merchant, who had previously enjoyed the benefit of monopolistic intermediation between oriental producers and Western markets. Syngros remarked that the Greek diaspora could easily adjust to the new conditions, all while remarking the apathetic behavior of Greek merchants. With regard to options for an alternative type of entrepreneurship, he proposed, for those who had the financial resources, the creation

44 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 268–69.

of commercial enterprises with agencies in global financial and production centers, the reorganization of their commercial activity in Asia Minor, Russia, and Greece, and even switching their activity towards industry. These observations clearly reflect the expansion of commercial and financial transactions beginning in the 1860s. The new conditions favored the economic – and geographical – rapprochement between the East and the West, but minimized the role of intermediaries such as the Greek and Armenian diaspora within the confines of the Ottoman Empire. It is hence clear that by giving this general advice, Syngros is describing his personal entrepreneurial strategy.

Furthermore, Syngros's beliefs were also colored by patriotic elements and questions of stabilizing a social ego,⁴⁵ especially concerning his intention to settle in the Greek kingdom. He wrote that once entrepreneurs from the Greek diaspora had accomplished their objective of making a fortune, especially in the European West, they should return to Greece and help their country's development through the expertise they had acquired. Moreover, in Greece they could earn a reputation and honors that they could never obtain in a foreign country. In fact, the Ottoman activity of this Orthodox Christian economic elite, which after 1870 settled massively in Greece and tried in many cases to secure social and economic recognition, did not cease after their establishment in the Greek kingdom.

3 Liberal Alternatives in an Introverted Market: Creating Economic Institutions in Nineteenth Century Greece

Such reflections on the economic role that the Greek diaspora could play in Europe and Greece were compatible with Syngros's personal decisions. In early 1871, upon returning to Istanbul from Europe, he dissolved the limited partnership that he co-directed, and converted it into an anonymous company⁴⁶ called the Bank of Constantinople. The listing of the Bank's shares was completed on the London Stock Exchange via the Bischoffsheim firm, a fact that proves the integration of his banking activities within the context of global financial centers. As noted earlier, this insertion was facilitated by his role as an actor in various Ottoman debt instruments.

Having completed this major task in the Istanbul market, he fulfilled the decision made years earlier to permanently settle in Greece. He noted the

45 Ibid., 136.

46 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 3, 5–7.

‘infantile condition of the banking and financial sector in Greece,’⁴⁷ and considered ‘founding a private bank in Athens, with the aim of disrupting the monopoly of the National Bank.’⁴⁸ At the same time he prepared the creation of the Athenian Stock Exchange, which was ‘unheard of even as a term in Greece.’⁴⁹

A first attempt to combine banking and industrial capital was his involvement in the Lavrion mines affair,⁵⁰ a legal dispute between the French-Italian company Roux⁵¹-Serpieri-Fressynet CE and the Greek state concerning the extent of metallurgic exploitation. The issue dominated public debate from 1869 to 1875, and also sparked diplomatic and political problems since the Italian, French, and Austro-Hungarian Embassies in Athens intervened in favor of the company. The issue arose in connection with the company’s privilege of exploiting not just the mines, but the silver estuaries as well, which is to say the remains of the mines and treatments made in ancient Athens, which were located on the surface. The 1871 law acknowledged the privilege of the state, but the Roux-Serpieri Company refused to stop the exploitation of the estuary. Faced with this impasse, and following the intermediation of King George I, Syngros, who was acting as a proxy of the Bank of Constantinople, acquired the rights of the French-Italian company in 1873, and established the Hellenic Metallurgical Company of Lavrion, incorporating both the exploitation of estuaries and Lavrion mines.⁵² The shareholders included the Bank of Constantinople, Syngros himself, and other diaspora bankers. The firm’s share was instantly overvalued in the stock market because of public expectations

47 Ibid., 40.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 For a more detailed discussion of Syngros’s involvement in the Lavrion project, cf. Catherine Brégianni, “Προς τη διαμόρφωση των μηχανισμών της αγοράς: Η περίπτωση του Χρηματιστηρίου Αθηνών [To the Formation of Modern Market Mechanisms: The Case of the Athens Stock Exchange],” *Deltion tes Enoses Hellenikon Trapezon* [Bulletin of the Hellenic Bank Association] 5, no. 22 (January–October 2000), 109–23.

51 For the metallurgic activity of Hilarion Roux and the relevant investments in the Mediterranean, see C. Chastagnaret, “A Mediterranean Nineteenth Century: Economic Dynamics of the Mediterranean during the First Two-Thirds of the Century,” in *Banking and Finance in the Mediterranean: A Historical Perspective*, ed. John A. Consiglio, Juan C. Martínez Oliva, and Gabriel Tortella, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2016), 241–54, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315261768>.

52 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 3, 73–76.



FIGURE 8.4 1873 share of the Hellenic Metallurgical Company of Lavrion
CREATIVE COMMONS

surrounding the ‘treasures of Lavrion.’⁵³ The shares quickly lost considerable value as the low silver content of the Lavrion surface estuaries was proven. This was the first limit-down in the early days of the Greek Stock Exchange.

In addition to the Lavrion enterprise, Syngros and other members of the Greek diaspora created private banks in order to break the National Bank’s monopoly; all these efforts were only partly successful (or even completely unsuccessful, like the project for the creation of an Agricultural Credit Bank),⁵⁴ prompting the introversion of the Greek market.⁵⁵ More explicit was the failure of a project to build a railway from Piraeus to the borders as they were fixed in 1873. The respective contract included foreign investments, with participation from the Bischoffsheim Bank (Syngros’s permanent associate). Greece was still excluded from capital markets in 1873 due to the state default of 1843. As a result, the company’s shares could not be introduced on the London Stock Exchange, which was the overall condition for Greek securities in general.⁵⁶

These efforts made by Greek diaspora bankers, and Syngros in particular, to create new economic institutions in Greece from the 1870s onward coincided with the economic liberalism prevailing in the country. Greece enjoyed monetary stability because of its membership in the Latin Monetary Union,⁵⁷ which

53 The Lavrion affair was an endless source of inspiration for satire, with the literary production reflecting the social agitation prompted by the immediate devaluation of the Greek company’s shares. Expectably, the Lavrion limit-down was connected in social consciousness to the business activity of the Diaspora elites and its overvaluation. Cf. for instance the satire of Georgios Souris:

“the poor devils were looking forward
to taking Syngros’s money,
hoping soon enough to eat and drink gratis
and expecting that they, too, will turn themselves to gold beetles.”

Ο Ρωμιός. Εφημερίς που την γράφει ο Σουρής [Journal O Romios. Edited by Souris], vol. 4, 18 July 1887, 2 (my translation).

Cf. also: Angelos Vlachos, “Λαυρεωτικής μετοχής απομνημονεύματα” [The Autobiography of a Laurion share], *Διηγήματα* [Short Stories], ed. Pantelis Voutouris, (Athens: Nefeli, 1997), 129–76 [first published 1874].

54 Catherine Brégianni, *Les Banques, l’agriculture et l’Etat. Stratégies de crédit et politique agraire en Grèce, de 1861 à 1940* (Lille: Septentrion, 2002).

55 However, in 1881 Syngros managed to create a bank in Thessaly, after Greece’s annexation of this region. The Bank of Thessaly and Epirus acquired a limited privilege to issue banknotes. Historical Archives of the National Bank of Greece, Series: Bank of Thessaly and Epirus, D. 65, A. Syngros Archives, 1883–1898. For further analysis, cf. Antonis Antoniou and Catherine Brégianni, “Όψεις της θεσσαλικής ενσωμάτωσης (1881–1899), Οι άνθρωποι, το νόμισμα, οι μηχανισμοί της πίστης [Aspects of Thessaly’s Annexation (1881–1899), Inhabitants, Currency and Credit Mechanisms],” *Historika* 38 (2003), 133–62.

56 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 3, 93–95.

57 Archives de la Banque de France, Paris, 103500401/53/1, 2, 3, Union Latine.

of course was a temporary condition, as the progressive devaluation of the drachma and its falling parity to the French franc was an ongoing process. In a narrower context, this investment activity was related to the monetary supplies provided by the Greek diaspora's activity in connection with the Ottoman debt service, where the Galata bankers played an intermediary but significant role. Their passage from a multicultural financial environment to the national market is an example of the economic aspects of statecrafting, and was also a defensive measure, as when the Ottoman Empire declared default in 1876.

Economic liberalism nevertheless faced internal contradictions, as the national market was monopolized by the National Bank of Greece, which was a commercial bank and at the same time exercised (for the greater part of the period) the exclusive privilege of issuing banknotes. What's more, despite its participation in the LMU from 1867,⁵⁸ the country was excluded from capital markets from the 1843 default to the 1878 sovereign debt settlement, subsequently lacking access to monetary supplies for a long period. By and large, the failure of diaspora bankers to create economic institutions in Greece was due to both internal and external factors, with the latter also being related to the distribution of capital flows on the European continent.

The country's financial exclusion from the open market was overcome in 1878 when the national debt was settled.⁵⁹ A series of international loans were contracted by the state in the 1880s to sustain the drachma's stability in the transnational LMU framework and finance public works, especially railway construction. Sustainability was not connected to output, but to state efforts to overcome monetary shocks, for during the 1870s and 1880s the drachma was mostly in forced circulation.⁶⁰ Since 1884, the silver drachma had begun to be slightly devalued against the French franc, parity with which it was institutionally guaranteed by the LMU's acts.⁶¹ This phenomenon intensified until the early 1890s. The drachma's devaluation was related to the bimetallic monetary crisis of 1878 and the major one of 1885, but it mostly reflected the existing asymmetry in the framework of monetary zones, in addition to regional

58 Centre des Archives Economiques et Financières, Fonds d'Archives de la Monnaie de Paris, K-2, D. 21: Union Latine. Accession de la Grèce, 1867–68.

59 As Syngros notes, 1879 was the year of 'Greece's material development,' for capital markets opened for the country in that year. Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 3, 162.

60 Foreign Office 32, General Correspondence, Greece, 658, 1878–93/Greek loans.

61 Catherine Brégianni, *Νεοελληνικό Νόμισμα. Κράτος και ιδεολογία από την Επανάσταση έως τον Μεσοπόλεμο* [Modern Greek Currency. State and Ideology from the Revolution to the Interwar Period] (Athens: Academy of Athens, 2011), 189–90 and 218.

disparities.⁶² Greece's loss in assets led to new and extended state borrowing, which was targeted to public debt service.

Unfortunately, Syngros interrupts his narration between the years 1875–93, probably because of his energetic role in national politics during this period, as well as his role in Greek finances. It would have been of great interest to have a description of banking activity under these circumstances by a directly involved actor. He continues his autobiography partially for 1893 and 1897, both years representing critical dates in Greek financial history. His aim was to communicate his personal involvement in Greek debt trading, as the state declared default in 1893.⁶³ It is interesting to note that he underscores the role of debt feedback in the default.⁶⁴ Having failed in his efforts to contract new international loans in Europe after receiving unofficial authorization from the Greek government, in 1893 he endorsed debt trading directly with Greece's private creditors, with no government intervention.⁶⁵ He was also against any unilateral Greek action.⁶⁶ Syngros's approach was to regulate the debt via the market, an approach that was not adopted by Greek governments of the period. Nevertheless, the Greek defeat in the 1897 Greco-Turkish War made the settlement of Greek debt inevitable, as a new international loan had to be concluded so that the country could pay war reparations to the Ottoman Empire in gold. The settlement of the Greek debt was finalized in 1897, and financial control was imposed on the country via the International Financial Commission, which had a transnational character (its members were appointed by Greece's creditor states: Great-Britain, France, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Germany). It was therefore not an institution based on the private interests of the bondholders.

62 For an American example of late nineteenth century economic asymmetry, cf. R.C.K. Burdekin and P.L. Siklos, "Gold resumption and the deflation of the 1870s," in *Routledge Handbook of Major Events in Economic History*, ed. Randall E. Parker and Robert Whaples (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203067871>.

63 For a retrospective analysis of Greek public debt, cf. Georgios Dertilis, "Dette publique et dépenses militaires: la Grèce et la question d'Orient," in *La dette publique dans l'histoire*, ed. J. Andreau, G. Béaur and J.-Y. Grenier (Paris: Institut de la gestion publique et du développement économique, Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, 2006), <https://books.openedition.org/igpde/1180?lang=en>. For a comparative approach to the Ottoman and Greek defaults, which occurred in 1875 and 1893 respectively, cf. Giampaolo Conte, "Ottoman and Greek Sovereign Debt and Bankruptcy: A Long-Term Comparative Analysis," *The Journal of European Economic History* 48, no. 2 (2019), 111–23.

64 Syngros, *Autobiography*, vol. 3, 129 and 137.

65 *Ibid.*, 171.

66 *Ibid.*, 194.

Compared to the type of financial control applied in Greece, the Ottoman debt settlement was based on private initiative; the consortium of the bondholders obtained control over Ottoman state revenues, according to the Sultan's decree on 22 November 1879, and the consequent Act between the Ottoman Empire and its creditors.⁶⁷ Under the Decree of Muharrem, financial control was imposed to ensure debt service of twenty-five per cent of principal and interest. In this arrangement, Galata bankers played an important role – the Greek included –, while financial control was abolished by the newly born Turkish state in 1923.⁶⁸

4 A Research Perspective as an Epilogue: Cosmopolitanism or Nationalism in the First Era of Globalization?

Syngros describes his passage from a local player in Istanbul to an intermediary actor in contact with international financial centers. However, his later activity, which was primarily located in Greece, evokes the creation of the national market in parallel to the formation of the nation-state. The internal status of power was also intertwined – by way of national relations – with exterior financial centers, whose role in the periphery was critical for input in monetary supplies.⁶⁹

Syngros's autobiography demonstrates that during the first era of globalization, internationalized economic activity was not incompatible with national market formation, accentuating the fact that market liberalization was supported and sustained by national policies. Despite the disparities in capital division and local market dysfunctions during this period, the late nineteenth century Greek paradigm was incorporated in economic liberalization, as demonstrated by private efforts to found economic institutions.

67 For further analysis on the Ottoman debt settlement, cf. A. Coşkun Tunçer, *Sovereign Debt and International Financial Control. The Middle East and the Balkans, 1870–1914* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 53–78.

68 *Encyclopedia Pyrsos*, vol. 9, Athens, 1929, entry “Georgios Zarifis,” 915.

69 For the incorporation of diasporic entrepreneurial activity in Greece within the analysis of international investments in the country during the nineteenth century, cf. Ioana Shapfo Pepelasis and Dimitris Varvaritis, “An Unexplored Facet of International Business in Greece: Foreign and Diaspora Shareholders in Joint Stock Company Start-ups, 1833–1920,” *Journal of Evolutionary Studies in Business* 2, no. 1 (2016), 100–28, <https://doi.org/10.1344/jesb2016.2.j014>.

Does this nationalized activity of the Greek diaspora since the early 1870s represent a rupture of the emerging cosmopolitanism⁷⁰ from their occasional interrelation with global financial centers, and with the *millet's* cultural diversity in the framework of the Ottoman Empire? From an economic point of view, this alteration in entrepreneurial behavior followed the geographical extension of the market during the nineteenth century, incorporating its regional expressions such as early banking activity in the framework of the Ottoman Empire. Since the 1840s, local non-Muslim elites acted as intermediaries in the Ottoman Empire between Ottoman authorities and the process of Ottoman debt 'financialization,' and generally as mediators in the process of the Ottoman economy's westernization. Rather than a nationalistic mentality, the shift of the Greek diaspora's activities toward the Greek state mostly coincided with economic mentalities during the first era of globalization, as it reproduced western entrepreneurial models, and involved the importing of the know-how obtained via their contact with the West. Furthermore, economic historians have already demonstrated that global capitalism involved the implementation of domestic economic institutions and international interaction.⁷¹ The case of Syngros's investment in the Lavrion mines is an eloquent example of this: it represents a common nineteenth century story, as natural resources exploitation on the periphery was an entrepreneurial trend during the second half of the century. The same can be said of the diaspora's intention to invest in Greek railways or the national banking sector. A part of the diasporic elites tended to integrate its activity in global capital flows, an effort that also included moving through space. Their intermediary role in international trade across the Ottoman Empire, and their later involvement in Ottoman public finances, was a precondition for the motivation – at least among some of them – to engage in a more globalized activity.

70 Evidiki Syfneos, "Cosmopolitanism as a feature of the Greek commercial Diaspora," *History and Anthropology* 16, no. 1 (2005), 97–111, DOI: 10.1080/0275720042000316641. My analysis intends to describe the existing social stratification among members of the Greek Diaspora, which also determined their ability to extend their economic activity. To simplify, cosmopolitanism was not simply a social but also an economic expression of Greek diasporic elites. Cf. also Athanasios Gekas, "Class and Cosmopolitanism: The Historiographical Fortunes of Merchants in Eastern Mediterranean Ports," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24, no. 2 (2009), 95–114.

71 Larry Neal and Jeffrey J. Williamson eds., *The Cambridge History of Capitalism*, vol. 2: *The Spread of Capitalism, from 1848 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014), 1–2.

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Mapping Europe with Love: Spaces and Conjunctions between Smyrna and Munich

Simone Egger

1 Wonderful Webs and Relations: A Cosmopolitan Assemblage



FIGURE 9.1
Aspasia Schönwald playing tennis
in Smyrna, around 1913
CREDITS: SIMONE EGGER

‘Dear Wilhelm! Love Aspa’ served as the written framework for a transnational love story between Smyrna and Munich. The author of these salutations on hundreds of postcards and letters was Aspasia Schönwald, called Aspa. She was born in Athens in September 1891 into an Austrian-Greek family, and raised in the Ottoman city of Smyrna on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. In 1910, the young woman travelled to the German city of Munich, and met a man named Wilhelm Boeck. Their personal encounter gave rise to a network

connecting people, cities, classes, and circumstances, one that lasted over a century, and provides a view of Europe based on connections rather than borders. Since many insights can be gleaned from the person of Aspa and the city of Smyrna, the central task of my continued work in this field will be to search out and reconstruct these transnational paths and connections in her correspondence, an effort that brings together biographical and urban research, and connects the local to the transnational using historical cultural analysis. As the historian Luisa Passerini has stated,

[T]he loving – and speaking – subject was most frequently assumed to be white, male and European, while women, Jews and people of all other cultures were considered either as objects – without a voice of their own – or admitted to the kind of relationship called romantic love only through processes of subordination and assimilation.¹

However, in the love letters examined in this study, a young woman describes her feelings and thoughts during the years she spent in the Ottoman Empire waiting for World War I to end, so that she could marry her fiancé Wilhelm who lived in the *Deutsches Kaiserreich* (The German Empire). This is what makes these letters so important as a historical source, for they offer an individual female perspective rooted in everyday life to the fundamental changes unfolding in Europe and the world during the most turbulent decade of the early twentieth century.

Including the correspondence from when Aspa lived in Bavaria (1909–11), she sent a total of 270 letters to Wilhelm, mostly in German but with some parts also in Greek, English, and French. Unfortunately, only one of his love letters from Munich has survived. However, the extended sources that can be used to understand the relationship between Aspa and Wilhelm include a large number of postcards and several photo albums, one of which contains pictures from the letters – taken with a miniature camera by Aspa and friends. The couple's communication opened up new spaces, namely a *Thirdspace* that encompassed everything:

subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the

1 Luisa Passerini, *Europe in Love: Love in Europe: Imagination and Politics in Britain between the Wars* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris 1999), 21.

unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history.²

As the geographer Edward Soja, who considers *space* as a social construction, has described it. Aspa and Wilhelm were unequal lovers in terms of class, but were deeply connected via sports, music, and the arts. However, in this background they can nonetheless be seen as actors in sociologist Bruno Latour's sense of a sociology of networks and relations. Their writings should be understood as 'chains of associations'³ combining descriptions of silk wardrobes for the international balls in Smyrna's Carnival season with stories about sisters and friends, discussions regarding emotions, and the question of a common future, information on the current state of the Great War, observations about the increasing poverty of the Turkish people in the socially divided Ottoman city, lists of fruits or dishes, questions about local places or events in Bavaria such as Oktoberfest or sporting activities, and last but not least, expressions of love. Understanding Aspa as an actor in the sense of actor-network theory weaves a continual web not only of her kind of ethnographic writing in her letters – full of thick descriptions – but also of her regular use of the European postal service to send correspondence or goods from one country to another.⁴ Systems of order and ways of thinking play an important role within these spaces, because they make similarities and differences visible. Everything is about the chains, as Latour says, that create relational spaces around wonderful webs that overlap with her profile and are often nested within one another – mapping Europe with love.⁵

My dear Willy,

You should have the three meka stones that I sent to your mother made into a beautiful golden brooch for her, which I think [she] will wear and attract the eyes of all friends, as well as you with your cufflinks, they are the same coins that I wear on a bracelet, even here in Smyrna it is now a rarity, because you cannot find gold money, it was my luck that I let it work for you a long time ago. Hoping that I was able to give you a little joy with my gifts,

2 Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, Malden, a.o., 1996), 57.

3 Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005).

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

I remain, your faithful bride Aspa Schönwald, many greetings and kisses from your Aspa. I send special greetings to your Mama.⁶

Intermediate biographies are interesting for research because the actor-network perspective focuses on relationships rather than specific and therefore determinant categories. This shift is particularly helpful for a deeper understanding of transnational spaces and conjunctions. A multitude of types or classifications will most likely fail to capture – and may instead block out – concepts of existence and love, in addition to the forms of relations, interlaced constructions of nationality, and ideas of Europe and cosmopolitanism that were negotiated in daily routines over one hundred years ago. Sending meka stones and gold coins to the beloved in Munich materialized another social environment, but also marked the economic situation in the Ottoman city of Smyrna, and established an idea of the *Orient* in a Bavarian jewelry case. As Luisa Passerini emphasizes,



FIGURE 9.2 Envelope from Smyrna to Munich, 7.8.1917

CREDITS: SIMONE EGGER

⁶ Letter from Aspasia Schönwald to Wilhelm Boeck, Smyrna, 8 Oct. 1916. Originally written in German, translated by Christine Egger.

[p]lacing love at the core of identity – rather than linking identities with an abstract and intellectual individualism or with an inherited patrimony based on class, race or region – would imply that elective affinities as well as inherited ones are constitutive of individuals and of their relationships with their collectives.⁷

Reflecting this perspective, which is also based on the habitus of the historical discipline, she adds: 'A pre-condition is a critical enquiry into the historical discourses on this matter in the western tradition.'⁸ This leads to the assumption that the entangled spaces of Aspa and Wilhelm's life, additionally affected by the impact of the Great War, may only be understood from a local and as well from a transnational (historical) perspective. As a result, this article will follow the wider context of the Schönwald family from Smyrna during the first half of the twentieth century, starting with a moment of review. This story will help retrace and better understand the changing realities during this very brief period, such as the day-to-day connectedness of practices and places that mapped a shape of Europe that was no longer politically requested, as well as the concurrent rise of nationalism, the decline of empires, and the imminent end of the previously known world order.

2 Belonging: A Trip to the Past

Tuesday, May 12, 12:30 PM

Dear Wilhelm!

This afternoon we will arrive in Ragusa [Dubrovnik] and I want to tell you quickly that we are fine. The weather is nice, music is playing, and we are sailing alongside the mountains. You would think we are in paradise! How beautiful the world is – the hills, the sky, and the sea (...).

Dear Daddy!

Yesterday evening around 8:00 PM the Abadjie family accompanied me to the ship by motorboat. I showed them the steamboat and we said goodbye and they sailed back to land. The farewell was very difficult; long after dinner, when Heidi had fallen asleep, I could still see

⁷ Passerini, *Europe in Love*, 20.

⁸ Ibid.

the illuminated buildings, and I said farewell to Athens for the last time around 12:45 AM. I cried in bed. Farewell this time was so much harder than parting from Smyrna. You feel and see in a much darker way than ever before. My experiences were very, very beautiful. I can hardly describe the love of all the dear people from former times, still thinking of me. I would like to stay here, and preferably make it my home. With every beat of my heart I am attached to every stone however small. I wish to latch on to all that is beautiful and stay here at home forever. I have never thought that I loved Greece more than Germany, and even more the friendly people who cared so sincerely and with such self-sacrifice for me. They came with presents to say goodbye until the last moment. The phrase 'separating hurts' aches so badly this time. But it is in God's hands. That one has to leave one's most beloved. It is so nice on board, everyone swims in the pool together – men and women. We are now sailing alongside the Dalmatian coast. May 14 at 8 PM we are going to arrive at Split and then take a train. I still do not know the departure time. I will take a sleeper, thus we do not have to go out, and it is cheaper. I will tell you when we are arriving. Music has started playing again, and we are having dinner.

For the present, kind regards, yours Aspa with Heidy. Kisses to all!⁹

This letter was written on paper from the s.s. *Kraljica Marija*, a ship operated by Jugoslavenski Lloyd company, and documents a trip from Athens to Munich in 1931. The travelers were Aspa and her five-year-old daughter Heidi – or Heidy in her mother's spelling – who had visited family and friends in Greece. Coming over ten years after Aspa left her Levantine hometown of Smyrna and the Ottoman Empire in September 1918, this journey across the sea was to be the first and last of its kind. The preserved letter is addressed to her husband Wilhelm Boeck and the two elder children Burschi and Gretel at home in Munich, Germany. On her way back to her own family for the first time, she terribly missed her relatives in Greece, even though she had spent her childhood and youth in the Ottoman city of Smyrna, where many members of her close Greek family used to live. In her new environment, only her youngest child, who was born in 1926, spoke to her in her mother tongue of Greek.¹⁰ The

9 Letter from Aspasia Schönwald to Wilhelm Boeck, ss *Kraljica Marija*, Yugoslavia, 13 May 1933. Originally written in German, my translation.

10 My research on Aspasia Schönwald's life and the city of Smyrna in the first half of the twentieth century is part of my habilitation project, on which I have been working since 2014. I first met Heidi Boeck in 2010 during an exhibition in Munich. She later gave me Aspa's letters, with the remark that I could somehow use them. I also acquired the remaining

trip to Athens was not only meant as a holiday, but also as a trip to Aspa's past, which no longer existed as a physical space, but as a social structure that she called home. Personal encounters with people from an earlier chapter of her life story – family and friends – raised the question of belonging.

Following the discussion about home or *Heimat*, the term in German history was often used in a political and ideological sense between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. Conceptualizing *Heimat* as a culturally and socially mediated human need for belonging, it can be described as a feeling of familiarity and security, firstly within the perception of an individual.¹¹ At the same time, *Heimat* always has a spatial dimension in the sense of a locality. Thinking about *Heimat* as an emotion shifting over time is a key to describing Aspasia's connections to political systems, people, neighborhoods, circles, cities, and landscapes.

In May 1931, Aspa sent greetings and announced her arrival at Munich central station on the second page of the letter from the *Kraljica Marija*. She also explained that she had taken the Jugoslavenski Lloyd company because it was so much cheaper than the other line. In former times, as the descendant of a wealthy family, she was accustomed to traveling by Austrian Lloyd via Italy, from Smyrna to Genoa by boat, and from Genoa to Munich by train. Her trip to Greece, and the latest return via Split and Agram – the historic Austrian German name for the Croatian Zagreb – ended on 15 May 1931 when Aspa and Heidi arrived in Munich by train at 8:00 AM. As with many Western cities at the time, the Bavarian capital had to deal with the consequences of the Great Depression of 1929, and grew accustomed to the presence of members of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP)* in public life.¹²

sources from her parents' belongings. Knowledge of Heidi's lifestyle and memories of her mother, such as their trip to Greece helped me draw certain conclusions about the past. Heidi Boeck died in 2013. For more information about her life and the Schönwald family, see Simone Egger "A cosmopolitan City, a cosmopolitan Life: Aspasia Schönwald from Smyrna and the spaces of a transnational biography," in *Journal for European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis (JECCA)* 2 (2016).

- 11 Simone Egger, *Heimat. Wie wir unseren Sehnsuchtsort immer wieder neu erfinden* (München: Riemann, 2014); Ina-Maria Greverus, *Der territoriale Mensch. Ein literaturanthropologischer Versuch zum Heimatphänomen* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenaeum, 1972); and Hermann Bausinger, "Heimat in einer offenen Gesellschaft," in *Heimat. Analysen, Themen, Perspektiven*, ed. Will Cremer (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1990), 76–90.
- 12 The year 1931 from the Munich City Chronicles. Munich City Archives (accessed 12 Feb. 2020), <https://www.muenchen.de/rathaus/Stadtverwaltung/Direktorium/Stadtarchiv/Chronik/1931.html>.

3 Levantine Smyrna: A Multifaceted, Cosmopolitan Metropolis on the Aegean Sea

The historian Philipp Mansel, himself a descendent of a Smyrniotic family, has studied the biographies of three Levantine cities: Smyrna, Beirut, and Alexandria. Diversity, open-mindedness, and strong social hierarchies marked the urban society of Smyrna around the turn of the century. The city was one of several Levantine ports on the Aegean Sea.

Levant is not only a history of three key cities, and the ways in which they reflected dialogues between east and west, cities and states. It is also a quest: to find out whether as many inhabitants claimed, these cities were truly cosmopolitan, possessing that elixir of coexistence between Muslims, Christians and Jews for which the world yearns.¹³

In conclusion, Mansel poses the following question: ‘Were they global cities before globalization’?¹⁴ Smyrna’s Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Arabic, British, Italian, Dutch, French, German, Austrian, and American – as well as Muslim, Jewish, Orthodox, and Christian – residents had obviously found a special way of living together in a city that can be understood as *cosmopolitan*, albeit subject to transformations, contemporaneities, differences, conflicts, and the influence of power.¹⁵ The historian Sibel Zayek uses ‘urban space and spatial practices as a lens to investigate the dynamic nature of identity and belonging in a rapidly modernizing and centralizing, multinational and multireligious state’¹⁶ in the case of Smyrna.

The historians Bernhard Gıfıbl and Isabella Löhr have suggested a *post-colonial sensitized cosmopolitanism* as a concept that focuses on the quality of relations on a local, regional, and global level, one that makes differences visible and entails concrete practices of emancipation and participation. In this sense, working on cosmopolitanism means not only analyzing cosmopolitan phenomena, but also looking at them from a cosmopolitan research

13 Philipp Mansel, *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* (London: John Murray, 2010), foreword.

14 *Ibid.*, foreword.

15 Vangelis Kechriotis, Malte Fuhrmann, “Editorial. The late Ottoman port-cities and their inhabitants: subjectivity, urbanity, and conflicting orders. In memory of Faruk Tabak (1953–2008),” in *The Late Ottoman Port Cities and Their Inhabitants: Subjectivity, Urbanity, and Conflicting Orders*, special issue, eds. Malte Fuhrmann and Vangelis Kechriotis, *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24, no. 2, (December 2009), 71–78.

16 Sibel Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman İzmir; The rise of a cosmopolitan port* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 6.

perspective.¹⁷ An enlightened cosmopolitanism with European influences therefore becomes a bundle of polycentric, overlapping, and sometimes contradicting practices that are always specific to place and time. Following this conceptual extension can be fruitful for a common historic approach, and especially for the cultural analysis of an environment that was connected to the world in so many ways at the beginning of the twentieth century.

From a historical point of view, Smyrna (in Greek) or Izmir (in Turkish) was simultaneously a colonial, imperial, and pluralistic city, as well as a center of nationalism.

The term *Levant* for the Eastern Mediterranean can be traced back to the sixteenth century: *soleil levant* means the rising sun in French. The geographer Paul Stock explains that ‘the Levant’ as a spatial concept in eighteenth-century Britain referred to an area made up of several countries, regions, and continents, and was defined by its position adjacent to the sea, including ‘coasts in Europe, Asia, and Africa.’¹⁸ The Levant denotes something in between, with no fixed geographical delimitation, a kind of *Thirdspace* referring to various networks and ideas. *The Levant* is reminiscent of other conceptions such as *the Orient* or *the Balkans*. Even *Europe* can be understood as a fluid *Thirdspace* from a cosmopolitan perspective. As the archeologists Margreet Steiner and Ann Killebrew have pointed out, ‘Levantine’ later appeared ‘in numerous contexts to refer to European traders in the Levant but also to westernized local populations of the Levant that were usually involved in commerce, spoke numerous languages, and were cosmopolitan in character.’¹⁹ They also have a negative connotation due to colonialism and unfair trade practices. The territorial space denoted by the term *Levantine* is fluid as well: ‘It encompasses the western region of the Fertile Crescent, an area south of the Taurus Mountains, bordered by the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and the north Arabian Desert and Mesopotamia to the east.’²⁰ The city of Smyrna, located in the northwest part of this region, later became a postmodern metropolis, but was still referred to as a Levantine city. The area saw a succession of empires and nation states over the centuries. The terms *the Levant* or *Levantine* were important in

17 Bernhard Gifßibl, Isabella Löhr, “Die Geschichtswissenschaften vor der kosmopolitischen Herausforderung,” in *Bessere Welten. Kosmopolitismus in den Geschichtswissenschaften*, eds. Bernhard Gifßibl and Isabella Löhr (Frankfurt am Main, New York: Campus, 2017), 17–18.

18 Paul Stock, *Europe and the British Geographical Imagination, 1760–1830* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2019), 175.

19 Margreet L. Steiner and Ann E. Killebrew, “Introduction,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant: c. 8000–332 BCE*, eds. Margreet L. Steiner and Ann E. Killebrew (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014).

20 Steiner, Killebrew, “Introduction.”



FIGURE 9.3 Goad, Charles E. Plan d'assurance de Smyrne (Smyrna): Turquie: plan, index. Londres: C.E. Goad, 1905. [Plate 3], seq. 4

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avoiding the emphasis or reconstruction of borders between the East and the West within this variable space, and instead help to understand '(...) its function in history as a land bridge, serving as the point of intersections for the crisscrossing of peoples and cultures from Europe, Asia and Africa' – as well as its close relations with the Americas via the sea in modern times.²¹ As a consequence of location, this region has witnessed unique cultural interactions, hybridity, and confrontations that often fractured the population into local subcultures and multi-layered identities.²² The archaeologists conclude by

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

emphasizing that contemporary interpretations do not consider *the Levantine* as something Eastern or Western, but as something in-between.²³

Smyrna was the place where Aspa grew up. As the daughter of a mother from Greece and a father from the Habsburg monarchy, respectively named Mosca Alexiou and Adolph Schönwald, she was a typical Levantine inhabitant of the port city. Her father, a businessman who was probably from Hungary and who worked for the Greek royal dynasty, apparently died around 1900, at which time his widow opened a boarding house in Smyrna, renting out rooms for long-term guests. Aspa lived there with her mother and two of her elder sisters, Anna and Maria, in addition to her nephews and nieces, near the Italian and the British consulate in the heart of the city's European quarter. The neighborhood of Sari Sokak, where the family's house was located, reached from the quay to Rue Franque, and connected the central points of public life in this area.²⁴ The historian Laurence Abensur-Hazan has noted that

as often happens in seaside cities, the quay – known as the *kordon* – played an essential role in Smyrna from the 1870s to the 1880s, the period of its construction by the Dussaud company. It offered visitors, then arriving by ship, their first real impression of the city, and simultaneously provided inhabitants with a promenade which was clearly the place to be seen.²⁵

The quay was not only the place to meet and greet, but also determined the course of the tramway; in addition, most of the theatres, cafes, and clubs, including the famous sporting club, were located along the waterfront. Smyrna's great hotels, such as the Kraemer and the Huck, were another important part of the scenery.²⁶

A popular nearby attraction was what Aspa called the *Cinimatograph*, an early form of cinema. The names of many of these 'most fashionable leisure establishments of the time'²⁷ made references to Europe, such as the English

23 Hala Halim, "Latter-day Levantinism, or 'Polypolis' in the Libretti of Bernard de Zogheb," *California Italian Studies* 1 (2010), 1–41. Taken from, Steiner, Killebrew, "Introduction"; Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Levantine. Lebenswelten und Identitäten einer ethnokonfessionellen Gruppe im osmanischen Reich im langen 19. Jahrhundert* (München: Oldenbourg, 2005).

24 Elena Frangakis-Syrett, "The Making of an Ottoman Port: The Quay of İzmir in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of Transport History* 22, no. 1 (2001), 23–46.

25 Laurence Abensur-Hazan, "Aspects of Social Life in Smyrna from the 18th to Early 20th centuries," in *Smyrna in the 18th and 19th Centuries: A western Perspective*, ed. Müjde Unustası (Izmir: Arkas Holding, 2013), 124–25.

26 Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis, "Urban Space in Smyrna in the 18th and 19th Century," in *Smyrna in the 18th and 19th Centuries: A Western Perspective*, ed. Jean Luc Maeso and Marie Valerie Lesvigne, exhibition catalogue (Istanbul: Arkas Holding, 2013), 104.

27 *Ibid.*, 125.

restaurant or the Pilsen Brasserie, an eatery with Bavarian beer, while their owners referred to nearby surroundings, such as the Hotel D'Edremit or the Hotel Lesbos and Kidonie. According to the theorist Homi K. Bhabha's conception of the *Thirdspace*, this part of Smyrna in particular can be seen as a transitional zone where hybrid identifications were possible, with different groups naturally living together.²⁸ Many of the city's residents were accustomed to speaking or understanding several languages in their daily life:

Towards the end of the 19th century, the city boasted ten newspapers: two in Turkish (*Aydn* and *Hidmet*), four in French (*L'Impartial*, *La Réforme*, *Le Courrier*, and *Journal de Smyrne*), three in Greek, and one in Judeo-Spanish. To those must be added three magazines, two in Greek, one in Armenian.²⁹

Aspa Schönwald was therefore no exception in her diverse neighborhood, as she spoke Greek, Turkish, English, French and German, and probably also understood Armenian.

4 Dear Wilhelm! Chains and Conjunctions

Smyrna, November 26, 1912.

Thank you so much for the album, and a kind flower regard and a kiss in thanks.

Dear Wilhelm!

You will excuse me for not writing a letter to you on Sunday afternoon, but I was visiting a friend who is consumptive, to help ease her trouble and mourning. After I went home with Maria I felt so sad myself, I was not in the mood to write to you, my darling. On Sunday we commemorated the dead [Protestant Orthodox holiday]. In the evening I got your [Music] album, I was very happy about it. I hold it in my hands every day and sincerely thank you, I appreciate it very much. Mama asked, who

28 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Taylor and Francis, Routledge Classics, 2004), 55.

29 Frédéric Hitzel, "Ottoman Izmir: Jewel of the Mediterranean," in *Smyrna in the 18th and 19th centuries: A western Perspective*, ed. Müjde Unustası (Izmir: Arkas Holding, 2013), 68–81.

sent this to you? And I told her, naturally, Wilhelm again! She took it, flipped through it, and asked if you sent it by yourself, or if I asked you for it? I told her I ordered it and you sent it. Mama said I should get the bill and pay for it, because Wilhelm should not have any expenses now. How is your finger? Should I come and kiss it or is it fine again? Why aren't you careful? I am very sorry that you had to suffer because of me, but it was not too bad. Think about what happened to me. I had to help the servant and fell down all fourteen stairs; it hurts so much, and today the spot where I fell has turned dark blue. It still hurts today. All the warships are gone, only one Dutch one is still there, and I am invited for tea with my cousin. What do you think of the war? Mama reads the Greek newspaper every day, and is happy that they will win. I am, too. One of our relatives writes from Mytilene, that the Christians are very glad about the Greek landing. They kiss each other and say, Christ rises from the dead and will save us! What have you heard about this? My cousin will not leave temporarily, I am very happy about it You ask me about bookings for the guesthouse? Oh! Thank god, no empty rooms, all British gentlemen, and yesterday the director of the Italian postal office arrived. He is very old but a good man, he talks a lot about Tripoli [Libya] because his brother is a general there and he stayed there for almost a year. Mama always wants me to play 'Love me and the World is mine,' and I play it every day. Thank you so much for the album, but please do not sent it to customs because it is not easy to get it from there.

Greetings from Mama and Maria, greetings and kisses from your wife, greetings to Mama and Anny.³⁰

Benefiting from her social background and the opportunities of modern mobility, in 1909 Aspa travelled abroad for a stay in Munich, a city she had never visited. During her stay in the Bavarian capital, she lived with the family of the Protestant Pastor Lambert. His parish was St. Lukas at Mariannenplatz, located in the inner city. In January 1910, she went to a nearby New Year's party at Jahn's Sports Club, located on the high ground above the Isar River, where she fell in love with Wilhelm Boeck. He was born in Munich in 1890, and lived with his mother Margarethe, brother Siegfried, and sister Anni in an apartment at Milchstraße in Haidhausen, an incorporated suburb of the growing city. He was different from Aspa in that he was a member of a lower middle-class family. When they met at the party, Wilhelm was completing an apprenticeship as

30 Letter from Aspasia Schönwald to Wilhelm Boeck, Smyrna, November 26, 1912. Originally written in German, my translation.

a financial manager. The couple intensified their relationship during the next months, but the conservative pastor and his wife strictly refused the love affair; the young woman from the Ottoman Empire was forced to leave the house, and later found a position and spent time with another pastor's family in Gauting near Munich, where she took care of the family's children. Aspa continued to report what happened to her, and the couple did not break up. There was a regular connection between the village in Upper Bavaria and the city. Whenever possible, Aspa took the train in the morning or afternoon to meet Wilhelm at Munich's main station, for a visit to a department store or a walk in the English Garden. However, even if she tried very hard to delay her return to her first home, at her mother's request she went back to Smyrna in early 1911.

As mentioned above, the close relation between Aspa and Wilhelm had its source chiefly in their personal encounters. For the next seven years, it was developed and deepened by the exchange of media, papers, photographs, and goods.³¹ After her return to the Ottoman Empire, Aspa and Wilhelm never stopped writing for more than a few weeks – not even during World War I, which prevented the lovers' reunion until the autumn of 1918. Through their communication and relationship they established what Edward Soja has called a *Thirdspace*.³² Aspa regularly reported to her fiancé and his family in Upper Bavaria on the happenings and activities along the Aegean coast. In doing so, over the years she created a world out of words, one that Wilhelm would never experience with his own eyes. These parallels introduce the concept of the *Orient*, namely the agenda, interests, and desires of a well-educated female inhabitant of cosmopolitan Smyrna, who shaped or even created a city through her narrations. Using a Latourian approach, their correspondence preserved – more or less connected – actants that were integral parts of Aspa's social situation. Occasionally these elements stand alone, but more often they become part of a more complex structure via repetition.

In return, Wilhelm told Aspa about political developments in Bavaria and news from Munich; he shared his thoughts, dreams, and wishes with the young woman abroad. Narration is an everyday technique of interaction, as well as an ethnographic and historical method that uses sources to reconstruct relations and environments through cultural analysis. Music and theater were the couple's common ground, a factor that was even more important because they did not come from the same social environment. Because they did not share a common home, during the years of their correspondence Aspa and Wilhelm defined roles in their own *Thirdspace*, in which economic differences in particular were mentioned, albeit not too directly. Aspa often sent pictures with

31 Egger, "A Cosmopolitan City."

32 Soja, *Thirdspace*.

her letters to illustrate her descriptions. In addition to portraits from several studios, she mailed images of daily scenes taken using her own camera. In a popular practice of the time, she also addressed dried flowers to her beloved boyfriend. Both of them sent goods such as tennis balls, swimsuits, cigarettes, books and magazines, and macaroni, in an effort to include one another in their social environment. Aspa and Wilhelm mutually generated realities via chains of actants. Requests in the letters to buy or search for goods required tangible action by the lovers, sometimes involving friends or relatives who also benefited from *Oriental* textiles, or new German songs or slices of soap in times of war.

The woman from the Levant not only offered Wilhelm insights into the world of the international port city and its surroundings, but also into her experiences of contemporary nationalism and the growing significance of belonging. Her own idea of ethnic identity was fluid because of her multi-layered personal history and the hybrid nature of everyday life in prewar Smyrna. From the perspective of Aspa's life world, the idea of being in the right place – being at home – firstly entailed following social boundaries. However, changing political circumstances made borders and other concepts of inclusion and exclusion more and more powerful, even in the transnational spaces of cosmopolitan Smyrna. Using Bruno Latour's approach, Aspasia with her attitudes and opinions was closely embedded in this complex network of spaces, actors, and actants. Her relationship with Wilhelm nevertheless remained concrete and resilient, leading her through the tide of events.

I feel so la la today, do you know why? Because I was so annoyed about politics today. I said, Lemberg has fallen and the British became so angry that I got in trouble with them. What do you say? This afternoon I have to play tennis with them, isn't it terrible?³³

5 Munich. Becoming Another Arrival City

'Cities by their very nature have always been in trade and migration that go beyond that immediate locality to other places.'³⁴ On the one hand, migration and the urban experience is about people moving from one place to another

33 Letter from Aspasia Schönwald to Wilhelm Boeck, Smyrna, 20 July 1915. Originally written in German, my translation.

34 George Gmelch, Walter P. Zenner, "Part 6: Globalization and Transnationalism," in *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*, eds. George Gmelch and Walter P. Zenner (Prospect Heights: Waveland, 2002), 338.

‘or from [the] country to the city,’³⁵ but on the other hand, ‘when we view cities in global terms,’³⁶ the question arises as to ‘how urban life is influenced and determined by these far-off developments, rather than on what is going on within the city itself.’³⁷ Even the biggest city is characterized by locality, with different spaces such as markets, postal offices, grocery stores, train stations or public places, where the paths of all inhabitants will sooner or later cross. However, individual lives are also influenced by events in the unbounded hinterland of every thick and heterogeneous urban space. What was appropriate in the city of Smyrna was applicable to the city of Munich as well. The founding period from 1870–71 was important for the development of the Ottoman port in the Levant and was also a particularly formative era for Bavarian capital. During the 19th century, both cities became modern metropolises.

With the conferral of royal dignity by Napoleon’s grace in 1806, the ruling Wittelsbach dynasty initially decided to develop Munich into its sole capital and permanent residence. Civil servants and their families from across the country settled in the city, and henceforth shaped the urban lifestyle with their social, cultural and economic capital. In addition, educational and cultural institutions, such as the royal opera and theaters, were concentrated there. The Academy of Fine Arts opened its doors in Munich in 1808, and other universities followed.³⁸ The municipal art association was founded in 1828. A new social class – the bourgeoisie – developed from the administration, local merchants, lower nobility and dignitaries from the university and other public institutions. King Maximilian I Joseph of Bavaria and his son Ludwig, who later became Ludwig I, reconstructed wider sections of the city, representing the capital of power with the arts. In addition to these royal construction activities, private building companies developed Munich from a profit-oriented perspective. A central topos of Bavarian writer Ludwig Thomas’s novel *Münchnerinnen* is the renovation of the old city beginning in the last third of the nineteenth century. The figures discuss investments, made over several decades that significantly changed the face of the city. As part of a debate that unfolds during the story among fellow regulars, the language also captures the image of the city.

The buildings that you like, Doc, that come from the time of Ludwig I, what are they? A university, library, edifices for art collections such as the Glyptothek or the Pinakotheken. Were they not supposed to give

35 Ibid., 339.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Richard Bauer, *Geschichte Münchens. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005).

our Munich a certain character, the city of art, instead of being a fraud, a poster for the tourism industry.³⁹

Walter Kresin, a Munich-based art and culture expert, rejoices in the novel: ‘Palaces stand for the habitus of the beautiful city, for after all churches are for belief.’⁴⁰

With the expansion of infrastructure during industrialization, more and more people around the world moved from the countryside to the city, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. This is what happened in Smyrna, Munich, and everywhere else. Doug Saunders, a journalist who studies these dynamics around the globe, sums up this complex development with his concept of the *Arrival City*.⁴¹ It includes the effects associated with such processes worldwide: people came and still come from rural areas to urban centers in order to develop, establish themselves and – often only through subsequent generations – advance socially. In parallel to the citizenship, a workers’ proletariat formed in Munich during the second half of the nineteenth century. Suburbs emerged at the gates of the old city, which were gradually incorporated into the surrounding villages. Like everywhere else, the search for work was usually what drew young people from other parts of Bavaria and neighboring regions.⁴² This is also the story of Wilhelm’s family. His father Joseph’s tax list shows that he was born on 11 July 1843 as a Catholic in Straubing, a smaller city in Lower Bavaria about 150 kilometers from Munich. He was a plumber by profession, and moved to the Bavarian capital in the 1860s, where he died on 13 April 1896. Joseph Boeck first married Josefa Krandl, who probably deceased; he then lived in Munich – ‘now Munich’ is written on the recorded papers – in a second marriage to Margarethe Ling from Oberbibrach, a village in the Upper Palatinate area of Bavaria, who gave birth to Wilhelm and two other children. Due to the historically poor housing situation, which was made worse by the move to the city, frequent changes of accommodation were common among the poor social classes, to which the Boeck family belonged. Joseph Boeck worked as plumber, gas and water fitter, and lightning rod fitter in the growing city. Wilhelm, the youngest son, completed an apprenticeship with the Munich city administration and became a civil servant, thereby achieving the longed-for social advancement.

39 Ludwig Thoma, *Münchnerinnen* (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 2008), 157–58.

40 *Ibid.*, 158.

41 Doug Saunders, *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History is Reshaping Our World* (New York: Random House, 2012).

42 Karl Gattinger, “Im Hinterhof der Musenstadt. Lebenswelten der Münchner Vorstädte Au, Haidhausen und Giesing” in *Münchner Lebenswelten im Wandel. Au, Haidhausen und Giesing. 1890–1914*, ed. Egon Greipl (München: Volk, 2010), 18–25.

As a second-generation inhabitant, Wilhelm was born and raised in Munich, and later trained as a civil servant. With his education he scaled a second step on the social ladder of the *Arrival City*. From quite humble beginnings Wilhelm also became a member of a popular grassroots sporting club that opened a new gymnasium in Widenmayerstraße in 1905. This is where Aspa and Wilhelm met for the first time and maintained connections to the club throughout their shared life. The young woman was keen on sports like tennis, swimming, and horse riding, which she practiced almost every day at home in Smyrna. The club offered a space enabling encounters, even between young people from different classes. Sport was a significant actor in the relationship between the lovers. Nevertheless, Wilhelm's living environment and its associated habitus differed significantly from that of his great love Aspa, who grew up and was socialized in the setting of a cosmopolitan city. In their letters they both learned about the other's environments, as well as their differences. Aspa wrote several times that her mother tried to engage her to a Greek dentist or some other person. Love was another important actor in her connection to Wilhelm. Finally, the link to a fiancé abroad allowed Aspa to empower herself and live a self-determined life, without the responsibilities of a housewife, and with all the pleasures of the city on the Mediterranean Sea.

6 Around Transnational Locality: Mobility and Migration

'Smyrna, September 17, 1911 ... in the afternoon I was at Cremer's with my sister Maria, aunt, and uncle, where we drank Spaten Munich beer, it was nice too.'⁴³ This was possible because the German engineer Carl von Linde had developed the refrigerator in the Bavarian capital – an invention that provided beer from Munich for its international supply. From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, Levantine Smyrna was a cosmopolitan essence of the urban – an interface of many peoples, spaces, and conjunctions – with a significant geopolitical location. Port cities are characterized by frequent mobility and the accelerated migration of ideas and diseases. Aspa confirms these specific features for Smyrna by reporting several times how lucky she was not to have contracted the typhus brought to town by the ships. But the true features of a particular city are always negotiated in local contexts. The city and the people, the buildings and the atmosphere, are actors and actants in networks with tremendous range. At the same time, the metropolis on the Aegean coast can be seen as a pressure-cooker for the developments of world history. Against this

43 Letter from Aspasia Schönwald to Wilhelm Boeck, Smyrna, 7 Sept. 1911. Originally written in German, my translation.

background, the story of Aspa, Wilhelm and the Schönwald family of Smyrna serves as an excellent example for superposing processes of forced migration and mobility by choice in a world in disorder. In her letters to Wilhelm, Aspa concentrated on the environments of family and friends, following their movements and connections while travelling or migrating. Aspa, her sister Maria, and her mother earned their income in Smyrna by offering guest rooms in their house to people from across the world. Stamps in her private collection document the global dimension of this local business. Maria had close relations to the family's Greek relatives and friends in Mytilene, and often visited this city on the island of Lesbos. Besides her stay in Munich, Aspa describes a trip to Italy and Switzerland in 1914, and repeated travels to Constantinople by train. She spent most of her time at home in Smyrna or nearby places, such as Budja or Cordelio. However, as described in the letters, from the family's house in Sari Sokak she could see the arriving steamboats and activities on the quay.

For the anthropogeographer Jørgen Carling, conjunctions are more often socio-spatial than vital. Referring to current definitions, he concludes that '[s]ocio-spatial conjunctions and vital conjunctions are thus partly overlapping concepts, and the difference between them is an entry point of understanding the significance of space in people's lives.'⁴⁴ This is also true of the relation between the cities of Smyrna and Munich in the story of Aspa, Wilhelm and the Schönwald family. They did not necessarily have to be present at the place they were concerned with, as their environments consisted of many vital – and even more socio-spatial – conjunctions.⁴⁵ While Aspa and Maria were initially located in Smyrna, their sister Anna, the eldest daughter of the family, expanded the chain of relations to Africa. Aspa's narration of this part of the family for Wilhelm gives the impression of a nearby location of their business. Several sources enable us to reconstruct that Anna's husband and Aspa's brother-in-law, the teacher Dr. Dimitrios Ghikas, moved from Greece to German East Africa in the late nineteenth century because he was an anti-royalist. He first worked as a translator for German railway engineers and their Greek workers, a language he learned while studying in the Austrian city of Graz. After returning to Smyrna for a time, the couple decided to return to British East Africa together. Dr. Ghikas later bought a coffee plantation for the family in the district of Moshi, near Mount Kilimanjaro. His wife Anna and children regularly traveled to Smyrna to visit relatives, seek medical treatment,

44 Jørgen Carling, "On conjunctures in transnational lives: linear time, relative mobility and individual experiences," in *Timespace and International Migration*, eds. Elizabeth Mavroudi, Ben Page, and Anastasia Christou (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), 37.

45 Carling, "On conjunctures," 37.

pursue schooling, or shop for goods. As Aspa reported, Anna came to the Ottoman Empire in 1913 with her sons Philotas and Adolphos, her daughter Helena, and the youngest son Alexander, who was born in 1912, as described in another letter. Aunt Aspa loved to care for her little nephew, whom she called Lele.⁴⁶ Hidden on the back of one picture in her album is the note 'Alexander Ghikas. A real African,' which for the first and last time mentions the surname of her sister's family. There is another photograph with Aspa and Lele, who would later study in England, in the garden of the British consulate in Smyrna. In the 1950s Alexander's nephew Marios also studied at Oxford, and a university colleague named Shelby Tucker decided to record the family's history.⁴⁷ This is how we know that Dimitrios died at the age of ninety in 1941, and that his wife Anna spent fifty-eight years in Northeast Africa. In 1955, their son Philotas opened *The Livingstone Hotel* in Moshi, a luxurious building with a view of Mount Kilimanjaro. The investment was made using profits from the coffee plantation, which was part of the 1,600 hectares of land owned by the family.⁴⁸

In November 1914, the Ottoman Empire allied itself with the Central European powers, the German Empire, and Austria-Hungary. At this point the frontlines of World War I had a crucial impact on the networks of Smyrna and the Schönwald family. It suddenly became a problem that a very close friend of Aspa, her mother, and her sister was neither Turkish nor Austrian nor German. Augustus C. Routh, a British citizen and member of the British consular staff, was born in the Ottoman Empire, where his father had worked for the Imperial Ottoman bank.⁴⁹ Another Schönwald sister was Olga. She was married to Johann Zimmerman, an Austrian civil servant at the consulate in Smyrna.⁵⁰ With the 'right' passport and national belonging it was no problem to stay in the city, whereas Anna's Greek husband Dimitros Ghikas in East Africa lost

46 Letter from Aspa Schönwald to Wilhelm Boeck, Smyrna, 23. Oct. 1913. Originally written in German, my translation.

47 Shelby Tucker, *The Last Banana: Dancing with the Watu* (London: Stacey International, 2012). After studying in England, Alexander returned to Moshi, where he married Rose Marie Daepf. She was born in Switzerland, in 1919, and moved to Tanganyika as a child. Some of the grandchildren still live in Switzerland according to a discussion on <https://www.ancestry.com/> (accessed 20 May 2020).

48 As part of the colonial system, members of the family lost their property when Tanganyika gained independence in 1961. Descendants of Dimitrios Ghikas still live in Tanzania today. See Tucker, *The last Banana*.

49 John Karatzoglou, *The Imperial Ottoman Bank in Salonica: the first 25 years, 1864–1890* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives & Research Centre, 2003), 18.

50 Egger, "A Cosmopolitan City."

all connection to his family and relatives in Smyrna for years.⁵¹ With the outbreak of the war, his wife and children were no longer able to return to Dar es Salaam, and were forced to stay at their grandmother's house before moving into their own apartment. 'This week my sister got news from her husband in B.E.A. [British East Africa];'⁵² Aspa could finally write Wilhelm in August 1916. 'He asked about our health and sent a lot of money, not directly to Smyrna, but he sent the letter and the money to a friend at the British consulate in Mytilene, and entrusted everything to a Greek in Smyrna, and now my sister can write to her husband. What luck for the four children and her mother!'⁵³ However, they had to wait until the end of the Great War to travel back to East Africa and reunite with Dimitrios Ghikas. This was also when Aspa took the chance to leave home in 1918 via Constantinople.

7 Leaving Smyrna: Leaving the Cosmopolitan Past

Just four years later, Smyrna, the 'Pearl of the Orient,' was gone. It no longer existed, almost completely destroyed by fire. World War I did not end at all of the frontlines in 1918, as allied forces still occupied the Ottoman Empire after its defeat with the central powers. However, the tide turned again, as Smyrna and its surroundings were occupied by Ottoman troops. On 13 September 1922, they looted several buildings in the Armenian quarter after dousing it with petroleum. Within hours, evacuees who had found safe haven in the city as well as inhabitants were forced to flee. Turkish soldiers moved through the streets beating, torturing, and killing tens of thousands of people. When the wind shifted in the afternoon, the fire also burned down the villas, churches, hotels, and consulates of the European quarter.⁵⁴

By the time dusk fell on that terrible Wednesday, the quayside was crowded with half a million refugees. They stood in real danger of being burnt alive, for the fire had by now reached the waterfront – a scalding,

51 Letter from Aspa Schönwald to Wilhelm Boeck, Smyrna, 16 Aug. 1916. Originally written in German, my translation.

52 Letter from Aspa Schönwald to Wilhelm Boeck, Smyrna, 8. Aug. 1916. Originally written in German, my translation.

53 Ibid.

54 Giles Milton, *Paradise Lost. Smyrna 1922. The Destruction of a Christian City in the Islamic World* (New York: John Murray, 2008), 306–08.

pulsating heat that was transmitted from building to building through the liberal use of benzine.⁵⁵

Aspa's sister Maria made it to Athens, where many relatives of the mother were located, and where even more gathered after the events of 1922. Like she did Olga with her Austrian husband. As for Aspa, she was safe in Munich with Wilhelm, but would never see her often described home again. The Schönwald family's house in the European quarter was located near the massive damage caused by the Great Fire.

In the summer of 1918, Aspa prepared for her expatriation from Grand Rue de Pera in Constantinople, where she had moved from Smyrna. On the eve of the November Revolution, she finally left for Munich. For months, she had explained to Wilhelm how to arrange facilities in her new home, and told him about her idea of living together in a common household. As an upper middle-class bride, Aspa prepared suitable goods for her dowry. In her letters she told her fiancé where to stay, and how many rooms their residence should include. She left by train, arriving in Munich on 24 September 1918. But as housing shortage was a long-term problem in the Bavarian capital, the young couple had to stay in the apartment of Aspa's mother-in-law for years. For Aspa, moving to Munich not only meant leaving home, but also irretrievably losing her former lifeworld. The Great Fire in Smyrna's European quarter in 1922 marked the material and immaterial passing of her familiar environment, its links and connections. Now her life was situated in middle-class Munich, while Smyrna was gone, and most of her relatives had become refugees in Greece. Still, the cosmopolitan character of the Levantine port city lived on in Aspa's personal history, appearing in her thoughts and actions. In the sense of Latour's actor-networks, the material goods that had been part of the links between cities, regions, and people were transferred into another way of life, with new but less transnational links and networks. From the 1920s onward all vital connections to Smyrna were gone, but all the photographs and items, such as dried flowers or carpets, became meaningful for Aspa's individual remembrance, and enabled her to evoke new socio-spatial connections for her German children growing up with their mother's narration of her life on the Aegean coast. Her youngest daughter Heidi, who travelled to Greece with her mother, kept these memories in mind, and passed on the story of Aspa, Wilhelm, and the Schönwald family as a contemporary witness of her mother's attempt to map Europe in her letters and relations with love. This allows for a deeper understanding of the transnational connectivity of places and situations, which for political reasons are no longer regarded in contemporary Europe as having a deep historical connection.

55 Ibid., 319.



FIGURE 9.4 Aspa, Wilhelm, and her first child Burschy in Munich, around 1922
CREDITS: SIMONE EGGER

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Afterword: Transitions from a Transimperial to a Transnational Migration Society

Stefan Rohdewald

1 A Transottoman Perspective on Migration Dynamics until 1900

The aim of this volume has been to reassess ‘Population Displacements and Multiple Mobilities in the late Ottoman Empire’ through a three-part methodological approach: avoiding a teleological perspective on the study of the Ottoman cataclysm; connecting late Ottoman history to wider dynamics, namely the collapse of its European counterparts Russia and Austria-Hungary, as well as to processes of globalization and migration, such as the ‘Greek Revolution’ and Zionist movements; and extending or challenging existing concepts and narratives. Last but not least, the volume has sought to reach out from Europe toward Asia, in an attempt to further integrate (post)Ottoman and Turkish history, as well as Near Eastern and Eastern European history, within a general Transeuropean context. While drafting the Call for Papers, and later helping to select the proposals, I endeavored to broaden the arena for this larger approach to the topic, as well as to ensure it could be read as part of and as a key to ‘Transottoman’ entanglements. Here I will try to recontextualize the approaches and results of this volume on Displacements and Multiple Mobilities, doing so between the *longue durée* and in simultaneity with a Transottoman setting. This volume will assess the changes that occurred around 1900 by broadening the spatial perspective to encompass the Near East and parts of Eastern Europe – stretching from Cairo to Moscow and Saint Petersburg, and from Iran to Poland-Lithuania – as well as taking a longer temporal perspective, spanning from 1500 to the twentieth century. I will also focus on developments connected to migration, especially collective violence and the forced displacement of people, to characterize new phenomena in keeping with a *longue durée* perspective.

I will begin by explaining what we mean by a ‘Transottoman focus.’ The Transottomanica research program financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG)¹ focuses on the historical entanglement of the Middle East

¹ Running from 2017 to 2023, with approximately thirty projects, most of them postdoctoral: www.transottomanica.de. Stefan Rohdewald, Stephan Conermann, and Albrecht

and Eastern Europe over the last five centuries by examining processes of migration from a transregional and transimperial perspective. In the early modern period, various types of migration – especially from and across interimperial buffer zones such as the northern Black Sea region, the Caucasus, and the Balkans – connected the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and consolidated transregional societal bonds. Merchants, refugees, and slaves created an overarching migration society primarily but not exclusively in cosmopolitan cities, while transregional migration also helped constitute the self-description and identities of imperial elites. The effects of intra- and interimperial migration, which reproduced or reconfigured local and far-reaching societal and identity structures, can be followed until the early twentieth century. The research program's focuses include interactions and networks – social, economic, material or military – across the Ottoman Empire, Poland-Lithuania, Russia, and Persia from the early modern period to the twentieth century, stressing entanglements between Eastern Europe and the Near East, without necessarily including Western or Central Europe. 'Transottomanica' is not conceived of as a 'historical region'² with fixed borders, but as a set of multiple relational and socially constituted spaces³ that varied considerably in their extent – ranging from the local to the transregional – and their density. Migration as a universal human activity played a pivotal role in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, as it did around the globe. While only small parts of any population migrated, all of the others were affected by the mobility of local or transcontinental migration. This happened either directly or, seen from a systemic perspective, through the general relational impact of mobility. Transottoman migration society was constituted by such flows in transimperial contexts both locally and across the entire space of our focus.⁴

Fuess, eds., *Transottomanica – Osteuropäisch-osmanisch-persische Mobilitätsdynamiken. Perspektiven und Forschungsstand* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019). Open Access: <https://www.vr-elibrary.de/doi/book/10.14220/9783737008860>.

- 2 See, among others, Ulf Brunnbauer, "Der Balkan als translokaler Raum. Verflechtung, Bewegung und Geschichte," *Südosteuropa Mitteilungen* 3 (2011), 83.
- 3 Pierre Bourdieu, "Physischer, sozialer und angeeigneter physischer Raum," in *Stadt-Räume*, ed. Martin Wenz (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus Verlag, 1991), 25–33.
- 4 For a short introductory text on the topic and the approach, which is applied in this contribution, see Florian Riedler and Stefan Rohdewald, "Migration and Mobility in a Transottoman Context," *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 51, no. 1 (2019), Special Issue: Between Europe and Middle East: Migrations and Their Consequences in Southeast Europe and Anatolia in Transimperial and Intercultural Context, ed. Vjieran Kusar: 201–19.

Migration and mobility are analyzed in our focus from a transimperial perspective. Cross-community migration⁵ and exchange were integral to the larger setting of the Ottoman Empire, Poland-Lithuania, Russia, and Persia during the early modern period. This was true not only of the peripheries, but of the border zones and vassal states between these empires as well, which were zones of high mobility often involving more than two imperial contexts. Groups such as Tatars, Circassians, Georgians, inhabitants of Moldavia or Valachia, Jews, Ruthenians/Ukrainians, Kurds, Armenians, Greeks and – especially in the nineteenth century – Poles were not only part of the Ottoman world, but formed societal networks across many of the empires in our area of focus, including their capitals. These groups moved from one imperial context to the other, but at the same time remained within their transimperial migration networks. On a local level, cross-community networks became the characteristic trademark of empires, for instance in their multi-ethnic cities, thereby consolidating one large transregional migration society when seen from a metaperspective. Even groups that did not move came in contact with these networks, and were therefore part of a transimperial society.

Research in recent years has clearly established migration's central role in the establishment, expansion, and functioning of empires, as well as their sense of cultural identity. The Muscovite Tsardom constituted itself as a multi-religious Empire by integrating the Muslim Tsardom of Kazan and the Khanate of Astrakhan, in other words through its long-term societal expansion to the steppes and the Caucasus, in direct competition with the Ottoman Empire and Persia.⁶ The Ottoman realm has been defined as a 'movable empire' on account of its close interaction with mobile groups, nomads in particular. These groups stood for the central position of mobility and migration in the constitution of society as a whole.⁷ The Ottoman central government's policy of forced settlement (*sürgün*) affected nomadic tribes, which for instance were transported from Anatolia to the Balkans, urban populations, and groups of elites and experts. Most notably, specialized craftsmen and members of the Jewish

5 Patrick Manning, *Wanderung, Flucht, Vertreibung: Geschichte der Migration* (Essen: Magnus, 2007).

6 See Andreas Kappeler, *Rußlands erste Nationalitäten. Das Zarenreich und die Völker der Mittleren Wolga vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert* (Köln and Wien: Böhlau, 1982); Andreas Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich: Beck, 1992) and Mikhail Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2002).

7 Reşat Kasaba, *Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants and Refugees* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2009).

community had to populate the new Ottoman capital of Istanbul.⁸ Another group of migrants in both the spatial and social sense consisted of recruits forced into the Ottoman central administration. In the institution known as *devşirme*, young boys from the Balkans were ‘collected’ from Christian families to serve as Janissaries and administrators after their cultural and religious conversion. A comparable system was adopted in the late sixteenth century in the Iranian Safavid Empire, when slaves (*ghulam*) captured in the Caucasus were educated in the palace to fill the highest positions in the army and state. They replaced the Turkman nomadic tribes on whom the power of the Safavid dynasty had been previously based.⁹ Both phenomena overlapped in the post-Mamluk and Ottoman Near East, including Syria and Egypt, and should be seen together within a Transottoman setting.

While displacements (*sürgün*) and *devşirme* were certainly enforced by violence, this was also true of economic transactions between human beings, leading to even greater flows of large numbers of people: large inter-imperial buffer zones, such as the steppes of the northern Black Sea or the entire Caucasus region, were ruled by mobile groups, and also gave rise to a special type of migrant that was a constituent element of Near Eastern Empires – slaves. Most of them originated from the North, as millions of persons of Slavic and Circassian origin were sold to the Ottoman Empire in the slave raids carried out by the Tatars between 1500 and 1800 in Southern Ukraine, Russia, Moldavia, and Circassia. Muslims were captured by Cossacks and transported mainly to Muscovy. Jews were involved in the slave trade as merchants, but also as ‘live merchandise.’ Enslavement often involved the conversion of the captives.¹⁰

In the Ottoman Empire, slaves occupied many positions in the urban and rural economy; women and men were recruited into the harem and other central state organizations. In the seventeenth century, regular slaves replaced recruits from the *devşirme*. Those from the Caucasus in particular became part

8 Joseph R. Hacker, “The Sürgün System and Jewish Society in the Ottoman Empire during the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries,” in *Ottoman and Turkish Jewry: Community and Leadership*, ed. Aron Rodrigue (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Turkish Studies, 1992).

9 Sussan Babaie et al., *Slaves of the Shah: New Elites of Safavid Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

10 Mikhail Kizilov, “Slave Trade in the Early Modern Crimea from the Perspective of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 11, no. 1 (2007), 1–31; Christoph Witzzenrath, ed., *Eurasian Slavery, Ransom and Abolition in World History, 1200–1860* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Christoph Witzzenrath, “Sklavenbefreiung, Loskauf und Religion im Moskauer Reich,” in *Gefangenenloskauf im Mittelmeerraum. Ein interreligiöser Vergleich*, eds. Heike Grieser and Nicole Priesching, (Hildesheim: Olms, 2015), 287–310.

of networks within the Ottoman state administration that formed on account of their former regional identity, which was not entirely lost with their forced migration to the empire.¹¹ In general, slaves were highly integrated within Ottoman society, and could expect manumission after a certain time of service, or the death of their master. Seen in conjunction with the *ghulam* practice, these millions of people directly constituted a Transottoman society, one that was continuously reproduced for centuries, and extended from Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania to the entire Ottoman and Persian Near East.

The Phanariots are another example of a large social network consolidating a Transottoman migration society shaped by multiple mobilities. This Greek-speaking Orthodox elite, which was based in the Istanbul quarter of Fener, and had served important functions in the Ottoman state apparatus and its European tributary states since the late seventeenth century, was a composite group from various regional backgrounds within the empire. Like many other such groups, it also participated in transimperial networks stretching well into Muscovy/Russia, Poland-Lithuania, and the Near East, as well as the entire Mediterranean.¹²

Scholars of the social and urban history of the Ottoman Empire who pay special attention to the experience of non-elite groups have also singled out migration as a constituent element of its society in general. The multi-ethnic character of Ottoman cities from Egypt and Syria to Anatolia and the Balkans was the consequence of multiple migration processes that engendered specific solutions of governance.¹³ Big cities, such as the capital Istanbul, were economically dependent on seasonal migrant laborers who often came from the minority communities of the interimperial periphery, such as the East Anatolian Armenians. Their example not only shows how spatial and social mobility were entwined, but also offers a glimpse of the transcultural cooperation of different migration communities from the same regional contexts. The same can be said, *mutatis mutandis*, about urban settlements in Poland-Lithuania, Russia, and Persia: for most of them, plurireligious and plurilingual societies were important parts of the urban societies since their beginning, for instance

11 Metin Ibrahim Kunt, "Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5, no. 3 (1974), 233–39.

12 Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2011), 24–40.

13 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire: Employment and Mobility in the Early Modern Era* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014); Ulrike Freitag et al., eds., *The City in the Ottoman Empire: Migration and the Making of Urban Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

during the late Middle Ages and early modern period in Vilnius, L'viv, and Polotsk, Astrakhan, and Isfahan, and beginning in the late eighteenth century in the new port and industrial cities of the Northern Black and Caspian Seas.¹⁴

2 Change with Partial Continuity? Refugees and National Conceptions since the Nineteenth Century

From the late eighteenth century onward, an increasing number of Muslims whose homelands were incorporated into the Russian Empire – Crimean Tatars, Circassians, and other peoples from the Caucasus and Central Asia – increasingly established refugee communities within the Ottoman Empire. These communities of ‘transimperial Muslims’¹⁵ did not lose contact with their former homelands. In the late nineteenth century, intellectuals from these communities who propagated reformist and Pan-Turkist ideas transformed both Russian Muslim communities and Ottoman society, thereby re-producing and rethinking migration society in a very large spatial framework. These new ideas were formulated and conceived of as responses to new concepts of imperial and national identities among the Christians.

In the nineteenth century, both Ottoman and Russian cities were important laboratories where new national identities formed. Bulgarians, Serbians, Armenians, Jews, Greeks, Crimean Tartars, and Kurds living in Ottoman and Russian cities – for instance on the Black Sea shore, but most importantly in Istanbul – formed national and transimperial networks. Similar to the case of East Central Europe,¹⁶ older denominational or political group identities transformed into new ‘national’ ones. Old denominational Orthodox networks began to split up and develop ‘Greek,’ ‘Serbian,’ and ‘Bulgarian’ national

14 See Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg and Stefan Rohdewald, “Polen-Litauen als Teil transosmanischer Verflechtungen,” in *Transottomanica*, eds. Rohdewald, Conermann, and Fuess, 169–70; Stefan Rohdewald, David Frick and Stefan Wiederkehr, eds., *Litauen und Ruthenien. Studien zu einer transkulturellen Kommunikationsregion (15.–18. Jahrhundert) / Lithuania and Ruthenia. Studies of a Transcultural Communication Zone (15th–18th Centuries)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007).

15 James H. Meyer, *Turks across Empires: Marketing Muslim Identity in the Russian-Ottoman Borderlands, 1856–1914* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014).

16 Balázs Trencsényi and Márton Zászkaliczky, eds., *Whose Love of Which Country? Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern East Central Europe* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2010).

political loyalties.¹⁷ These divisions can be seen in a larger context of mutual observation and competition, and hence within a Transottoman framework.

The nineteenth century saw changes to long-standing cultural and social practices of difference¹⁸ within imperial contexts. For the Ottoman context, this can be seen with the spread of the new concepts: as Western European powers and Russia insisted on improved conditions for Christian minorities within the Empire, they consolidated their ethnic denominations,¹⁹ subsequently fostering the long-term congruence of religion and a modern understanding of nationhood in the sense of ‘national minorities.’ On the other hand, Ottoman authorities used their agency to change local rule and ‘hedge’ groups.²⁰ While during the early modern period it was common in court documents to distinguish between groups (*taife*) along religious and denominational lines – as well as transreligiously through economic (guilds) and other aspects – the term millet was consolidated, within the new participation rules for laypersons in both church and later secular bodies, firstly denoting a denominational group within the Ottoman frame of dynastic and imperial identity, and soon coming to signify not only a ethno-confessional group, but a national one as well. This has been observed with respect to Ottoman Armenians, among whom a sense of national identity spread only in the 1880s, under the influence of Russian Armenians.²¹ This can once again be seen as resulting from the Transottoman circulation of concepts and knowledge about national identities.

If, in a larger entanglement of transimperial competition, the Ottoman Empire developed new forms of identity within the broader context of consolidating new national identities – beginning with the French Revolution and Romanticism in both Western and Eastern Europe – at the beginning of the twentieth century it became key in another context: the idea of ethnic cleansing, or the goal of annihilating national groups within a defined territory

17 Haris Exertzoglou, “Reconstituting Community: Cultural Differentiation and Identity Politics in Christian Orthodox Communities during the Late Ottoman Era,” in *Homelands and Diasporas: Greeks, Jews and Their Migrations*, ed. Minna Rozen (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 137–54.

18 Karen Barkey, *The Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008).

19 See Alexis Heraclides and Ada Dially, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2015).

20 Maurus Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung über die osmanische Reformpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005).

21 Howart Eissenstat, “Modernization, Imperial Nationalism, and the Ethnicization of Confessional Identity in the Late Ottoman Empire,” in *Nationalizing Empires*, eds. Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (Budapest and New York: Central European Univ. Press, 2015), 445.

claimed by another nation or group of actors claiming to represent a nation.²² The various attempts, up through the present, to bring about ethnic homogenization in most of the territories of the former Ottoman Empire should be seen in a metaperspective as a chain of interdependent phenomena establishing new, horrifying practices that unfortunately became characteristic of modernity in the European twentieth century. The aim of achieving ‘cleansed’ national states, which began in Southeast Europe but included Central and Eastern Europe as well, was a central rather than a marginal development in modern global history. Founded on ‘imagined communities’ (Benedict Anderson), and claiming new and popular forms of participation and legitimation – in place of preceding dynastic legitimacies – the entire context was marked by aggressive violence.²³

Loyalism, especially to the Ottoman dynasty and the new legal framework of the *Tanzimat*, had spread since the mid-nineteenth century, and continued to gain support with the Young Ottomans and the constitution from the second half of the nineteenth century, and once again in 1908 with the Young Turks. Yet in the final years of the Ottoman Empire, Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian,²⁴ and later Ottoman Muslim²⁵ nationalisms prevailed, while clear-cut Turkish nationalism consolidated only afterwards, but within this exact context. The Balkan Wars of 1912–13 proved to be a significant escalation of nationalist violence, and of what was referred to at the time as ‘an international war carried on [*sic*, S.R.] under modern condition.’ These wars defined modernity: they were not framed as something atavistic or parochial, as something Balkan, but were conceived of as a threatening vision of the modern world’s global state. The report financed by the Carnegie Foundation tried to make this clear, forcefully emphasizing the ‘the shocking horrors which modern warfare entails,’²⁶ and describing the events as ‘the annihilation of the [civilian, S.R.] population.’ With regard to the parties engaged in the warfare – included all actors,

22 Mathias Beer, ed., *Auf dem Weg zum ethnisch reinen Nationalstaat? Europa in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Attempto, 2004); Philipp Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation-States: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2016).

23 Mathias Beer, “Einführung,” in *Auf dem Weg zum ethnisch reinen Nationalstaat? Europa in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Mathias Beer (Tübingen: Attempto, 2014), 9; Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation-States*.

24 Stefan Rohdewald, *Sacralizing the Nation through Remembrance of Medieval Religious Figures in Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia*, 2 vols (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2022).

25 Erik J. Zürcher, “Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists: Identity Politics 1908–38,” in *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk’s Turkey*, ed. Erik J. Zürcher (Istanbul: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 213–35.

26 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, (Washington/DC, 1914), 1.

well beyond the regular armed forces – the report pointedly explained that ‘The first consequence of this fact is, that the object of these armed conflicts, overt or covert, clearly conceived or vaguely felt, but always and everywhere the same, was the complete extermination of an alien population.’²⁷ This was thus new and inherent to modernity and ‘modern warfare’ within the context of competing national identities among nationalistic actors, and could not be explained by the practices of deportation or migration via violent means mentioned earlier. Even when the objective had been to get rid of part of the population, the point was never to kill them without any exemption.

During the period stretching from the Berlin Congress until well after World War II, Muslim refugees fled in large numbers from historical regions in the Balkans such as Macedonia or Bulgaria, which were previously seen as being central to the Ottoman Empire and Anatolia; some of them were the relatives or descendants of refugees who had fled from Russia earlier in the nineteenth century, especially from the Northern Caucasus,²⁸ as mentioned above. Migration across our entire region of focus accelerated due to anti-Semitic governance and pogroms in Russia, and later due to World War I and revolutions, including migration within Russia,²⁹ large-scale emigration from the Balkans to Anatolia, and in the case of Jews, migration from Russia to the US or Late Ottoman Palestine.³⁰

Russian-Armenian and Armenian-Ottoman relationships developed and escalated precisely in this context. As explained by Ozan Arslan in this volume, the January 1915 proposal to the Council of Ministers – to deport the entire Muslim population from Russian occupied former Ottoman frontier

27 Ibid., 148.

28 Alexandre Toumarkine, *Les migrations de populations Musulmanes Balkaniques en Anatolie (1876–1913)* (Istanbul: Isis, 1995); Wolfgang Höpken, “Flucht vor dem Kreuz? Muslimische Emigration aus Südosteuropa nach dem Ende der osmanischen Herrschaft (19./20. Jh.),” *Comparativ* 6, no. 1 (1996), 1–24; Nathalie Clayer and Xavier Bougarel, *Les musulmans de l’Europe du Sud-Est: Des Empires aux États balkaniques* (Paris: Karthala, 2013), 70–76; Alexandre Popovic, *L’islam balkanique: Les musulmans du sud-est européen dans la période post-ottomane* (Berlin: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986); Nicole Immig, “The ‘New’ Muslim Minorities in Greece: Between Emigration and Political Participation, 1881–1886,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 29, no. 4 (2009), 511–22.

29 Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1999).

30 Toumarkine, *Les migrations de populations*; Höpken, “Flucht vor dem Kreuz?”; Clayer and Bougarel, *Les musulmans de l’Europe du Sud-Est*, 70–76; Popovic, *L’islam balkanique*; Immig, “The ‘New’ Muslim Minorities in Greece.”; Gur Alroey, *An Unpromising Land: Jewish Migration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2014); Gur Alroey, *Ha-Mahpekhhah ha-sheketah: Ha-hagirah ha-yehudit me-ha-Imperyah ha-Rusit 1875–1924* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 2008).

governments – accurately mentioned the preceding and ultimately simultaneous actions taken against Jews from September 1914 onward in Russian occupied Galicia: these actions provided examples for Ottoman authorities, and situated the events within a Transottoman framework, even though they were certainly not alone in laying the groundwork for securitization actions against the Armenians within the Ottoman Empire.³¹ Forced mass deportation, without guaranteeing security or supplies on the path of deportation or at the destination, defined the genocidal acts against the Armenian population of Asia Minor, in the service of a new Ottoman Muslim and later Turkish nationalism.³² While the extermination of Armenians was a new and modern phenomenon, deportation or expulsion itself was, as previously mentioned, an established practice, and known in the Russian or Muscovite Empire, for instance during its occupation of parts of Poland-Lithuania³³ in the seventeenth century, and throughout Europe as far as religious groups³⁴ were concerned. Another traditional means of military migration was the settlement of Cossacks, seen from Poland-Lithuania to Central Asia, and then, as shown by Ozan Arslan, planned during World War I – in a very Transottoman setting – for the Euphrates Valley.

The genocidal events of 1915 were a bellwether for European and global history overall, and not just for the Anatolian peninsula. During these years, the international community actually supported the means of ethnic homogenization by legitimizing the population exchange between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire in 1913, and then again in Lausanne in 1923: according to these treaties, individuals would be forced to leave their homelands, even involuntarily.³⁵ The deciding criterion was therefore not nationality – as was most often the case in post-World War I and especially post-World War II

31 İlkey Yılmaz, “Anti-Anarchism and Security Perceptions during the Hamidian Era,” *Zapruder World. An International Journal for the History of Social Conflict* 1 (2014), accessed March 9, 2019, doi:10.21431/Z33W2Q.

32 Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2004).

33 Barbara M. Pendzich, “Civic Resilience and Cohesion in the Face of Muscovite Occupation,” in *Citizenship and Identity in a Multinational Commonwealth: Poland–Lithuania in Context, 1550–1772*, eds. Karin Friedrich and Barbara M. Pendzich (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2009), 103–30.

34 Joachim Bahlcke, ed., *Glaubensflüchtlinge: Ursachen, Formen und Auswirkungen frühneuzeitlicher Konfessionsmigration in Europa* (Berlin: Lit, 2008).

35 Holm Sundhaussen, “Die Ethnisierung von Staat, Nation und Gerechtigkeit: Zu den Anfängen nationaler ‘Homogenisierung’ im Balkanraum,” in *Auf dem Weg zum ethnisch reinen Nationalstaat?*, ed. Mathias Beer (Tübingen: Attempto, 2014), 69–90; Renée Hirschon, ed., *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003).

transfers – but rather religious belonging, meaning that Greek-speaking Muslims were deported to Turkey while Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians adhering to the Rum-Millet or Greek Orthodox Church, were deported to Greece. This approach further legitimized and consolidated the congruence of religion or denomination in the region, although this congruence was not a distinctive feature, and can also be seen in Ireland, Spain, and Sweden, and was vehemently discussed in Germany in connection with the *Kulturkampf*.³⁶ Hence, in a context of condensed (post)imperial and (trans)national competition, which we have called Transottoman, there emerged the precedents for other tragedies of ethnic cleansing, or worse, for collective annihilation – with the Shoah being central to the excessive consequences of the modern imaginations of pure nations.³⁷ These events were and are at the heart of ensuing debates, as well as of competitive or multidirectional contexts most often involving national memory.³⁸

Also, within a transimperial context of competition as part of a Transottoman focus, Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman depicts the securitization and colonization strategies in Yemen to ensure that this region and its ports, which traditionally connected the ‘Indian Ocean World’ to Europe via maritime routes, did not become another milestone of the British Empire. Ottoman strategies for improving imperial governance, which Ahmad Mukhtar Pasha learned in Southeast Europe and elsewhere, were applied here. Jewish Migration from Yemen to Palestine did not occur due to anti-Semitism, but can nevertheless be seen as an indirect result of these actions. On the other hand, Jewish emigration from formerly Polish-Lithuanian regions within Russia to Ottoman Palestine were due partly to economic reasons, but primarily resulted from the growing anti-Semitism mentioned above, and created a new, post-Ottoman migration society among Arabs and Ashkenazim, as well as Sephardim from Russia and Southeast Europe.³⁹ The transition to new imperial, modern, and national competitions beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing in

36 Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003).

37 Shmuel Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” in *Multiple Modernities*, ed. Shmuel Eisenstadt (New Brunswick and London: Routledge, 2002), 1–29.

38 Bruce Clark, *Twice a Stranger: The Mass Expulsions that Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006); Eftihia Voutira, “Population Transfers and Resettlement Policies in Interwar Europe: The Case of Asia Minor refugees in Macedonia from an International and National Perspective,” in *Ourselves and Others: The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity since 1912*, eds. Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis (Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers, 1997), 111–31.

39 Alroey, *An Unpromising Land*; Yuval Ben-Bassat and Eyal Ginio, eds., *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

the interwar period can be analyzed with a focus on the large-scale, translocal, and transcontinental mobility of the key players involved. Conflicts travelled with the refugees, as though transported from one section of our Transottoman focus to another, namely from Russia to Palestine. As with later emigration from the Soviet Union, immigration from Yemen to Israel soared after World War II, consolidating already-existing structures of the Israeli migration society in a *longue durée* approach to Transottoman mobility dynamics. This larger context, which is precisely the focus of our Transottoman perspective, also fits for the complex evolution of the Arab an-nahda within the Ottoman Empire, as well as the framework for or reaction to Ottomanism, in addition to the transition of the Young Turk or Ottoman revolution, and the cataclysmic shift from a romantic or enlightened cultural movement to a national one.⁴⁰

Moreover, the example of Ahmad Mukhtar Pasha once again shows how mobility biographies of leading players also evolved in (trans)imperial settings; this context is made clear by Denis Ljuljanović's illustration of the Istanbul careers of Ottoman Albanians from Montenegro, with the examples of Tahir Pasha, who was born into a family from Podgorica, and his son Cevdet Bey. This fits very well into a Transottoman perspective, if we keep in mind the migration and mobility of intellectuals or professional revolutionizers between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, whether they were headed from Baku, the Volga region, or Crimea to Salonica, Istanbul, or Cairo. Governmental experts, and military experts in particular, were key to transimperial competition and post-imperial nation building, as shown by the historically cosmopolite Russian Imperial Army, interimperial military consultants in the Ottoman Empire, the careers of Tsarist Generals in the early Red Army,⁴¹ and no less prominently in the role of the Paşalar, that is former Ottoman Young Turk Generals in the Turkish Republic, well into the second half of the twentieth century. Experts and intellectuals continued to move and interconnect between the Soviet Union, Turkey, and the broader Near East during the twentieth century, providing an additional opportunity to reveal continuities or re-productions of

40 Jens Hanssen and Max Weiss, "Introduction. Language, Mind, Freedom and Time: The Modern Arab Intellectual Tradition in Four Words," in *Arabic Thought beyond the Liberal Age: Towards an Intellectual History of the Nahda*, eds. Jens Hanssen and Max Weiss (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2016), 36; Evelin Dierauff, *Translating Late Ottoman Modernity in Palestine: Debates on Ethno-Confessional Relations and Identity in the Arab Palestinian Newspaper Filastin (1911–1914)* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2019); Peter Hill, *Utopia and Civilisation in the Arab Nahda* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2019). For the even larger context, see Reinkowski, *Die Dinge der Ordnung*.

41 Brian D. Taylor, *Politics and the Russian Army: Civil-Military Relations, 1689–2000* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 138–39.

(post)Transottoman mobility dynamics, as the mobility of experts within and well beyond the Ottoman Empire was characteristic of the Transottoman migration society from its beginning and throughout the early modern period. These networks developed in our regional focus but also went well beyond it, as illustrated by Simone Egger's contribution to this volume; by Armenian merchants for the early modern period, seen as a 'circulation society'⁴² rather than a 'diaspora,' and stretching from Sumatra to Amsterdam; and by the Rhomaic/Greek networks re-produced, for instance, within the economic family enterprises of the Rallis and Sarifis.⁴³ Economic logic, as explained in this volume by Catherine Brégianni, evolved from a transimperial to a transnational setting: at the end of the day, the accounts of the individual enterprises were decisive, and these were and remained familiarized, localized, globalized, and – but not exclusively – nationalized.

The Ottoman and later Turkish, Greek, and Albanian demographic engineering discussed by George Kalpadakis and Renaud Dorlhac in this volume – viewed from both old and new centers, as well as the redefinition of local populations on the spot – should be seen both within the European context, and regionally within this transimperial situation of competition as reactions to expulsions from Russia and the Balkans. They should also and especially be linked with the new nationalisms escalating in the Balkan wars, which were led as wars of annihilation against the civilian population of imagined enemy-nations, and the new logic of internationally supported demographic exchanges with the treaties of Lausanne. The Balkan Wars and World Wars were an earlier and unseen escalation of these newly developed demographic politics, which evolved in the broader European setting, especially in the German *Kaiserreich*. The violent and (directly) state engineered Germanification of former Polish territories – one could call it crossdisciplinary or holistically designed – intensified after 1871, and culminated in a coherently and vehemently nationalized interpretation of 'internal colonization' at the turn of the twentieth century.⁴⁴

As Lausanne supported and legalized ethnic cleansing, population exchange remained an internationally accepted means to recompensate and pacify a

42 See Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2011).

43 See Anna Vlachopoulou's project in *Transottomanica*: "The Trading Companies Rallis and Zarifis in the Long 19th Century. A Contribution to the Global History of the Ottoman Empire," accessed October 29, 2020, <https://www.transottomanica.de/research/projvlaochopoulou>.

44 Hans-Erich Volkmann, *Die Polenpolitik des Kaiserreichs: Prolog zum Zeitalter der Weltkriege* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2016).

post-war situation in 1945 and ensuing years. In fact, only the Dayton accords, formally ending the war in and for Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995, marked a clear turning point, trying to force all involved parties to accept the return of refugees to the communities they were forced to leave in the first place.⁴⁵

It is important to re-emphasize, in concluding this book that migration and mobility were essential for all societies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and continue to be so today. In all of these movements – including those focused on in this volume – mobility changed both migrants and immobile people in areas of departure as well as arrival, for these concrete long-term mobilities constituted an overarching migration society. The growth of cities, via immigration or emigration to urban centers both within or beyond political frontiers, is a key phenomenon of both global and post-Ottoman history.⁴⁶ Politically enforced migration, expulsions, or flight due to war or economic disaster were and are common to our modern history, with their exacerbations into genocidal events unfortunately recurring as well, and shaping part of modernity to this today. Seen through a Transottoman lens, the events described in this book can be characterized as trailblazing and fundamental for the European and Near Eastern twentieth century – and certainly not marginal, exceptional, or somehow inherently and exclusively connected to local or area history.

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45 Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation-States*.

46 Freitag et al., *The City in the Ottoman Empire*.

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