Borders, Boundaries and Belonging in Post-Ottoman Space in the Interwar Period

Borders, Boundaries and Belonging in Post-Ottoman Space in the Interwar Period

Edited by

Ebru Boyar
Kate Fleet

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Cover illustration: Albert Eckstein with a *muhtar* in İscehisar, Afyonkarahisar in 1937, from the Eckstein Albums, Skilliter Research Library and Archives, The Skilliter Centre for Ottoman Studies, Newnham College, Cambridge.

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For the cover of the book, we have used a photograph from the Eckstein Albums in the Skilliter Centre collection which shows Albert Eckstein (1891–1950), a German Jewish paediatrician who fled from Nazi Germany and became a leading paediatrician in Turkey, sitting with a *muhtar* in İscehisar, Afyonkarahisar in 1937. We are most grateful to the Eckstein family for the donation of Albert Eckstein's photo albums to the Skilliter Centre.

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Introduction

Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet

In 1930, King Faysal of Iraq and Emir ʿAbdullah of Transjordan visited their ailing father Husayn, ex-king of the Hijaz and ex-sharif of Mecca, who had been living in Cyprus where the British had exiled him, to arrange for his transfer to Amman.[1] With them went Rıza Tevfik (Bölükbaşı), one of the *Yüzellilikler* (those declared *persona non grata* by Turkey)[2] and at that time in exile in Transjordan where he worked for Emir ʿAbdullah. This was to be Rıza Tevfik's first journey on a plane. "I was pleased" he noted on receiving Emir ʿAbdullah's invitation to join them

> thinking that we would take a nice boat trip. I immediately packed my bag, but do you know what they said just as we were about to set out on the journey? 'In order not to lose time, we will go by plane'. And would you believe it, they said this just as we arrived in front of the aircraft. Well, that was that, it was beyond me to be able to say in the middle of this group 'I am frightened of planes'. Such a tiny plane … My God! There were 12 of us as passengers, there was even King Faysal's English doctor, so enormous that he equalled three of me.[3] We were crammed together inside the plane like sardines in a can.[4]

The plane took off for Alexandria (from where they were to travel by boat to Cyprus), the passengers joggled and shaken about, and Rıza Tevfik looked out to see Amman spread out below them. A little later he looked again, only to see Amman still below them – "it was as if we could not get away from it".[5] The passengers had filled their ears with cotton wool. At one point, Rıza Tevfik coughed, and then coughed again. "It was the first time in my life that I had not heard the sound of my coughing. I experienced a strange crisis of nerves".

1 Strohmeier, Martin, "The exile of Husayn b. Ali, ex-sharif of Mecca and ex-king of the Hijaz, in Cyprus (1925–1930)", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 55/5 (2019), pp. 735 and 744.

2 For the *Yüzellilikler*, see Ebru Boyar's chapter, "*Yüzellilikler*: the League of Nations's first and only Muslim refugees", in this volume.

3 This was Sir Harry C. Sinderson (d. 1974), royal physician from 1922 to 1946 and Dean of the Baghdad Medical College.

4 Rıza Tevfik, "Bir Tayyare Yolculuğu" [A plane journey], in Kandemir, Feridun, *Rıza Tevfik'in İtirafları. Hayatı – Felsefesi – Şiirleri* [The Confessions of Rıza Tevfik. His Life, His Philosophy and His Poems] (Istanbul: Yağmur Yayınları, 2013), p. 193.

5 Rıza Tevfik, "Bir Tayyare Yolculuğu", p. 194.

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In reply to Emir ʿAbdullah's twice asking him how he was, Rıza Tevfik finally replied "'how should I be? I'm distressed". Rıza Tevfik wrote a note to the pilot asking when they would reach Alexandria to which he replied "God knows, but we are going there".[6] Once the plane landed in Alexandria, Rıza Tevfik swore on his ancestors that he would never again board a plane, unless it was to return to Istanbul.

This story serves as a window onto the post-Ottoman world of the interwar period, where exiles lived in ex-Ottoman lands, working for the new leaders of the new states (and, in the case of Emir ʿAbdullah and Rıza Tevfik, communicating in Turkish),[7] and where travel was fast (or certainly faster), frequent and trans-national. It was a world of fluidity, liminality and zones rather than borders, for although the now defunct empire had been permanently dissected into a myriad of nation states, demarcated in the new region within clearly drawn borders, such borders were not yet necessarily etched securely onto the mental maps or geographical perceptions of the recipients of the new cartography.

For some, the new world was a transitory phase, a temporary blip before all returned to at least a semblance of the past. The mental map of such Ottomans did not encompass the borders of the new nations and perceptions of geography remained pinned to an imperial understanding. For Vahdeddin, Mehmed VI, the last sultan/caliph rescued dramatically by the British from Istanbul in 1922 and whisked off to Malta, a life in exile was merely a waiting period before return. He received a constant stream of visitors at his villa in Sanremo, in northern Italy, where, according to *L'Echo della Riviera*, "he had arrived … with regal pomp, even if he was a sovereign in exile" and where "he had meditated and organised his response and his return to his homeland, if not as sultan than at least to sit on the seat of the caliph".[8] Among these visitors were prominent *Yüzellilikler* Kiraz Hamdi Paşa, Mehmed Ali, Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı, and ex-Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri, together with non-*Yüzellilik* General Vehib Paşa, who held a series of meetings with Vahdeddin there in late April 1925 and who were entrusted by him with the task of toppling the Kemalist government.[9]

For the British the re-establishment of the Ottomans and the removal of Kemalist Turkey was for long regarded as a distinct and largely pleasing possibility, a reversion to a more satisfactory past than the prospect presented from Ankara. Even as late as 1930, the British regarded the total collapse of the

6 Rıza Tevfik, "Bir Tayyare Yolculuğu", pp. 194–5.

7 Beyaz, Yasin, "Osmanlı Bakiyesinde Bir Osmanlı Aydını: Rıza Tevfik Ürdün'de" [An Ottoman intellectual among the Ottoman remains: Rıza Tevfik in Jordan], *Divan. Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi*, 21/41 (2016), p. 32.

8 *L'Eco della Riviera*, 19 June 1926.

9 Boyar, "*Yüzellilikler*: the League of Nations's first and only Muslim refugees", p. 108.

Turkish state as possible.[10] The British kept both possibilities, a restored sultan and a restored caliph, in their minds and up their sleeves, apparently toying, however faintly, with the possibility of a return of royalty as late as 1941.[11]

For the Italians, Vahdeddin was still for the most part the sultan, often referred to in the local Italian press of the period as His Imperial Majesty Sultan Mehmed VI.[12] Concepts of continued royalty which belonged to a world now past were also evident in the title prince given in the local Italian press to those related to the ex-sultan: his nephews Sami and Lutfullah, and Sami's son Bahaeddin Sami.[13] Bahaeddin himself made use of the title prince, describing himself in a letter to Churchill in June 1937 as the "son of H.H. Prince Samy Nedjib, the nephew of his late Imperial Majesty the Sultan Mehemed VI of Turkey", a masterful confusion of title and place that bore little reality either to the past or the present, for neither Sami nor Bahaeddin had the Ottoman title *şehzade* (prince), being descended as they were from the female line, nor was Mehmed VI sultan of Turkey.[14] The use of the term prince popped up often and was used also by Cemaleddin, the grandson of Abdülaziz, whom he described in a letter to Queen Mary as "Emperor of Ottomans, who was one of the greatest friends of Great Britain",[15] a letter which the queen referred to as a "tiresome communication".[16] Prince was also the title used by the British in communication with and about ex-members of the Ottoman royal family. Both the British and the French maintained imperial perceptions in their dealings with men who were now ex-Ottomans, and sometimes nothing else, being at least temporarily in a *heimatlos* state. Such men were to be rewarded in the new world for services in the old, for services rendered to France in the war, for example, as was the case with Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı. For the League of Nations, the *Yüzellilikler* were perceived, and valued, as "Friends of Allies", as Ebru Boyar demonstrates in her chapter in this volume.[17]

10 Boyar, Ebru and Kate Fleet, "Great Britain and 'a small and poor peasant state': Turkey, Britain and the 1930 Anglo-Turkish Treaty of Commerce and Navigation", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 57/6 (2021), pp. 11–12.

11 The Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge [hereafter CAC], AMEL 2-2-21, Leopold Amery to Anthony Eden, 16 April 1941.

12 *L'Eco della Riviera*, 13 February, 22 May, 19 June 1926; 7 May 1927.

13 *Il Pensiero di Sanremo*, 7 September 1924; *L'Eco della Riviera*, 7 March, 21 March, 23 March, 4 April, 11 April 1923; 8 March, 29 March 1924; 13 February, 20 February, 13 March, 12 June 1926.

14 CAC, CHAR 2/297, Sami to Churchill, 24 June 1937.

15 The National Archives, London [hereafter TNA], FO 371/21934, 222, Cemaleddin to Queen Mary, 12 March 1938.

16 TNA, FO 371/21934, 221, 11 April 1938.

17 Boyar, "*Yüzellilikler*: the League of Nations's first and only Muslim refugees".

It was a mental conception of geography based more on an imperial rather than a nation-state framework that allowed for a blurring or even an erasing of borders. Thus the "still fluid borders of the mandate states", Eli Osheroff argues in his chapter in this book, "made it at least possible to entertain" the Maronite call in the 1930s to allow Jewish migration to Lebanon.[18] The view that no Jewish state could survive "in the midst of an Arab sea"[19] was predicated on the vision of an Arab federation, not a counterpane of separate states, a vision doomed to failure in the fractured reality of post-war geography. The worldview inherent in such a "post-Ottoman" Arab proposal, as Osheroff calls it, reflected "the endurance of a special perception of the Middle East that was common before the collapse of the Ottoman empire and endured deep into the 1930s".[20]

It was a vision of a connected geography well beyond the new national borders that linked Libya mentally to Italy, while the reality of Italian Libya remained a strictly segregated space, as Brian McLaren's chapter shows;[21] or Marjayun to Oklahoma, where imagined connections or, better, mental belonging resulted in what Toufoul Abou-Hodeib describes as "the apparently paradoxical phenomenon of the globalisation of the periphery".[22] Marginalised economically under the impact of the borders of the new French mandate, southern Lebanon became more interconnected and intellectually vibrant "precisely because of the connections the region was able to forge with its diaspora".[23]

In the case of Marjayun the diaspora could be very dispersed indeed, but in the post-Ottoman world a diaspora could also now be a very local entity as the empire disintegrated into mere parcels of its former self. People, once all subjects or citizens of the same imperial space, now found themselves divided up, nationals of different new states, part of an imperial diaspora. The new borders did not, however, mean the severing of links or the erasing of shared concepts of belonging, those from well-off social strata in Istanbul, Beirut or

18 See Eli Osheroff's chapter, "The deal of the decade: Jewish immigration for Arab independence and post-Ottomanism in 1930s Palestine", p. 48 in this volume.

19 Osheroff, "The deal of the decade: Jewish immigration for Arab independence and post-Ottomanism in 1930s Palestine", p. 44, quoting from Khalil Totah.

20 Osheroff, "The deal of the decade: Jewish immigration for Arab independence and post-Ottomanism in 1930s Palestine", p. 34.

21 See Brian L. McLaren's chapter, "Colonialism and mobility in Libya during the Balbo era, 1934–1940", in this volume.

22 See Toufoul Abou-Hodeib's chapter, "From Marjayun to Oklahoma: translocalizing the periphery in interwar Lebanon", in this volume.

23 Abou-Hodeib, "From Marjayun to Oklahoma: translocalizing the periphery in interwar Lebanon", p. 268.

Cairo, for example, continuing in many ways to enjoy a shared social and cultural world.[24] Many of the emergent intellectuals and politicians, the doctors and educators of the new states, were the products of an imperial education, schooled in Istanbul and Turkish speaking. Such now trans-national links remained in place, forging connections between, for example, doctors trained in the major medical schools of the empire in Istanbul, Beirut and Cairo, as Liat Kozma's chapter shows.[25] The prestige of such schools continued after the collapse of the empire, and drew in students regardless of what new state they came from. This applied not only to medical schools, for the Najah school that opened in Nablus in 1918 was attended not just by children from all over Palestine but by pupils from as far away as Morocco. The reputation of the school was such that those from Najah could get into the American University of Beirut without an entrance exam.[26] Such a shared world of past experience inevitably fed into an inter-connectedness, however disjointed it was to become as the period wore on. Egyptians in Turkey were thus by no means 'foreign' in the surroundings of the new republic, and indeed were welcomed as tourists by the Turkish government, despite any political policies of emphasising distinctions between Turkey and its new Arab neighbours, as Amit Bein notes in his chapter in this volume.[27]

While the post-Ottoman world remained in many ways a shared mental space knitted together by social and cultural connections and perspectives regardless of the new national borders, for some the physical presence of such borders, often no more than "a hypothetical line",[28] was hardly perceived at all, as they criss-crossed them daily with their flocks, commodities, or cargos of contraband. Soviet-Turkish cross border trade, for example, "frequently obscured territorial demarcations", as Onur İşçi points out in his chapter in this volume.[29] Transnational patterns of mobility were not "instantly or irrevocably

24 Boyar, Ebru and Kate Fleet, "Approaching societies in the interwar Middle East and North Africa", in *Middle Eastern and North African Societies in the Interwar Period*, ed. Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet (Leiden: Brill, 2018), p. 2.

25 See Liat Kozma's chapter, "Regional careers: doctors' mobility across the new frontiers of the interwar Middle East", in this volume. See also Kozma, Liat, "Doctors crossing borders: the formation of a regional profession in the interwar Middle East", in Boyar and Fleet, *Middle Eastern and North African Societies in the Interwar Period*, pp. 123–43.

26 Schayegh, Cyrus, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 216.

27 See Amit Bein's chapter, "Strolling through Istanbul: Egyptians in 1930s Turkey", in this volume.

28 Mümtaz Faik [Fenik], "Cenup Hududu Hain, Sinsi bir Huduttur" [The southern border is a treacherous, insidious border], *Tan*, 1 January 1937, p. 2.

29 See Onur İşçi's chapter, "Interwar territoriality and Soviet-Turkish convergence across the Aras River", in this volume.

circumscribed"[30] and as Meyer has noted, trans-imperial mobility, which continued throughout the 1920s, "was very much a part of the early post-imperial era".[31] Intelligence and political ideas moved across new state lines bringing unwanted communism into Turkey, for example, where Turkish concern about communism among Hungarian immigrants led to the arrest and expulsion of Hungarians in 1928.[32] Overzealous curtailing of movement, however, could have undesired consequences. When the Italians in Libya put up a barb-wire fence on the Egyptian border in order to stop trans-border movements, this damaged not just Bedouin mobility but British intelligence as well.[33]

The new British and French authorities of the mandate states acted pragmatically in the face of the realities of the constant meandering of farmers and animals across agriculturally irrelevant borders. Under the Franco-British agreement of 1934, Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian farmers were allowed free passage with their animals. This agreement included the requirement that each animal be "marked by a metal ribbon bearing the letter 'S' in the case of Syrian and Lebanese animals and the letter 'P' in the case of Palestinian animals, securely attached to its right ear". Thus, as Cyrus Schayegh puts it, "the sovereign state concerns that structured inter-imperial communications had reached the point of territorializing, indeed nationalizing, animals".[34]

Contraband moved largely unimpeded across many of the new territorial divisions where the terrain often made policing well neigh impossible. According to an article in the *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* from 1946, Transjordan's main industry was possibly smuggling, for its frontiers "could hardly have been better designed for the evasion of guards".[35] It was smuggling that helped Aleppo retain its position as a commercial centre of trade with southern Turkey, for it was "the centre and the depot" of goods smuggled across the border, according to a report submitted to the Prime

30 Fletcher, Robert S.G., "Running the corridor: nomadic societies and imperial rule in the inter-war Syrian desert", *Past & Present*, 220 (2013), p. 191.

31 Meyer, James H., "Children of trans-empire: Nazım Hikmet and the first generation of Turkish students at Moscow's Communist University of the East", *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, 5/2 (2018), p. 199.

32 Saral, Emre, "A foreign labor force in early Republican Turkey: the case of Hungarian migrant workers", *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 6/3 (2017), pp. 609–10.

33 Fletcher, "Running the corridor: nomadic societies and imperial rule in the inter-war Syrian desert", p. 201, note 67.

34 Schayegh, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World*, p. 261.

35 Fletcher, "Running the corridor: nomadic societies and imperial rule in the inter-war Syrian desert", pp. 192–3, note 33 referring to Mackenzie, Marcus, "Transjordan", *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, 33 (1946), p. 263.

Minister İsmet İnönü by the Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya in 1931.[36] Smuggling was of considerable economic significance leading to a boom in commercial activity in southeastern Turkey as contraband flooded across the border and spread as far as Sivas and Samsun. Such was the situation that "the southern provinces including Siirt and Muş were still unable to escape from being Aleppo's economic and commercial tributary".[37] The damage which Aleppo had suffered due to losing its northern and eastern hinterland had been erased thanks to its export of contraband and it had now become a more expansive centre of trade than before. In Şükrü Kaya's estimation, Turkey's increasing the customs charges had only served, thanks to smuggling, to strengthen Aleppo.[38] Indeed the border between the two new states was so porous as to be almost non-existent in practical terms, at least according to Mahmud Şevket, a grandson of Abdülaziz and vocal opponent of the Kemalist government. Smuggling was rife, and crossing the border was a "very easy matter", so easy in fact that such possibilities were unlikely ever to be repeated. This porosity was perceived as a positive advantage not just because it enabled a roaring contraband trade which the authorities were quite incapable of controlling, but because, with the Black Sea borders and the Turkish-Syrian border wide open, infiltrating men and political tracts could be done with ease.[39] Oppositional political pamphlets and newspapers, such as those of Arif Oruç including his *Kurtuluş Mücadelesi Yarın*, were smuggled into Turkey from Bulgaria concealed inside Bulgarian newspapers.[40]

It was not just a matter of ignoring the new territorial demarcations but of failing to see them as significant, a perception of time past as perpetual, of a mental geographical landscape void of nation-state structures. Thus, as Leyla Amzi-Erdogdular notes in her chapter in this book, "the inhabitants of the region that was only until recently Ottoman Macedonia might not have taken the borders and even the new nation-states for granted".[41] The same could be said of the Aromanians for whom Balkan state borders meant the dissecting of their nomadic world between Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, as Nikola Minov discusses in his chapter in this volume, for "setting up borders between

36 Devlet Arşivleri, Cumhuriyet Arşivi, Ankara [hereafter BCA], 030-10-180-244-6, 5 December 1931, p. 1.

37 BCA, 030-10-180-244-6, 5 December 1931, p. 1.

38 BCA, 030-10-180-244-6, 5 December 1931, p. 1.

39 "Belge 22", 22 January 1932, from Mahmud Şevket to Ali Bey, in "150liklerin Gizli Mektupları" [The secret letters of the *Yüzellilikler*], ed. Tülay Duran, *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi, Dün/Bugün/Yarın*, 33 (September 1999), p. 71.

40 Boyar, Ebru and Kate Fleet, "A dangerous axis: the 'Bulgarian Müftü', the Turkish opposition and the Ankara government, 1928–36", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 44/5 (2008), p. 785.

41 See Leyla Amzi-Erdogdular's chapter, "Muslim migration and nation-building in interwar Yugoslavia and Turkey", p. 255 in this volume.

the Balkan states meant that the summer abodes of a great number of these stockbreeders were now located on the territory of Bulgaria and Serbia, while their winter abodes remained in Greece".[42]

Borders, both physical and mental, were thus not a "quick *fait accompli*", as Jordi Tejel and Ramazan Hakkı Öztan put it in their chapter.[43] They took time to solidify and bed down, Fletcher noting the danger of "exaggerating the speed and impact with which these boundaries took root".[44] The borders of Syria, for example, were not firmly fixed until 1930 while the Transjordan border was not demarcated until 1932. Border fluidity meant too that territory, not just people, moved from one state to another. Dobruja thus shuttled between Bulgaria and Romania, becoming a "true Alsace and Lorraine of the Balkans".[45]

Mobile and porous, borders could also be elastic, stretching well beyond a line drawn in the sand to become a zone, it has been argued, that should be seen as a specific region in its own right, a "social institution", as Tejel and Öztan put it referring to the Turkish-Syrian border zone.[46] This long border was a wide open zone with no natural barriers to mark it out, a region where the people on either side were intricately intermixed and where their affairs were inextricably intermingled, according to the interior minister Şükrü Kaya's 1931 report on the area.[47] Marked by "heaps of stones set up at regular distances", the land, the vegetation and the people were the same either side of this to all intents and purposes invisible border line.[48] Such zones facilitated a gradient of border behaviour, a more fluid world of liminality where people could move to and across a border and back without any perceptible breach or change of cultural landscape. Such a zone could also be perceived in political terms as a buffer zone or a bastion between two separate territories. The Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* floated the idea of settling incoming migrants from the Balkans in Thrace near the Bulgarian border "so that they form a 'wall in Europe' as a response to those who are 'eying the Bosphorus'".[49] An official in

42 See Nikola Minov's chapter, "Cursed in Heaven: the colonization of the Aromanians in southern Dobruja", p. 58 in this volume.

43 See Jordi Tejel and Ramazan Hakkı Öztan's chapter, "Borders of mobility? Crime and punishment along the Syrian-Turkish border, 1921–1939", p. 211 in this volume.

44 Fletcher, "Running the corridor: nomadic societies and imperial rule in the inter-war Syrian desert", p. 190.

45 Minov, "Cursed in Heaven: the colonization of the Aromanians in southern Dobruja", p. 61.

46 Tejel and Öztan, "Borders of mobility? Crime and punishment along the Syrian-Turkish border, 1921–1939", p. 205.

47 BCA, 030-10-180-244-6, 5 December 1931, p. 11.

48 Mümtaz Faik, "Cenup Hududu Hain, Sinsi bir Huduttur", p. 2.

49 Amzi-Erdogdular, "Muslim migration and nation-building in interwar Yugoslavia and Turkey", p. 263.

the Yugoslav ministry of foreign affairs "suggested simply ethnically cleansing a spatial belt of Albanian population along the Albanian border".[50]

However much borders might not map well onto internalised geographies that remained imperial for many in the immediate post-war years, the existence of nation-state borders had a decided impact on the practicalities of belonging. The new borders could leave people in a limbo land, either in a "liminality of exile" a "status of being stuck on the threshold, being neither here nor there", as Peter Wien describes it in his chapter in this volume,[51] or because, with the wiping of the Ottoman empire from the map, people simply ceased to belong to anything. People who became "involuntarily estranged from family, home, and property"[52] now had to scrabble to belong, to seek and petition for a national status in a new and alien world of nation states. They now had to choose where they belonged. Many simply lost out entirely and ended up ousted from their former homeland, not deemed to be residents or citizens of the new nation state erected on the lands which they perceived as their own.

The new realities also wiped out the benefits of belonging for those who now lost the ability to defend or claim their rights in courts that now no longer existed. With no empire came no pensions leaving people unable to obtain any financial support. Soldiers who had not taken part in the Turkish National War of Liberation and who had been left outside the borders of the present state of Turkey now lost all their connections to the army of which they had been serving members.[53]

Banks once located across the empire lost their imperial character, their branches now absorbed into new states, their accounts inaccessible to those who had, as Ottomans, deposited their money in them. In 1925 Habib Efendi, who had worked for more than 40 years in the telegraph and postal office, his last posting being in Salat in Syria, found himself involuntarily parted from his savings which he had originally deposited in the Ziraat Bankası in Damascus in 1327 (1911/1912). When he retired, he went to Damascus to withdraw the gold he had deposited in the bank, only to be told that there was no gold available, all gold having been removed from the bank by Cemal Paşa. He would therefore need to get the gold from Istanbul. With the fall of Damascus, Habib Efendi went to Istanbul and approached the bank's headquarters there about his account. He received a year's interest on his savings and was offered, rather

50 Amzi-Erdogdular, "Muslim migration and nation-building in interwar Yugoslavia and Turkey", p. 253.

51 See Peter Wien's chapter, "Surviving in Nazi Berlin: Husni al-ʿUrabi's 89 months in exile", p. 141 in this volume.

52 See Michael Provence's chapter, "Post-Ottoman dreams and nightmares in the mandate Middle East", p. 19 in this volume.

53 See for example BCA, 030-10-205-400-6, 27 March 1924.

than the gold he had deposited, *evrak-ı nakdiye*, the bank notes issued by the Ottoman government during the war. Having deposited gold, Habib Efendi did not wish to accept notes. Later, now in Merzifon, he again petitioned the Ziraaat Bankası and was told to make his request to Damascus. Habib Efendi protested: "I entrusted my money to the Turkish government's Ziraat Bankası, so I want it back from them. But they advised me to approach the Arab government". But, he noted, today the Ziraat Bankası was administered by the Turkish Republic, and so why should he apply to a foreign government? This he would not accept. The republic, not any Arab government, should therefore return his money. He was now left in a parlous position, having to provide for his three young sons, with no ability to withdraw his savings and his goods having been "seized by the Arabs". He therefore petitioned the Turkish government that the Ziraat Bankası release his money.

A further petition was presented by Habib Efendi's sons (whose photograph appears below), the oldest of whom was almost 13 years of age. Addressing Mustafa Kemal Paşa (Atatürk) as "Paşa Babamız Hazretleri" (His Excellency our Father Paşa), they explained that their father was unable to get by on the money he had, despite his 40 years of service, and that they often went hungry. They requested that Mustafa Kemal arrange for the money held in the Ziraat Bankası to be returned to their father.

In his response to the Turkish government, however, the director of the Ziraat Bankası stated that the money had been entrusted to a place now outside the borders of the present Turkish Republic to a bank, Ziraat Bankası, which, although it had been an imperial state bank at the time the deposit

FIGURE INTRODUCTION 0.1
The three young sons of Habib Efendi, Celaleddin, Hayreddin and Fahreddin, BCA 030-10-210-431-6, 15 September 1341 (1925)

was made, was not the property of the Turkish Republic. Under the Treaty of Lausanne the transfer of the money was not therefore legally permitted.[54]

While bank deposits vanished in the miasma of new states, the disappearance of Ottoman courts rendered land disputes based on Ottoman legal documentation dead in the water. Many landowners simply lost their property to the mandate authorities and "only the richest and most well-connected had any chance of a successful legal battle to retain control of lands they plainly owned under Ottoman law",[55] as Michael Provence notes in his chapter in this volume. Land which passed into the hands of the mandate authorities was often used "as bribes"[56] to ensure political compliance from influential citizens, hundreds of thousands of acres being auctioned off to wealthy Syrians "to purchase their support of the government",[57] or was passed on to concessions and enterprises controlled by high-ranking mandate officials.[58]

The new post-Ottoman world thus left many bereft materially, deprived of rights that no longer existed and with either a new national identity or no identity at all. While new national borders might exist on the ground, they did not necessarily do so in the mental perceptions of those they were designed to contain. Their physical presence could be ignored by those who traversed them unconcerned, or were simply regarded as temporary or transitory by those yet to grasp the extent to which their world had changed and that the past was very much gone forever. As the interwar period progressed, however, borders solidified and mental perceptions shifted. The older generation of Ottomans gave way to a new generation of citizens of nation states for whom the imperial world had little or no resonance.

54 BCA, 030-10-210-431-6, 15 September 1341 (1925).

55 Provence, "Post-Ottoman dreams and nightmares in the mandate Middle East", p. 25.

56 Provence, "Post-Ottoman dreams and nightmares in the mandate Middle East", p. 25.

57 Provence, Michael, "Ottoman and French Mandate land registers for the region of Damascus", *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, 39/1 (2005), p. 39.

58 Provence, "Post-Ottoman dreams and nightmares in the mandate Middle East", p. 25.

CHAPTER 1

Post-Ottoman Dreams and Nightmares in the Mandate Middle East

Michael Provence

In 1925 former wartime foreign secretary, Arthur Balfour toured the new League of Nations mandates of what had been Ottoman Syria. He started his tour in Palestine. It was evidently a confusing experience for the elderly statesman. In Palestine he asked a British official, "who are all these people in long cloaks and white headdresses?" Upon being told they were Arabs, he asked, "But if they are Arabs, what are they doing in this country?".[1] Days later, in Damascus, he was forced to flee angry crowds protesting his presence. The consul in Damascus noted, "Lord Balfour was naturally much distressed at the tumult his presence had provoked. He did not understand why Syria should be so much interested in his historic [Balfour] declaration".[2]

A few years before Balfour's visit, the First World War and its settlement had brought an end to four great dynastic empires. Only one, the oldest, and only non-Christian world power, was both partitioned and extensively occupied by the victorious powers. The League of Nations Mandate Regime was the mechanism by which the Ottoman partition and occupation was made legal, rational, and just, according to its functionaries and apologists. Diplomats among the victors, and a few influential neutrals, devised the Mandate Regime to supervise the division and management of the war's territorial spoils in the Ottoman realms and among the seized enemy colonies. International fury seethed at the waste of the war, and America's Woodrow Wilson, Britain's David Lloyd George, and France's Georges Clemenceau worried about the prospect of popular revolution. Ostensibly victorious statesmen watched anxiously the collapse of the Russian and German monarchies, and sought to defuse charges that the war was fought for empire, land, and plunder. Taking Wilson's lead, they piously declared the post-war settlement would bring a just settlement of all claims. The new colonies would be called mandates and would be governed

1 Rendel, Sir George, *The Sword and the Olive: Recollections of Diplomacy and the Foreign Service, 1913–1954* (London: John Murray, 1957), p. 121.

2 The National Archives, London [hereafter TNA], FO 371/10838, Smart to Chamberlain, 24 April 1925.

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in the interests of the inhabitants, who were mostly ignored and stymied in their efforts to represent themselves or their interests before the world body.

Arguably the land scramble for the Ottoman empire represented both the prize and a proximate cause of the war, as historians like Christopher Clark, Michael Reynolds, and others have recently pointed out. Italy invaded and occupied Ottoman Libya in 1911–12, and the Balkan Wars came in 1912. A week and a half before the assassination at Sarajevo, Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill convinced the British parliament to approve the purchase of a 51 percent stake in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to secure fuel oil supplies for the Royal Navy.[3] The massive APOC refinery at Abadan was within sight of the Ottoman frontier across the Shatt al-Arab river, and about 15 kilometers from the Ottoman provincial capital of Basra, at the head of the Persian Gulf. The re-arrangement and distribution of the Ottoman lands would be central to the post-war wrangling, as it was central to wartime negotiations, the Eastern Question, and much European diplomacy since the mid-nineteenth century.

It fell to the new League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission to reconcile the victors' proclamations to honor consent of the governed with their determination to control their winnings. French, British, and Russian politicians and intellectuals had spent a century defining Ottoman Muslims as racially deficient Asiatics and murderous Turk barbarians, possessed of a stunted and fanatical culture. The Mandates Commission, comprised of neutral European academics and ex-colonial functionaries, subscribed to varieties of this worldview and believed the peoples of the east needed development, tutelage, and firm guidance from civilized nations. The barbarity of the war just ended notwithstanding, they imagined civilization as a hierarchy of races and nations; Africans were at the bottom; Arab and Turkish Muslims slightly higher; so-called Oriental Christians a bit higher still. European statesmen occupied the pinnacle.

The League of Nations has long been remembered, if at all, as a failed attempt to prevent another European war. Sustained scholarly interest drained away in the years after the Second World War. Mandate bureaucrats, like their Great Power colleagues, remained ignorant that Ottoman politicians had presided over a constitutional monarchy in a vast, geographically contiguous state with established law codes, courts, a constitution, elected parliament, local elected bodies, a regime of theoretical legal equality of citizens before the law, a growing state education system, electrified cities, and a railway and telegraph

3 Anglo Persian became British Petroleum or BP. The British government remained majority shareholder in the oil company until the 1980s. The Royal Navy landed troops near the refinery even before Ottoman entry in the war in 1914.

network. The Ottoman state had conscripted, trained, equipped, and placed in the field an army of some three million men between 1912 and 1918. Historian Elizabeth Thompson has recently uncovered the roots of Ottoman representative government stretching back centuries, but League and Great Powers functionaries were willfully ignorant of such details.[4]

The Eastern Question had preoccupied European colonial strategists and intellectuals since the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Broadly speaking, Britain and France sought to arrest any Russian or German territorial expansion in the Ottoman Balkans or the Middle East. By the second half of the nineteenth century, statesmen began to conceive and market the end of Ottoman rule and the resolution of the Eastern Question as a humanitarian mission to free subject nations from Turkish and Muslim tyranny. The newly freed nations, beginning with Greece, would be subordinate allies and clients of the respective western empires. Humanitarian liberation of "smaller nations", resumption of a Christian Crusade, and imperial expansion, and capitalism could all advance. The melding of imperial strategy with claims to humanitarian altruism, almost never at the request of its targets or beneficiaries, has had a long career, and helped bring about the Crimean War of 1853–56, the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78, the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, and the 1914–18 Great War itself. More recent Middle East interventions also belong in this category.

In contrast to four centuries of Ottoman rule, the post-Ottoman mandates in the Arab East lasted less than three decades. This chapter examines and contrasts examples of post-war hopes, however fleeting, of those left behind by Ottoman defeat and partition with examples of little-known mandate actions to curtail those same hopes, and their consequences. The comparison between dreams and nightmares, representation and disenfranchisement, voluntary mobility and involuntary immobility, freedom and servitude, and home and exile, animates the inquiry. Underlying the period is a persistent and generally willful failure on the part of the new European colonial rulers to comprehend the political consciousness of their new, unwilling, colonial charges. The architects of the mandates, like Lord Balfour, came armed with certainty about their righteousness and moral fitness for rule and for the role they envisioned for themselves. The former Ottoman citizens of the mandates refused to play the roles assigned to them, and insisted, relentlessly, on their right to determine their own role in the world and their own governing arrangements. The reverberations of the ensuing collision reach into the present.

4 Elizabeth F. Thompson, *Justice Interrupted: the Struggle for Constitutional Government in the Middle East* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013).

Representation

Ottoman citizens immediately claimed rights of self-representation and self-determination. Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points speech provoked optimistic dreams, promising that the Ottoman realms would enjoy "secure sovereignty", and that the "nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development".[5] Wilson's contemporaries sometimes mocked his naive idealism, but Lloyd George recognized its utility. Clemenceau famously skewered Wilson's pretense, when he said, "Fourteen? The Good Lord was satisfied with ten".[6] Dreams of independence and Great Power altruism notwithstanding, Wilson's speech, like David Lloyd George's similar proclamations of self-determination, came in response to the wartime threat posed by the Bolshevik Revolution and the prospect of mass desertions and revolutionary movements among the millions of allied soldiers. After the armistice, Ottoman citizens tried to claim the promised autonomy, and quickly suspected a swindle. Once the outlines of the Mandate Regimes came into view, they immediately challenged the settlement by the time-honored Ottoman practice of petitioning. The Mandate Commission was taken by rude surprise by the immediate arrival of cartons of letters and petitions, often composed in cultured French, decrying the carve-up and demanding the right of self-representation and self-rule. Visiting delegations followed letters, and cultured Ottoman gentlemen, of all Ottoman religions, fashionably attired, French speaking, and making determined reference to the Rights of Man, Wilson's Fourteen Points, the Ottoman constitutional monarchy, and the elected Ottoman parliament, caused additional confusion and consternation among the well-meaning functionaries of the Mandates Regime at Geneva, who had conceived themselves 'guardians' of civilizational 'minors'. The minors inconveniently insisted on the right to speak for themselves. The mandate system thus faced a little noticed crisis of legitimacy at birth. British and French colonial officials reserved the right to rule without challenge or oversight, and yet the League system claimed to act on behalf of "those not able to stand by themselves", as stated in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations:

5 https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=62&page=pdf. Accessed 23 February 2021.

6 Inge, William Ralph, *The End of an Age and Other Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 139.

> To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.
>
> The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League ...
>
> Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.[7]

Ottoman subjects had interacted with their government by means of petitions for centuries. A petitioner could reasonably expect a complaint, typically about some injustice by state functionaries, would be answered. So deeply ingrained was the practice that every city had professional writers available for hire to draft and submit petitions for those unable to write, or unsure of the correct protocol.[8] Historians have studied Ottoman petitions and found that the sultan's government often weighed in on the side of peasants and the aggrieved poor against corrupt formal or informal agents of the state.

Ottoman statesmen and former parliamentary deputies from Greater Syria were the most prominent and most prolific early petitioners. Musa Kazim al-Husayni, leading member of the most famous political family of Jerusalem, began a series of detailed petitions in 1920. He was almost 70 years old and was the most distinguished and senior Ottoman politician in Palestine. He had been educated in Istanbul and had served in high government office in postings from the Balkans to Yemen. Musa Kazim al-Husayni had been briefly

7 The Covenant of the League of Nations, article 22. https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919Parisv13/ch10subch1. Accessed 23 February 2021.

8 Ben-Bassat, Yuval, *Petitioning the Sultan: Protests and Justice in Late Ottoman Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013).

appointed mayor of Jerusalem under British occupation till his dismissal and imprisonment after addressing a public protest against the Balfour Declaration.

In the immediate wake of the mandate apportionment in 1920, the French invasion of Damascus, and the exile of King Faysal, Musa Kazim wrote as president of the third Palestine Conference at Haifa. In the name of the conference, he made the poignantly futile request that the letter be read to the League General Assembly. As conference president and representative of all Palestinian Muslims and Christians, he protested the Balfour Declaration, and noted that even the most brutal law of conquest did not allow displacing the citizens of the defeated power from their land and homes, in favor of placing another, foreign people, in their country.[9]

By the time the Mandates Commission finally convened its first meeting in October 1921, telegrams and petitions had been arriving from ex-Ottoman citizens all over the world for more than a year. Another former Ottoman parliamentary deputy, and high official in the wartime government, Shakib Arslan, had organized a body to represent the former Ottoman citizens of Greater Syria before the League of Nations. The Syrian-Palestinian Congress, under Arslan's direction as secretary general, produced a professionally printed and published declaration addressed to the president of the General Assembly. The pamphlet addressed the League in sophisticated legal terms and demolished at a sweep all the proclamations of altruistic humanism, which the allies claimed defined their war aims.[10]

The Congress prepared their pamphlet and gathered in Geneva in time for the first Mandates Commission meeting. Ten prominent political and intellectual figures from the regions of Greater Syria met, including Rashid Rida, Shakib Arslan, Amir Michel Lutfallah, and Ihsan al-Jabri, and requested the League Secretary General Sir Eric Drummond meet and allow them to present their case in public before the Assembly, or at the least before the Mandates Commission. Drummond refused all requests and denied even the briefest meeting. The Mandates Commission Director William Rappard, an American educated Swiss academic and diplomat, wrote to Drummond to note that the Commission had received telegrams from Syrian-Palestinian organizations all over the world including Peru, Ohio, Boston, Alexandria, and Cairo. The letters and telegrams were addressed to the President, or the League Council. Rappard sought guidance and opined that while he had no information on the organizations, he had "some scruples about merely suppressing documents". He proposed to acknowledge receipt of each telegram and distribute copies to the

9 League of Nations Archives, Geneva [hereafter LON] [carton] R14, 18 December 1920.

10 LON, R39.

commission in advance of the meeting.[11] The Muslim-Christian Committee of Cleveland, Ohio, sent a telegram, noting that "government by consent of the governed is the guiding principle of the League of the Nations", and the Balfour Declaration "is against the consent of the Palestinians".[12]

Drummond, former personal secretary of Foreign Secretary Balfour, was plainly irritated by the insistence that newly colonized populations be heard. Rappard wrote, "I cannot bring myself to feel that we are doing our full duty toward the inhabitants of these territories … they can make out a strong case against the way in which they have been treated by France and Great Britain, as well as against the League of Nations … I think that we should not forget that in the course of the war these populations were promised national independence and that the Covenant recognizes their right to be consulted".[13] Drummond ignored Rappard's repeated requests for clarification, and finally replied to dismiss all attempts at self-representation. "'The wishes of the inhabitants' is only the concern of the mandatory power and not the council. I have continually stated that I do not think that documents such as these, which contain absurd allegations, should be circulated".[14] For Rappard the Mandates Commission was obligated to hear from all concerned, while for Drummond the mandate was a mechanism to silence the colonized, and defuse criticism of imperialism.

Ultimately neither position prevailed. During the nearly three decades of the mandates, Rappard continued to receive petitions and enter them into the records of the Mandates Commission. He also continued to receive visitors and representatives, including Palestinian and Syrian politicians, the World Zionist Organization's Chaim Weizmann, and pro-Zionist figures like Albert Einstein. Shakib Arslan and Jamal al-Husayni, among many others, lobbied the Mandates Commission tirelessly, but unlike the Zionist representatives, never appeared before any League body as representatives. Drummond was Secretary General till 1933, and while he failed to exclude letters and petitions from being received, he succeeded in devising a tortuous and dystopian procedure in which aggrieved mandate citizens were forced to first make complaints to the responsible mandate authorities, who would then, it was claimed, forward the complaint and response to the Mandates Commission. Unsurprisingly, such complaints never materialized at Geneva, but a loophole, probably thanks to Rappard, existed: petitions originating outside the mandated territory could

11 LON, R15, Rappard to Drummond, 1 September 1921.

12 LON, R15, telegram, 2 September 1921.

13 LON, R15, Rappard to Drummond, 11 January 1921.

14 LON, R15, Rappard to Drummond (pen in the margins), 23 September 1921.

be sent and received directly to Geneva. Exiles like Shakib Arslan kept busy collecting, translating and submitting smuggled petitions over the decades, but Drummond and his colleagues insured there was no follow-up investigations and only Rappard seemed to take the letters seriously. Shakib Arslan soon understood he was shouting into a silent void, and only the archives hold any record of his endless efforts to be heard.

Mobility

The League of Nations Archives hold uncounted thousands of petitions from Ottoman citizens involuntarily estranged from family, home, and property.[15] Such people had customarily pursued justice and resolution of their problems in Ottoman state offices and courts. Ottoman citizens had applied to receive state documents, like passports, state benefits, like pensions, and state credentials, like diplomas, in various local offices. Property disputes, whether land, inheritance, or business matters, could be resolved in court. After the Treaty of Lausanne however, jurisdictional borders and the demise of the Ottoman state made such efforts infinitely more difficult and complicated. Widows who applied to receive Ottoman pensions owed for the service of their late husbands, found the state no longer existed in a practical sense, and would not pay claims originating outside the region that became the Turkish Republic. British and French mandatory governments paid some pensions, though pensioners complained that the conversion scheme from Ottoman gold pounds and piasters to paper mandate money cheated them out of most of their support. Mandate governments refused to consider most claims, noting in correspondence with the Mandates Commission that they were not bound by practices or promises of the former government. And while the mandatory governments answered some inquiries from the League of Nations, even if only to dismiss them, inquiries from citizens were simply ignored. Hundreds of desperate people considered the League of Nations their last resort, and sent petitions to claim state benefits, often arguing that, as "title" to Ottoman lands had been transferred, so had obligations made to ex-Ottoman citizens. These petitions went nowhere. Eventually petitioners died or gave up, and by the late 1920s they disappear from the archives.[16]

15 For petitions to the League of Nations from *Yüzellilikler* see Ebru Boyar's chapter, "*Yüzellilikler*: the League of Nations's first and only Muslim refugees", in this volume.

16 Examples are nearly endless. See LON, R2308, petition for Ottoman telegraph pension; LON, R28, "Events in Syria", a large number of detailed petitions from Syrians and

As empires and states suddenly disappeared, tens of millions lost the nationality and citizenship they had previously held. Diplomats and architects of the post-war settlement apparently gave little thought to what a world of nations would mean for the rights of nationality and of millions of Ottomans and Habsburg citizens. The Treaty of Lausanne forced nearly two million Anatolian Orthodox Christians and Balkan Muslims to be uprooted and moved hundreds of kilometers from their towns and villages. And while the population exchange is well known, thousands of others, not part of the exchanges, found themselves arbitrarily declared nationals of new states, or frequently, people without nationality or citizenship in any state. The results were sometimes comical and more often tragic.

In late 1927, B.S. Nicolas, a stateless Assyrian refugee, residing with his wife and two children in some kind of refugee shelter in Marseilles, sought the help of the League of Nations. It was not his first attempt. He asked politely, but with obvious desperation, if the League Mandates Commission could compel Britain to compel Iraq to give him citizenship – something neither he nor any of his family enjoyed. He had once been an Ottoman citizen, but had fled for his life from his native Kurdistan to British-occupied Baghdad during the war. In Baghdad he claimed to have fought for the British. In 1925 he had left Iraq with temporary Iraqi travel documents for France. Now, in France, and owing to the Treaty of Lausanne, the Turkish consul refused his request for citizenship, so too did France and Britain, owing to the same treaty and their respective positions in the region. There was no independent Iraqi authority to which he could appeal, and the documents he possessed were expired. He seemed to be unable to work, establish residence, or legally secure housing.

A detailed internal correspondence resulted. Nicolas had no right to French nationality since France was the mandatory in Syria, and he had resided in Kurdish Anatolia and Baghdad. At the time the Treaty of Lausanne came into effect, in August 1924, Turkish citizenship could be acquired by those in the "territories detached" from the Ottoman realms, by "habitual residence", or "by option", for a two-year period, until August 1926. To claim citizenship by option, the petitioner needed to request and receive the assent of the relevant authorities within the two-year window. The League had no power to enforce the terms, and in any case, Nicolas had exceeded the two-year application window.

Armenians claiming losses dating from 1926–27 written in pencil and ink in Armenian, Arabic, and French on wide variety of paper. An attached note reads: "Is there any point in adding these to the file? No action seems to be required. Further letters will be thrown away. Registry 23.11.26". Few appear to have been translated.

Turkish authorities would have been unlikely to assent to extending residency rights to estranged Anatolian Christians. The Iraqi Citizenship Law, enacted as a consequence of the Treaty of Lausanne, Article Three, stated "All persons who on the 6 of August 1924 were Ottoman subjects and were habitually resident in Iraq are hereby declared to have ceased to be Ottoman subjects and to have acquired Iraqi nationality".[17] The League officials believed the treaty entitled Nicolas to Iraqi nationality, but as a member of the Assyrian minority, and a refugee, they expected Iraq and Britain to reject him. The League of Nations Minorities Section might be in a position to grant him a Nansen refugee passport, but only if he requested it through the proper procedure, which he had not done.[18]

The conclusion of Nicolas' case remains unclear. A letter to him is the final document in the file. At the end of December 1927, the Minorities Section chief wrote, "In reply to your letter of November 28th, 1927 concerning the question of your nationality, I have the honour to inform you that the League of Nations has no general authority to determine the nationality of individuals or to grant nationality to them".[19] The letter continues to instruct Nicolas to submit his petition according to the rules (enclosed) through the mandate authorities for Iraq. Nicolas had the good fortune to reach France, to be capable of composing his letters in official English, and to have submitted his letters from outside the mandate territory. The archives contain thousands of similar pleas without such advantages that never drew replies and staff notations make clear that thousands more were simply thrown away. It seems possible that given his English skills, familiarity with Baghdad, and resourcefulness, Nicolas might have been able to hire a Baghdad lawyer from distant Marseilles to pursue his case in Iraq, but he faced long odds despite his luck and skills. Even for those resident in the mandate, the process was interminable.

Less than a year after the armistice, Leonidas Spiridion Baw (Baos), Ottoman citizen of Basra, and Ottoman trained lawyer, attempted to claim Greek citizenship. He noted that his grandfather had moved to Iraq with his family as a physician and colonel in Ottoman military service in 1865. Leonidas's father, Spiridion, served as an Ottoman telegraph official. In 1897, during the Greek-Ottoman war over Crete, an imperial *irade* required Ottoman officials

17 LON, R59, Iraqi Nationality Law, cited in report on Nicolas's case, no. 63533, 7 December 1927.

18 LON, R58, Nicolas correspondence, October-December 1927. See also LON, R28, "Events in Syria", representative file notations, "To registry: There is no one in the registry who understands Armenian. 15.12.26".

19 LON, R59, Gilchrist to Nicolas, no. 63533, 28 December 1927.

originating outside the Ottoman realms to swear an oath of Ottoman loyalty, under which Spiridion, and his dependents, became documented Ottoman citizens. Leonidas was born in 1889, and thus was confirmed an Ottoman citizen along with his siblings, mother, and father when he was eight years old. Leonidas, perhaps objecting to the post-1908 Ottoman government, refers in his correspondence to his efforts to seek foreign nationality since 1908 at the age of 19. Eleven years later Baos wrote, seeking Greek nationality in October 1919, to the Greek foreign ministry, and separately to the French consul in Baghdad. Both were receptive, and over the course of the next year, Baos received replies, paid fees, and received, through the French and Hellenic Interests section of the Belgian consulate, and the Greek vice-consul in Basra, a certificate of familial ancestral registration in the island of Sifnos, thus establishing Greek nationality as far as the Greek Kingdom and foreign ministry was concerned in March 1921. It seemed that Baos had prevailed and would receive Greek passports to enable him, his brother, and their families to immigrate to Greece, but over the next year international political events conspired against Baos.[20]

The file on Leonidas Baos is silent for more than two years corresponding to the war in Anatolia. In early September 1923, a month or so after the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, Baos dispatched letters to the French consul, the Greek foreign minister, the Greek ambassador at London, and the Secretary General of the League of Nations. Baos had learned that, owing to the new treaty, he would be considered an Ottoman subject resident in Iraq, and when the Treaty of Lausanne came into effect, 6 August 1924, he would automatically become an Iraqi citizen with no right to any other nationality, despite what may have previously transpired. The turn of events outraged Leonidas, and he responded with two related arguments: first, he had never been an Ottoman subject, since as a minor he had not consented, and second, the British mandate of Iraq could not legally force him to become an Iraqi. To his former ally, the Greek vice-consul at Basra he wrote,

> I regret very much that you are unable to defend my national status when you are well aware of my real nationality, in accordance with the identification certificate which I hold, unless you deny this and say it is a false document … I am quite surprised the secretary says I am to wait for the promulgation of the Iraqi nationality law. What do I have to do with this law? I don't think any such decision will be in my favour, because anybody contradicting such officials they always try to crush them down

20 LON, R58, "British Mandate for Mesopotamia", 1920–1924.

> even if they know that their act is contrary to law but only to show their power and influence over powerless people and smaller states. In case the Hellenic Government refuses to recognize me as her subject, I shall stick to the nationality which my late father chose, but never as an Arab subject.[21]

Needless-to-say, the Ottoman citizenship his late father chose had also disappeared as an option and it seems unlikely the Turkish Republic would have granted him citizenship. Soon after this letter, both the British Secretary for the Colonies and the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Section weighed in. The Secretary for the Colonies, writing through the office of the High Commissioner at Baghdad, opined that the case wait until the final version of the "Iraqi nationality law" appeared. "It will then, and not till then, be possible definitely to decide questions as to the national status of residents in this country. Meanwhile no great inconvenience appears to be caused to Mr Baos by the ambiguity of his present position".[22] William Rappard of the Mandates Section had also become involved. In internal mandates memos he notes Baos' letters are not petitions and are thus not a matter of League of Nations jurisdiction.[23] Rappard's is the last letter in the file. "I have the honour to inform you that the terms of the mandate have never been defined by the Council of the League of Nations and it is not possible for us to take any action in the matter".[24] After five years of relentless effort and superhuman determination, against the arbitrary actions of a half-dozen states and international bureaucracies, and endlessly shifting rules, treaties, and laws, Leonidas Baos appears to have accomplished nothing. I found no further mention of him in the League of Nation Archives.

At the same time thousands of immigrants from the Ottoman coastal regions of what became Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine to the Americas lost their legal rights of residence in their former towns and villages and lost title to land and property they had owned.[25] Khalil Marcos and Musa Kazim al-Husayni submitted a meticulously drafted petition on their behalf. They cited the requirement under the Treaty of Lausanne, Article 34, which required residency and

21 LON, R58, no. 37134, Baos to vice consul for Greece, Basra, 28 April 1924.

22 LON, R58, no. 37134, Secretary of the high commissioner to acting vice consul for Greece, 17 March 1924.

23 LON, R58, no. 37134, Rappard memo, 19 December 1923.

24 LON, R58, no. 37134, Rappard to Baos, 19 May 1924.

25 For Lebanese immigrants to the United States see Toufoul Abou-Hodeib's chapter, "From Marjayun to Oklahoma: translocalizing the periphery in interwar Lebanon", in this volume.

property rights to be claimed within two years or be lost: "The people originally belonging to former sections of the Turkish empire dismantled in virtue of the Treaty, and who, when this Treaty becomes in force, shall still reside abroad, they may select allegiance to the land to which they formerly belonged, if they belong to the majority of the inhabitants of the said land, and if agreeable to the Mandatory Power. This option shall be exercised within two years from the date this treaty becomes effective".[26]

The petitioners noted thousands of Palestinians had submitted proof of origin, property, and so on, to the British consuls in the Americas and Europe, and awaited their nationality certificates, only to learn their applications were rejected because they had not resided in Palestine during the two-year period. The petitioners opined that emigrants possessed Palestinian nationality and the British government surely had no wish to deprive them of their rights, and yet as busy people, engaged in important business, both abroad and in the mandated territory, the time limit was inadequate. Indeed, the Colonial Office had acknowledged the fact.

The treaty had come into effect in August 1924, and the Palestinian nationality law was published more than a year later in September 1925, giving them less than a year to comply with the residence requirement. In the decades before air travel, long journeys required weeks of travel by sea and land, often at great expense. The emigrants all possessed property in Palestine on which they paid taxes and fees. They wished to continue to contribute to the administration of their homeland. The petition noted that the new nationality law affected at least 25,000 people, and their contributions were considerable. By contrast, the petition claimed, the Turkish Republic had instructed its consuls to recognize all emigrants abroad as Turkish citizens. The petition asked, "Would the British government tolerate the active sections of the Palestinian population be accredited to Turkey? Would that be suitable to British policy? Would British public opinion permit the denial of those emigrants who would rather die than relinquish their land associations, family ties, and Palestinian nationality?"[27] The petition remained unanswered, and the complaint unaddressed. The emigrants lost their rights of residence and their property.

Ottoman land law counted three main categories of land, endowment (*vakıf/waqf*), state land (*miri*), and private free-hold (*mülk*). In practice the vast majority of land was *miri* agricultural land, in which mostly small farmers enjoyed secure rights of tenancy. The treaty transferred all Ottoman state

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26 LON, R19, "Mandate for Palestine", Husayni and Marcos to H.C. Jerusalem, n.d.
27 LON, R19, "Mandate for Palestine", Husayni and Marcos to H.C. Jerusalem, n.d.

land to the mandatory power under the terms of the treaty of Sèvres in 1920: Britain or France. *Mülk* land usually comprised freehold urban holdings and structures. *Vakıf/waqf* was endowed land, either structures or agricultural land intended to provide income for the endowment, which could be a mosque, church, or school, or heritable family trust.

Both such holdings were secure if owners were present and could prove ownership. If, as in many cases, the holdings fell outside the new residence of the owners, as for example, in the case of a prominent family, resident in French mandate Beirut, which held *waqf* agricultural land in the new British mandate of Palestine, the legal terrain quickly became treacherous, and expensive. Most such people lost control of their land. Only the richest and most well-connected had any chance of a successful legal battle to retain control of lands they plainly owned under Ottoman law. Land lost to its former owners reverted to the mandate state, and could be sold, given, or auctioned as the relevant authorities saw fit. In practice land controlled by mandate authorities either in Lebanon, Syria, or Palestine was often made available to influential mandate citizens to purchase political compliance, in other words, used by the mandate state as bribes.[28] Vast tracts of land also passed to capitalist enterprises and concessions controlled by high-ranking mandate officials, included right-of-ways for Iraqi Petroleum Company pipelines, terminals, and rail lines, mines, and mineral holdings.[29]

Freedom

The Ottoman Constitution of 1876 and 1908 enshrined the theoretical rights and freedoms of Ottoman citizens. The documents claimed citizens were guaranteed equality before the law, freedom of movement, of property, of speech and of the press, of religion, of association, and rights of petitioning for redress of grievances. Education was to be free, private property and the domicile inviolable, and torture outlawed. It was also the case, however, that the powers of the sovereign were completely unrestrained, and extended to dismissal of anyone from official duty, making war and peace, granting and revoking freedom, and imposing captivity. The constitutional restoration of 1908–09 targeted the

28 See my, "Ottoman and French Mandate land registers for the region of Damascus", *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, 39/1 (2005), 32–43.

29 Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes [hereafter CADN], 3AE/23 Damian de Martel papers.

dictatorial exercise of such sultanic prerogatives, but arguably the post-1908 constitutional regime became equally, though differently, dictatorial in the coming years, especially after 1912.

The League of Nations Mandate Regime claimed to operate in the interests of the inhabitants and to bring freedom, liberty, and sound government to the populations under mandate. The authors and functionaries of the mandates began their work in an atmosphere of profound, and willful, ignorance of Ottoman constitutional law and legal practice, but were nevertheless confident they brought superior governance to the post-Ottoman colonial states. The mandate charters stipulated that each new country receive a constitution within three years.

Ex-Ottoman statesmen endeavored to enlighten League of Nations officials about the political aspirations of the region and its recent past. From the outset mandate and League officials were deaf to their efforts, and arguably became more resistant over time. The Syrian-Palestinian Congress emphasized freedom in its first interactions with the League of Nations and mandate authorities. Shakib Arslan prepared a detailed pamphlet, mentioned above, for the first meeting of the Mandates Commission in 1921.[30] The pamphlet made a case for the freedom and independence of Greater Syria.

> The Great War just ended had given birth to the League of Nations and brought together two concepts; the first of force and violence, the second, of rights and liberty. At the forefront of their war goals, the allied nations fought under the banner of rights, and enshrined the independence of peoples, and in turn, the most eminent allied statesmen proclaimed to their parliaments, that the war, far from leading to annexation of territory or of new conquests, must bring the triumph of civilization and the independence of peoples …
>
> The conscience and political capacity of our people is undeniable. Even under the Turkish regime, provincial and electoral life survived …
>
> In 1908 universal suffrage was proclaimed, and Syrians exercised all their rights. Arab deputies represented more than a third of the Ottoman Parliament. They played an important role in all sessions and commissions. Syria, before the War, was self-sufficient in revenues, and delivered its tax surplus to the Ottoman central treasury.[31]

30 LON, R39, Appel, 25 August–21 Sept 1921, pp. 3–6.

31 LON, R39, Appel, 25 August–21 Sept 1921.

The pamphlet continued to argue Ottoman Greater Syria possessed all the elements of advanced civilization, included a unified Arabic language, the culture of which dominated the country. There were dozens of Lycées, hundreds of secondary schools, thousands of primary schools, all teaching in Arabic. There were two foreign language universities and 620 foreign schools. About 100 newspapers were published all over the region. Intellectuals, men of letters, poets, publicists, jurists, physicians, and engineers were numerous. Many had received their education and diplomas in Europe and Istanbul and were qualified to organize and conduct all manner of public services.

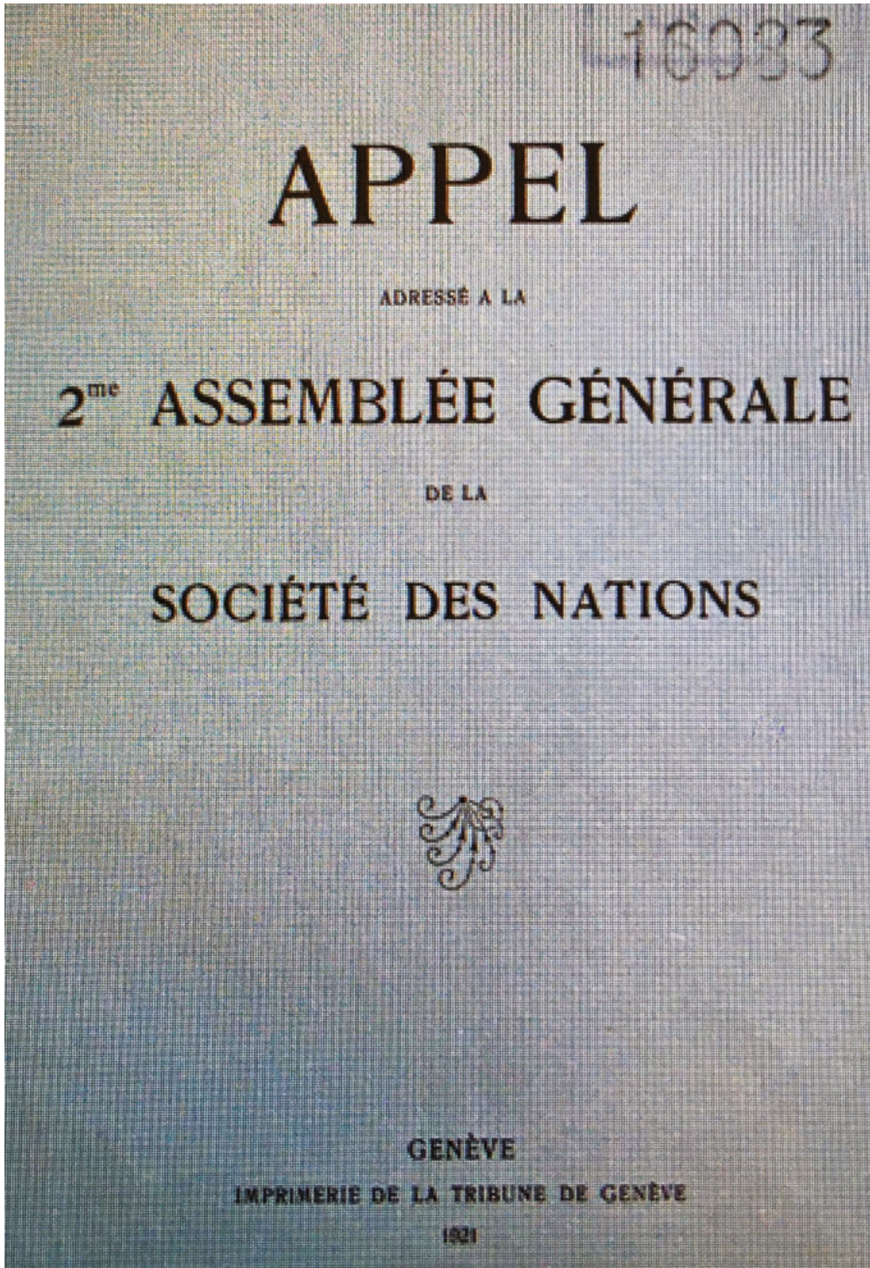
The pamphlet addressed Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations directly. Ex-Ottoman Greater Syria was a civilized, developed country, with all the attributes of League of Nations member states. It had no need or wish for tutelage, guidance, or advice, and the Syrians rejected the imposition of the mandates since they had not been consulted, and in fact had been denied the right to speak for and represent themselves. An addendum to the pamphlet, in the same archive file asked,

> If the League is unable to cancel these mandates, to declare us independent and to accept us into its body as it accepted Georgia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Albania, and Armenia, which are neither more developed nor more important than we are, all we ask is not to subscribe to mandates, which spell our death, kill our political existence, and put the chains of slavery on our necks.[32]

Arslan noted that Britain and France carried out conquest and colonization under the guise of mandates. He insisted the League live up to its own idealistic claims, allow the post-Ottoman regions to represent themselves, determine their own arrangements, and seek help from whomever they chose. The League should recognize their freedom and independence. The Mandates Commission denied Arslan's request to address the commission in person. He never stopped in his efforts to represent Syria before the League, but in 26 years of effort he was never permitted a public hearing before any League body.

The League of Nations Mandates Commission placed a premium on the outward signs of liberal rule. Iraq was the first to gain a constitution in early 1924. A British army officer and Colonial Office official, Major Hubert Young, wrote the first Iraqi constitution in 1922. Seeking native endorsement, Young recruited

32 LON, R39, letter from Shakib Arslan to the League of Nations, Council President, 29 September 1921.



16933

APPEL

ADRESSÉ A LA

2me ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE

DE LA

SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS

GENÈVE

IMPRIMERIE DE LA TRIBUNE DE GENÈVE

1921

FIGURE 1.1 Cover of *Appel adressé à la* 2me *Assemblée Générale de la Société des Nations* (Geneva: Imprimerie de la Tribune de Genève, 1921)

distinguished Iraqi-Ottoman legal scholars and politicians, Naji al-Suwaydi and Sasoon Eskell, to add their imprint. The two nearly derailed Young's draft when they pointed out that the Ottoman constitution it was meant to replace had delivered a superior and more liberal interpretation of rights to citizens. The Iraqi parliament barely ratified the constitution and related Anglo-Iraqi Treaty in early 1924, before collapsing under the weight of its political contradictions. The next parliament, comprised mostly of opponents of the constitution and treaty, found itself stuck with both.

Owing to wide opposition, the Syrian and Lebanese constitutions were only promulgated in 1930, when the exasperated High Commissioner Henri Ponsot, unilaterally imposed them, after rejecting the documents he had invited Syrian legal scholars to produce. In 1928 Ponsot had approved elections and a constitutional convention; neither of which turned out as he planned. Displeased with the assembly delegates and the constitution they approved, Ponsot dismissed both in spring 1928. Syrian University professor of international and constitutional law and assembly delegate, Fawzi al-Ghazzi was the principal author of the constitution. Al-Ghazzi was foremost among the legal minds of Syria and had received his legal education in Istanbul. Between 1914 and 1918 he served with distinction as an Ottoman officer at Gallipoli and in the Caucasus before returning to Damascus at the end of the war.

Fawzi al-Ghazzi addressed demonstrators in Damascus on the one-year anniversary of the Syrian constitution and High Commissioner Ponsot's cancellation. Al-Ghazzi outlined recent Syrian history, noting that Syria sought autonomy within the Ottoman union after 1908, and that the Syrian people, like the people of Poland and Czechoslovakia, greeted wartime allied promises of freedom, liberty, and independence with enthusiasm. The allies recognized the Syrians, like the Czechoslovaks and Poles, were free people, deserving their independence, and in 1917 the French foreign minister had declared France would apply the national principle to the Syrians, and give them the right to determine their own destiny. But, he noted, there turned out to be two standards for recognition: one for the people of the West and one for the people of the East. The Allies divided Syria into three occupation zones, and then divided the territory again to create their mandates, in conformance with their secret agreement, and in contradiction to their public promises. Still, Faysal's brief government had proved the capacity of the Syrians to govern themselves. But the mandate and its misfortunes came to pass despite the wishes of the Syrians, in terms "obscure and ambiguous". His speech continued:

> So then! We have Syria in 1920, which had been one in territory, language, traditions, and memories, divided into several states. The signs

> and symbols of independence began to disappear, one by one. The Prime Minister was dismissed. The parliament was suspended – not to meet again for three years, and even then reconvened in a fashion incompatible with the elementary principles of independence and liberty. And then! All of Syria bent under the weight of five consecutive years of martial law. The activists and intellectuals of the country were flung into prison or driven to exile, guilty only of demanding and demonstrating for liberty and independence!
>
> All this was contrary to the promises made to the Syrians!

The speech enumerated the struggles of Syrians for a constitution of justice and liberty and the mandate's ceaseless construction of traps and barriers to limit their dreams and aspirations for freedom and self-determination.[33]

With parliament closed, politics shifted back to the streets. Strikes, marches, shop closures, and fiery speeches occupied the center of political action in the mandate decades, and Fawzi al-Ghazzi possessed the oratorical skills to lead either in parliament or the streets. In the event, his moment as leader of the opposition was tragically brief, and he died a month later at the age of 39 of poisoning. His wife was accused of his murder under mysterious circumstances. His sudden death made the memory of the speech still more renowned, and his funeral was a vast patriotic spectacle. Huge crowds reckoned at 25,000 people marched in his funeral procession singing his praises and mourning his loss. "The author of the Constitution is dead", they cried, "long live the Constitution!" The newspaper *al-Ahrar* published a long obituary and described the funeral, estimating that 60,000 people lined the streets to pay their respects as his body was carried to the cemetery. His friend, fellow law professor, eventual first Syrian ambassador to the UN, and prime minister, Faris al-Khuri, delivered the funeral oration.

> Alive, his speeches were the emissaries of the law.
> Dead, his words are the eternal deposit of our will.
> The liberators of Syria cry for their brother. The Constitution of Syria cries for its father …
> And though Fawzi is dead, our cause is not, and the death of the creditor does not cancel the debt.[34]

33 LON, R2328, 1928–1931 Revue de presse de M. Massignon, *Al-Ahrar*, 11 June 1929.

34 LON, R2328, 1928–1931 Revue de presse de M. Massignon, *Al-Ahrar*, 9 July 1929.

In death as in life, Fawzi al-Ghazzi represented the dreams of freedom, and struggle against the nightmare of colonialism for Syrians. Meanwhile the constitution remained canceled and the parliament shuttered.

About a year later, in mid-summer 1930, High Commissioner Ponsot published his Syrian Constitution. Added to the document Fawzi al-Ghazzi and Faris al-Khuri had produced, and the elected assembly had ratified, was a final, 116th article, placing all decisions subject to approval and rejection by the Mandate High Commissioner. Opposition to the imposed constitution was widespread. Petitions came from Syrians in the Americas, in Europe, and from exiles in nearby countries. Sultan al-Atrash sent a telegram to the League of Nations General Assembly. He, and other rebel exiles of the Great Revolt were living in a refugee camp in the desert kingdom of al-Saud, under French death sentence. They finally received amnesty in 1937. He dispatched his telegram in English from Amman.

> In the name of Syrians, we protest against the Syrian Constitutions, which are shattering to its sacred unity, and the French declarations before your League, which are contrary to facts in the name of international justice and rights of nations and in honour of our martyrs' blood spilled on the alter of liberty since the World War. We call upon your honourable League to realize the independence of Syria and its national, legal sovereignty.
>
> Commander in Chief Sultan al-Atrash[35]

Conclusion

Ottoman citizens in the towns and cities of Greater Syria and Iraq faced the new century with optimism in 1908. People everywhere greeted the restoration of the constitution with a mood of hope and enthusiasm. In the following years, as the Unionist government increased repression, leading Arab intellectuals advocated varieties of political decentralization, often citing the Austro-Hungarian empire as a possible model. In Damascus the Ottoman Administrative Decentralization party formed. Hopes of reform from within the Ottoman system were swept aside by tectonic international events after 1912. The wars that began in 1911 brought great suffering and trauma to the eastern Mediterranean region, but the end of the Great War, between 1918 and 1920, brought a brief bloom of optimism, and a dream of independence

35 LON, R2307, "Mandate over Syria", telegram, 9 July 1930.

blossomed among engaged citizens. The idealistic proclamations of leading allied politicians gave hope that the long nightmare of war and trauma might end, and bring an awakening of freedom, justice, and independence.

The imposition of the mandates, accompanied by the appearance of idealistic language, provoked confusion. Ottoman politicians sprang into action, seeking to represent and advocate for their political communities. Ottoman regions varied widely, but for Syrians, left behind by war, the collapse of the state, partition, colonial occupation, and the deceptive machinations of the League of Nations, the period was especially bitter. People educated in new schools, to write, think, and debate were ill-suited to confront the manifest absurdity of an age in which liberal-sounding claims of civilization, legal structures, and idealistic language turned into weapons to undermine political freedom.

The contradictions at the heart of the 'mandate ideal' doomed the League of Nations. But by encompassing both dreams of liberal independence and freedom, and nightmares of powerlessness, disenfranchisement, and servitude, the mandate system provided a potent example to the post-colonial state. Is it possible the mandates demonstrated to the century's worst leaders just what one could plausibly get away with? Perhaps the recurrent global afflictions of post-modern populism and personal rule, in which all truth is conditional, and all deception is equal, trace their roots to the unique contradictions of late colonialism in which liberal claims and facades of legalism coexist with total disenfranchisement and appalling state violence, both military and bureaucratic, against citizens. Perhaps as historian Andrew Arsan has recently argued about tiny, contemporary Lebanon, understanding the world and its breathtaking array of problems might best start in the places the contradictions first appeared.[36] And where, a century ago, in 1920, brave citizens insisted they could not be silenced.

36 Arsan, Andrew, *Lebanon: A Country in Fragments* (London: Hurst & Co., 2018), p. 4.

CHAPTER 2

The Deal of the Decade: Jewish Immigration for Arab Independence and Post-Ottomanism in 1930s Palestine

Eli Osheroff

In 1936, Palestine was swept into what came to be known as the Great Arab Revolt. The events, which started as a general Palestinian-Arab strike in April of that year, escalated into a full-fledged armed rebellion through 1937 and 1938. Acts of violence were directed at Jews and Zionist targets, but above all, this was the first time in the history of the British Mandate (1918–48) that the Palestinian national movement made the regime the strategic objective of an organized civic and armed uprising. A key British reaction was the appointment of the Palestine Royal Commission of Inquiry, the Peel Commission, in July 1936 to look into the roots of and offer remedies to the Palestine Problem. In its final report of July 1937, the commission recommended the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state connected to Britain by treaty, including large-scale population transfers of Arabs from the future Jewish State. This was the first time that the British establishment officially endorsed the idea of partition (and transfer) as a remedy to the Zionist-Arab conflict in Palestine. Arabs, both within and outside the country, rejected this solution almost unanimously and the decision sent waves of dissent throughout the Middle East and intensified the armed revolt until the British withdrew from the partition concept, and the revolt was crushed by British forces and dissolved by the eve of World War II.[1]

The revolt, and its relation to partition, serve as the background for this essay, which revolves around failed and forgotten Arab attempts to solve the Palestine Problem in the 1930s, particularly around the publication of the Peel Commission recommendations. The overall concept of the deal at the heart of the chapter is that Arabs would receive independence in the form

The author wishes to express his gratitude to Michael Provence and Peter Wien for their comments and suggestions on previous drafts of this essay.

1 Although much has been written on the revolt, Porath's seminal work is still the authoritative source: Porath, Yehoshua, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement from Riots to Rebellion, 1929–1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1977). For a recent account on partition in British policy see Sinanoglou, Penny, *Partitioning Palestine. British Policymaking at the End of Empire* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2019).

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of a federation including Greater Syria and Iraq. The Jews, on their side, would agree to give up on sovereignty in Palestine, in return for being allowed to settle throughout this expansive Arab sphere. In short: Arab independence for Jewish immigration. I argue that this deal should be read as 'post-Ottoman'. The practices and worldviews it encompassed reflect the endurance of a spatial perception of the Middle East that was common before the collapse of the Ottoman empire and endured deep into the 1930s. This argument is not important only for itself, but also because it sheds new light on common notions still prevailing in public discourse, as well as in research, regarding the Zionist-Arab conflict.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections. The first is a case study of a failed diplomatic initiative to bridge the gap between Palestinians-Arabs, Zionists and British by two prominent Arab politicians, shortly after the Peel Commission resolution. The next section places this case study in a broader, contemporary context, to show the extent to which this failed diplomatic move was a product of its time. In the third and concluding section, I discuss the wider Arab social context in which this deal was conceived, as well as its historical roots as a post-Ottoman phenomenon. By way of conclusion, I comment on the consequences of this approach for a broader understanding of the history of the Zionist-Arab conflict.

Nuri al-Saʿid and ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Shahbander: Another Case of Futile Diplomacy

One important aspect of politics in Mandatory Palestine was the continuing attempts of non-Palestinian Arabs to intervene and bridge the gap between Palestinian-Arabs, Jews, and British, especially after the 1936 Revolt.[2] The initiative described below was part of this general tendency. After the Peel Commission had released its report in July 1937, two prominent Arab politicians, the Iraqi Nuri al-Saʿid (1888–1958) and the Syrian Dr. ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Shahbander (1879–1940) formed a political front to solve the Palestine Problem within a regional framework. Nuri was at the time a veteran politician and former prime minister of Iraq (1930–32). In July 1937, however, Nuri was already almost a year out of a job – having served as foreign minister since

2 Caplan, Neil, *Futile Diplomacy: Arab-Zionist Negotiations and the End of the Mandate* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), pp. 60–2; Porath, *Rebellion*, pp. 199–216, 225–8.

1933 – an exile in Egypt, after a military coup that took place in his country in October 1936.[3]

Syrian exile Shahbander also resided in Egypt at the time. A physician, in 1925 and 1926 he was among the leaders of the Syrian Revolt against the French Mandate Regime, and then fled his country to escape a death warrant. After the French authorities had proclaimed a general amnesty in 1937, Shahbander started to make his way back into Syrian politics. Like Nuri, his attempt to solve the Palestine Problem was one of the steps he took to gain prominence in his country's political arena.[4] The two met in Egypt, but not for the first time: both belonged to the circles of young Arab nationalists who had gathered around the Hashemite King Faysal, the commander of the Arab revolt against the Ottomans in World War I. The two were active in Faysal's short-lived independent Arab Kingdom of Syria in 1920. Before the French occupation of Damascus and their king's dethronement, Nuri served as his political secretary.[5] Shahbander was his foreign minister.[6]

The two proposed an independent federation of Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, Palestine, and Iraq. In return, the Zionist movement would have to forego its dream of a Jewish State, and settle for local autonomy in Palestine, in which the number of Jews would remain roughly around a third of the population. In return for their independence, the Arabs would provide a way out from the deadlock of the Palestine Problem by absorbing Jewish refugees from Nazi and other European antisemitic regimes in this federation of Arab states.

Nuri and Shahbander did not make the specifics of the plan public and explicit, but there is enough record to show that the promise to absorb Jewish immigrants in Syria and Iraq was integral to their diplomatic maneuvers. Minutes of meetings and memoirs from Zionists, British and Arabs show that from around August 1937 to early March 1938, the two consistently discussed this idea with their counterparts, and as shown below, Shahbander was more explicit and elaborative in specifying its details.

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3 Eppel, Michael, *The Palestine Conflict in the History of Modern Iraq: the Dynamics of Involvement, 1928–1948* (London: Frank Cass, 1994), pp. 73–9.

4 For a detailed description of Shahbander's return to Syria from exile in Egypt see Hanna, ʿAbdallah, *ʿAbd Rahman al-Shahbander (1879–1940), ʿAlam Nahdawi wa-Rajul al-Watniyya wal-Taharur al-Fikri* [ʿAbd Rahman al-Shahbander (1879–1940), A Renaissance Figure, and a Man of Nationalism and Intellectual Liberation] (Damascus: al-Ahali, 2000), pp. 147–70.

5 Al-Dori, Sayf al-Din, *Nuri Basha al-Saʿid, 50 ʿAman ʿala Masraʿihi wa-Suqut al-Nizam al-Maliki fil- ʿIraq ʿAm 1958* [Nuri Basha al-Saʿid: 50 Years to his Violent Death and the Fall of the Monarchic Regime in Iraq, 1958] (Beirut: al-Dar al-ʿArbiyya lil-Mawsuʿat, 2011), pp. 21–38.

6 Hanna, *Shahbander*, p. 24.

Nahum Vilensky, journalist and intelligence agent of the Jewish Agency in Cairo, reported to his superiors in Palestine that Shahbander had approached him several times around August and September 1937, declaring that he wished to travel to the League of Nations in Geneva to offer, on behalf of the Syrian government, a solution that included "a concession on behalf of the Jews on the Balfour Declaration and on the Mandate, in return for allowing a million [Jews] [...] into Arab countries". Vilensky was careful to mention that Shahbander even "spoke of 3 million" in a previous conversation.[7] Eliyahu Sasson, the Jewish Agency's chief intelligence agent in Arab countries, reported in November that "Dr. Shahbander agrees to allow limited Jewish immigration to Syria and Lebanon" and that he had "already told the Syrian government of his own agreement to such a solution and accepted their approval".[8]

Arab associates of Shahbander and Nuri were also not blind to this aspect of the deal. Some even held their hopes high, like Syrian Parliament Speaker Saʿid Haidar.[9] Others were highly critical of the proposal, and even labelled it treason. In his memoir, ʿAuni ʿAbd-al-Hadi, Secretary of the Arab Higher Committee that led the Palestinian national movement, quoted letters he had received from Syrian political activist ʿAdil Arsalan warning that Shahbander, together with "another friend" believed it would be better "to open the gates for Jewish immigration to Lebanon and Syria, in addition to their ownership of the northern parts of Palestine".[10] Arsalan claimed that Shahbander received a Zionist bribe for his endeavors,[11] an assumption that was not true and, paradoxically, underscored the subversive nature of this deal, as explained below.

On another occasion, Shahbander provided a more detailed version of his vision to a British intelligence officer, in two meetings in February and early March 1938:

> As a contribution to the settlement of the Jewish problem, the Arab Governments would be prepared to allow Jewish immigration into the Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, it being clearly understood that the Jews would have no special right in these countries but that adequate safeguards

7 Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem [hereafter CZA], S25/3135, Vilensky to Sharet, 28 September 1937.

8 CZA, S25/5569, Sasson to Sharet, 13 November 1937.

9 Sasson, Eliyahu, *Baderekh el ha-Shalom* [On the Road to Peace] (Tel Aviv: Am-Oved, 1978), p. 107. Sasson reported that Saʿid Haidar had showed him a letter from Shahbander containing this proposal and that he was enthusiastic about the idea.

10 ʿAbd al-Hadi, ʿAwni, *Mudhakirat ʿAwni ʿAbd al-Hadi* [Memories of ʿAwni ʿAbd al-Hadi], ed. Khairiah Kasmieh (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahda al-Arabiyyah, 2002), p. 204.

11 ʿAbd al-Hadi, *Mudhakirat*, p. 203.

> would be given by the governments concerned for their protection as 'minorities'.[12]

We may extract from the above the sort of future Nuri and Shahbander envisioned for Palestine and for Jewish settlers in the Middle East. In Palestine, there would be a sort of Jewish autonomy, with Jews enjoying special national status, mostly in the cultural and educational sense. Outside Palestine, Jews would immigrate and naturalize only as individuals, a status that would make them, at least implicitly, Arab-Jews. I could not, however, locate documents from this period in which Nuri explicitly called for the entrance of Jews to Syria and Iraq.[13] I assume that as a more experienced politician he understood better than did his Syrian partner that this approach was highly problematic in the Arab public sphere and in general and thus left him with the task of discussing it explicitly.

Nuri and Shahbander had a personal interest in the deal. Solving the Palestine Problem and achieving Arab federal independence would be a source of prestige, perhaps propelling them to the position of rulers or at least high-ranking officials in such a federation. The Iraqis had a unique interest in this constellation, since it allowed them access to the Mediterranean, especially after the inauguration of the Iraq-Haifa oil pipeline in 1935.[14] A federation was also a way to make the multiethnic, multireligious Iraq with its ruling elite of 25 percent Sunni Muslims even Sunni-er.[15] The immediate political context, however, was the attempt to solve two of the major problems facing world powers and the Middle East in 1937: the Jewish Problem and the Palestine Problem. The two were intertwined and the deal sought to resolve them in one fell swoop.

Although sometimes unnoticed in the public memory of Mandate Palestine, one of the crucial turning points in its history took place outside the country. The rise of the Nazi regime in Germany as well as antisemitic persecutions in Eastern Europe, especially Poland and Romania, sent a wave of Jewish

12 The National Archives, London [hereafter TNA], Foreign Office [hereafter FO], 371/21874, E 1630/10/31, Kingsley-Heath to The Chief Secretary, Jerusalem, 5 March 1938.

13 See for example TNA, FO 371/21872, E 175/10/31, Kerr to Eden, 28 December 1937. Kerr mentions two conversations with Nuri, noting that some of his explanations were too "vague and confused"; TNA, FO 371/21872, E 473/10/31, 17 January 1938, minutes of talk with Nuri al-Saʿid by Rendell, and TNA, FO 371/21872, E 501/10/31, 24 January 1938, minutes of talk with Lord Cranborne, and TNA, FO 371/21872, E 521/10/31, 27 January 1938, minutes of talk with Ormsby-Gore.

14 Eppel, *The Palestine Conflict in the History of Modern Iraq*, pp. 45–6.

15 Eppel, *The Palestine Conflict in the History of Modern Iraq*, pp. 1–5.

refugees across the world.[16] Since most countries gradually sealed their borders, Palestine became the ultimate refuge. The Zionist project had already created serious facts on the ground by 1933, but it was only these new waves of persecuted Jews that made the Jewish National Home a truly undisputable fact. The numbers tell the tale: from 1922 to 1932, the number of Jews in Palestine rose from around 90,000 to around 200,000, or 17 percent of the total population. From 1933 to 1937, it doubled to 400,000, or a critical third of the population.[17] To a large extent, this wave was the straw that broke the camel's back, paving the way for the revolt, which, catastrophically for the Palestinians, opened the door for the first British partition resolution. Proposing Arab countries as a destination for Jewish immigration, *instead* of Palestine, was, therefore, supposed to solve both problems. Arabs would gain independence; the Western powers would not have to deal with Jewish refugees; and Jews would receive refuge from persecution, but instead of concentrating in the small Palestinian territory and threatening the indigenous population – and consequently, the stability of the surrounding Arab regimes – they would be scattered in a Greater Arabia.

Proponents and Opponents of the Deal

As we know, however, millions – not even hundreds – of Jews never made their way to Basra, Damascus, or Kirkuk in 1937. Why? This is where we meet some of the (few) supporters and (many) opponents of this idea. The idea that Jews would immigrate to Arab countries was unrealistic, but hardly naïve. Nuri and Shahbander were experienced and shrewd politicians. As hinted earlier, what was not regarded as a meaningful aspect of the deal by its Arab opponents is that Nuri and Shahbander indeed offered a compromise, but at the same time used tactics of divide and conquer towards the Zionist movement. Offering a comprehensive deal with the Arab world – including a solution for the Jewish Problem – was a wink in the direction of important factors within the Zionist movement, those who did not share the premises of mainstream political Zionism, particularly with regard to Jewish sovereignty. To explain this aspect, we take a detour to the history of interwar Zionism.

16 The authoritative work on the subject is Marrus, Michael R., *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the 20th Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), esp. pp. 122–207. Exact numbers are hard to estimate.

17 McCarthy, Justin, *The Population of Palestine: Population History and the Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 37.

Since 1929, the Jewish Agency, the executive body of the Zionist movement, included within it ranks an influential group of non-Zionists, as they defined themselves. The group was comprised mostly of wealthy American Jewish philanthropists of German descent, led by Felix Warburg. This coalition *did* support Zionist activities in Palestine but opposed the goal of Jewish sovereignty or a Jewish state. Their main reservation was that a Jewish state might raise the question of dual loyalty in Jews' home countries, and that it might be a failed and embarrassing – read communist – project.[18] As part of their general policy, non-Zionists leaned towards a more moderate approach to Arabs and even negotiated briefly with members of the Arab National League – an advocacy group of Syrian and Palestinian-Americans – in July 1937 in order to find an alternative to partition.[19] Nuri and Shahbander hoped, therefore, that their ideas would somehow catch the eye of these affluent and critical non-Zionist Jews, to the point that they might even use their influence to drag the rest of the Zionist movement along with them. As historian Yoram Nimrod had shown, from 1936 and especially around the winter of 1938 Nuri negotiated directly and indirectly with representatives of these groups.[20] Ultimately, non-Zionists were never determined or interested enough in such a deal to counter the official Zionist line,[21] but that should not blind us to the fact that the two astute Arab politicians used 'soft power' in an attempt to persuade the Zionist movement to concede independence and scatter its members across the Middle East.

Beside the group of affluent non-Zionists, the presence of another group of Jewish activists in the background of this deal attests to its more cunning, counter-Zionist dimension. In Mandate Palestine, there was constant activity of marginal Zionist activists who pushed for agreement with Arabs – inside or outside of Palestine – on a binational basis. The first and better-known Jewish binational association was Brit Shalom (Covenant of Peace), which was active from 1925 to 1933, but whose members continued to promote similar initiatives

18 Medoff, Raphael, *Baksheesh Diplomacy: Secret Negotiations between American Jewish Leaders and Arab Officials on the Eve of World War II* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), pp. 1–50.

19 Medoff, *Baksheesh*, p. 94. On the ANL see Bawardi, Hani, *The Making of Arab Americans: From Syrian Nationalism to U.S. Citizenship* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014).

20 This affair is elaborated in Nimrod, Yoram, "Meʿoravuto shel Nuri Al-Saʿid be-Eretz-Israel: le-Koroteiha shel Shutafut ʿAravit Yehudit" [Nuri al- Saʿid's involvement in Palestine – Jewish-Arab collaboration, 1937–1938], *Cathedra: For the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv*, 14 (1980), 153–79. Yoram Nimrod was an original and dedicated historian of the Zionist-Arab conflict who published mostly in Hebrew. His research and observations have immensely contributed to my own.

21 Medoff, *Baksheesh*, pp. 94–103.

until 1948. The ideas they promoted resembled those of Nuri and Shahbander, thinking it would be better for the Palestine Problem and the Jewish Problem to be solved in a regional framework to which Jews would be allowed to immigrate.[22]

Two of the prominent activists in Jewish binational circles were Haim Maragaliot Kalvarisky, a renowned land purchaser on behalf of the Zionist movement, and Jehuda Leib Magnes, the first Chancellor of the Hebrew University. Throughout the Mandate, both promoted a federative vision for the Middle East, called for Jewish immigration of Jews to Arab countries outside Palestine, and were in constant contact with Arab notables, including Nuri and Shahbander. Magnes for example negotiated with Nuri in the crucial months after the Peel Commission resolution.[23] Kalvarisky had personal ties with Shahbander, from as early as 1914 and until Shahbander's untimely death in 1940. In a eulogy written for the late Syrian leader, Kalvarisky told the story of their first meeting in 1914, and how later Shahbander saved the lives of his daughters when they were on a field trip to Syria in 1920. Most importantly for this discussion, Kalvarisky argued that Shahbander told him that he supported his own vision of a "Semite" Jewish-Arab federation as a solution for the Palestine Problem.[24] Even if we take Kalvarisky's memories with a grain of salt, they still emphasize how Jewish binationalism shaped and was shaped by Arab regional thinking. In other words, the deal of independence for immigration was conceived also through a long, latent dialogue with the margins of the Zionist movement. At the same time, this attests to the extent to which the deal *did not* overlap with mainstream Zionist discourse.

Zionist leadership obviously rejected this deal altogether. For Zionists like Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organization, and David Ben-Gurion, Chairman of the Jewish Agency, Nuri and Shahbander's offers, and similar ones around that time, represented something that would undermine the Zionist project altogether[25] (and yet, the Zionist relation to Jewish

22 Heller, Joseph, *Mi-Brit Shalom le-Ihud, Jehuda Leib Magnes ve-Hama'avak le-Medina Du-Leumit* [From "Brit Shalom" to "Ichud": Judah Leib Magnes and the Struggle for a Binational State in Palestine] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2003), pp. 75–7. Magnes was at the same time the representative in Palestine of the aforementioned non-Zionists, but ultimately, he was an ardent binationalist, unlike his counterparts in the United States.

23 Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, pp. 77–84.

24 CZA, A113/26/2, H.M. Kalvarisky, "Shalosh Pgishot ve-Drishat Shalom Aharona, le-Zikhro shel Dr. Shahbander Hamanoah" [Three meetings and a last farewell, in memory of the late Dr. Shahbander], *Be'ayot ha-Yom*, 3 November 1940 and 24 November 1940, vols. 10 and 12.

25 Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, pp. 77–84.

immigration to Lebanon and Syria, specifically, was more complex, as seen in the next section).

Almost last, but certainly not least, a deal of this sort was already highly toxic in the Arab public sphere by 1937. The idea that Jews would immigrate to countries outside Palestine was inconceivable to many or most Arabs. When rumors spread that the Nuri-Shahbander deal included Jewish immigration to Iraq, Iraqi newspapers were quick to illustrate the public panic, with one describing it as a "Zionist plot".[26] Iraqi Foreign Minister Tawfiq al-Sweidi had to deny in front of the Iraqi parliament the rumor that two million Jews were on their way.[27] Indeed, as we have seen earlier, although their diplomatic activity was public, Nuri and Shahbander never endorsed *this* aspect of their deal publicly, and kept it only to conversations behind closed doors. The logic that lay at the basis of opposing this proposal was that such plans put the Arab world in danger of more Zionist colonization, now even *beyond* the mandated territory of Palestine. A common argument on the Arab side was that Palestinians-Arabs had contributed enough to the solution of the Jewish Problem, by accepting the 400,000 Jews already in Palestine by 1937. Why, then, when the rest of the world closed its doors to Jewish refugees,[28] must the Arabs accept *even more* Jews? As a writer in *Filastin* put it, "the people of Palestine have showed tolerance to the greatest possible limit and a great deal of good intent [...] in their consideration of the four hundred thousand Jews already in the country as equal citizens in rights and duties to the Arab native inhabitants [*lahum ma lil-ʿarab wa-ʿalayhim ma lil-sukan al-asliyyin*]".[29] In contemporary Arab discourse, the acceptance of Jews already settled was sometimes regarded as a "sacrifice" (*tadhiya*) already made by the Palestinians.[30]

26 *Filastin*, "Dam Filastin wa-Shark al-ʾUrdun lil-ʿIraq, Kaifa ʿAlakat al-Suhuf al-ʿIraqiyya ʿalal- Mashruʿ" [Joining Palestine and Transjordan to Iraq: how did Iraqi newspapers react to the project], 27 January 1938, p. 2.

27 *Filastin*, "Takdhib Shaʾiʿa" [Denying a rumor], 3 February 1938, p. 1.

28 On this issue, see Marrus, *The Unwanted*, pp. 145–58.

29 *Filastin*, "Al-Mufawadat al-Daʾira li-Hal Qadiyat Filastin" [The ongoing negotiations to solve the Palestine issue], 11 January 1938, p. 1.

30 See for an example a debate between Nuri and a group of Palestinian leaders, among them the Mufti Haj Amin al-Husayni, in 21 December 1937 in Beirut. When Nuri asked the participants to offer some sacrifice to prevent the partition of Palestine, the participants answered that accepting the Jews who had already come was a big enough sacrifice, considering the nature of their project, in Darwaze, Muhammad Izzat, *Mudhakirat Muhammad Izzat Darwaze* [The Memories of Muhammad Izzat Darwaze], vol. 3 (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1993), p. 160.

British officials were usually skeptical of Nuri and Shahbander's maneuvers,[31] but not necessarily because they objected to the substance of their proposal. Some British officials even promoted similar ideas.[32] But ultimately, from a British perspective, the broad opposition on both sides made it seem futile. Around March 1938, the endeavors of the two Arab politicians reached a dead end.[33] Shahbander retuned to Syria, to become involved in national politics until his assassination in 1940, probably by political rivals.[34] Nuri continued to be active in similar negotiations until the end of the British mandate. He too was murdered in 1958 by an angry mob in the course of the revolution against the Hashemite regime.

Before we move to the next section, it is time to put Nuri and Shahbander's activity in the larger context of Middle Eastern politics of the mandates' era. As I mentioned earlier, both were old acquaintances, as young national activists around King Faysal after World War I. Nuri apparently escaped from the Ottoman army in 1914, was in British captivity in Egypt, and under British patronage joined the Arab revolt in the Hijaz. He later continued to serve under Faysal in Iraq and continued to act as a client or at least an intermediator between the British empire and the Iraqi government.[35] Shahbander's career, as described by Philip Khoury, had its similarities to Nuri's. Shahbander too escaped to Cairo during World War I, made ties with British officials, and helped in their propaganda for the Arab revolt in the Hijaz. Later he joined the short-lived government of Faysal in Syria and fled to Cairo again from French persecution, after the French army dismantled Faysal's Syrian state in July 1920. Unlike Nuri, Shahabander became an anti-colonial rebel leader in Syria during the 1920s, up to the point of fleeing the country again, this time from the death

31 As Rendell, the head of the Eastern Department in the Foreign Office, put it "I doubt if whether these schemes and suggestions can possibly lead anywhere […] for instance Nuri Pasha's wild scheme for a large Arab confederation into which virtually unlimited Jewish immigration should be allowed on the basis of the Jews remaining a minority in the confederation as a whole". Rendell's comment is in TNA, FO 371/21874 E1125/10/31, Lampson to Cadogan, 28 February 1938.

32 Hathorn Hall, Chief Secretary of the Government of Palestine, offered a similar federative plan in July 1936, wherein, as Porath explains, "the Palestine Arabs would have the benefit of being protected by the Arab states, whereas the Jews would be able to broaden the sphere of the National Home throughout the Arab Middle East and to settle there", Porath, *Rebellion*, p. 227.

33 As early as January 1938 Vilensky heard from Shahbander in Egypt of his disappointment over the Zionist rejection of his efforts, CZA, S25/22221, Vilensky to Sharet, 16 January 1938.

34 Khoury, Philip, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism 1920–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 587–9.

35 Provence, Michael, *The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 44, 57, 93–4, 105, 125.

warrant French authorities had put on his head. Nevertheless, like Nuri, he preserved his British orientation, what made his Syrian political rivals describe him as a British "agent".[36]

Judging by their life trajectories, it would be correct to argue, therefore, that the two replicated in late 1937 the policy of their king from 1919 – and until his untimely death in 1933 – to unite Greater Syria under the Hashemites, with some form of British patronage.[37] The independence-for-immigration deal was very much the reincarnation of the agreement that Faysal signed with Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann. According to the deal, Arabs were committed to facilitate Jewish immigration to a large *independent* Arab state under Faysal's rule[38] and under the British umbrella. This secret controversial deal never materialized, subsequently becoming the source of abundant criticism as well nostalgia and apologetics on both sides of the conflict. The next section shows, however, that the Weizmann-Faysal Agreement was not a paradigm in itself, but rather a part of, or a product of larger cultural-political tendencies prevailing in the Arab Middle East in the interwar period. In the same manner Nuri and Shabander's deal was not only a tactical maneuver of clandestine diplomacy, but also a common practice, or way of thought, which reflected wider cultural tendencies towards immigration, colonization and settlement in the Ottoman and Post-Ottoman world. The history of this approach is the subject of the next section.

More than Futile: Arab Regional Thinking and Zionism in the 1930s

Arab acceptance of Jewish immigration, settlement and colonization in Palestine, or in the surrounding countries, was not uncommon in the late Ottoman period and in the 1920s. As Immanuel Beška defined it, Zionist colonialization was accepted among Palestinians first with "ambivalence" and only later with "hostility".[39] This ambivalence was based among other things on demographic assumptions. The common Arab argument was that, ultimately, Zionism could not succeed because it meant creating a Jewish island in the middle of an Arab ocean. But this argument had a less apparent side,

36 Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, pp. 119–26, 168–242 and in particular p. 233 for the accusations.

37 Porath, Yehoshua, *In Search of Arab Unity: 1930–1945* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), pp. 4–22.

38 Allawi, Ali A., *Faisal of Iraq* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 184–91.

39 Beška, Emanuel, *From Ambivalence to Hostility: the Arabic Newspaper Filastin and Zionism, 1911–1914* (Bratislava: Slovak Academic Press, 2016).

according to which Zionism need not be feared exactly because of its location in the middle of an Arab ocean. This is, for example, why Palestinian political activist Hasan Sidqi al-Dajani, wrote in 1926 that "If Palestine will join Egypt, then even if the Zionists would arrive in the number of one million (which is impossible), there is no reason to fear them among fourteen million and a half of the sons of Egypt and Palestine".[40] This rather rare public articulation of Palestinian optimistic – and, at least in retrospect, illusionistic – thinking with regard to Zionism, is what stands at the basis of Nuri and Shahbander's initiative a decade later. If there is more Arab space, *and* Arab sovereignty, then there is more place for Jews to settle, and they need not be feared.

Most Arabs who endorsed this deal in the interwar period did so behind closed doors. But some, even Palestinians, took a more explicit approach. Here is perhaps the clearest public articulation of this line of argument, by Dr. Khalil Totah, a prominent Palestinian educator, in 1937: "the natural desire to escape from European persecution, and to reestablish self respect, gave birth to Zionism. Surely this desire is innocent enough and no one should begrudge the Jew this barren strip of territory where he wishes to be himself again". Yet, in the face of the whole Arab world, the Jewish state would collapse like "a house of cards in front of a cyclone coming from the desert". The solution therefore is an Arab federation comprised of Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Transjordan, in which

> there would be room for the Jews. In the first place, Jewish life and property would be safer than it has proved under the mandate. Secondly, there would be room for more Jews than in a Jewish state or under the mandate. Thirdly, the Jews would be at home instead of remaining foreigners and supported by foreign imperialism. Of course, there is a price for all this and the Jews would be wise to pay it. They would have to give up the hateful Balfour Declaration, abandon the chimera of a sovereign Jewish island state in the midst of an Arab sea and exchange European support for mutual friendship with Arabs.[41]

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40 al-Dajani, Hasan Sidqi, "Misr wa Filastin" [Egypt and Palestine], *Mir'at al-Sharq*, 23 December 1926, p. 2.

41 The Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem (CAHJP), P/3 2669, Khalil Totah, "Can there be peace between Jew and Arab?" The draft version quoted here is located in the Magnes Collection. Totah probably sent the piece to Magnes, maybe for review. It was published, however, under the title "The Palestine triangle", *Asia Journal*, 6 (1937), quoted from Smith, Amy, "Dr. Khalil Totah: Arab-American Quaker Educator and Palestinian Nationalist Crusader, 1914–1948", Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Maine, 2018.

I suggest viewing Totah's words as an elaborate, *ideological*, explanation of Nuri and Shahbander's *political*, activity. According to Totah, the suffering of Jews should be sympathized with, and Jews might find refuge within the Arab world, but for that, Arabs should receive independence and Jews should stop being colonizers and act as 'regular', individual immigrants. Totah's rare elaboration on the issue is also a de-facto explanation of the paradoxical dimension of the deal. If Jews need or want to immigrate, so be it. But they can have more of it, as much as they need, only under Arab auspices. Totah, like other Arabs who endorsed this approach, was in friendly relations with Magnes.[42] Totah even sent a draft of this article for Magnes's eyes, maybe for comments before its publication.[43]

Another political activist who endorsed the idea publicly was Fu'ad Shatara, an American physician of Palestinian origin, who was also the leader of Arab national and anti-Zionist activity in the US in the interwar period.[44] In a January 1938 letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, Shatara stated that "Syria and Iraq must be willing to accept Jewish immigrants".[45] Like Totah, he had ties with Jewish binational activists as well as the affluent non-Zionist Jews in America. In July 1937, Shatara was among the group of Arab-Americans who negotiated with representatives of the latter in New York.[46] In addition, during the 1930s, Shatara was in friendly relations with Albert Einstein, who supported Jewish binationalism and Brit Shalom. In an exchange of letters between the two, Shatara expressed his hopes that Einstein's binational ideas would prevail in the Zionist arena.[47]

In the Palestinian political sphere, Totah and Shatara were marginal activists. But they remain a good example of the diverse sociocultural contexts in which the deal of independence for immigration was conceived. Their American orientation is the cultural key for their approach. Totah earned all his academic degrees from American universities. Shatara was a well-established American citizen by 1937. I suggest that they viewed Greater Syria, and the Arab World at large, as similar to the United States of America. In their vision, Greater Syria was to become a federation, where immigrating Jews might keep

42 Smith, "Dr. Khalil Totah", pp. 163–4.

43 See footnote 41.

44 Bawardi, *Arab Americans*, p. 113.

45 Shatara, F.I., "Ill-advised and dangerous operation", *The Manchester Guardian*, 11 January 1938, p. 18. For a similar statement, see the booklet *The Arab National League: An Appeal to the American Justice and Fair Play on Behalf of the Palestine Arab*, The Arab National League, January 1938, New York, in TNA, FO 371/21875, E 2099/10/31.

46 Medoff, *Baksheesh*, pp. 92–4.

47 Bawardi, *Arab Americans*, pp. 184–6.

their ethno-religious, Jewish, identity and also become loyal to their new Arab homeland – just like Shatara himself has become a proud American-Arab or Jewish immigrants from Europe became proud American-Jews, such as Albert Einstein. Implicitly, in this federation Jews might become Arab-Jews, owning a sense of 'positive' double loyalty to their new Arab homeland and to their primordial, Jewish community. In other words, Jews might see the Arab world as a new America.

'Americanism' is not the only explanation of the regional approach. In February 1937, Iraqi Prime Minister Hikmat Suleyman told C.J. Edmonds, British advisor to the Iraqi government, that since he was worried about what was happening in Palestine as well as "fanatical political elements in Iraq", he thought that the way out was "a federation of Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine". This, according to Suleyman would put an end to the "[…] minority bogey and the Arabs would no longer worry if a million Jews came in".[48] Suleyman, as Michael Eppel noted, was a "pro-Turkish" politician. An admirer of Atatürk, he sought Iraqi separatism and rapprochement with Turkey, and had little interest in Pan-Arabism or in Palestine.[49] Yet, his short career led him at least to acknowledge a solution that was quite similar to that of his Pan-Arab counterparts.[50] Therefore, there appears to be a broad cultural mechanism operating behind this idea, one that made it reappear repeatedly in different places. The next example explains this mechanism in action.

The idea that Jews would immigrate to other Arab countries in the 1930s was a reactionary idea, in the literal sense. It was a *reaction* to the pressures of Zionist settler-colonialism and British imperialism. Metaphorically speaking, it was an answer to a question. One document in particular sheds light onto the inception of this reaction. In the 1930s, Ben-Gurion held a series of talks with Arab leaders, and later, in the 1970s, published the minutes in the form of a memoir, which became an important source for the history of Zionist-Arab political relations. The deal of independence for immigration is raised repeatedly during the conversations. In an August 1934 conversation with Musa 'Alami, a senior Palestinian legal advisor in the mandate government and later a prominent political leader, Ben-Gurion suggested that Palestine be "an independent Jewish State, connected with an Arab Federation". The skeptic 'Alami countered by suggesting that "the order be reversed: first establish the

48 TNA, CO 733/341/16, Edmonds to Kerr, 8 February 1937.

49 Eppel, *The Palestine Conflict in the History of Modern Iraq*, pp. 50–67.

50 TNA, CO 733/341/16, Baggaley to Ormsby-Gore, 5 March 1937. According to Baggaley, Suleyman's ideas were "not entirely new, and before his fall from grace Nuri Pasha, expressed very similar opinions".

federation, with free immigration throughout it, and *not limited to Palestine alone* [my emphasis]".[51]

In a series of meetings held in 1936 with Arab diplomat, intellectual and former mandate official George Antonius, the latter remarked that "within Palestine proper", there was no possibility of a solution, since Palestine was a small country, "without elbow room"; therefore the two should discuss Greater Syria, "that was a single unit and it incorporated much vaster expanses". Not surprisingly, Magnes, who was present at the conversations as a mediator, agreed and commented that it was "a good thing for Jews to go to Syria too". Antonius replied that "Syrians would gladly accept Jewish capital and Jewish industrialists to develop all of Syria".[52] One Arab interlocutor even suggested to Ben-Gurion that Jews immigrate as far as Saudi Arabia.[53]

These conversations show the extent to which this approach was shaped in a dialogue. As Zionists pushed for more immigration and settlement, Arabs proposed to think outside of the mandate box(es). Interestingly, Ben-Gurion did not reject this idea altogether: we are "by no means interested in scattering the Jews in countries outside of Palestine, but wish to concentrate them in this country", he told ʿAlami. However, he added, "Individual Jews would be free to settle in Iraq or Syria if they so wished".[54] I argue that what drove Ben-Gurion's ambivalence was the ambiguity of the Zionist movement towards the actual boarders of *Eretz Israel*, Land of Israel, in the mandate period. Negating this deal altogether meant also rejecting the possibility that these places *would* be settled by Jews in the future, *within* a Jewish sovereignty. This Zionist ambivalence also informs the wider Arab resistance to this deal, mainly because of the question hanging in the air, how can one be sure where colonialism ends, and 'ordinary' immigration begins?

There was, however, in the interwar period one invitation for Jews to settle in an Arab country outside of Palestine, which was the exception to the immigration-for-independence rule. After the beginning of Nazi persecutions in Germany, prominent leaders of the Maronite sect in Lebanon called for their state to open its gates to Jewish refugees fleeing Europe. As Laura Eisenberg showed, Maronite clerics expressed these views in confidential meetings with Zionist officials, and sometimes even publicly. This call was more an expression of alliance between two 'western' minorities than an actual Maronite

51 Ben-Gurion, David, *My Talks with Arab Leaders*, trans. Aryeh Rubinstein and Misha Louvish (New York: The Third Press, 1973), p. 27.

52 Ben-Gurion, *My Talks*, p. 49.

53 Ben-Gurion, *My Talks*, p. 182. Ben-Gurion received that proposal in February 1938 from Musa Husayni, cousin of the Palestinian Mufti and a student in London.

54 Ben-Gurion, *My Talks*, p. 27.

policy. And as in other cases, the invitation met fierce Arab resentment. Yet, the Maronite case in the 1930s provides another indication of how widespread this approach was,[55] and how the still fluid borders of the mandate states made it at least possible to entertain such ideas.

Ultimately, Arab leaders repeatedly suggested that Jews immigrate outside of Palestine. As Yoav Alon had shown, Emir ʿAbdullah of Transjordan, Faysal's brother, tried throughout the first half of the 1930s to convince officials in the Zionist movement to purchase land and settle in his country.[56] In 1938 ʿAbdullah envisioned that if there was good faith after an agreement was reached, then "Arabs will have the right to permit" immigration of Jews to an Arab federation.[57] Gregourius al-Hajjar, the Palestinian Melkite Archbishop of the Galilee, suggested that "If it is desired at all costs to give the Jews a place where they can be grouped together, why not direct them towards the immense lands stretching between Syria and Iraq where soil is very fertile", thus practically sending Jews to colonize the al-Jazira area. If that did not work, pondered al-Hajjar, the Sinai desert could be a solution too.[58] Moshe Sharet, Head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, and ʿArif al-ʿArif, a district officer in the Gaza area and a renowned Palestinian ethnographer and historian, discussed the idea in 1941. As in other cases, al-ʿArif suggested the deal, while Sharet was quick to reject it.[59] In 1941, even ʿAwni ʿAbd-al-Hadi discussed the possibility that Arab countries would absorb Jewish immigrants in a meeting with Yaakov Thon, a Zionist official and activist in binational associations.[60]

It is clear by now that the deal of independence for immigration emerged in circles broader than the circles of the late King Faysal and his followers. It was a general Arab *reaction* to Zionist and British pressure, and it was more of a discursive instrument, i.e. a declaration of good will, than actual policy. It was the latent deal of the 1930s. The idea surfaced in Arab thought after Jews had started to flee Europe to Palestine in 1933, reached its peak when Arabs were in dire need of alternatives to partition after the Peel Commission recommendations in July 1937, and dissolved in the beginning of 1938, when these suggestions turned out to be futile, with no meaningful response from the Zionist or

55 Eisenberg, Laura, *My Enemy's Enemy: Lebanon in the Early Zionist Imagination* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), pp. 61–87.

56 Alon, Yoav, "Friends indeed or accomplices in need? The Jewish Agency, Emir Abdullah and the Shaykhs of Transjordan, 1922–1939", in *Israel's Clandestine Diplomacy*, ed. Clive Jones and Tore T. Peterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 31–47.

57 Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, p. 238. The translation from the Arabic is by Caplan.

58 TNA, CO 733/368/9, Al- Hajjar to Osborne, 9 September 1938.

59 CZA, S25/3033, Sharet to Kapelyuk, 7 May 1941.

60 CZA, S25/100925, Thon to the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, 17 December 1941.

British side. What is unique, nevertheless, in Nuri and Shahbander's initiative, is that it was a political move by two experienced, high-ranking statesmen, who made this aspect of the deal an integral part of their diplomatic endeavors. But it was not an exclusive idea, originated by Faysal for them to promote, but something that was in the air. The two only gave it a more concrete political form. In the final section, I explain how this approach came to 'float' and reappear in the 1930s and delve down into its Ottoman roots.

Conclusion: Affinity to Empire(s) Past and Present

The deal of independence for immigration was proposed, among others, by American-Arab political activists (Shatara and Totah), Iraqi and Syrian politicians (Nuri, Shahbander and Suleyman), ʿAbdullah, the emir of Transjordan, a Palestinian-Arab Catholic priest (Hajjar), Palestinian mandate government officials (ʿAlami, Antonius, al-ʿArif) and by Maronites in Lebanon. Some of the proposers had friendly ties with Jews, and they understood and identified with the persecuted refugees. However, ultimately, the general signifier of these personalities was their affinity to empire. Some were educated in Western institutions, and some worked for the Palestine mandate government. Others, with Nuri being the best example, saw the British empire as their source of political power. Declaring, or thinking aloud, that Arabs should contribute, even more than they already had, to solving the Jewish Problem was a way of presenting yourself as a rational, pragmatic opponent – in other words, a friend. Another way of designating this group is, thus, as an outsider, by examining who did not share this worldview.

Conversely, it is very hard, if not impossible, to find support for this deal among Arab political activists who took the more anti-imperial stance in the 1930s. I did not encounter such proposals by persons such as Iraqi Prime Minister Yasin al-Hashimi and his brother, Taha, chief of staff of the Iraqi army, both of whom sent arms and men to support the 1936 Revolt in Palestine.[61] It would probably also be futile to expect this kind of approach from a national Arab man of letters like Fu'ad al-Khatib. Al-Khatib, as Peter Wien showed, was an Ottoman-Arab intellectual, originally from the Beirut area, who joined the pro-British Arab Revolt as he fled Ottoman persecutions in 1916. He remained an ardent supporter of the Hashemite family, yet during the 1936 revolt, he did not adhere to the Hashemite paradigm of trying to co-opt Zionism by

61 Eppel, *The Palestine Conflict in the History of Modern Iraq*, pp. 41–2.

agreement, but rather took the more anti-imperial stance and supported the armed struggle, articulating an anti-Jewish tone in his writings.[62]

Nor was this approach endorsed by Palestinian political activists such as Muhammad Izzat Darwaze, or his disciple Akram Zuʿaitar, or Haj Amin al-Husayni, all of whom took part in igniting and leading the Palestinian Revolt,[63] with the moral and material support of persons like the Hashimi brothers or al-Khatib. To be sure, these persons *did* negotiate with the British empire in certain points – directly and indirectly – and even worked for the mandate government in the interwar period (Husayni as the mufti, a government position, is the best example). Generally, however, their line of thought was that in order to receive Arab independence, Arabs should give in return mostly peace and tranquility for the empire, including the naturalization of the Jewish settlers who had already immigrated to Palestine, as an act of Arab benevolence. Absorbing more Jews inside the Arab world – particularly given their indeterminate nature as 'settlers' or 'ordinary' immigrants – was out of the question for the more anti-imperial Arab activists.

This leads me to the next argument. If we consider affinity to the British empire as the main explanation for this approach, it explains that empire or imperialism at large is what lies in its deeper, cultural infrastructure. The idea to let Jews enter a large, 'Eastern', sphere rested on an Ottoman relation to Jewish immigration, which was common centuries before the 1930s. As Jacob Norris puts it, "in the long sweep of Ottoman history, successive imperial governments in Istanbul had viewed Jews as potentially useful agents of Mediterranean commerce".[64] Noted historian of modern Iraq Hanna Batatu brings evidence of different plans concocted by Zionists with Ottoman officials in the beginning of the twentieth century to settle Jews in Iraq, even to open its doors to "'millions' of Russian Jews".[65] Renowned historian Halil İnalcık argues that as early as the conquest of Constantinople in the fifteenth century, "the Ottoman authorities encouraged immigration of Jews to its premises", to bolster local industry, urban development and finance. It was, in İnalcık's words,

62 Wien, Peter, *Arab Nationalism: the Politics of History and Culture in the Modern Middle East* (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 21–33, 172–5.

63 Porath, *Rebellion*, pp. 241–9.

64 Norris, Jacob, *Land of Progress, Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 80.

65 Batatu, Hanna, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: a Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Baʿthists, and Free Officers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 289.

a "rational and deliberate policy on the part of the Ottomans, in response to a crusading Europe".[66]

Allowing skilled, sometimes well off immigrants into the large Eastern sphere was thus a longstanding Ottoman practice if not full-fledged policy, showing, for example, that the controversial Weizmann-Faysal agreement was not an exclusive, isolated event, but a logical extension of the Ottoman tendency to absorb and scatter productive Jewish immigrants in the empire. However, what also appeared around the beginning of the Zionist activity in Palestine was the uniquely counter-Zionist or Palestinian logic of scattering the Jews in the Middle East as a way to *protect* Palestine from excessive Jewish immigration. A case in point, provided by historian Jonathan Gribetz is a conversation, quite similar to the ones we read in the lines above, which took place in 1909, between the reviver of the modern Hebrew language Eliezer Ben Yehuda and Palestinian Saʿid al-Husayni, one of Jerusalem's representatives to the Ottoman Parliament. When Ben Yehuda pressed Husayni about the possibilities of Jewish immigration to the country, he suggested that

> Turkey should welcome the Jews with open arms. However, both for the Jews' own sake, and for the sake of the empire and the rest of its residents, it is best that the Jews settle in all provinces of the empire and not concentrate in one place [Palestine].[67]

This Zionist question and the Arab answer resemble the dialogue common in the 1930s, albeit with two major differences. In 1909, instead of a projected independent Arab federation, the solution was based on the vast territories of the Ottoman empire. Accordingly, at that time, this solution could be offered relatively freely by a Palestinian-Arab politician in a Jewish newspaper. This conversation shows that the deal I presented here only resurfaced again in the 1930s as the reincarnation of an Ottoman approach towards Zionism and in the wider sense towards Jewish immigrants. This Ottoman heritage lies in the cultural infrastructure of the discourse on alternatives to partition. Arabs who promoted this approach in the 1930s thought, quite like the Ottoman citizens that they were 20 years earlier, that Jews might be a useful and productive

66 İnalcık, Halil, "Foundations of Ottoman-Jewish cooperation", in *Jews, Turks and Ottomans: a Shared History, Fifteenth through the Twentieth Century*, ed. Avigdor Levy (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), p. 4.

67 Gribetz, Jonathan Marc, "Arab-Zionist conversations in late Ottoman Jerusalem: Saʿid al-Husayni, Ruhi al-Khalidi and Eliezer Ben Yehuda", in *Ordinary Jerusalem, 1840–1940: Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City*, ed. Angelos Dalachamis and Vincent Lemire (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 305–29.

minority in the service of an empire, this time an Arab one. By this time, however, these suggestions had become obsolete, if not outright dangerous, to those who made them among most of their Arab counterparts. The history of this latent deal in the 1930s is thus the history of the "death of something old", to borrow from Michael Provence.[68] This "old" thing was not liberalism, but the tendency of empires to absorb, transfer, manipulate, and take advantage of minorities *inside* their borders by means of decentralization, negotiation and containment. The 'new' thing that gained more and more prominence in the interwar period was the building of homogenous Arab nation-states through an open struggle with colonialism.[69]

Finally, pointing to relics of Ottomanism in the Middle East is not important only for itself. It is also relevant as a basis for a wider discussion on the history of the Zionist-Arab conflict. Historicizing this forgotten, latent deal serves to show that when confronting Arab nationalism, the Zionist movement did not meet only resistance or collaboration. It encountered also subtle, sophisticated ways of containment, sometimes ways to use Zionism's own force to subvert itself. In the same manner, this sophisticated, subversive dimension of Arab politics is not only important for itself, but as a means to inform a wider Arab approach to Zionism. This is the crux of the matter: the assumption underlying this political culture was that eventually, the Jewish settlers who were already in Palestine would be naturalized and become citizens of Palestine itself if not the Middle East. The Ottoman experience contributed much to the possibility of imagining this future, which was an Arab future by the interwar period. This Arab assumption regarding the future of Jews in Palestine deserves further exploration.

68 Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation*, p. 5.

69 For a compelling view on Yasin al-Hashimi's modern state formation as a form of anti-imperialism, see Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation*, pp. 214–18, 241–7.

CHAPTER 3

Cursed in Heaven: the Colonization of the Aromanians in Southern Dobruja

Nikola Minov

> Eh, as much as I can remember my cousin Tasa, they were so eager to escape to Romania; they did not even wait for their son to finish his military service. They sold their house and horse, and they fled to Heaven, lest it filled up and there was no place for them. Their son came back from the army and he found no home waiting for him, nor family. We consoled him: 'You will see them again, you will. Hope to God that they are on this Earth somewhere. Day by day, day by day, this shall pass'. Yet, when we saw how things stood [we told him]: 'You'd better go abroad, too, rather than toil away here'. What was I to do with him? We have no idea what became of them. Twice uprooted, the poor sods.[1]

On 26 October 1925, the ship "Iaşi", of the Romanian Maritime Service, dropped anchor in the harbour in Constanţa and unloaded the 1,000 or so passengers who had arrived from northern Greece. A great number of people had gathered at the harbour to greet the valiant newcomers who were supposed to settle near the Bulgarian border, and to protect it from the attacks carried out by the Bulgarian troops. From Constanţa they were taken to Silistra, where they were welcomed by the locals with marching bands, fiery speeches, shouts and applause. A local newspaper reported that the poor Aromanians were thrilled by the warm welcome, for the first time in their life, having had to live among foreign enemies.[2]

1 Fotiadou-Balafouti, Giota, *Εμείς οι Βλάχοι* [We the Vlachs] (Athens: Kalentis, 1991), p. 71.
2 Negoiţă, Cătălin, "Colonizarea aromânilor în Cadrilater" [Colonization of the Aromanians in Cadrilater], *Danubius*, 32/1 (2014), p. 256.

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The Aromanians in the Balkans

The Aromanians (also known as Vlachs, Koutsovlachs, Tzintzars and Macedo-Romanians) are an Eastern Romance ethnic group native to the Balkans, which for the most part of Ottoman rule lived in the rugged regions of Albania and Epirus, as well as in the lowlands of Thessaly. In the second half of the eighteenth century, after the destruction of the prosperous Aromanian nuclei of Moscopole (now Voskopojë), in south-eastern Albania, and Grammousta, on the Gramos Mountains, set on the present-day border between Albania and Greece, the Aromanians dispersed throughout Ottoman Macedonia and western Thrace.[3] The Moscopolitan Aromanians populated the large urban centres and formed villages with an economy largely based on commerce and craft-trades. The remaining ones formed villages with an economy based on stockbreeding. The Aromanians of Mt. Pindus and a part of the Grammoustian Aromanians were transhumant shepherds. Their summer abodes were located in the mountainous regions of Macedonia, while their winter abodes were set in the low-lying coastal regions of Macedonia and Thessaly. A part of the Grammoustians and most of the Farsherot Aromanians, who had received their name from the village of Frashër in Albania, whence their ancestors allegedly originated, were nomadic cattle-breeders, who constantly moved around.[4] The Vlachs of Mt. Paiko in the vicinity of Moglena in central Macedonia made up a distinct group, who, according to their ethnogenesis, their linguistic affinity, and their identity, differed from the Aromanians. The language spoken by this agricultural population was very close to Romanian and, as opposed to the Aromanians, who call themselves *Armãnj* or *Rrãmãnj*, these call themselves *Vlaşi* (Vlachs).[5] Nevertheless, due to political machinations in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Vlachs of Moglena were often included in the larger group of Aromanians.

Those very political happenings resulted in the formation of the basic division of the Aromanian population into pro-Romanians and pro-Greeks. The majority of travel writers who visited Ottoman Macedonia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries noted that most of those who had declared themselves as Greeks had Aromanian origins. Given that the Aromanians were Greek Orthodox Christians and that their cultural and economic activities

3 Koukoudis, I. Asterios, *The Vlachs. Metropolis and Diaspora* (Thessaloniki: Zitros, 2003), pp. 340–57, 402–8.

4 Koukoudis, *The Vlachs*, pp. 192–411.

5 Kahl, Thede, "The ethnicity of Aromanians after 1990: the identity of a minority that behaves like a majority", *Ethnologia Balkanica*, 6 (2002), p. 145.

were tied to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, most of them attended Greek schools, supported the Hellenic idea, and developed a feeling of belonging to the Hellenic, or at least to the modern Greek nation.[6] This symbiosis between the Aromanians and the Greeks was disrupted during the 1860s, when the newly-formed United Romanian Principalities discovered the existence of the Aromanians. During their travels in Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia, several Romanian intellectuals, such as Dimitrie Bolintineanu, came across a people who spoke a language similar to Romanian. Such intellectuals later published books and articles through which the Romanian public was acquainted with the distant brothers of the Romanians, the Aromanians.[7] In 1864, Romania financed the opening of the first Romanian school in Macedonia, and by the end of the century approximately another 100 primary and secondary schools had been opened in Macedonia, Epirus and Albania, where young Aromanians were educated in Romanian, and taught that they were part of the great Romanian nation.[8] The success of these schools did not correspond to the means invested in them because the majority of the approximately 150,000 Aromanians in the Balkans[9] continued sending their children to Greek schools, and they remained loyal to the Hellenic idea. The Romanian influence infiltrated only into the most impoverished Aromanian population, mainly among the Vlachs of Moglena, and the shepherds of Pindus and central Macedonia. However, this Greek-Romanian rivalry for dominance among the Aromanians caused discord in Aromanian circles, which reached its culmination in May 1905, when the sultan Abdülhamid II issued a decree (*irade*) by which he recognized the Aromanians as *Ullah milleti* (often interpreted as 'Aromanian nation'), with the right to open their own schools, and to conduct religious services in their mother tongue.[10] Romania interpreted this decree as recognition of the existence of a Romanian people in the Ottoman empire, while the Greek armed bands of *andartes*, who were sent to Macedonia to fight against the Bulgarian influence and the bands of

6 Papahagi, Nicolas, *Les Roumains de Turquie* (Bucarest: Eminesco, 1905), pp. 74–5.

7 Peyfuss, Demeter Max, *Chestiunea Aromânească. Evoluţia ei de la origini până la pacea de la Bucureşti (1913) şi poziţia Austro-Ungariei* [The Aromanian Question. Its Evolution from its Origins until the Peace from Bucharest 1913] (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 1994), pp. 33–5.

8 Peyfuss, *Chestiunea*, pp. 37, 110.

9 Weigand, Gustav, *Die Aromunen. Ethnographisch-Philologisch-Historische-Untersuchungen über das volk der sogenannten Makedo-Romanen oder Zinzaren*, vol. I (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth [Arthur Meiner], 1895), pp. 281–95.

10 *Documente diplomatice, Afacerile Macedoniei, Conflictul Greco – Român 1905* [Diplomatic Documents. The Affairs of Macedonia, the Greek-Romanian Conflict 1905] (Bucureşti: Imprimeria Statului, 1905), pp. xxxi, 5–6.

the Secret Macedonian-Adrianopolitan Revolutionary Organization, began to attack pro-Romanian villages, and to kill the most prominent pro-Romanians.[11] In response, in 1906, the pro-Romanians formed their own bands, which attacked Greek villages and pro-Greek Aromanians.[12] The frequent killings resulted in serious problems in Greek-Romanian relations, which were severed in 1906.[13] The animosities stopped temporarily after the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, but erupted once again during the First Balkan War, when Greek paramilitary formations entered the Aromanian villages on Mt. Pindus and killed the pro-Romanian leaders.[14]

The Aromanians after World War I

After the borders had been marked separating the Balkan states, following the Balkan Wars, the vast majority of the Aromanians became Greek citizens.[15] The number of Aromanians in Greece was constantly on the rise during the period between 1912 and 1924, when approximately 10,000 inhabitants of the Greek municipalities from Serbian Macedonia – wealthy merchants, bankers, scholars, teachers and lesser professionals, the majority of whom were Aromanian – transferred their activities to the Greek cities of Florina and, above all, to Thessaloniki.[16] These people were proficient in Greek, and upheld pro-Greek sentiments; hence they fitted seamlessly into Greek society.

The first three years after the Balkan Wars had ended were extremely fruitful for the Aromanian stockbreeders in Greece. Due to the increased demand for dairy products, as well as the increase in prices, a large number of them managed to acquire considerable capital and to purchase real estate and large

11 Dakin, Douglas, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897–1913* (Thessaloniki: Museum of the Macedonian Struggle – Institute for Balkan Studies, 1993), pp. 218, 233, 236, 257, 312.

12 Minov, Nikola, "'Романските' чети на македонската револуционерна организација (1906–1908)" [The 'Romanian' bands of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization 1906–1908], *Историја/Journal of History*, 53/2 (2018), pp. 45–53.

13 Velichi, N. Constantin, "Les relations Roumano-Grecques pendant la période 1879–1911", *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, 3 (1969), pp. 536–8.

14 *Şcoli şi biserici româneşti din Peninsula Balcanică, Documente 1864–1948* [Romanian Schools and Churches from the Balkan Peninsula, Documents 1864–1948], vol. I, ed. Adina Berciu-Drăghicescu and Maria Petre (Bucureşti: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2004), docs. 81–84, 89–90, pp. 248–56, 272–4.

15 Koukoudis, *The Vlachs*, p. 38.

16 Pallis, A.A., *Στατιστική μελέτη περί των φυλετικών μεταναστεύσεων Μακεδονίας και Θράκης κατά την περίοδο 1912–1924* [Statistical Study of the Tribal Migrations in Macedonia and Thrace during the Period 1912–1924] (Athens: n.p., 1925), pp. 1–24; Koukoudis, *The Vlachs*, p. 467.

farming lands, where they invested their profits.[17] However, the creation of the Macedonian front, and the decision of the Greek state to enter World War I had negative consequences on the Greek Aromanians. The villages of the Moglenite Vlachs were now positioned on the frontline and thus sustained significant damage as a result of the fighting. The problems of the inhabitants of these villages continued after the war had ended. Our sources do not offer evidence which would support the accusations concerning "relentless and merciless persecutions" carried out on the Moglenite Vlachs by the Greek authorities,[18] yet certain low-ranking members of the state organisation, the Greek army and the Church, exceeded their authorization and reminded – at times, violently – the pro-Romanian Moglenite Vlachs that, during the revolutionary fighting in late Ottoman Macedonia, they had taken the Bulgarian side.[19] The Aromanian villages that were far from the frontlines were also affected by the military conflict. In order to avoid being conscripted into the Greek army, some of the Aromanians fled to Italian-occupied Epirus, where on 29 August 1917, a provisional committee composed of pro-Romanian Aromanians declared the independence of the Aromanian district of Pindus.[20] This creation, which was recognized neither by Romania nor by Italy, lasted only for a couple of days, and once the Greek army entered Epirus, the advocates for autonomy, together with the Italian troops, fled to Albania.[21]

After World War I ended, the problems experienced by the pro-Romanian Aromanians in Greece were not political in nature. In a supplement of the Treaty of Bucharest, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia took upon themselves the responsibility to provide and secure religious and educational autonomy for the Aromanians in their states, as well as to accept the sponsorship of the Romanian government concerning the existing and future Romanian religious

17 Vlasidis, Vlasis, "Consequences of the demographic and social re-arrangements on the Vlach-speaking element in Greek Macedonia, 1923–1926", *Revue des etudes sud-est européennes*, 34/1–4 (1998), p. 161.

18 Noe, Const., "Colonizarea Cadrilaterului" [The colonization of Cadrilater], *Sociologie Românească*, 3/4–6 (1938), p. 125.

19 Vlasidis, "Consequences", p. 159.

20 Lascu, Stoica, "Evenimentele din Iulie-August 1917 în regiunea munţilor Pind – încercare de creare a unei statalităţi a Aromânilor. Documente inedite şi mărturii. Studiu istoriografic şi arhivistic" [The events of July-August 1917 in the Pindus Mountains region – an attempt to create an Aromanian statehood. Unpublished documents and testimonies. Historiographic and archival study], *Revista Română de Studii Eurasiatice*, III/1–2 (2007), p. 140.

21 Zdrulla, N., "Mişcarea Aromânilor din Pind în 1917" [The Pindus Aromanians' movement in 1917], *Revista Aromânească*, 1/2 (1929), p. 168.

and educational institutions.[22] Greece was the only state of the three which, after World War I, continued to honour the obligation it had undertaken, and, as such, the Romanian schools and churches on Greek territory continued functioning up to the Greek Civil War (1946–49).[23] Indeed, Greece went to great lengths to maintain its good relations with Romania, which also meant being tolerant toward the pro-Romanian Aromanians. Romania was pleased at how Greece was fulfilling its obligations set out in Bucharest, which can be confirmed by the fact that not a single complaint was lodged with the League of Nations by Romania regarding the treatment of Greece toward its pro-Romanian subjects.[24]

However, the fact that the pro-Romanians in Greece enjoyed their human and political rights did not mean that they did not encounter serious problems. The overwhelming majority of pro-Romanian Aromanians were nomadic or transhumant herders, who had, for decades, migrated between the towering Macedonian mountains and the Aegean Sea and Thessaly. Setting up borders between the Balkan states meant that the summer abodes of a great number of these stockbreeders were now located on the territory of Bulgaria and Serbia, while their winter abodes remained in Greece.[25] Another problem was the lack of property documents for their houses and pastures, forcing a part of the Aromanian stockbreeding families once again to purchase the land which they had freely made use of prior to 1912.[26] Undoubtedly the greatest challenges these people had to deal with were the agrarian reforms in Greece, as well as the arrival of Greek refugees from Anatolia. With the Agrarian Reform Law of 1917, large tracts of state and church land were expropriated and distributed to landless farmers.[27] The estates in Macedonia, Thessaly, Thrace and Epirus, which were larger than 15 hectares (1 hectare = 2.471 acres), and which had, in the past, belonged to the Turkish major landowners and had been lent out to the Aromanian herders as pastures, were now privately owned.[28] The prob-

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22 Vlasidis, "Consequences", pp. 155–6.

23 Divani, Lena, *Ελλάδα και μειονότητες. Το σύστημα διεθνούς προστασίας της Κοινωνίας των Εθνών* [Greece and Minorities. The International Protection System of the League of Nations] (Athens: Kastanioti, 2008), pp. 104–6.

24 Divani, *Ελλάδα*, p. 103.

25 Papathanasiou, Katerina, *Οι μετακινήσεις των Βλάχων της Ελλάδας στη Ρουμανία 1924–1940* [The Migration of the Vlachs from Greece to Romania 1924–1940] (Athens: Panteio Panepistimio Koinonikon kai Politikon Epistimon, 2013), pp. 71–2.

26 Vlasidis, "Consequences", p. 162.

27 Doukas, A. Kimon, "Agrarian reform in Greece", *The American Journal of Economy and Sociology*, 5/1 (1945), p. 88.

28 Evelpidis, C., *Les états balkaniques. Étude compare, politique, sociale, économique et financière* (Paris: Rousseau, 1930), p. 90.

lems increased after 1923, when around one million refugees from Anatolia settled in Greek Macedonia. The former pastures were now divided into smaller plots and were offered to the refugees for farming. The decrease in pastures presented a serious threat to the cattle breeding activities and resulted in economic losses for the Aromanian herders. They were forced to abandon their transhumant lifestyle, without any other alternative to fall back on with which to provide for themselves.[29] Their standard of living also further deteriorated with the enormous increase in prices of all goods and services after 1923, as a result of the large increase in demand following the arrival of the refugees.[30] These problems were, certainly, not typical only for the pro-Romanian Aromanians, nor did they affect all the pro-Romanians. The Aromanians of Epirus, where the number of refugees who settled was very much smaller than in Macedonia, experienced no disruption to their former way of life. The herders in Macedonia, regardless of whether they were pro-Romanian or pro-Greek Aromanians, or of some other ethnicity, encountered the same misfortunes, and a number of them began to consider leaving Greece for good.[31]

The Aromanians in Bulgaria were also experiencing serious economic hardships. In 1913, Romania annexed Southern Dobruja from Bulgaria. The Dobrujan Question was a sore spot for Bulgaria, which hampered Romanian-Bulgarian relations in the interwar period.[32] During the last decades of Ottoman rule, the Romanian state opened schools for the Aromanian herders living in the mountainous regions of north-eastern Ottoman Macedonia, who had, under the Treaty of Bucharest from 1913, been allotted to the Kingdom of Bulgaria. Even though Romania considered these Aromanians to be Romanians, in the Bulgarian censuses carried out in 1920 and 1926 they were registered as Aromanian, Koutzovlachs or Tzintzars, and, unlike the Romanian populace in north-eastern Bulgaria and the Bulgarians in Southern Dobruja, they were unaffected by the Romanian-Bulgarian animosity stemming from the Dobrujan Question.[33] However, they encountered problems of a different type. The overwhelming majority of them were transhumant stockbreeders. Like

29 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 125.

30 Vlasidis, "Consequences", pp. 162–3.

31 *Şcoli şi biserici*, I, doc. 139, p. 418.

32 Iordachi, Constantin, "Diplomacy and the making of a geopolitical question: the Romanian-Bulgarian conflict over Dobrudja, 1878–1947", in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans, vol. 4: Concepts, Approaches, and (Self)Representations*, ed. Roumen Daskalov (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 359–84.

33 Nyagulov, Blagovest, "Проблемът за Власите в България между двете световни войни (политически фактори и аспекти)" [The problem of the Vlachs in Bulgaria in the interwar period (political factors and aspects)], *Bulgarska Etnologia*, 5 (1995), p. 54.

their countrymen and relatives, who found themselves in the Serres region in Greece at the end of the wars, and who, as such, could not migrate to their summer abodes on Mt. Pirin, the Aromanians in Bulgaria could no longer migrate to their winter abodes in Greece.[34] On the other hand, depending on the needs of the moment, the Bulgarian authorities sometimes treated these Aromanians as Bulgarian subjects, and sometimes as foreigners. Regarding the compulsory work they had to carry out, in terms of road and railway construction, they had the same obligations as the Bulgarians, but when it came to land distribution and paying taxes on pasture land, they were considered foreigners, and apart from the taxes they were subject to, and which they paid to the state, they also had taxes to pay to the municipality, as well as to the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), which, *de facto*, controlled Pirin Macedonia.[35]

In the southernmost parts of the newly-formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the Aromanian herders settled in the mountainous regions near the Bulgarian border encountered much the same problems as did their countrymen on the eastern side of the same border. With the agrarian reforms in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the Aromanians had the lands they had bought from the Turks on the mountains confiscated. Under the pretext that they needed to be verified, their right of property documents were sent to Belgrade, but were never returned. As a result, these stockbreeders were forced to pay exorbitant prices in order to use their own lands.[36]

The Aromanians in Albania – renowned caravan-leaders in the Ottoman empire – fell victim to the modernization of the new Albanian state. The construction of roads from Tirana to Korçë, as well as the introduction of new means of transport, brought about the disappearance of the caravans. On the other hand, the loss of available winter pasture lands led to the shrinking of the herds, and a drastic decrease in the standard of living of the Aromanian cattle-breeders in Albania.[37]

Apart from economic problems, the Aromanians in the Balkan states, especially those who used to attend Romanian schools, faced scathing comments

34 Lascu, Stoica, *Românii Balcanici în Dobrogea* [The Balkan Romanians in Dobruja] (Bucureşti: Editura Etnologică, 2016), p. 93.

35 Nyagulov, "Проблемът", pp. 63, 69; Malev, N., "Арумънската колонизация на Южна Добруджа и арумъните в Пиринска Македония" [The Aromanian colonization of Southern Dobruja and the Aromanians in Pirin Macedonia], *Dobruja*, 11 (1994), 134–41.

36 Lascu, *Românii*, pp. 94–5; Cuşa, Nicolae, *Macedo-Aromânii Dobrogeni* [Dobrujan Macedo-Aromanians] (Constanţa: Ex Ponto, 2004), p. 48.

37 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, pp. 48–9.

from those dominant in the new states, who told them: "This is our country. You are Romanians, go back to Romania!"[38]

The Promised Land

Situated between the lower course of the Danube and the Black Sea, Dobruja is an arid, windy region which had been ruled by the Ottomans until it was divided between Romania and Bulgaria in 1878. Southern Dobruja became a part of the new Bulgarian principality, while Northern Dobruja went to Romania. After the Second Balkan War, Romania annexed Southern Dobruja (also known in Romania as *Cadrilater* or *Dobrogea Nouă*); toward the end of World War I it lost it back to Bulgaria, regaining authority over it once more with the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine in November 1919.[39] The region was organized in two districts or counties: Durostor (3,226 km^2), with a centre in Silistra, and Caliacra (4,500 km^2), with a centre in Bazargic.[40]

Due to the fact that the jurisdiction over the region shifted a number of times between Romania and Bulgaria, Dobruja became a true "Alsace and Lorraine of the Balkans".[41] After the Congress of Berlin in 1878, both states engaged in policies of ethnic colonization and cultural homogenization in their respective parts of Dobruja, so as to Romanianise, that is, to Bulgarianise the region with a dominant Turkish and Tatar populace.[42] According to a Bulgarian census report from 1912, out of a total of 282,778 inhabitants in Southern Dobruja, 48 per cent were Turks and Tatars, 43 per cent were Bulgarians, and only 2.3 per cent were Romanians.[43] Bearing in mind the Romanian performance in Northern Dobruja, as well as its own in Southern Dobruja, Bulgaria knew that it was simply a matter of time before the figures would change, and the Dobrujan Question would be resolved to Romania's advantage. All of this served to

38 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 126.

39 Clark, Roland, "Claiming ethnic privilege: Aromanian immigrants and Romanian fascist politics", *Contemporary European History*, 24/1 (2015), pp. 45–6.

40 Tudor, Constantin, *Administraţia românească în Cadrilater 1913–1940* [Romanian Administration in Cadrilater 1913–1940] (Călăraşi: Agora, 2005), pp. 71–124.

41 Iordachi, "Diplomacy", p. 301.

42 Iordachi, Constantin, *Citizenship, Nation and State-Building: the Integration of Northern Dobrogea into Romania 1878–1913* (Pitsburgh: Center for Russian and East European Studies, 2002), pp. 7–63; Popov, Zheko, *Българският национален въпрос в българо-румънските отношения 1878–1902* [The Bulgarian National Question in Bulgarian-Romanian Relations 1878–1902] (Sofia: Mediakom, 1994), pp. 55–101, 261–82, 294–348, 494–519.

43 Brătescu, Constantin, "Populaţia Cadrilaterului între anii 1878 şi 1938" [The population of Cadrilater between 1878 and 1938], *Analele Dobrogei*, 19/2 (1938), p. 196.

further strain Bulgarian-Romanian relations in the *Interbellum*, in which an unexpected element made an appearance – the Aromanians.

The idea of settling the Balkan Aromanians in Southern Dobruja was mentioned for the first time before the Treaty of Bucharest was signed in 1913. In June 1913, the Romanian military attaché in Sofia, G.A. Dabija, suggested exiling the entire Bulgarian populace from Southern Dobruja, and populating the territory with inhabitants from the 'Old Kingdom', from the Vidin region in Bulgaria, and Aromanians from Macedonia.[44] The following month, eight Moglenite Vlach villages requested Romania to help them to be assigned to Serbia instead of Greece, or, should that prove impossible, to find them a place in New Dobruja,[45] and Professor G. Munteanu-Murgoci suggested that, should Serbia and Greece not offer any guarantee that they would afford Aromanian culture the opportunity to develop and expand in their states, they should then be settled in Southern Dobruja.[46] Romania ignored these requests, and only a small number of Aromanian traders and scholars individually made their way to and settled in the urban centres in Dobruja.[47]

The signing of the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations on 30 January 1923, and its ratification by the Turkish and Greek governments on 23 and 25 August that same year, once again brought to the foreground the issue of the emigration of the Aromanians from Greece to Southern Dobruja. On 5 March 1923, 27 Aromanians from the Veria region in Greece sent a request to the inspector of the Romanian schools in Macedonia to ask the Romanian government to allow the Greek Aromanians unrestricted entry to Dobruja, to mediate with the Greek government to allow them to leave the country, and to provide land for the colonists to settle, as well as to pay for their transport from Greece to Romania.[48] Toward the end of that same month, an Aromanian committee from Edessa sent a request to the Greek government to mediate with the authorities in Bucharest to allow colonization in Southern Dobruja,[49] and on 31 March "a delegation of Romanians from Veria" asked the Romanian government to welcome them in their *Patria mumă* (fatherland-mother), to give them land, and to facilitate the transport to

44 Dabija, G.A., *Amintirile unui ataşat militar roman în Bulgaria 1910–1913* [Memoirs of a Romanian Military Attaché in Bulgaria 1910–1913] (Bucureşti: Editura ziarului Universul, 1936), p. 368.

45 Lascu, *Românii*, p. 78.

46 Murgoci, G., "Împărţirea Macedonie. Pieirea aromânilor" [Partition of Macedonia. The doom of the Aromanians], *Minerva*, 5/1645 (15 July 1913), p. 1.

47 Lascu, *Românii*, pp. 84–7.

48 Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", p. 255.

49 Vlasidis, "Consequences", pp. 163–4.

Romania.[50] The reply from Bucharest was not favourable. Only G. Pop, a member of the opposition party, raised the question as regards the colonization of the Aromanian émigrés in Southern Dobruja, or in the county of Ialomiţa, but the minister of agriculture and domains, A. Constantinescu, replied that Romania held a moral obligation only to its brethren who had remained in Hungary, and that it was they who should be given the available space to colonize, while the others would be taken into consideration only should any free space remain.[51]

In 1924, the influx of refugees intensified the demands of the Aromanians from Greece for the colonization of Southern Dobruja.[52] On 30 November 1924, approximately 400 delegates of the Aromanian communities in the prefectures of Thessaloniki, Pella, Kozani and Imathia gathered together for a general congress in Veria, and they concluded that the arrival of the Greek refugees had led to the demise of their way of life, and that the only solution to this was mass emigration to Romania. It was decided that a delegation should be sent to Romania to request permission from the Romanian government to migrate to Romanian soil.[53] The demands of these Aromanians in Romania continued to be met with scepticism, even with open hostility, not just by the Romanian politicians, but also by the general public, as well as by the Aromanian circles in Bucharest. It was emphasized that the Aromanians were shepherds, and that Dobruja offered no conditions for cattle breeding; that the Aromanians were not familiar with agriculture; that Southern Dobruja needed to be socialized and for that to happen it needed to be settled with real Romanians, not Aromanians; that colonization would lead to conflicts with the Bulgarians.[54] Even Bucharest's Society for Macedo-Romanian Culture, which, from its foundation in 1879, acted as a pressure group to raise and bring attention to the Aromanian question every time it seemed as though the Romanian government had lost interest in the Aromanian cause, declared itself against the colonization idea.[55] The remaining Aromanian societies in Bucharest pointed out that the fight should be continued in Macedonia, and

50 Noe, "Colonizarea", pp. 126–7.

51 Popa-Gorjanu, Cornelia, "Colonizarea românilor macedoneni în Cadrilater (1925–1935)" [Colonization of the Macedonian Romanians in Cadrilater 1925–1935], *Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica*, 4–5 (2001), p. 159; Noe, "Colonizarea Cadrilaterului", pp. 127–8.

52 Hagigogu, T. Sterie, *Emigrarea aromânilor şi colonizarea Cadrilaterului* [Emigration of the Aromanians and the Colonization of Cadrilater] (Bucureşti: Tipografiile Române Unite, 1927), p. 19; Noe, "Colonizarea", pp. 129–30.

53 Vlasidis, "Consequences", p. 164.

54 Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", p. 256; Popa-Gorjanu, "Colonizarea", p. 159.

55 Popa-Gorjanu, "Colonizarea", p. 159.

that emigration should not be supported because the role of the Aromanians in the old fatherland was vital for the future enlargement of Romania.[56] In the spring of 1925, 36 influential inhabitants from Durostor sent a memorandum to the Romanian government, in which they categorically declared themselves to be against the idea of a potential colonization of Aromanians in their country under the pretext that "the Romanians from Macedonia, born and bred in the south of the Balkans, have Balkan traditions and do not know the Romanian language. They have a different character from the Romanians from Dobruja, and they cannot develop a culture or activities which would correspond with the Romanian national interests". In continuation, the Memorandum described the Aromanians as unrefined, violent, vengeful, and greedy, and it also pointed out all the damage that would be inflicted on Romania were it to settle them in Southern Dobruja.[57]

The events in Dobruja forced the Romanian government to reexamine its stance concerning the potential colonization of Aromanians. In 1923, the Internal Dobrujan Revolutionary Organization (IDRO) was created, a Bulgarian nationalistic organization whose bands continually crossed the Romanian border in 1924 and 1925 and attacked the gendarmerie headquarters, as well as the representatives of the Romanian administration in the region.[58] The local Bulgarian population refused to cooperate with the Romanian authorities in their fight against the bands, and it helped to provide them with food and clothing, while the 13 military colonies, composed of 458 former Romanian soldiers from the Dobrujan front (1916–18), showed themselves to be ineffective in the protection of the Romanian border.[59] All of a sudden, settling the Aromanian colonists near the Bulgarian border seemed like a good idea. The idea that the Aromanians were well-versed in the language and the customs of the Bulgarians and the Turks gained momentum, as did the view that they had lived in Macedonia for centuries, that they had taken part in the revolutionary battles in Macedonia from the start of the century, and that, unlike the

56 Gica, Alexandru, *Introducere în istoria recentă a aromânilor* [Introduction to the Recent History of the Aromanians] (Bucureşti: Editura MNLR, 2012), p. 16.

57 *Colonizarea în Cadrilater. Memoriu adresat Guvernului şi tuturor factorilor răspunzatori* [Colonization in Cadrilater. Memorandum Addressed to the Government and to All Responsible Factors] (Silistra: Tipografia Ion. P. Radulescu, 1925), pp. 15–6.

58 Zlatev, Lyubomir, *Вътрешната добруджанска революционна организация (ВДРО) 1923–1940* [The Internal Dobrujan Revolutionary Organization (IDRO) 1923–1940] (Ruse: LENI AN, 2009), pp. 93–112.

59 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 123.

Romanians from the Old Kingdom, they were desperate enough and ready to assume the obligation of protecting the border from the revolutionary bands.[60]

Prior to this, a legal basis was established, which would allow for the planning of the colonization in Southern Dobruja. On 22 April 1924, a new law was brought into effect related to changes and addendums to the law on the Organization of New Dobruja from 1914, where under Article 117 the owners of former *miri* (state-owned) land became the rightful owners of that land once they had given 1/3 of it to the state, or had bought it out. Article 129 dealt directly with the issue of colonization, and allowed state-owned land, as well as land that would become state-owned through expropriation, to be colonized and divided into smaller plots.[61]

Thus, when on 1 February 1925, a delegation of 16 Aromanians from 12 villages and towns in Greece arrived in Bucharest to test the waters in regard to the general feeling of the Romanian government in terms of their settling in Dobruja, the reception they received from the authorities was quite welcoming. In their meetings with the Romanian ministers, the delegates asked for each family to receive 20 hectares of agricultural land, long-term loans for housing construction and the purchase of equipment, and for their transportation costs to be met, as well as mediation with the authorities in Athens for compensation of the lands that would be left behind in Greece.[62] Some of the delegates, dressed in their national costumes and without any real knowledge of diplomacy and political etiquette, asked the minister of finance, Vintilă Brătianu, and the minister of agriculture and domains, Alexandru Constantinescu point-blank: "Do you want us or not? Our lives are in your hands. Either take us in or throw us into the sea!". The answer they received was: "We want you! Come, because this country is yours too, and it must take you in".[63]

Between March and June 1925, the manner in which the Aromanians from Greece would settle in Southern Dobruja was defined. A commission from the ministry for agriculture and domains prepared a report concerning the available land which the colonists would settle. Minister Constantinescu sent out a report to the government based on that report, which noted that the state possessed 41,103 hectares of land in Southern Dobruja, on which it was planned to settle 1,500 families from the Old Kingdom, and 1,500 Aromanian

60 Turnus, "În jurul curentului de emigrare" [About the current emigration], *Peninsula Balcanică*, 2/8 (1925), p. 183; Muşi, Th. Vasile, "Aromânii şi minorităţile Dobrogei Noi" [Aromanians and the minorities of New Dobruja], *Tribuna românilor de peste hotare*, 1/2 (1924), p. 16.

61 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, pp. 51–2.

62 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 133.

63 Noe, "Colonizarea", pp. 135–6.

families. Each family would receive 15 hectares of land if they were to settle near the Bulgarian border, or ten hectares if they were to settle in the interior.[64] On 13 June Constantinescu's report was ratified by the government, but the decision made no mention of the remaining demands put forward by the Aromanian delegates concerning long-term loans and paid transport.[65] This created a feeling of unease in some of the delegates. Some were disappointed by what Southern Dobruja offered, as well as by the lack of guarantees for additional Romanian help during the settling. They shared their reservations with their countrymen in Greece and, as a result, many changed their minds and no longer wanted to emigrate.[66] Other delegates, some of whom, such as G. Celea, who later became large land-owners in Dobruja, attempted to convince their countrymen that Southern Dobruja was the promised land for the Aromanians, and that the Romanian statesmen had categorically promised help for the colonists.[67]

In the meantime, while the delegates in Greece were trying to garner supporters, and were working to make the colonization in Southern Dobruja attractive, negotiations were also being carried out with the Greek ministry of foreign affairs. The Romanians sent a delegation composed of D. Kehaia and G. Celea, who, in cooperation with the Romanian diplomatic representatives in Athens and Thessaloniki, were to work out the conditions for the migration. Finally, in September 1925, a verbal agreement was reached, in which Greece agreed to allow the emigration of 1,500 Aromanian families, on several conditions: the final deadline for the emigration was 30 July 1926; all those who left Greece would lose their Greek citizenship and would be erased from the municipal records in the towns and villages they had been registered in; the emigrants could sell their estates up to the day of emigration, and in the event that no buyer could be found, the land would be purchased by the Greek state.[68]

The Road to Dobruja

In October 1925, 200 families of Moglenite Vlachs and Aromanian herders from different parts of northern Greece stood waiting at the harbour in Thessaloniki

64 Hagi-Gogu, Toli, "Colonizarea în Cadrilater" [Colonization in Cadrilater], *Peninsula Balcanică*, 8/9 (1930), 138–40.

65 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, p. 52.

66 Vlasidis, "Consequences", pp. 167–8.

67 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, p. 53; Vlasidis, "Consequences", p. 168.

68 Papathanasiou, *Οι μετακινήσεις*, pp. 52–4.

to board the ship "Iaşi", which was to take them to the promised land. Some of the families were incomplete. Their sons were serving in the Greek army and, despite the verbal agreement between the representatives of the colonists and the Greek ministry of foreign affairs, which provided that the young men whose families were emigrating to Romania were to be freed from military service, some of the Greek officers did not follow through on the agreement, and did not release their soldiers.[69] A much bigger problem was the fact that some of the families had no money. The potential colonists thought that the Romanian state would pay for the trip from Thessaloniki, but Romania had never undertaken that responsibility, and the colonists had to finance the journey themselves.[70] Greece, on the other hand, had undertaken the responsibility of purchasing the emigrants' lands should they not manage to sell them, but in 1925 the colonists received no money for any unsold lands, and in some cases they had to wait until 1930 to receive what they were owed.[71] Nevertheless, despite all the problems, the colonists arrived in Romania on 26 October, and were settled in a number of villages in Durostor.[72] This point is usually taken to mark the beginning of the Aromanian colonization in Southern Dobruja, even though about two months previously around 70 Farsherot Aromanian families from the village of Plasë in Albania had arrived in Durostor, and founded the village of Fraşari, some 11 km. from Silistra.[73]

By April 1926, three more ships carrying Aromanian colonists from Greece arrived at the harbour in Constanţa, which covered the quota of 1,500 Aromanian families that were to settle in Southern Dobruja.[74] Prior to their setting off for Romania, these families had found themselves in an even more unpleasant situation than the first group of colonists. In accordance with the agreement with Greece, they could emigrate by 30 July 1926. However, they received a notification from Romania stating that if they wished to receive land, they were to arrive before 15 March 1926, because that land that they were to settle could not remain unplanted until the end of July. For this reason, a number of these Aromanians sold their lands for a pittance, so that they could get to Romania sooner.[75]

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69 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 147.

70 Noe, "Colonizarea", pp. 144–5.

71 Papathanasiou, *Οι μετακινήσεις*, pp. 61–2.

72 Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", p. 262; Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 146.

73 Muşi, Th. Vasile, "Cum s-a întemeiat Fraşari" [How Fraşari was founded], *Tribuna românilor de peste hotare*, 4/1–2 (1926), 6–12.

74 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 147 provides a list of villages where these colonists settled.

75 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, pp. 52–3.

Upon completion of the quota of 1,500 Aromanian colonists, the new Romanian government, led by the People's Party, halted the attempts to extend the colonization on the pretext that there was no more available land to be had for new colonists. Yet, when the Romanian liberals came back to power in June 1927, caving in under the pressure of the incessant demands for an extension to the process of colonization, as well as the unending attacks by Bulgarian bands, a decision was reached to allow new groups of Aromanians to come and settle in the region. This time, though, the Romanian state forced the newcomers to sign a statement that they were not settling as colonists, and that Romania was under no obligation to provide them land. Similarly, the Greek state also gave permission for the colonization process to continue, but only after the Aromanian émigrés had signed that Greece was under no obligation to purchase the lands that they could not sell.[76]

Realizing that the process of colonization had resumed, larger groups of Aromanian nomads from Bulgaria also made their way to the Romanian-Bulgarian border. Walking, with their herds, these cattle-breeders arrived at the border, where they were allowed to leave the country on the Bulgarian side, yet were prevented from entering by the Romanian border guards. After weeks of negotiations, they were permitted to enter Romanian soil, on the same conditions as those for the last groups of colonists who had arrived from Greece.[77]

By 1928, an agreement between the Romanian ministry of agriculture and domains and the ministry of external affairs was reached, once again providing the potential colonists with ten hectares of agricultural land, which resulted in new waves of Aromanian colonists. Up to 1933, on multiple occasions Romania received large groups of Aromanian families from Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania and, above all, from Bulgaria, who, in the end, made up half of the total number of Aromanian colonists in Southern Dobruja.[78] In 1933, the colonisation of Balkan Aromanians was essentially finished, because by 1937 an insignificant number of Aromanian families had come over. The total number of Aromanian immigrants to Southern Dobruja in the period from 1925 to 1937 was 5,964 families, or approximately 30,000 people.[79] Besides these colonists, Durostor

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76 Gica, *Introducere*, p. 21; Papathanasiou, *Οι μετακινήσεις*, p. 59.

77 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 149.

78 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, pp. 55–6.

79 For many years, the researchers studying this used the figures concerning the number of Aromanian colonists offered by two participants directly involved in the whole process – Vasile Muşi and Constantin Noe. According to Muşi, 6,553 Aromanian families had settled in Southern Dobruja (Muşi, Th. Vasile, *Un deceniu de colonizare în Dobrogea Noua 1925–1935* [A Decade of Colonization in New Dobruja 1925–1935] (Bucureşti: Tipografia Cărţilor Bisericeşti, 1935), p. 147), while, according to Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 154, it was

and Caliacra were settled by Romanians from completely different regions of the Romanian state, together with the Aromanians in 279 villages in Southern Dobruja.[80] Thus, the interwar period saw drastic changes in the ethnographic map of the region; the Turks and the Tatars were no longer the majority, and they made up 26 per cent out of a total of 372,058 inhabitants. The Bulgarians composed 40.5 per cent, while the number of Romanians, Aromanians included, increased to 108,404 or 29 per cent of the whole population.[81]

Trouble in Heaven

The Aromanian colonists idealized Romania, not seeing it as it actually was in reality. They had hoped that they would find there something of their fatherland, but they soon realized that the delegates who had returned from Southern Dobruja convinced that the land was not fit for the Aromanian way of life were, in fact, right. Dobruja differed, in all aspects, from the centuries-old abodes of the Aromanian herders. Instead of the mountains that they were used to, they found plain, arid, rocky terrain, unbearable heat, insects, dust, no roads, and no drinking water.

The problems began as soon as they arrived. Some of the families received no land, because the state had not yet gained possession of its third of the former *miri* land, while the available agricultural land had already been planted and time had to pass before it could be harvested. Most of the colonists received only two, three, or four hectares of land, instead of the promised ten hectares for settling in the interior, and 15 hectares for settling near the border, and in some instances, they received barely one hectare of land.[82] A more serious problem was the accommodation of the colonists. The Romanian authorities secured the transport between Constanţa and Southern Dobruja, but they would then offload the colonists there and say to them: "look for housing in the villages". The colonists would spend days and months sleeping on the roads, and then, due to a lack of housing, they would be accommodated as tenants in the houses of the native Bulgarian and Turkish population. Those

4,946 families. In an attempt to find the exact number of Aromanian colonists, Nicolae Cuşa, who, himself, comes from a family of colonists from Greece, came across two pieces of paper with information on colonists who had settled in Caliacra up to 1937, and in Durostor up to 1940, with which he determined that that number was 5,964 Aromanian families in both counties (Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, pp. 124–9).

80 Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", p. 258.

81 Brătescu, "Populaţia", p. 199.

82 Lascu, *Românii*, p. 123.

who managed to sell their lands in Greece bought the houses of the Turks who were moving to Kemalist Turkey. Such was the case with the Aromanians from Megala Livadia, who bought the houses of the Turks from the villages of Tatar Atmaca and Uzunca Orman. However, the majority would remain in the houses of the native population for years.[83] When the minister of agriculture, Ion Mihalache, visited Dobruja in 1929, he noticed that a number of Aromanian immigrants were living on the outskirts of the villages, while the others were accommodated in the houses of the Bulgarians and Turks, which was causing serious discord between the locals and the newcomers.[84] Even as recently as 1940, 528 Aromanian families in Southern Dobruja were living in huts, while another 1,500 families still had no home of their own.[85] In certain cases, the problems with the land and the housing resulted in conflicts among the colonists themselves. Such was the case in the village of Fraşari, where the first colonists clashed with the later waves of colonists due to the fact that the first colonists had received the better lands right next to village, whereas the colonists who came later had received barren lands outside Fraşari.[86]

It seems that part of the misunderstandings between the Romanian state and the colonists was due to the conviction present among the Romanian politicians that the Aromanians were rich people with excellent commercial skills. In 1929, the politician and historian Gheorghe I. Brătianu pointed out that the Aromanians "are not just to be used for the colonization of Dobruja so as to protect the border. Due to their spirit and initiative, they represent a significant factor in reviving the economy. Their commercial abilities may also be made use of in the towns with dominant non-Romanian ethnicities".[87] Three years prior, the undersecretary in the ministry of agriculture and domains, G. Cipăianu, in reply to the question as to why there was no financial assistance for the Aromanian colonists, answered that "the Macedonian colonists bring with them bags stuffed with money, and they do not need help".[88] The Aromanians in the Balkans were, indeed, believed to be skilled and rich traders,

83 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, p. 54.

84 Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", p. 257.

85 Ciorbea, Valentin, *Evoluţia Dobrogei între 1918–1944: contribuţii la cunoaşterea problemelor geopolitice, economice, demografice, sociale şi ale vieţii politice şi militare* [The Evolution of Dobruja between 1918–1944: Contributions to the Knowledge of Geopolitical, Economical, Demographic, Social and Political and Military Life Issues] (Constanţa: Ex Ponto, 2005), p. 1699.

86 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, p. 56.

87 Brătianu, I. Gheorghe, "Ion I.C. Brătianu şi colonizarea aromânilor în Dobrogea de Sud" [Ion. I.C. Brătianu and the colonization of Aromanians in Southern Dobruja], *Legionarii*, 1/15, 27 April 1929, p. 1.

88 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, p. 55.

who rivalled the Greek and Jewish merchants in the larger towns of Rumeli. However, these merchants stayed in Greece, and had no intention whatsoever of resettling in Romania, while the Aromanians who moved to Dobruja belonged to the most impoverished Aromanian social classes. Some of them, once they realized that there were no conditions for cattle breeding, and that they had no idea about agriculture, did indeed try their hand at trade, although they did not manage to achieve the success of their merchant-countrymen from the Balkans.[89]

The disappointment of the Aromanians from the *Patria mumă* culminated in the summer of 1930, when the Romanian parliament passed the bill put forward by one Turkish and two Bulgarian MPs, concerning making changes to the laws governing the colonization of Dobruja, under which the former owners were given an additional 30 days to declare the lands that they had not managed to declare in the period that had been set in 1924, leaving the colonists facing the risk of losing the lands that they had been gifted.[90]

The role played by Romania was not as bad as that presented in the later reminisces of the colonists. When they arrived in Dobruja, a great many of the Aromanians were illiterate and did not speak Romanian. A number of the young Aromanians, having been brought up during the wars, had never attended school, and the youngest of them had had a very modest education in, for them, unfamiliar languages in schools in Albania, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Bulgaria, and even Greece. The Romanian state opened a number of schools in almost all of the colonist villages, where young Aromanians were provided with education from a very early age, often taught by Aromanian teachers, and secondary school students could freely continue with their studies in Romanian universities.[91]

Romania, even in the years of the Great Depression, found ways in which to help the most poverty-stricken colonists. In 1932, it allocated financial aid of 140 million *lei* for the construction of houses and wells in Southern Dobruja, and a number of colonists, who practically had no clothes on their back, were given enormous loans with which to purchase land and housing, with very modest chances that the loans might ever be repaid.[92] Despite all this, though, the colonists clung to their belief that instead of acknowledging their

89 Tuşa, Enache, "Reasons for Macedo-Romanians' colonisation in Dobrogea", *Analele Universităţii Ovidius din Constanţa – Seria Ştiinţe Politice*, 4 (2015), p. 102.

90 Muşi, *Un deceniu*, p. 129.

91 Caratană, Nicolae, *Memorii ghetsimanice* [Gethsemanic Memories] (Constanţa: Ex Ponto, 2000), p. 116; Bedivan, Maria, *Pe urmele unui colonist* [In the Footsteps of a Colonist] (Bucureşti: Semne, 2003), p. 49.

92 Ciorbea, *Evoluţia*, p. 169.

belonging to the ruling group of the nation-state, the state had shackled them in lifelong debt.

The biggest issue of the colonists, though, was connected to the main reason as to why Romania had accepted them in Southern Dobruja – as a means to defend itself from the Bulgarian armed bands.

Keepers of the Border

In 1927, General Ioan Vlădescu, commander of the XI division in Southern Dobruja, noted that "the social relations (of the Aromanians) with the Bulgarians and the Turks have no mutual understanding nor any kind of a civilized and humane application, because the only elements they have any contact with are knives and sticks".[93]

When the first Aromanian colonists arrived in Dobruja in 1925–26, the situation in the field was already critical. The Romanian government began stripping the Bulgarians in Dobruja of their lands, while the IDRO bands regularly crossed over the border in order to attack Romanian officials. The arrival of the colonists served to worsen the situation many times over. The land that was presented to the Aromanians had been confiscated from the Bulgarians and Turks, making the colonists particularly unpopular with the local population. The colonist villages were bombarded by leaflets which stated that Dobruja belonged to the Bulgarians and, should the colonists not leave, they would have their throats slit and be set alight, together with their children. The IDRO bands increasingly frequently crossed the border to attack the colonists, murdering some and provoking revenge attacks from the Aromanians.[94] General I. Vlădescu confirmed that he received a large number of requests from the Aromanians for bands to be formed against the Bulgarian *comitaji*, and underlined that "most of them (Aromanians) are obsessed by the idea that they have been brought over to free the *Cadrilater* from Turks and Bulgarians".[95] The authorities gave the Aromanians permission to carry weapons, and in most cases, they were the ones who were arming the colonists.[96] Border patrols were set up on the Romanian-Bulgarian border, consisting of two soldiers and two

93 Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", pp. 262–3.

94 Basciani, Alberto, *Un conflitto balcanico. La contesa fra Bulgaria e Romania in Dobrugia del Sud. 1918–1940* [A Balkan Conflict. The Dispute between Bulgaria and Romania in Southern Dobruja 1918–1940] (Cosenza: Periferia, 2001), pp. 92, 102; Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", p. 262.

95 Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", p. 263.

96 Gheorghe, Alexandru, *Drumul românesc al armânilor* [The Romanian Road of the Aromanians] (Bucureşti: Editura Societăţii Culturale Aromâne, 2013), p. 41.

colonists each, which served to further confirm the cooperation between the authorities and the Aromanians against the Bulgarian bands.[97] This is how Cătălin Negoiţă describes the situation in Dobruja:

> Faced with Bulgarian violence, the Macedo-Romanians replied with violence. Ironically, the former allies in Macedonia now clashed in Southern Dobruja, which was slowly turning into a small Macedonia, a real hornets' nest in which life was becoming ever so insecure. Coming from a state where conflicts were an everyday occurrence, and the clashes between clans resulted in victims, the Aromanians were faced with a huge dilemma: should they apply the, for them, traditional *ius talionis*, or should they wait for the authorities in Cadrilater to undertake concrete measures to defend them from the danger that lay in wait from the committees. Since the lack of authority and the anarchy were a reflection of the social and political life in Macedonia, the colonists were tempted to make use of their own methods in the resolution of conflicts with the Bulgarians.[98]

From 1927 to 1934, the Romanian and the Bulgarian press was filled with stories about attacks and killings carried out on, and by, Aromanian colonists,[99] and the official figures of the Romanian authorities serve to confirm the severity of the clashes. In the period from 1925 to 1931, 234 attacks were carried out on and by colonists in Durostor, in which 18 colonists and Bulgarian locals were killed, and 39 were wounded.[100] The figures were most probably similar in the county of Caliacra, too. According to those same figures, it was the colonists who got the short end of the stick in these conflicts. However, it was not the colonists who fled from the bordering areas, but rather the Bulgarians. A great number of Bulgarian villagers sold off their estates in Southern Dobruja and moved to Bulgaria. In November 1928 alone, approximately 7,000 Bulgarian

97 Zlatev, *Вътрешната*, p. 187.

98 Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", p. 261.

99 "Atacurile din Cadrilater" [The attacks in Cadrilater], *Ţara Nouă*, 1/11 (1933), p. 186; Lascu, Stoica, "Aromânii-catalizatori ai revigorării naţionale, străjeri ai Statului Român la graniţa Dobrogeana" [Aromanians-catalysts of a national revival, Romanian state's guardians of the Dobrujan border], *Picurarlu de la Pind*, 1/1 (1994), pp. xi–xv; Ciorbea, Valentin, "Terorism în Cadrilater (1919–1940). Bande înarmate ale comitagilor, suştinute şi tolerate de Sofia" [Terrorism in Cadrilater (1919–1940). Armed bands of the *comitaji*, supported and tolerated by Sofia], *Dosarele Istoriei*, 7/1 (2002), 41–3; Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, pp. 117–22; Zlatev, *Вътрешната*, pp. 173, 175–7; Muşi, *Un deceniu*, pp. 138–9; Basciani, *Un conflitto*, pp. 120–1.

100 Popa-Gorjanu, "Colonizarea", p. 162.

families left Dobruja.[101] The aggression the Aromanian colonists displayed in the clashes with the Bulgarians concerned both the Romanian authorities and the Romanian general public. Not infrequently were the Aromanians accused of being the main cause of the increase of Bulgarian attacks on the peaceful colonists from the other regions in Romania, and in the newspapers whole pages were dedicated to finding an answer to the question of whether the settling of Aromanian colonists in Dobruja should be halted.[102] Expecting support for the mission they were carrying out on the Bulgarian border, but getting criticism instead, the Aromanians began to feel alienated from the state.

Nobody's People

When they emigrated to Romania, the Aromanians expected to be treated like ethnic Romanians, who would enjoy all the rights and privileges that came with belonging to the ruling group of a nationalising nation-state.[103] All of those who attended Romanian schools in the Balkans, as well as during the national struggles in Macedonia, had in mind the image of an unblemished Great Romania.[104] For decades, the Romanian students were taught that in their veins flowed the blood of the Romans[105] and that they were the lost brethren of the great Romanian people north of the Danube.[106] For this reason, their emigration, too, was presented as 'the great return home'. Vasile Muşi describes their emigration as "their return to *Patria mumă*, from which they had been driven out since time immemorial by the vicissitudes of fate".[107] Constantin Noe took advantage of every possible opportunity to clarify that the emigration of the Aromanians to Southern Dobruja was not motivated by material reasons, but represented, rather, a final and most noble sacrifice made by the Aromanians for the Romanian people: "Those who believe that these people have been brought here for the ten hectares of land are completely mistaken. They left their villages and counties, of which they had been masters for

101 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 153.

102 Tudor, *Administraţia*, p. 196.

103 Clark, "Claiming ethnic privilege", p. 37.

104 Papanace, Constantin, *Mişcarea legionara şi Macedo-Românii* [The Legionary Movement and the Macedo-Romanians] (n.p.: Editura Elisavaros, 1999), p. 70.

105 Al Bagav, Andreiulu, *Carti di aleadziri, Trã Clasili II, III, IV tsi vin dupã Abitsidar* [Reading Book for Classes II, III, IV which Come After First Grade] (Constanţa: Cartea Aromãnã, 1994), p. 243.

106 Lascu, *Românii*, p. 97.

107 Muşi, *Un deceniu*, p. 35.

hundreds of years, refusing to go back for the sole reason that they wanted to stay Romanian".[108]

Seeing how the Greek state treated its refugees and how the colonists from Anatolia automatically qualified as members of the privileged group in Greece,[109] the Aromanian colonists expected to receive much the same treatment in Dobruja. Instead, they found themselves at the bottom of the social hierarchy, competing with the Bulgarians, Turks, Tatars and other minorities.[110] And even this competition was frequently not a fair one. The Bulgarians and the Turks were foreigners, and were sometimes seen as enemies, but they were, nevertheless, Romanian subjects and, as such, represented significant electoral capital. In the battle for votes, the Romanian politicians would frequently choose the Bulgarian side over the Aromanian colonists to such an extent that the prefect of Durostor, Ghibănescu, made promises that he would expel the Aromanians from Southern Dobruja.[111]

Unlike the native inhabitants, the Aromanians were not Romanian citizens. Article 7, line 3, from the Romanian Nationality Law of 23 February 1924, contained the provision that foreigners could acquire Romanian citizenship as long as they had continuously resided on Romanian soil for at least ten years. However, Article 10 in the same law provided that "foreign citizens of Romanian origin, regardless of their place of birth … may acquire Romanian citizenship without meeting the said conditions in lines 3, 5 and 6 of Article 7".[112] The Aromanian colonists, who had had this stressed to them by Romanian politicians on numerous occasions, had believed that they were settling there as Romanians, and that there was no doubt concerning their Romanian origin. The issue of Romanian citizenship for the Aromanians was, however, pushed aside, and not one of the ten or so Romanian governments in the second half of the 1920s and in the first three years of the 1930s made any attempts to resolve it. The same laws applied to the colonists that applied to the foreign citizens of non-Romanian origin – that in order to acquire Romanian citizenship they needed to wait ten years.[113] As such, the colonists arriving in Dobruja from Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria remained citizens of the states whence they came, while the Aromanian colonists from Greece, who had already renounced their Greek citizenship, and did not yet qualify to be granted Romanian citizenship, belonged to nobody.

108 Lascu, *Românii*, p. 109.
109 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 150.
110 Clark, "Claiming ethnic privilege", pp. 37–9.
111 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 152.
112 Regatul Romaniei, *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 41, 24 February 1924, pp. 1895–901.
113 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, p. 57.

The then-Romanian press overflowed with desperate entreaties by the Aromanians to have their Romanianness recognized. They declared that they were neither foreigners nor beggars, and that they had come to Romania as Romanians,[114] protesting the fact that though they were not foreign citizens, they had still not been granted Romanian citizenship,[115] and making accusations against the orchestrated measures prohibiting them from becoming Romanian and being at home in their fatherland, which had become an El Dorado for foreigners, and a stepmother for the Aromanians.[116]

From the media, the anger spilled out onto the streets. On 21 July 1930, the Aromanian student George Beza shot the subsecretary of state in the Romanian ministry of internal affairs, Constantin Angelescu. The assassination was connected to the support that Angelescu's party, the National Peasants' Party, was extending to the Bulgarians in Southern Dobruja, as well as to the changes made to the Agrarian Law. However, soon afterwards, during Beza's trial, the issue of the Romanianness of the Aromanians was thrust to the forefront.[117] The discussions were further motivated by the resolution that the Aromanians should not be included at all in the Romanian census of December 1930.[118] Thus, the Macedo-Romanian Cultural Society described Beza as a 'national hero', while the Aromanian newspaper *Apărarea* (Defence) wrote that "the trial of the young Aromanian student Beza has become a trial of the Aromanians, of all Aromanian intellectuals, and of the masses that cannot accept the ultimate insult of being seen as foreigners in the land of the Romanians, and of the Romanians only".[119]

During his arrest, Beza was discovered to be in possession of a pamphlet of the Legion of Archangel Michael (Legiunea Arhangelului Mihail),[120] a Romanian fascist movement that was seeking privileges for ethnic Romanians at the expense of the Jews and the remaining minorities in the country. In fact, many Aromanians, especially the younger ones, identified with the ideology of

114 "De vorba cu un roman macedonean" [Talking to a Romanian from Macedonia], *Legionarii*, 1/23 (23 January 1929), p. 1.

115 Basciani, *Un conflitto*, p. 102.

116 Barba, Gheorghe, "Deschideţi larg porţile românilor din Macedonia. Apel către marele roman dr. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod" [Widely open the gates for the Romanians from Macedonia. An appeal to the great Romanian dr. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod], *Țara Nouă*, 1/8–9 (1933), pp. 127–8.

117 Beza, George, *Armânii în România secolului XX. Istoric, fapte, însemnări, documente* [Aromanians in Romania in the 20th Century. History, Facts, Notes, Documents] (Peterborough: Fast-Print Publishing, 2015), pp. 52–79.

118 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, p. 124.

119 Clark, "Claiming ethnic privilege", p. 54.

120 Gica, *Introducere*, p. 25.

the Legion and its fight to secure ethnic privileges for the Romanians. Frustrated at the way they were being treated as immigrants, and furious at the state that had promised them rights and then abandoned them, the young Aromanian activists joined the Legion and used the movement to assert Romanian privilege.[121] What is more, the Aromanians were some of the most dedicated and most aggressive members of the Legion.[122] Two of the three legionaires who had assassinated Romanian Prime Minister Ion Gh. Duca in December 1933 were Aromanian, and this very event is often cited as the main reason why the Aromanian colonization in Southern Dobruja was halted after 1933.[123]

In 1934, the question of granting Romanian citizenship to the Aromanian colonists in Southern Dobruja was finally placed on the agenda of the Romanian government. Influential Aromanians in Bucharest were mostly members of the National Liberal Party, which claimed victory in the parliamentary elections in December 1933, and gained an overwhelming majority in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Under pressure exerted by Aromanian lobby groups, as well as due to the closing of the legal deadline for the Aromanian colonists' ten-year uninterrupted stay in Romania, in April 1934, the Romanian MPs faced the question of the naturalization of the Aromanians. On 27 and 28 April the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, respectively, passed the amendments to the law brought in in 1924 on acquiring and losing Romanian citizenship. Several lines were added to Article 10 of the law, which regulated the rights of the colonists in Southern Dobruja to acquire Romanian citizenship.[124] All that the colonists had to do was to prepare a written declaration stating their name, surname, date of birth, marital status, and, if married, the dates of birth of their wives and children. This declaration was delivered to the elected village head, who checked the accuracy of the information, and then sent it to higher authorities. No cases were registered in which inaccuracies were reported, although there were confirmed cases where the colonists declared themselves to be older or younger than they actually were, mainly to avoid serving the compulsory military service. On 21 September 1935, in Silistra, the minister of justice, Valeriu Pop, ceremoniously served the Aromanian colonists with their citizenship documents. The ceremonial speeches of influential political figures from Bucharest and Dobruja predicted a bright future for the colonists.[125]

121 Clark, "Claiming ethnic privilege", pp. 37–9, 48.

122 Oliver Jens Schmitt, quoted in Clark, "Claiming ethnic privilege", p. 41, estimates that by 1937, 95 per cent of young Aromanian workers were legionaries.

123 Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", p. 258; Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, p. 125.

124 Regatul Romaniei, *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 115, 22 May 1934, p. 3210.

125 Cuşa, *Macedo-Aromânii*, pp. 58–9.

When Heaven Becomes Hell and Hell Becomes Heaven

In 1925, the Aromanian Toli Hagigogu, editor of the Bucharest newspaper *Peninsula Balcanică*, issued warnings to his countrymen to abandon emigrating to Southern Dobruja:

> Do you understand? Do you know what emigration entails? Do you know what it means to leave for good the country you were born in, where your parents were born, where their graves are, where your hearths are, and to set off into the darkness – because the road to another country is a road into darkness? Do you know that Romania allocates land to the villagers and those who expelled the enemies from the country? Do you know that the land is very expensive? That there is no more land to be given; there is no more land for grazing. Have you seriously thought out the step you wish to take? Do families have sufficient funds to move and live on? Are you certain that when you arrive, you will not curse the hour when you set off?[126]

The warnings Hagigogu issued fell on deaf ears. The main proponents of emigration visited Southern Dobruja and returned to their homeland with promises that Romania was waiting for the Aromanians with open arms, and that it would secure them land, money, houses, and tools for agriculture.[127] The more poverty-stricken were told that a much better life was awaiting them in Romania if they left the mountains, because there even the dogs walked around with pretzels on their tails.[128] A number of them, like cousin Tasa mentioned in the opening lines of this chapter, sold off all their possessions in order to catch the last places available in 'Heaven-on-Earth'.[129] This belief in a promised land, and in a better life in exile, was much stronger than the stark warnings given by those who had returned from inspection of Southern Dobruja, convinced that the marshy lands bordering Bulgaria were unsuitable for the Aromanian way of life.[130] Such was the dream of the promised land that sometimes, as in the case from 1929 in the village of Doliani in Greece, the Aromanians who wished

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126 Turnus, "In jurul", p. 183.

127 *Şcoli şi biserici*, I, p. 432, doc. 145.

128 Ţîrcomnicu, Emil, *Identitate românească sud-dunăreană: Aromânii din Dobrogea – sărbători, obiceiuri, credinţe, cultură şi viaţă comunitară* [South-Danubean Romanian Identity: Aromanians from Dobruja – Holidays, Customs, Beliefs, Culture and Community Life] (Bucureşti: Editura Etnologică, 2004), p. 190.

129 Fotiadou-Balafouti, *Εμείς οι Βλάχοι*, p. 71.

130 Vlasidis, "Consequences", p. 167.

to emigrate cut off all contact with those who had decided to stay behind, even taking them to court, and even sold their lands to the Greek refugees so as to force the remaining Aromanians to move to Southern Dobruja.[131]

The reports from Romanian reporters, sociologists and politicians do indeed present a picture of an idyllic life in the Dobrujan colonist villages, and of a perfect coexistence between the Aromanians and the other peoples in Southern Dobruja. In a report prepared in honour of the inauguration of the village of Fraşari, a Romanian journalist exclaims: "A village with a marvellous future … Happy and healthy children greet you everywhere, lively men rushing about to complete their tasks, or sprightly elderly people moving quickly even when out for a stroll. From dawn to dusk, a great liveliness dominates in the village".[132] In 1939, the sociologist C. Constantinescu Mirceşti published an in-depth study based on his extensive research carried out over many years in the village of Ezibei in Caliacra, which presents the prosperity of the village, as well as the ideal coexistence among the Aromanians, Romanians, Bulgarians and Turks.[133] Another author shares a similar story about the village of Tatar Atmaca, and the amicable relations that existed among the Aromanians and the native Turks and Tatars.[134] Newspapers highlighted the success stories of various colonists who had managed to become rich after their arrival in Dobruja: a certain Hristu Giagea and Achileia Coritza purchased 100 hectares of land from the Turks – "you could see from their eyes the happiness they felt at having settled on Romanian soil and escaping the fate of living a vagabond life".[135] Others opened up factories.[136] Some managed to buy themselves a radio.[137]

131 *Şcoli şi biserici româneşti din Peninsula Balcanică, Documente 1918–1953* [Romanian Schools and Churches from the Balkan Peninsula, Documents 1918–1953], vol. II, ed. Adina Berciu-Drăghicescu and Maria Petre (Bucureşti: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2006), doc. 76, p. 228.

132 Negoiţă, "Colonizarea", p. 262.

133 Constantinescu-Mirceşti, C.D., *Un sat dobrogean. Ezibei* [Ezibei – a Dobrujan Village] (n.p: Bucovina, 1939).

134 Cernea, M., "Atmageaua-Tătărească. O colonie de Megleniţi din Cadrilater" [Atmageaua-Tătărească. A colony of Moglenites from Cadrilater], *Sociologie Românească*, 3/4–6 (1938), 181–9.

135 L.L., "Amărăciunile coloniştilor din Dobrogea Nouă. Ancheta trimisului nostru special (II). Printre aromânii din Hasamdede" [Bitterness of the colonists from New Dobruja. Survey of our special envoy (II). Among Aromanians from Hasamdede], *Universul*, 5/224 (27 September 1927), p. 7.

136 Tic, Ion, "Printre coloniştii macedoneni [mare reportaj]" [Among the Macedonian colonists (great reportage)], *Ilustraţiunea română*, 6/36, 1 August 1934, p. 6.

137 Lascu, *Românii*, p. 117.

The majority, however, were not afforded the opportunity to recount their stories, though what they could not say in the papers, they shared elsewhere. In August 1926, 84 Aromanian families from the county of Durostor, disappointed by the conditions in Dobruja, and furious at the broken promises, decided to return to Greece.[138] Constantin Noe notes the reasons for their decision: "The disenchanted colonists began to regret their decision to come to Romania. Their abodes in the mountains, the green hills with rivers and crystal-clear springs, now seemed like Heaven to them".[139] Their attempt was blocked by 'colonists-nationalists', who physically removed them from the carriages that were to take them to Silistra, and prevented them from leaving. On 8 November 1926, another group of 120 Aromanian families left the villages and gathered in Silistra to return to their native land, but this time it was the Romanian government that intervened and foiled their attempt.[140] In the summer of 1933, 60 former transhumant families, who had ten months previously settled in Durostor from the surroundings of Serres in Greece, sent a request to the Greek authorities in which they asked to be allowed to return to their fatherland. The Greek ministry of foreign affairs reminded them of their voluntary renunciation of their Greek citizenship, and refused to grant their request.[141]

The recollections of the ordinary people tell quite a different story about life in Southern Dobruja than that presented in the papers at the time. It must be noted that most of what they recounted was noted down much later, and was most probably influenced by life in communist Romania. Yet, the main motifs that are present in all the reminiscences are the feelings of nostalgia for their previous homes, as well as their regret at having relocated.

"We were hit by disappointment the moment we arrived in Romania", claims Constantin Papanace.[142] A certain Cutula, soon after having arrived in Dobruja, sent her brother a letter in which she advised him not to come to Romania: "If you come, even the sheep dogs will bemoan your fate".[143] "Our people left the mountains behind; they left everything behind in the hopes of a better life. This was dishonest propaganda. I regret ever coming to Romania",

138 Hagigogu, *Emigrarea*, p. 31; Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 152.
139 Noe, "Colonizarea", p. 152.
140 Gica, *Introducere*, p. 21.
141 Papathanasiou, *Οι μετακινήσεις*, pp. 71–2.
142 Papanace, *Mişcarea*, p. 70.
143 Gica, Alexandru, *Unâ isturie pritu cântitsi a armânjloru ditu Romànie: Tut cu-n cântic sh-anchisea …* [A History in Songs of the Aromanians from Romania: It Always Began with a Song …] (Bucureşti: Editura Societăţii Culturale Aromâne, 2017), p. 15.

moans the elder Vasile Bardu.[144] Another colonist, who did not even remember life in Greece, says: "Our elders tell us that life in Greece was better. They were free; they had 500–1,000 sheep".[145]

The anger of the colonists toward those who had used false promises to trick them into leaving their homes and moving to Southern Dobruja is clearly described in the case of Naca al Iepur from Kumanovo, Yugoslav Macedonia. In 1930, despite the warnings issued by the Romanian Prime Minister Iuliu Maniu not to come to Southern Dobruja because they would be killed by the Bulgarians, six Aromanian families from Kumanovo, led by Naca al Iepur, sold off all their belongings in order to move to the county of Durostor, next to the Bulgarian border. In the years that followed, several other groups from southern Yugoslavia arrived in Durostor and saw their relations, landless, houseless, living in the locals' basements. "They wanted to return to Macedonia", one of these Aromanians recounts afterwards. They said: "The Aromanians went from the mountains to being buried alive". When it became clear to them that they had believed in an illusion of Heaven and a promised land, the Aromanians from Yugoslav Macedonia expelled Naca al Iepur, and cursed him to die alone. "That is what happened", notes Alexandru Gheorghe, with a dose of satisfaction for the justice served. "He died alone in the village of Calnia, where there were no other Aromanians".[146]

Conclusion: Towards a New Heaven

Southern Dobruja was not the promised land of the Aromanians. The arid plain, the rocky terrain and the unbearable heat did not favour cattle breeding or their way of life practiced for centuries on the mountains in Macedonia, Epirus and Albania. The Aromanians had hoped that they would find in Dobruja something of their fatherland, but they soon realized that the only similarity between Southern Dobruja and their old homelands in the Balkans was that they were both ethnically mixed borderlands, where conflicts between various ethnic groups were an everyday occurrence.

For years the Aromanian colonists in Dobruja fought the Bulgarian bands for the piece of land that they felt they deserved as loyal Romanians, and

144 Ţîrcomnicu, *Identitate*, p. 190.

145 Saramandu, Nicolae, *Aromâna vorbită în Dobrogea. Texte dialectale. Glosar* [Aromanian Spoken in Dobruja. Texts in Dialect. Glossary] (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române, 2007), p. 99.

146 Gheorghe, *Drumul*, pp. 38–40.

the Romanian authorities for the piece of paper which would confirm their Romanianness. The struggle for land made the colonists unpopular with the local Turks and Bulgarians, while the aggression the Aromanian colonists displayed in the clashes with the Bulgarians concerned even the Romanian authorities and the general public, which frequently accused the Aromanians of being the main cause of the Bulgarian attacks on the peaceful colonists from the other regions in Romania. Expecting support for the mission they were carrying out on the border, but receiving criticism and contempt instead, the Aromanians began to feel alienated from the state. Frustrated at the way they were being treated as immigrants, many Aromanian activists joined the Legion of Archangel Michael, a Romanian fascist movement, which allowed them to fight for ethnic privilege as a right that had been denied them as immigrants.[147]

Toward the mid-1930s, although the feelings of nostalgia for their homes in the Balkans, as well as their regret at having relocated were ever-present among the Aromanian colonists, their position began to improve. The state finally gave them the long-awaited piece of paper, as well as loans with which they could build themselves a house and buy more land. Even the Bulgarian bands stopped their attacks. "It may be said that they finally felt at home" remembers the colonist Maria Bedivan.[148] Some villages, like those of Gramostea and Fraşari, got their names from the places in Greece and Albania where the ancestors of the colonists originated, to remind them of their old home. "A normal life", another colonist reminisces, "some died, others were born. Some of us even managed to buy a car".[149] However, just as a state of normalcy appeared attainable, in September 1940 Nazi Germany forced Romania to sign the Treaty of Craiova, ceding Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria. Under the terms of the treaty, the two countries agreed to a population exchange, which included a mandatory resettlement of Aromanians living in Southern Dobruja to Romania.[150] For the second time the Aromanian colonists left their homes and set off for a new home, but this time without any promises of a Heaven-on-Earth. In no uncertain terms, the Romanian authorities told the Aromanians to forget forever the green hills and crystal-clear springs on Mt. Pindus and to learn instead how to become good ploughmen in Northern Dobruja.[151] Frustrated and disappointed that the Romanian state continued to treat them as second-class citizens, the Aromanians decided to take matters into their own hands and create

147 Clark, "Claiming ethnic privilege", p. 57.
148 Bedivan, *Pe urmele*, p. 51.
149 Lascu, *Românii*, p. 117.
150 Iordachi, "Diplomacy", p. 384; Clark, "Claiming ethnic privilege", p. 55.
151 Lascu, *Românii*, pp. 138, 140.

their own Heaven. Several days before the signing of the Treaty of Craiova, the Romanian legionaries took power along with General Ion Antonescu, and it was the Aromanian legionary Cola G. Ciumetti who took charge of organising the population transfer on the Romanian side. Under his supervision, the Aromanians fleeing from Southern Dobruja destroyed their properties rather than give them to the evacuated Bulgarians, before setting off for the counties of Constanţa and Tulcea in Northern Dobruja, where they used the authority of the Aromanian legionaries to ensure that they received the best land that had been taken from the Bulgarians and relocated Germans.[152]

152 Clark, "Claiming ethnic privilege", pp. 55–6.

CHAPTER 4

Colonialism and Mobility in Libya during the Balbo Era, 1934–1940

Brian L. McLaren

On 15 January 1934, Air Marshall and Quadrumvir Italo Balbo arrived in Tripoli to become governor of the soon-to-be-unified colony of Libya, a position he would hold until his tragic death from friendly fire just 18 days into the North African Campaign that would eventually strip Italy of its colonial possessions.[1] During the course of his almost seven-year governorship, one of the central problems that consumed much of his time and energy was the so-called 'politics of communication' – an issue whose importance was identified much earlier during the governorship of Giuseppe Volpi (1921–25).[2] This set of policies pertained to the improvement of infrastructures of transportation and public services as well as the movement of both Italians and Libyans into, out of, and through this North African colony. This legislative and administrative focus exposed the tension between efforts by the Balbo administration to bring Libya up to the standards of metropolitan Italy and initiatives aimed at preserving its indigenous culture – a tension that was both the strength and the weakness of Balbo's governorship and more generally the Fascist regime's approach to colonial rule. Additionally, the extreme nature of this conflict initiated a new phase in the history of Italian colonialism – which embraced the greatest heights of Western modernization alongside efforts to construct a scientifically accurate and unchanging interpretation of the local culture.

This chapter examines the conflicted nature of mobility in Libya during the governorship of Balbo, with a particular concern for how Italian colonial policy strove to shape the movement (and non-movement) of Italians and Libyans. The mobility of Italians was tied to efforts to modernize this colony in order to incorporate it into metropolitan Italy as its 'fourth shore'. A prime example of this process of integration of Libya into the larger Italy was the so-called

1 For a detailed discussion of circumstances surrounding Balbo's death see Segrè, Claudio G., *Italo Balbo: a Fascist Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 392–407.

2 Queirolo, Ernesto, "La politica delle comunicazioni", in *La rinascità della Tripolitania: memorie e studi sui quattro anni di governo del Conte Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata* (Milan: Casa Editrice A. Mondadori, 1926), pp. 259–83.

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Ventimila – a carefully staged mass emigration of 20,000 agricultural colonists from Italy to Libya in October 1938.[3] The movement of the Libyans – who were expected to return after having left the colony during the initial years of Italian occupation – was to be encouraged by the indigenous politics that attempted to preserve their culture while incorporating them into Fascist corporatist structures.[4] This set of initiatives, which were aimed at appeasing the local populations as well as the larger Muslim world, culminated with the creation of a special Italian citizenship for the Libyans in January 1939. Throughout this discussion it will be argued that while these reciprocal, though largely independent, migrations were an integral part of a coordinated policy that utilized Libya as a population colony while portraying Italy as a benevolent friend of Islam, the first movement was largely rhetorical, and the second illusory.

Reciprocal Flows

To provide a broader context for this discussion, the movement of Italians to Libya during the Balbo era was a product of political policies and programs that were aimed at encouraging demographic colonization. As numerous historians have argued, although Libya was, from the very beginning, viewed as an outlet for Italian emigration that was at that time flowing to other countries, it was not until after the appointment of Giuseppe Volpi as governor of Tripolitania on 3 August 1921 and the subsequent rise of the Fascist regime in October 1922 that such ideas were given serious attention and support by the colonial administration.[5] In considering the issue of agricultural colonization during the Balbo era, while there had been some success during the previous governorships with state subsidies of private companies – an approach that began in earnest in 1928 with the passing of the De Bono laws – by 1934 this system of land development had not fostered a substantial influx of colonist families, which was one of the stated goals of the Fascist colonization of the region.[6] As such, Balbo moved quickly to work with the organizations that encouraged

3 For a detailed discussion of the *Ventimila*, see Segrè, Claudio G., *Fourth Shore: the Italian Colonization of Libya* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 82–111.

4 Although the term ‘indigenous politics’ existed before the governorship of Balbo, it did not come into common use until that time. It became a regular feature in the journal *Rivista delle Colonie* – an official journal of the ministry of the colonies – in September 1936.

5 Segrè, *Fourth Shore*, pp. 3–6, 47–56, 62–81.

6 For a detailed discussion of the programs of demographic colonization under Balbo, see Segrè, *Fourth Shore*, pp. 82–111. A more concise study of the program in demographic colonization is provided by Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, pp. 299–301, 311–20.

the resettlement of families, the Ente per la Colonizzazione della Libia (ECL; Organization for the Colonization of Libya) and the Istituto Nazionale Fascista della Previdenza Sociale (INFPS; National Fascist Institute for Social Security).[7] He also made a substantial investment in research and development related to agriculture – including programs to reclaim desert areas. However, after achieving only modest results in his first three years as governor, Balbo embarked on a more ambitious program to systematically colonize the region. Conceived with the cooperation of minister of the colonies Alessandro Lessona, and making use of the organization of the ECL and INFPS, this program proposed to settle 20,000 colonists annually for five years beginning in 1938, the long-term goal being to create a population of 500,000 Italians in Libya by 1950.[8]

In contrast, the movement of Libyans was compensatory for an unprecedented flow out of the former Ottoman provinces of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica due to the Italian occupation. Beginning with the invasion of 1911, over the course of the next 30 years, a large segment of the local populations was in a relatively constant (and in many cases involuntary) state of trans-border migration, re-settlement and repatriation.[9] These movements – which included well over 150,000 of a local population of roughly 800,000 and involved Egypt, Tunisia, Syria and other destinations in Africa and the Middle East – produced a continual migration both in and out of the region, whose ebbs and flows responded to the constantly changing political dynamics of the Italian colonial administration.[10] Quite understandably, the migration of the Libyans was especially impacted by the brutal tactics employed by General Rodolfo Graziani in Cyrenaica during the so-called 'pacification' campaign in the early 1930s – when some 100,000 people were put into concentration camps and around 30,000 died.[11] The resulting negative impression of Italy

7 The ECL was a para-state organization that was specifically created to resettle unemployed farm workers in this colony. The INFPS was a social welfare organization that was involved in land reclamation projects in Italy. Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, p. 300.

8 As historian Angelo Del Boca notes, the census of 1937 showed that the agricultural population was only 2,711 families, with a total of 12,488 people. Lessona estimated that an organized program could resettle considerably more than their original prediction of 100,000 families. Toward the end of 1937 Balbo proposed this five-year plan, formalized with Regio Decreto Legge, n. 701 of 17 May 1938. Del Boca, Angelo, *Gli italiani in Libia. Dal fascismo a Gheddafi* (Rome and Bari: Editori Laterza, 1991), p. 260.

9 Baldinetti, Anna, *The Origins of the Libyan Nation: Colonial Legacy, Exile and the Emergence of a New Nation-State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 53–68.

10 Vanderwalle, Dirk, *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 31.

11 Del Boca estimates that in Cyrenaica around 100,000 were rounded up, with only 90,000 making it to the camps. With the last camp closing in September 1933, only around 60,000

in the Muslim world was of grave concern to the ministry of foreign affairs beginning in 1931, which was monitoring the activities of the Islamic press through the Italian consulates in locations like Damascus, Jerusalem and Cairo. These activities were undertaken due to the concerns expressed by the ministry of the colonies during the final stages of the Italian campaign to pacify Cyrenaica, and particularly at the time of the execution of the rebel leader Omar el-Mukhtar in September of that year.[12] In response to this atmosphere of discord and mistrust, the return of Libyans during the governorship of Balbo was encouraged by a series of policies that purported to respond to the cultural needs of the Libyans while affording them certain rights and freedoms within the colonial system.

Creating a Modern Colony

In considering the movement of Italians to Libya, this form of mobility was premised by a modernization program that attained its highest accomplishments under the governorship of Balbo. This development was intended to eventually incorporate Libya, as an extension of Italian interests on the other shore of the Mediterranean, into metropolitan Italy – a development that, it was believed, would inevitably attract Italian colonists. This broad integration of the colony was established through a wide range of initiatives that included the political restructuring of the colony along Fascist lines as well as a corresponding improvement of public works and infrastructure. The first step in this process was a series of administrative reforms that were formalized through a law passed on 3 December 1934 that called for the unification of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica into the single colony of Libya.[13] Through this process of unification, Balbo's powers in governing the colony were consolidated and a political system parallel and equivalent to the Fascist government in Italy was created. While such changes had been proposed before, it was argued

people returned to their land. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, pp. 179–89. See also Wright, John, *Libya* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1969), p. 177.

12 The files that pertain to what was called the "Campagna islamica antitaliana" can be found in the Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri [hereafter ASMAE] - Affari Politici [hereafter AP] – Libia. See also Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, pp. 222–32; and Baldinetti, *The Origins of the Libyan Nation*, pp. 90–109.

13 See Regio Decreto Legge, 3 December 1934, n. 2012, which was converted into law on 11 April 1935, n. 675. For a detailed contemporary analysis see Bruni, Giuseppe, "Il nuovo assetto politico-amministrativo della Libia", in *Viaggio del Duce in Libia per l'inaugurazione della litoranea. Anno XV. Orientamenti e note ad uso dei giornalisti* (Rome: Stabilmento Tipografico Il Lavoro Fascista, 1937), pp. 1–14.

that the conditions were right for combining the development of the colony with its administrative redefinition along metropolitan lines. It is important to note, however, that despite the deep commitment of the colonial government, these changes were met with a considerable amount of resistance on the part of both Minister of the Colonies Emilio De Bono – who saw this as an effort to avoid being under his supervision – and Mussolini – who was reluctant to concede any substantial powers to any colonial governor, and especially Balbo.[14]

In its essential outlines, the legislation for the unification of Libya resulted in the centralization and strengthening of the governing authority of Balbo and the dissemination of this power through a newly conceived regional structure. In the first instance, the government of Cyrenaica was suppressed in favor of a single government in Tripoli. Balbo's position, which was renamed governor general, was one of absolute authority over all political, administrative, legislative, military and financial matters.[15] The decentralization of power was related to the division of Libya into two distinct regions, the first of these being comprised of the four provinces along the coast – Tripoli, Misrata, Benghazi and Derna – and the second being the areas of Libya south of the 29th parallel, such as Jufra, al-Kufra and Ghat. According to the Fascist authorities, the coastal regions were fundamentally Mediterranean and as such they were well suited to a "social and judicial arrangement" that would advance them "to the same level as the most advanced regions of North Africa".[16] In contrast with this view, the southern regions were African, and accordingly their people would never reach "the same social and economic level that it is legitimately possible to encourage in the coastal region and its inhabitants".[17] As such, the southern regions of Libya would always have the status of being a colony, with the Southern Military Command forming their system of governance.

In conjunction with administrative and legislative changes that were aimed at bringing metropolitan standards to Libya, a substantial effort was made by the Balbo administration to apply this same measure to the public works and infrastructure of this colony – a development that was especially crucial

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14 Segrè argues that Balbo "wanted to test his authority as governor against that of the minister of the colonies in Rome". Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, pp. 294–5. ASMAE, Ministero dell'Africa Italiana [hereafter MAI] – AP - 54, Fascicolo 30, Ordinamento politico amministrativo Libia, 1935–36, Letter from Governo della Tripolitania, Tripoli, 7 December 1934 to S.E., il Ministro per le Colonie, Roma. Oggetto: Schemi dell'ordinamento politico amministrativo e dell'ordinamento amministrativo – contabile.

15 Bruni, "Il nuovo assetto politico-amministrativo della Libia", p. 7.

16 Bruni, "Il nuovo assetto politico-amministrativo della Libia", p. 5.

17 Bruni, "Il nuovo assetto politico-amministrativo della Libia", p. 6. The Southern Military Command restructured the military authorities that were already in place in these regions.

in encouraging the movement of Italians to Libya. The seriousness of this commitment was evidenced by the fact that expenditures on these projects had nearly doubled during the Balbo era – increasing from 28.5 million lire/year in 1933 to around 54 million lire/year in 1935.[18] These new improvements included the construction and enhancement of institutions that related to public services – such as, post offices, schools and hospitals – and those related to the administration and control of the colony – such as, government offices, prisons and military barracks.[19] However, in this case these projects reflected the new administrative structure of the provinces and their subdivision into smaller districts – something that led to the creation of new regional centers in Misrata and Derna and a network of district offices in towns like Nalut, Gharyan, al-Khums, Ghadames and Sabratha.[20] By 1937 the then unified colony of Libya – which in January 1939 would become Italy's 19th region – possessed a network of roads and public services that rivaled (and in many ways surpassed) that of much of Italy.

Beyond the general improvements to public services in Libya, the Balbo administration undertook one massively scaled infrastructure project – the construction of the *Strada litoranea*, or coastal highway, which began in October 1935 and was completed in February 1937. This project was intended to unify the colony through a single transportation artery that stretched along the Mediterranean shore from Tunisia on the west to Egypt on the east, although the construction only involved the completion of less than half of the full length of the existing coastal highway.[21] Also significant was this project's rhetorical value. Through combining Balbo's ability to organize projects of these proportions with a keen sense of their value as propaganda, this new infrastructure came to symbolize the idea of Libya as Italy's fourth shore, and define the Fascist sense of monumentality and public spectacle.

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18 Notably, there had already been a significant increase during the governorship of Badoglio (28.5 million lire/year) from that of De Bono (13.5 million lire/year). See ASMAE-MAI – 3–56. Fascicolo-OO.PP. Servizi. Dir.Gen. AA.EE. e FF. Riassunto delle spese per opere pubbliche o di pubblica utilità. 1913/14–1936/37.

19 For a detailed presentation of these projects, see ASMAE-MAI – 3–56. Fascicolo-OO.PP. Servizi. *Le Opere Pubbliche in Libia* [Opere stradali, edilizie, idrauliche ed igieniche con sommarie], 1938.

20 In addition to the creation of two new provincial centers of Misrata and Derna, the law of April 1935 provided for the subdivision of Libya into *circondari* (districts), *residenze* (residences) and *distretti* (precincts). See ASMAE-AP. Libia – 13 (1935), Fascicolo 8. *Suddivisione politico-amministrativo del territorio della Libia*. Tripoli: Plinio Maggi, 1935.

21 While the highway was 1,822 kilometers long, this project only involved 813 kilometers of new construction. See *La strada litoranea della Libia* (Verona: Officine Grafiche A. Mondadori, 1937), p. 33.

FIGURE 4.1 *Strada litoranea*, rest house on Misrata-Tawergha section, Libya, 1937, *La Strada Litoranea della Libia* (Verona: Mondadori, 1937), p. 127, author's collection

In more specific terms, the *Strada litoranea* was the logical outcome of the political reforms that had unified Libya into a single administrative, military and civic entity. In so doing, this transportation artery gave physical form to a new political reality. As Balbo stated in an essay published in March 1937: "the civic, commercial, military and touristic relations between [Tripolitania and Cyrenaica] will inevitably intensify themselves" and as such "it was indispensable to create a modern street of communication that challenges the weather and the adversity of the climate".[22] In so doing, this road was built according to the most modern standards, including amenities like roadside maintenance facilities and rest houses that would assist the traveler.[23] With regard to its role as a military artery, within the context of the ongoing campaign in Ethiopia, it was believed to be of great importance to the "security of the Mediterranean" by making possible the rapid movement of Italian troops for surveying the territory.[24] This project was also an impressive feat of engineering that was

22 Balbo draws a clear connection between the *Strada litoranea* and the political unification of Libya. Balbo, Italo, "La litoranea libica", *Nuova Antologia*, 72/1559 (1 March 1937), p. 7.

23 The design of this road included 65 maintenance facilities, each containing two families responsible for servicing the road and responding to emergencies. The rest houses were roadside gas stations and hotels, providing for emergency services and lodging in the most desolate regions. *La strada litoranea della Libia*, pp. 127–34.

24 It was noted that "The modern technique of war requires the swift transfer of great masses and regular supply of arms, materials, food", *La strada litoranea della Libia*, pp. 16–17.

FIGURE 4.2 Balbo and Mussolini inaugurating the Fileni Arch, Libya, March 1937, Postcard, author's collection

undertaken on a massive scale, underscoring the lofty ambitions of the Fascist regime to recapture the spirit and accomplishments of ancient Rome.[25] In addition, this undertaking required a considerable amount of organization and expertise, as it was a project of significant size that required working in difficult conditions, such as the desert terrain of the Gulf of Sirte.[26]

Finally, the *Strada litoranea* was a brilliant work of Fascist propaganda – projecting an image of Italian control and domination over this segment of the African Mediterranean. This explicitly political aspect was fused with a broad sense of Libya as a modern and efficient colony with access to advanced networks of transportation. The role of this project as a form of propaganda that served the Fascist colonial project was especially apparent during its various inaugural ceremonies, which were directly linked with Benito Mussolini's visit to this region in March 1937 – a visit that, following the itinerary of the

25 Balbo stated "this road is a monument that will remain over the centuries to immortalize and consecrate the Empire of Rome, recalled and resurrected by the inflexible will and politico-military genius of Mussolini", Balbo, "La litoranea libica", p. 5.

26 Segrè notes this work was accomplished through a well-organized process that divided the road into segments and called for competitive bids. The wages of the Libyan work force were set by the Governatore Generale at around 1/3 of that of Italians. Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, pp. 296–8.

Strada litoranea itself, began at Libya's eastern border and traversed the entire length of the colony.[27] One particularly powerful example of this propagandistic dimension was the celebration of the opening of the Fileni Arch – a 28 meter high travertine clad monument designed by the architect Florestano Di Fausto.[28] Given that Mussolini was arriving at dusk, Balbo arranged for the arch to be illuminated with searchlights that created columns of light in the darkness. A space was also created in front of the arch with a series of torches and a battalion of Libyan soldiers and a group of "zaptie", or Libyan military officers, on camels.[29] As a stage set in this remote desert location, the Fileni Arch was backdrop to an event that created a spectacularized image of Fascist modernization for an international audience.

Developing an Indigenous Politics

The analogous movement of Libyans from Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and other regions during the Balbo era was to be initiated by an indigenous politics that was aimed at improving the relationship between the colonial administration in Libya and the local populations. Among the numerous efforts that took place during the initial years of Balbo's governorship, there were a number of direct meetings with leaders of various local groups on matters of education, public assistance and religion.[30] An equally important political gesture was a program of clemency begun in January 1935, which freed 130 political prisoners in Cyrenaica – a program whose results were widely disseminated throughout the Middle East.[31] The freeing of political prisoners was followed up in 1936 with an initiative to return personal goods and property confiscated during

27 Mussolini visited Libya from 12–21 March 1937, just following the completion of the *Strada litoranea*. Archivio Centrale dello Stato [hereafter ACS], Ministero della Cultural Popolare 105, Sottofascicolo 4, "Viaggio del Duce in Libia per l'inaugurazione della Litoranea – Programma Sommario", Tripoli, 18 February 1937.

28 There were 42 invited foreign journalists from 11 different countries and a total of 67 Italian journalists. There were also eight different foreign and Italian film crews. A number of publications were provided to journalists under the title *Viaggio del Duce in Libia per l'inaugurazione della litoranea. Anno XV. Orientamenti e note ad uso dei giornalisti*.

29 See *Il Duce in Libia* (Milan: S.A. Stab. arti grafiche Alfieri & Lacroix, 1937). A more complete description of this event is described in Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, p. 309.

30 ASMAE-MAI - 2, 150/25, Fascicolo 116 - *Agence d'Egypte et d'Orient. Bulletin Quotidien d'Informations*, No. 34 (13 September 1935).

31 In January of 1935, 130 of 170 political prisoners in Cyrenaica were freed. In October the final 11 prisoners were also freed, at which time a governor's decree stated that the relations in the colonies were now normalized. ASMAE-AP. Libia 13 (1935), Fascicolo 2, Sottofascicolo 1, Telegram, Consolato d'Italia, Damascus to the Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 9 February 1935.

the period of the concentration camps.[32] With regard to these concessions, Balbo still maintained a firm hand with the Libyans, who he did not hesitate to punish for infractions that he regarded as either undermining the respect for Italian rule or morally dangerous. Indeed, despite the general policy of granting clemency to former rebels, Balbo called for the execution of three Tuareg soldiers who murdered their Italian commander – a punishment that was carried out in his presence and in that of indigenous chiefs and Italian military officers.[33] While this was the only execution during the Balbo era, it nevertheless established a standard of conduct for the Libyans that was not shared by the Italian colonizers. It is also worth noting that these conciliatory gestures did not assure the acceptance of all colonial policy by the Libyans. For example, the program of demographic colonization for Italians was widely regarded in the Muslim world as a threat to the economic and cultural survival of the local populations.[34]

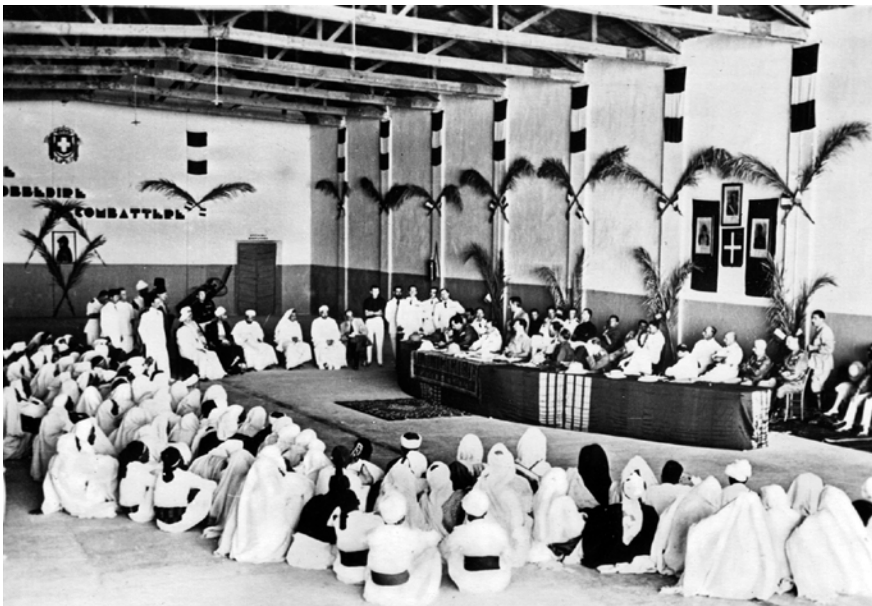

FIGURE 4.3 Balbo meeting with Muslim leaders concerning the Italian Sahara, June 1937, Postcard, author's collection

32 The decree of Balbo that allowed for the return of this property, from 10 October 1936, was published in *La Voix Indigène* (Constantine) on December 17. ASMAE-AP. Libia 17 (1937), Fascicolo 2, "Consulat d'Italie", *La Voix Indigène* (Constantine), 17 December 1936.

33 Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, p. 321.

34 ASMAE-AP. Libia 13 (1935), Fascicolo 2, "A colloquium on the combat zone. The war of the Arabs for their liberty", *Al Ayam* (7 December 1934).

These political tactics were coincident with and reinforced by a systematic propaganda effort that reached new heights during the Balbo era. Indeed, not only was there an extensive reporting of the policies of the Libyan government in favor of the Muslim populations – which included a wide range of religious, cultural and economic initiatives – but also many of these gestures were themselves conceived of as a form of propaganda. This aspect was especially apparent in the numerous publications, such as the French language *L'Italie pour les populations islamiques de l'afrique italienne* (1940), which presented the various programs of the colonial administration to non-Italian speaking audiences, including the local populations in the Middle East and North Africa.[35]

Another important example of a propaganda effort directed at the Libyans and the larger Muslim world was the voyage of Mussolini to Libya in March 1937. As an explicitly political gesture, it was intended to convey the image of Mussolini as a protector of Islam. This was particularly true of the numerous ceremonies that incorporated the local populations, such as the "Charge of the Savari" at 'Ain Zara – a battle of indigenous troops on horseback that was re-enacted for Mussolini and his entourage of dignitaries and reporters. This attempt to appease and embrace the Muslim populations was also demonstrated in the speeches given by Mussolini during this visit, which spoke of "a new epoch in the history of Libya" that assures "peace, justice, well-being, and respect for the laws of the Prophet". This relationship was similarly conveyed in the publicity material related to this voyage, which, repeating the words of Mussolini, contended that "the international politics of Fascist Italy in relation to the Muslim East has always been, without any deviation, a politics of friendship".[36]

The relationship between the local populations in Libya and European civilization was especially well expressed in a presentation made by Balbo to the *Convegno Volta* held in Tripoli in October 1938, entitled "La politica sociale verso gli arabi della Libia".[37] In this speech, although recognizing the need for a "vigilant defense of the manners" of the Libyans, Balbo did not hesitate to reference the eradication of "those old retrograde customs that oppose themselves

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35 See *L'Italie pour les populations islamiques de l'afrique italienne* (Rome: Società Editrice « Novissima », 1940). See also ASMAE-AP. Libia 17 (1937). Fascicolo 1, Sottofascicolo 1, "What Italy has done for Islam in its Colonies" [translated from Arabic], *Legazione d'Italia* in Egypt. 5,000 copies of this brochure were produced for sale to a local audience.

36 "Speech by Mussolini to the Muslims of Tripoli", 18 March 1937, in *Il Duce in Libia*, p. 47.

37 Balbo, Italo, "La politica sociale fascista verso gli arabi della Libia", in *Convegno di scienze morali e storiche. 4–11 ottobre 1938-XVI. Tema: l'Africa. Vol. 1* (Rome: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1939), pp. 733–49. This article was also published in the journal *Illustrazione Coloniale* in November 1938.

FIGURE 4.4 "Charge of the Savari" at ʿAin Zara, Mussolini's visit to Libya, March 1937, Postcard, author's collection

to the social evolution of these same populations".[38] This was particularly true for his response to Libyan religious practices, which were supported in so far as they conformed to the Italian interpretation of what was correct and proper. As such, any so-called 'primitive' practice like fakirism, which was "condemned as contrary to the religion" by Islamic religious leaders, was prohibited. With similar arguments, Balbo asserted that the Senussi politico-religious order "transported a conflict of a political nature onto religious terrain", and as such it was outlawed. These restrictions in colonial policy had to do with both maintaining control of the local populations, and eliminating the possibility of Arab nationalist movements making any progress in Libya.[39] This meant that while the Libyans were allowed, within certain limits and within the confines of religion and the family, to practice according to their traditions, all larger forms of social and political organization were conceived according to the dictates of the colonial administration. Moreover, even explicitly private religious

38 Balbo, "La politica sociale fascista verso gli arabi della Libia", p. 746.

39 For the legislation pertaining to the outlaw of these practices, see ASMAE-MAI-2 - 150/39. Fascicolo 174, "Decreto che vieta in Libia cerimonie biasimevoli di alcune confraternite religiose musulmane", Bengasi, 16 June 1935.

institutions that were allowed to continue, such as the sharia tribunals, were subject to close supervision and control.[40]

The most important and ambitious initiative undertaken by the Balbo administration in favor of the indigenous populations of Libya was the attempt to give them full Italian citizenship. As will become abundantly clear, it was also the best example of the difficulty of resolving the relationship between the incorporation of this colony into a modern western nation, and the maintenance of the customs and practices of its people. This project began with a letter sent by Balbo to Mussolini in December 1935, in which it was suggested that a temporary measure for granting citizenship to the Libyans and some foreign nationals be approved – an initiative that was to be done in conjunction with the incorporation of this colony into Italy.[41] This proposition was quickly followed up in early 1936 by a series of reports from various Fascist ministries in which the basis of the opposition to this measure became quite clear – "the irreconcilability on the part of Muslim religious law and the profession of Islamism with a European citizenship". Using the French colony of Tunisia as an example, it was argued that this concession could cause grave consequences within Libya, in addition to fueling protests within the larger Muslim community.[42] Although these objections put a stop to this proposal, it was revived again immediately following the 1937 visit of Mussolini to Libya, at which time the ministry of the colonies suggested reexamining it – a process that eventually led to the creation of a special Italian citizenship for the Libyans.[43]

This new citizenship came into effect in January 1939 in a provision that was part of the same legislation as the annexation of the four coastal provinces of Libya into Italy.[44] This resulted in the Libyans being able to participate in Fascist organizations, the military and, in a limited way, politics. However, as much as these new rights represented a greater recognition of the Libyans by the Italian government, this new status was only valid within the territorial

40 Balbo notes that a governor's decree of 4 December 1937 regulated the nomination of the "Cadi" and the scope of the sharia tribunals. Balbo, "La politica sociale fascista verso gli arabi della Libia", p. 739.

41 ASMAE-MAI-AP - 91, Fascicolo 291, Letter from Italo Balbo to Benito Mussolini, 11 December 1935.

42 ASMAE-MAI-AP - 91, Fascicolo 291, Carlo Alfonso Nallino, "Sull'eventuale concessione della cittadinanza italiana ai musulmani libici", Roma, 1 January 1936. To S.E. On. Alessandro Lessona, Sottosegretario di Stato per le Colonie, Roma.

43 ASMAE-MAI-AP - 91, Fascicolo 29, letter from Ministero delle Colonie, Roma, 3 May 1937, to S.E. il prof. Santi Romano, Presidente del Consiglio di Stato, Roma.

44 Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, pp. 279–80. This law also provided for the extension of the syndical corporatist regulations over all of the populations in the four provinces of Libya.

limits of the colony. Additionally, in order to apply for this special citizenship all rights to full citizenship were lost.[45] As a consequence, while this law incorporated Libya into the greater Italy, it can be argued that its residents had a dual status – a metropolitan one for Italians and a colonial one for Libyans. In the end, very few Libyans availed themselves of this opportunity, and most remained resistant to their assimilation by the Italian authorities.[46] Although during the Balbo era an incredible effort had been made to literally and figuratively incorporate this region into Italy, while the Italians were able to freely emigrate and return to their country, the 'natives' were carefully controlled by the Fascist authorities.

An Army of Rural Infantry

Returning to the question of the migration of Italians to Libya, the most ambitious and highly publicized example of this movement was the *Ventimila*. After the approval of the necessary legislation in May 1938, the preparations for arrival of the first group of colonists in October were fully underway. This was no small task, as it required both an extensive process of review and selection of applicant families in Italy and a substantial effort to prepare suitable facilities in Libya for their settlement. In the first case, a joint committee of ECL and INFPS members and government representatives was formed to undertake the difficult task of selecting 1,800 suitable families from a pool of approximately 6,000 applicants.[47] With regard to preparations in Libya, in a manner similar to the prior efforts at land reclamation in the Pontine Marshes in Italy, this task included the preparation of the properties for agriculture, the paving of roads, the subdivision and clearing of land, the digging of wells, the laying of drainage systems, and the construction and expansion of colonial villages, houses and associated farm buildings.[48] The design of these villages and farm houses are themselves notable as, the product of well-known colonial architects Di

45 Ambrosini, Gaspare, "La condizione giuridica dei libici dall'occupazione all'avvento del Fascismo", *Rivista delle Colonie*, 13/2 (February 1939), p. 188.

46 Segrè notes that even after much fanfare and publicity, only 2,500 of a total population of 500,000 Libyans made the application for this citizenship. Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, p. 331. See also Al-Hesnawi, Habib Wadaa, "Note sulla politica coloniale italiana verso gli arabi libici (1911–1943)", in *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, ed. Angelo Del Boca (Bari-Rome: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1991), p. 47.

47 Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, pp. 311–12.

48 30,000 Italian and Libyan laborers were used in the preparation of land and construction of villages and 60 million lire was spent in order to compensate Libyan landowners for the land. Wright, *Libya*, pp. 172–3.

Fausto, Giovanni Pellegrini and Umberto Di Segni, their simple cubic massing and local vernacular references placed them squarely within contemporary discourse on architecture in the colonies.[49]

In the context of this discussion, however, an equally important dimension of the *Ventimila* was its value as a work of propaganda that projected an image of the incorporation of Libya as a unified colony into the greater Italy. This dimension was largely attributable to the conspicuous manner in which this mass migration of colonists to Libya took place. Beginning in Italy on 27 October 1938 – the day before the annual celebration of the March on Rome – colonist families began to assemble in Genoa, from which a flotilla of nine ships would carry them to Naples, where, joined by six other ships, they left for Tripoli. The crowning moment of their departure was an 'inspection' of the colonists' vessels by Mussolini while he was on board a navy cruiser that traveled the full length of the single line of anchored ships.[50] The arrival of the colonists in Tripoli and their transportation to their villages was no less orchestrated, as they were given free run of the city for the remainder of the day and then loaded into convoys of army trucks that took them to their new homes.[51] The photographs and accounts of the journey offer an image of a strong-willed people who enthusiastically accepted their colonizing role – an effort that was entirely framed within the Roman (and thus Fascist) tradition of land reclamation.

The propagandistic dimension of this event was also displayed in the publicity campaign through which it was represented to an Italian and European audience. This migration was well published in the foreign press, who were given room aboard one of the vessels – something that allowed them to travel along with the colonists and report on the entire event.[52] Understandably

49 For a concise examination of the architecture of the agricultural towns and their organization, see Cresti, Federico, "Edilizia ed urbanistica nella colonizzazione agraria della Libia (1922–1940)", *Storia Urbana*, 11/40 (1987), 189–231. Florestano Di Fausto, Giovanni Pellegrini and Umberto Di Segni were the most active architects during the Balbo period. The work of Pellegrini was particularly well-known, as his projects appeared in *Rassegna di Architettura* and *Architettura* and his "Manifesto dell'architettura colonial" was published in *Rassegna di Architettura* (October 1936).

50 For detailed information on organization and experience of the voyage, see ACS-Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri 1937–39–17.4.6001, "Trasferimento in Libia di famiglie coloniche".

51 Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, pp. 315–17.

52 Correspondents from Germany, England, the United States, France, Poland, Switzerland and Spain were aboard. Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, p. 317. Publications of foreign journalists include Moore, Martin, *Fourth Shore: Italy's Mass Colonization of Libya* (London: Routledge and Sons, 1940); and Bailey, Herbert, "The colonization of Libya", *Fortnightly Review*, 145 (February 1939), pp. 197–204.

FIGURE 4.5 Colonists traveling to the agricultural village of Bianchi during the *Ventimila*, October 1938, Wolfsoniana – Palazzo Ducale Fondazione per la Cultura, Genoa

there was also a substantial representation of the *Ventimila* in contemporary Italian journals and newspapers, including an article by Balbo in the science, literature and arts journal *Nuova Antologia* in November 1938, which described it as "an army of rural infantry, who take stable possession of the land, already conquered by our armies and destined to make fertile with our work".[53] Equally interesting is a special issue of the tourist-oriented *Libia* magazine from 1938, whose graphic presentation gave visual form to the political policies of Balbo for the consolidation of Libya as Italy's fourth shore. In this regard, the *Ventimila* was both a manifestation of and potent symbol for the incorporation of this region – a spectacle of colonization in motion conceived on a monumental scale.

Attracting Disciplined Subjects

The reciprocal movement, or the return of Libyans to their land, was considerably more elusive as it was reliant upon the policies of the Balbo administration

53 Balbo, Italo, "Coloni in Libia", *Nuova Antologia*, 73/1579 (1 November 1938), pp. 3–13.

to preserve the local culture while incorporating the Libyans into corporatist organizations. Although the indigenous politics of Balbo did not explicitly offer itself as a political theory that called for a separation of the races in the same manner as in Italian East Africa, it is interesting to note that these policies led the Balbo administration to either create or reinforce a set of parallel organizations and practices for the local populations. In the case of religious institutions, this policy was realized with the founding of the Consiglio provinciale per l'amministrazione dei beni Aquaf (Provincial Council for the Administration of the Waqf) – a charitable association directed by the local populations that was responsible for the construction and administration of all Muslim religious facilities like mosques, libraries and schools.[54] During the Balbo era, due to the efforts of this organization and the Italian municipal administration, 29 different mosques and religious buildings were restored, reorganized or newly constructed in the city of Tripoli alone.[55]

One of the more prominent restoration projects to be carried out under the direction of the Superintendancy of Monuments in Tripolitania and the Waqf Administration was the Mosque of Ahmed Paşa Karamanlı in Tripoli – which was the largest and most well-known religious monument in the city. Completed in 1934, this project was conducted according to the most advanced standards available at the time, the aim being to remove layers of recent additions so as to return the building to its 'original' state – an effort that was in itself guided by a modern conception of the value of history.[56] This project in particular, and the restoration effort in general, was coincident with an intense historical and touristic interest in Muslim architecture – something that was underscored by the fact that most of these buildings were classified as national monuments.[57] This historical interest was also realized in new constructions, like the Mosque of Sharia Bou Harida – built by the municipality of Tripoli in 1937. As an abstract re-interpretation of the forms found in the old city, it raised the problem of the relationship between historical preservation and modern forms of construction.

In addition to these initiatives for the creation of parallel institutions for the Libyans within the colonial economy, similar efforts were made to create

54 See "Institutions musulmanes", in *L'Italie pour les populations islamiques*, pp. 29–32.

55 See "L'œuvre de l'Italie dans le domaine religieux", in *L'Italie pour les populations islamiques*, pp. 16–28.

56 For a detailed discussion of the restoration of this building see Turba, Luigi, "La Moschea dei Caramanli a Tripoli", *Le Vie d'Italia*, 40/8 (August 1934), pp. 583–91.

57 See Corsi, Mario, "Le moschee di Tripoli", *Emporium*, 61/362 (February 1925), pp. 96–113; Aurigemma, Salvatore, *Tripoli e le sue opere d'arte* (Milan and Rome: Luigi Alfieri & Co., 1927); Apollonj, Fabrizio Maria, "L'architettura araba della Libia", *Rassegna di Architettura*, 9/12 (December 1937), pp. 455–62.

corresponding organizations in the realm of education. One such example is the creation of the Gioventù araba del Littorio (GAL; Arab Youth of the Lictors) – an Arab equivalent to the Fascist youth organization Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (GIL; Fascist Youth of the Lictors). This initiative was intended to create a parallel structure for the education of Arab youth that would better integrate them into the Fascist party and the colonial project in general.[58] Constituted in August 1935, the GAL was a voluntary organization for Arab youths of 12 to 18 years old who had been educated in Italian schools, providing cultural instruction and pre-military training under the direction of Italian militia officers. Although the success of this group has been questioned by some historians, there were already over 5,300 members by September 1936.[59] According to a letter written by Balbo to Mussolini on the creation of the GAL, its aims would seem to be purely that of indoctrination and propaganda – "to accomplish *a work of penetration of the indigenous masses* [emphasis in the original], attracting disciplined subjects from the new generations that are more interested in us, proud of belonging to a nation that returns to dominate with the sign of the Fascist party".[60]

Another sphere of activity pursued by the Balbo administration in favor of the local populations was in the area of vocational training. This focus included the creation of the Scuola Musulmana di Mestieri ed Arti Indigene (Muslim School of Indigenous Arts and Crafts) – which provided education related to artisanry.[61] One of the new locations of this group was in a facility designed by the architect Di Fausto at the Suq al-Mushir in Tripoli. This school was a reorganization of an existing institution that provided training in a diverse array of indigenous art – from goldsmiths and silversmiths, to ceramics and weaving.[62] It is important to point out that the educational programs in the area of indigenous artisanry were more broadly important to the organization of labor in

58 Branzoli-Zappi, V., "La « Gioventù araba del Littorio » nuova ardita realizzazione coloniale del Fascismo", *Il Lavoro Fascista* (11 August 1935), p. 1.

59 ASMAE-MAI-AP – 92 - Fascicolo 302, Decreto Governatoriale 29 June 1935, Serie A. n. 282; Bollettino Ufficiale del Governo della Libia. 16 September 1935, n. 26; and "Cenni sulla costituzione e sul funzionamento del G.A.L.". With regard to membership, the latter document lists 1,338 in Tripoli province, 2,202 in Misrata, 915 in Benghazi and 863 in Derna – a total of 5,318 in 45 units.

60 ASMAE-MAI-AP - 92, Fascicolo 302, letter from Governo della Libia, Gabinetto di S.E. il Governatore Generale, Tripoli, dated 3 June 1935, to S.E. il Capo del Governo, Roma.

61 Balbo, "La politica sociale fascista verso gli arabi della Libia", pp. 741–2. See also Di Pasquale, Francesca, "La Scuola di arti e mestieri di Tripoli in epoca coloniale", *Africa*, 63/3 (2007), pp. 420–3.

62 Quadrotta, Guglielmo, "Appunti sull'Artigianato Libico", in *Viaggio del Duce in Libia per l'inaugurazione della litoranea*, pp. 9–12. The section on weaving was exclusively intended for women.

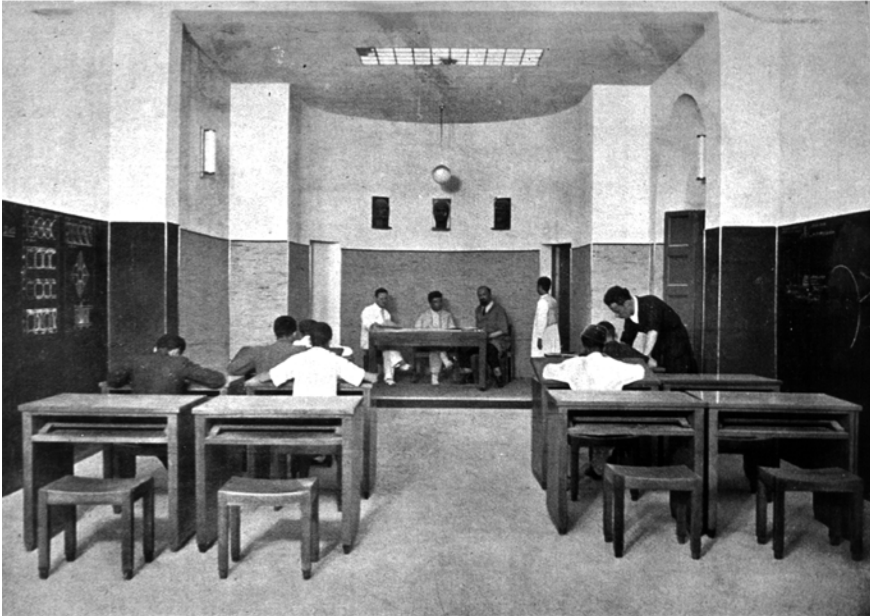

FIGURE 4.6 Di Fausto, Scuola Musulmana di Mestieri ed Arti Indigene, Artisanal quarter, Suq al-Mushir, Tripoli, 1935, *Rassegna Economica dell'Africa Italiana*, 25/7 (July 1937), p. 953, author's collection

the colonies. Indeed, the Scuola Musulmana di Mestieri ed Arti Indigene was not only an educational institution, it was closely tied to the 'industry' of craft production. It is also significant that, along with agriculture, the indigenous arts were an important sector of the economy in which the colonial administration under Balbo attempted to encourage the participation of the local populations.[63]

In a manner similar to measures enacted by Balbo for other colonial industries, the indigenous arts were in the process of being reorganized according to a corporatist model. Although this effort began as early as 1934, it was with the creation of the Istituto Fascista degli Artigiani della Libia (Fascist Institute of Libyan Artisans) in 1935 that the indigenous part of this industry came under this structure. As a result, technical, economic, commercial and social assistance was provided to all of its members.[64] As with other Fascist organizations,

63 Quadrotta, "Appunti sull'Artigianato Libico", p. 6.

64 The Istituto Fascista degli Artigiani della Libia was formed in March 1936 with formal legislation passed in November 1938. Quadrotta, "Appunti sull'Artigianato Libico", pp. 13–14. For a copy of this legislation and its relation, see ASMAE-Consiglio Superiore

this was also an important means of controlling the labor force – instituting a system of permits for each company and licenses for each member.[65] In this case, although the Istituto Fascista degli Artigiani della Libia was intended for both Italian and indigenous artisanry, a clear distinction was made between the potential contribution of these two groups. With Italian artisanry, it was naturally seen as an extension of these industries in Italy, with a greater capacity for artistic innovation, technical development and economic output. The exact opposite was the case for the indigenous part of this industry, as although "the indigenous artisanry must ever more perfect its work" this effort was aimed at recuperating practices that "were abandoned by the absence of good artisans".[66] This emphasis was part of two related areas of concern in the indigenous arts, the impact of mass produced goods and the potential loss of traditional techniques – something for which a considerable research effort was undertaken in all regions of the colony.[67] The dilemma that this situation presents is that, while there was a desire to both improve and control the indigenous industries according to modern and Fascist exigencies, this should not be at the expense of the perceived function that they performed as a register for the authentic traditions of each region.

Conclusion

Through the course of the Balbo administration in Libya, colonial policy pursued a conflicted approach to the mobility of Italian and indigenous populations. This uneven access to mobility within the colony was a discriminatory practice that had a profound impact on the respective status of the Italians and the local populations as well as on the cultural meaning of the colonial environment. While Italians were encouraged to immigrate to Libya as a modernizing and civilizing force that included a policy of demographic colonization – and these policies enjoyed modest results – attempts to persuade Libyans displaced by the Italian occupation to return, through a political policy

Coloniale - 27 (1938), n. 135, "Costituzione dell'Istituto Fascista dell'Artigianato della Libia", 25 November 1938.

65 Quadrotta, "Appunti sull'Artigianato Libico", pp. 27–9.

66 Quadrotta, Guglielmo, "Sviluppo e realizzazioni dell'artigianato in Libia", *Rassegna Economica dell'Africa Italiana*, 25/7 (July 1937), p. 952.

67 This almost scientific approach to craft production was reinforced by a substantial effort that was made by the Istituto Fascista degli Artigiani della Libia to survey the techniques and traditions in all regions of Libya. Quadrotta, "Appunti sull'Artigianato Libico", pp. 6–8, 16–24.

of reconciliation and support of the indigenous culture, were largely unsuccessful. Moreover, for those that remained in the colony, their movement was constrained through measures that attempted to preserve their traditional culture, including involving them in menial and labor-intensive industries. Even gestures towards the indigenous populations that represented an embrace of modern systems of economic exchange, such as the improvements to the indigenous artisanal industries, placed them within the controlling mechanisms of the corporatist system.

In a final reflection on the movement of Italians to Libya, a great majority of the largely poor colonists were neither trained as farmers, nor entirely pleased at the prospect of being exiled to what they perceived was a hostile land, and in particular under the condition of extreme isolation.[68] Just like the Fascist program of land reclamation in the Pontine Marshes, the organized migration of agricultural colonists to Libya was a highly fabricated work of propaganda, reinforcing the image of the Italian people as selfless and dedicated rural workers whose identity was founded in their close connection to the land. Notwithstanding the extensive efforts on behalf of Italian agricultural colonists in Libya, their alleged freedom of movement was, in fact, largely rhetorical. In a similar manner, the anticipated return of the local populations to Libya was no less a political strategy that was aimed at exercising control over a disempowered people – although in this case race and national origin, instead of class, was the source of differential power. Despite the substantial propaganda effort undertaken by the Balbo administration to portray Italian colonial rule as benevolent and supportive, relatively few of the displaced Libyans returned. In large part this had to do with the fact that although they were offered the benefits of effectively living within the boundaries of a European nation, their status as modern 'citizens' was an illusion. Not only did the different standing of Libyans in the colony forestall the return of those who left during the Italian occupation, but also it rendered those that remained immobile, in conformance with an Italian vision of their religious and cultural practices.

68 For a brief assessment of the difficult challenges of the agrarian colonization effort in Libya, see Cresti, Federico, *Oasi di italianità. La Libia della colonizzazione agraria tra fascismo, guerra e independenza (1935–1956)* (Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1996), pp. 254–7.

CHAPTER 5

Yüzellilikler: the League of Nations's First and Only Muslim Refugees

Ebru Boyar

On 30 June 1928, the League of Nations Council adopted an "arrangement", "to extend to Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean and Turkish refugees the relief measures already adopted in favour of Armenian and Russian refugees".[1] Under this arrangement, "Turkish refugees" became the first and only Muslim refugees recognized by the League of Nations.

"Turkish refugees" in this arrangement were defined as: "Any person of Turkish origin, previously a subject of the Ottoman Empire, who, under the terms of the Protocol of Lausanne of July 24th, 1923, does not enjoy, or no longer enjoys the protection of the Turkish Republic and who has not acquired another nationality".[2] This definition, therefore, only included those 150 Ottoman subjects, *Yüzellilikler*, who were exempted from the general amnesty declared as a result of the Lausanne Treaty, under a protocol annexed to the treaty, which stipulated that "the Turkish Government reserves to itself the right to prohibit sojourn in and access to Turkey to 150 persons included in the category of persons referred to in the said paragraph. Consequently, the Turkish Government will be entitled to expel from its territory such of the persons in question as may be there at the present time and to prohibit such as are abroad from returning".[3] The names of these 150 people were decided by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1924.[4] This numbered list, the members of which were broadly described in a report of the Assembly's Justice Committee as those "who worked in various ways for the destruction of the Turkish nation at a time when atrocities and disasters befell the country",

1 "League of Nations notes", *Bulletin of International News*, 6/23 (22 May 1930), p. 26.

2 "League of Nations. Russian, Armenian, Assyro-Chaldean and Turkish refugees. Report of the Secretary-General on the future organisation of refugee work", 30 August 1930, p. 2, the League of Nations Archives, Geneva [hereafter LON], C 1518. See also in "Legal status. Nansen Passports. Collection of intergovernmental arrangements", 20A 26507 19172, LON, C 1533.

3 https://www.mfa.gov.tr/viii_-declaration-of-amnesty.en.mfa (accessed 13 June 2022).

4 *T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları* [The Minutes of the Secret Session in the Turkish Grand National Assembly], Devre: II, İctima Senesi: II, 22–23 April 1340 (1924) (https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/GZC/d02/CILT04/gcz02004044.pdf).

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was made up of very dispersed elements.[5] Among the *Yüzellilikler*, there were members of the last Ottoman sultan Vahdeddin's entourage, the Circassians who first supported the National Liberation War and then fell out with Ankara, those who had collaborated with the Greek occupying forces, members of Grand Vezir Damat Ferid Paşa's cabinets, and members of the administrative and military structures (*Kuvva-i İnzibatiye*), including judges, police officers, soldiers and journalists who opposed Ankara and had collaborated with the occupying powers.[6]

This arrangement was the result of almost two years of negotiations and meetings held in different offices and at different levels of the League of Nations. The plight of the *Yüzellilikler* was first brought to the agenda of the League by the Norwegian diplomat Erik Andreas Colban, who was then the director of the Minorities Section at the League of Nations. While in Greece, Colban was "approached by a Turkish refugee", who was "one General Hamdy Pasha".[7] Although Skran glosses over this encounter by simply burying it in the endnotes, in fact, the very identity of this Turkish refugee was essential to understanding the process of making the *Yüzellilikler* the League of Nations's "Turkish refugees". He was Cakacı or Ferik Hamdi Paşa, no. 12 in the *Yüzellilikler* list, who was chief of staff and naval minister in Damat Ferid's cabinet. In his letter of 8 March 1926 to the director of the International Labour Office, he described himself as "Général Kurde Hamdy Pacha Emir de Zarouchatte [i.e. Arpaçay, Kars]".[8] After this encounter, in March 1926, Colban wrote about these Turks to Major Thomas Frank Johnson, from the Refugee Section of the International Labour Office, who was the central figure for the refugee work in the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization.[9]

5 *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi* [The Minutes of the Sessions of the Turkish Grand National Assembly], Devre: II, İçtima Senesi: IV, Yetmişinci İçtima, 21 May 1927, p. 339 (https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d02/c032/tbmm02032070.pdf).

6 Erdeha, Kamil, *Yüzellilikler Yahut Milli Mücadelenin Muhasebesi* [*Yüzellilikler* or the Assessment of the National Struggle] (Istanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1998), pp. 173–220; Bingöl, Sedat, *150'likler Meselesi. Bir İhanetin Anatomisi* [The Question of the *Yüzellilikler*. An Anatomy of a Treason] (Istanbul: Bengi Yayınları, 2010), pp. 44–91.

7 Skran, Claudena, "The quest for legal protection", in Skran, Claudena, *Refugees in Inter-war Europe: the Emergence of a Regime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 67–70, endnote 47, accessed via *Oxford Scholarship Online* (www.oxfordscholarship.com); Skran named the Turkish refugee who approached Colban in a later publication, Skran, Claudena M., "Part one background, historical development of International Refugee Law", in *The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol: a Commentary*, ed. Andreas Zimmermann, Felix Machts and Jonas Dörschner (first published in print in 2011, and online in 2021), endnote 37, accessed via *Oxford Public International Law* (http://opil.ouplaw.com).

8 Cakacı Hamdi Paşa, Athens, to Director of the International Labour Office, Geneva, 8 March 1926, LON, C-1412-308-R.409-04-Jacket1, online access via https:/archives.ungeneva.org.

9 Skran, "The quest for legal protection", pp. 67–70, endnote 47.

It is clear that the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization were constantly approached by different refugees, individually or as a group. But "after a careful examination of the numerous applications received from or on behalf of various groups of persons, either directly by the High Commission or through the intermediary of the Refugee Section of the International Labour Office",[10] only seven categories of refugees, one of which was the *Yüzellilikler*, were selected by the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the 1922 Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Fridthof Nansen (1861–1930). Nansen, "the ferryman of the League, who has become a specialist in transporting lost peoples to places of safety",[11] selected these categories for submission to the League Council for consideration for "extension to other analogous categories of refugees of measures taken to assist Russian and Armenian refugees".[12]

Considering that there were many applications from different distressed groups asking for the League's assistance, how the *Yüzellilikler* managed to make Nansen's select list is a question that begs for an answer. Cakacı Hamdi not only managed to get access to Colban but was also able to influence him sufficiently that Colban deemed it necessary to draw the plight of these Turkish refugees to the attention of Geneva. This meeting could not have been a spontaneous gathering but an organized attempt to obtain the League's support.

When Cakacı Hamdi was busy in Athens, his namesake Kiraz Hamdi Paşa was active in Romania. Kiraz Hamdi, no. 1 in the *Yüzellilikler* list, who was the *aide-de-camp* of Vahdeddin and was known for his activities against the National Liberation War and his very pro-British political stance,[13] was a member of the Umumi Muhalifin Cemiyeti (The Society for General Opposition) which was set up in Constanța, Romania. This organization was headed by another prominent *Yüzellililik* the ex-governor of Bursa Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı (no. 25), who was a prominent member of Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası (The Freedom and Accord Party) and actively worked against the nationalist forces. Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı, who had left the Ottoman empire in 1913, spent the First World War in the service of the Allied Powers. The aim of this organization was, according to Turkish intelligence reports, to "get back their rights which

10 C-391-1927-VIII_EN, 16 June 1927, p. 3, LON, online access via https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/.

11 Howland, Charles P., "Greece and her refugees", *Foreign Affairs*, 4/4 (1926), p. 615.

12 C-391-1927-VIII_EN, 17 August 1927, p. 1, LON, online access via https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/.

13 Tunaya, Tarık Zafer, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler. Cilt 2, Mütareke Dönemi* [Political Parties in Turkey. Vol. 2, The Period of the Armistice] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), pp. 506–16.

had been trampled on" by appealing to the League of Nations.[14] Apparently, the ex-minister of internal affairs in Damat Ferid's cabinet, Mehmed Ali, no. 45 on the *Yüzellilikler* list, was also a member of this organization. Although the available sources do not provide an exact date for when this organization was set up, it can be inferred that it should have been around 1925–1926, as this is the period when the three men were living in Constanța.

At the same time as Cakacı Hamdi was obtaining an audience with Colban in Athens, Kiraz Hamdi was busy conspiring against the Ankara government. Kiraz Hamdi, Mehmed Ali and Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı together with a fellow *Yüzellilik* ex-Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri (no. 9), who was a prominent member of Damat Ferid's cabinets and a staunch enemy of the Kemalist regime, were joined by General Vehib Paşa, a well-known supporter of İttihat ve Terakki Fırkası (the Party of Union and Progress), who left Istanbul in 1920 for Italy from where he moved to Constanța. This group held a series of meetings with ex-sultan Vahdeddin and his entourage in Sanremo, Italy on 24–30 April 1925. There, the ex-sultan entrusted them with toppling the Kemalist government.[15] As these Sanremo talks show, these *Yüzellilikler* were hardly ordinary refugees in distressed conditions but were active members of the Turkish opposition abroad seeking to restore the old regime in Turkey.

The reason for the singling out of the *Yüzellilikler* as deserving the League's protection and aid, should, then, be evident in the definition of these Turks in Nansen's report. While Nansen provided more detailed observations about "the precarious situation of a large number of unfortunate beings" in the other categories of refugees, who were Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldeans, Ruthenians, Montenegrins, Jewish refugees in Central Europe without protection, he described the category of these 150 Turks only as "Turkish (referred to as "Friends of the Allies")", living in Greece and the Near East and limited his "observations" to pointing out that these people "state that they have been proscribed by the Turkish Government".[16] Although the phrase "Friends of the Allies" was not included in the official definition adopted in the 1928 Arrangement, Johnson,

14 Quoted in Halıcı, Şaduman, "Yüzellilik Bir Muhbirin Portresi: Yaver-i Has Kiraz Ahmet Hamdi Paşa Nam-ı Diğer Hamdi Zeza" [A portrait of a *Yüzellilik* informant: Aide-de-camp Kiraz Ahmet Hamdi Paşa, alias Hamdi Zeza], *Belgi*, 20 (2020), p. 2349.

15 Şahin, Muzaffer (ed.), *Saraydaki Kayserili Şükrü Bey. Vahdettin'in Tütüncübaşısı* [Şükrü Bey, a Man from Kayseri in the Palace. The *Tütüncübaşı* of Vahdeddin] (Ankara: Pelikan, 2012), pp. 100–2; Göztepe, Tarık Mümtaz, *Osmanoğulları'nın Son Padişahı Gurbet Cehenneminde* [The Last Sultan of the Ottomans in the Hell of a Foreign Land] (Istanbul: Sebil Yayınevi, 1991), pp. 135–42; Halıcı, Şaduman, "San Remo Görüşmeleri. Vahideddin, Bir "İttihatçi" ve Üç "Yüzellilik"" [The Sanremo talks. Vahdeddin, one "Unionist" and three "*Yüzellilikler*"], *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 11/22 (2015), 267–303.

16 C-391-1927-VIII_EN, 17 August 1927, LON, online access via https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/. See also, "League of Nations. Extension of other categories of refugees of the measures taken to assist Russian and Armenian Refugees. Report of The High Commissioner

who was then the Chief of the League of Nations Refugee section,[17] noted in 1930 that they were "commonly referred to as the "Friends of the Allies"".[18] Sometimes the *Yüzellilikler* appeared in the correspondence in the League of Nations Archives as "anti-Kemalist refugees".[19]

Among the proposed seven categories of refugee, only three, Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean and Turkish refugees were included to the 1928 Arrangement. As was the case with the previous categories, these new additional refugee categories recognized by the League of Nations were the products of developments related to the end of the Ottoman empire and the establishment of the Turkish republic. Indeed, the League's publication celebrating the tenth anniversary of the League of Nations demonstrated this connection very clearly.[20] Selecting the *Yüzellilikler* as a distinct refugee group in need of protection, therefore, was a highly political decision, political considerations in fact lying behind the League's decisions in refugee cases.[21]

Creating 'Turkish Refugees' under the Protection of the League of Nations

It is apparent that immediately after the 1926 Arrangement, signed on 12 May 1926 providing further benefits to Russian and Armenian refugees, the League was already working towards the extension of the category of the refugees to be put under the protection of the League of the Nations. Taking note of a resolution adopted by the League of Nations Assembly held in September 1926,

for Refugees", C-252-1928-VIII_EN, 4 June 1928, Geneva, LON, online access via https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/.

17 In 1921, the refugee work under the League of Nations officially started with the establishment of the High Commission for Refugees, for which Nansen became the Commissioner. Starting from 1924, this Commission worked closely with the International Labour Organization. In 1930, after the death of Nansen, The Nansen International Office for Refugees was set up under the Secretariat of the League of Nations assuming the responsibility for refugee work of both the High Commission and the International Labour Organization.

18 T.F. Johnson, the Chief of the Refugee Section, Geneva to M. Kotelnikov, Athens, 2 December 1930, LON, S 545, file 4.

19 Kotelnikov to Johnson, 3 January 1932 and an undated note, LON, S 545, No. 4.

20 *League of Nations. Ten Years of World Cooperation*, foreword by Sir Eric Drummond (London and Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd., 1930, the publication of the Secretariat of the League of Nations), pp. 270–1.

21 Metzger, Barbara, "The League of Nations, refugees and individual rights", in *Refugees in Europe, 1919–1959. A Forty Years' Crisis?*, ed. Matthew Frank and Jessica Reinisch (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 104; Orchard, Phil, *A Right to Flee. Refugees, States and the Construction of International Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 105 and p. 116.

the Council of the League on 10 December 1926 officially revealed its intention of "extending the measures at present taken on behalf of Russian and Armenian refugees to analogous categories of refugees" and advised the International Labour Office and the High Commission for Refugees to "consider the possibility".[22] The timing of Cakacı Hamdi's appeal, was, therefore, spot on.

In the period when Nansen was preparing a list of new categories of refugees to be taken under the wing of the League of Nations, the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed the Law Code 1064 (28 May 1927) which denaturalized the *Yüzellilikler* and deprived them of their rights of ownership of property and inheritance.[23] According to Erdeha, this law was a last warning shot to some of the *Yüzellilikler* who were very active against Turkey in the years 1926–27.[24] The Turkish government further made its firm stance known to the League of Nations informing the Secretary General that "persons who, formerly inhabitants of territories comprised in the present limits of Turkey, have been expelled either by virtue of a Convention or otherwise, cannot, under any pretext, return to Turkey".[25] Skran highlights this response by the Turkish government as a strong motive for making the *Yüzellilikler* a refugee group.[26] But well before the Turkish communication with the League and the Law Code 1064, Nansen and his co-workers had been working on including the *Yüzellilikler* in their list. Turkey's firm position and the Law Code could

22 "II. Report by the High Commissioner for Refugees", C-391-1927-VIII_EN, LON, 14 June 1927, p. 2, online access via https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/.

23 *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, Devre: II, İçtima Senesi: IV, Yetmişinci İçtima, 21 May 1927, pp. 339–40; *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, Devre: II, İçtima Senesi: IV, Yetmiş Üçüncü İçtima, 28 May 1927, pp. 639–40 (https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d02/c032/tbmm02032073.pdf.).

24 Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler*, p. 132.

25 "League of Nations. Extension of other categories of refugees", Geneva, 4 June 1928, pp. 3–4. It was only in 1938, that the Turkish position about the *Yüzellilikler* shifted and an amnesty was passed in the parliament allowing the *Yüzellilikler* to return to Turkey ("Af Kanunu. Kanun No: 3527, Kabul Tarihi: 29/6/1938", T.C. *Resmî Gazete*, No. 3961, 16 July 1938, p. 10297). The *raison d'être* for this shift was that, according to Mekki Said from *Cumhuriyet*, "the Turkish regime has finally been established in [people's] minds and hearts" ("Büyük Af Projesi" [The great amnesty project], *Cumhuriyet*, 30 May 1938, p. 1), a view which was supported by the eminent journalist Falih Rıfkı Atay, the editor-in-chief of *Ulus*, the official newspaper of the ruling party, who wrote: "in Turkey the revolutionary regime has become established" ("Afiv" [Amnesty], *Ulus*, 1 June 1938, p. 1). Another eminent journalist, the editor-in-chief of *Tan*, Ahmet Emin Yalman further claimed that "to leave behind a past from 15 years ago and grant amnesty and tolerance to those who committed crimes in the political environment of that time is something that only a nation with a sound structure and totally securely established can do" ("Siyasî Bir Maziyi Tasfiye" [To leave the past behind], *Tan*, 31 May 1938, p. 8).

26 Skran, "Part one background", part 20, accessed via *Oxford Public International Law*.

thus only have strengthened Nansen's hand, and only then if, of course, he was informed of the recent law at the time when he submitted his report to the meeting of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization held in Geneva on 14 June 1927.[27]

Three months later, Nansen submitted his report to the Council of the League which decided to "institute an enquiry into the applications submitted to him by the Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean, Montenegrin and Turkish refugees".[28] After receiving a communication from the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes pointing out that Montenegrins could get passports like any other citizens of the Kingdom and were thus "not living under analogous conditions to those of the Armenian and Russian refugees", they were removed from the list.[29]

Nansen was then entrusted with preparing a case supporting why these three groups should now be considered as "living under analogous conditions" and hence deserving of the League's protection. Nansen later explained how this preparation was conducted:

> In submitting the results of enquiries concerning these refugees, it should be pointed out that it has been necessary to rely, in a large measure, on the information at the disposal of organisations interested in the welfare of the refugees concerned, in order to avoid, by means of more direct enquires, raising hopes among the refugees concerned until the Council had come to a definite decision on the matter.[30]

This, however, was not true at least for the *Yüzellilikler*. All of a sudden, the League and the International Labour Organization started to receive many petitions, mostly in French,[31] from the *Yüzellilikler*, starting from September 1927. As the contents of these letters will be examined later, it suffices to say here that these petitions provided what Nansen needed to support his claims about these people's personal suffering, that they were victims of injustice, and that they deserved the League's protection. The first petition dated 9 September 1927 came from Hafız Said (no. 88) who was the former head of the first division of the Istanbul police office and now living in Kavala,

27 C-391-1927-VIII_EN, 16 June 1927, LON, online access via https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/.
28 "League of Nations. Extension of other categories of refugees", Geneva, 4 June 1928, p. 1.
29 "League of Nations. Extension of other categories of refugees", Geneva, 4 June 1928, p. 2.
30 "League of Nations. Extension of other categories of refugees", Geneva, 4 June 1928, p. 2.
31 It should be noted here that the majority of the petitioners did not have the linguistic ability to write in French. This also shows the collective effort organized from one centre.

in Greece.[32] On 15 September 1927, Çerkez Edhem (no. 57), initially a prominent leader of the irregular troops serving the nationalist forces but who, due to a major fall out with Ankara, revolted and defected to the Greeks, sent a letter from Baghdad.[33] Although he was in Iraq at that point, his connection to Greece was very strong as his older brothers, fellow *Yüzellilik*s Çerkez Reşid (no. 58) and Çerkez Tevfik (no. 59) and some of their men had continued to live there.[34] Indeed, a few months later, Çerkez Reşid, too, wrote two letters from Athens to the Secretary General of the League of Nations, the first on 4 March 1928 and the second on 1 June 1928.[35] Another *Yüzellilik*, originally from Veliko Tarnova, Bulgaria, ex-governor of Bolu Osman Nuri (no. 56), who aided the Greek occupation of Ayvalık, where he was the governor, sent his letter from Xanthi, Greece while only a few days later, Mustafa Sabri sent his from Komotini, Greece.[36] Where these letters were mostly sent from demonstrates that Greece was the centre of the operation for collecting evidence for Nansen's case for making the *Yüzellilikler* a refugee group under the auspices of the League of Nations. This, however, should not be surprising considering that in the 1920s, Greece became the main hub of the Turkish opposition supported by the Greek government.[37] Further, there was already a strong existence in Greece of offices of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization involved in refugee work.[38]

Received by the Political Division of the League, the petitions of Çerkez Edhem and Hafız Said were forwarded to Major Johnson who was already working on doing something for these "unfortunate people", a phrase often used in the correspondence among the League staff.[39] Upon receiving these

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32 Hafız Said, Kavala, Greece to the League of Nations, 9 September 1927, LON, C 1423, R 419/1/26/1.

33 Çerkez Edhem, Baghdad to the Secretary of the League of Nations, 15 September 1927, LON, C 1423, R 419/1/85/. Edhem left Greece with a Greek passport on 4 April 1925 for Baghdad. Halıcı, Şaduman, *Ethem* (Istanbul: Eyayınları, 2016), p. 342.

34 Halıcı, *Ethem*, p. 356.

35 Çerkez Reşid, Athens to the Secratary General of the League of Nations, Geneva, 4 March 1928 and 1 June 1928, LON, C 1423, R 419/1/85/1.

36 Osman Nuri, Xanthi, Greece, 5 June 1928 and Mustafa Sabri, Komotini, Greece, 9 June 1928, LON, C1423, R/419/2/26/1.

37 See for example, Halıcı, Şaduman, *Mütareke Döneminin İşbirlikçileri Yüzellilik Gazeteciler* [The Collaborators of the Armistice Period *Yüzellilik* Journalists] (Istanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2021), pp. 33–5.

38 See for example Howland, "Greece and her refugees", 613–23.

39 Henri Vigier, The Chief of the Political Section, the League of Nations to Major Johnson, Assistant Commissioner for Refugees, International Labour Office, Geneva, 3 October 1927, LON, C 1423, R 419/1/85/1; M. Roddolo to Yotaro Sigimura, 3 October 1927, LON, C 1423, R/4/9/1/85/1.

petitions, Johnson directly communicated to Çerkez Edhem and Hafız Said asking for information about the *Yüzellilikler*.[40] This correspondence reads like a communication crafted to create a necessary paper trail rather than being due to Johnson's lack of knowledge on the matter. In fact, Johnson in his reply to Çerkez Edhem's letter giving information about the *Yüzellilikler*, acknowledged the official use to which this information would be put: "This information will be extremely useful to Dr. Nansen, who is preparing a report on this subject which will probably be presented at an upcoming session of the Council of the League of Nations. I will be sure to inform you of any further action that may be taken on this subject".[41] Johnson did indeed inform Edhem about the arrangement adopted in June, sending him a copy of the text and noting that "I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the British government has not yet acceded to it".[42]

Eighteen years later, in his 1946 account, Edhem presented his correspondence with the League as "somewhat perfunctory" and argued that the League's response was a natural extension of the injustices of some of the so called civilized European states. He made no mention of his further dealings with the League.[43] But in 1927–28, he apparently did not feel the same way. Once reassured by Johnson that the forthcoming arrangement would include "the measures that should be taken in their [the *Yüzellilikler*] favour",[44] he had provided the precise information asked for by Johnson about the numbers and whereabouts of the *Yüzellilikler*, with most of whom, according his own 1946 account, he and his brothers did "not have any connection".[45] According to the information he provided, there were *Yüzellilikler* in Syria (30), Greece (37), Romania (32), Egypt (14), Bulgaria (5), Cyprus (3), Hijaz (3), Transjordan (3), Paris (2), Nice (3), Iraq (5), Albania (2) and 11 of them were dead.[46] These figures were adopted by Nansen, with the exception that the number of refugees in Bulgaria was reduced from five to three, Hijaz and Transjordan were not listed, and a new category of "other countries" was created, which also included the 11 people listed as dead by Çerkez Edhem. Hence the total number of those living in

40 To Hafız Said, 5 November 1927, LON, C 1423, R 419/1/26/1 and to Çerkez Edhem, 5 November 1927, LON, C 1423, R 419/1/85/1.

41 Johnson, Geneva to Çerkez Edhem, Baghdad, 1 March 1928, LON, C 1423, R/4/9/1/85/1.

42 Johnson, Geneva to Çerkez Edhem, Baghdad, 30 November 1928, LON, C 1423, R/4/9/1/85/1.

43 Özalp, Ömer Hakan (ed.), *Çerkes Ethem Meydan Okuyor! Kendi Kaleminden Resmi Tarihi Tersyüz Eden Hatıraları* [Çerkez Edhem Challenges! His Memoirs from His Own Pen, Overturning the Official History] (Istanbul: Derin Tarih Kültür Yayınları, 2015), pp. 68–9.

44 Johnson, Geneva, to Çerkez Edhem, Baghdad, 5 November 1927, LON, C 1423, R 419/1/85/1.

45 Özalp, *Çerkes Ethem Meydan Okuyor!*, p. 69.

46 Çerkez Edhem, Baghdad to Johnson, Geneva, 28 January 1928, LON, C 1423, R 419/1/85/1.

the "other countries" was 19, 11 of whom were living in 'the other world'.[47] While Çerkez Edhem's information might have been "extremely useful" to Nansen, it is obvious that Nansen received information from other undisclosed sources, since he changed some of the numbers. He also opted not to list Hijaz and Transjordan as separate countries, but to put them under the category of the "other countries", a choice which seems political. Moreover, despite the fact that some of the members of the *Yüzellilikler* had died by 1928, in official reports the League maintained this figure of 150.[48] The Nansen Office, however, later kept its own updated list of people, showing who was alive, who had died and who had adopted another nationality and had thus lost the legal status of being a "Turkish refugee".[49] It was, however, only after the 30 June 1928 Arrangement had been passed that Johnson, on 9 August 1928, set out to acquire a complete list of the *Yüzellilikler*. "Not being able to get this list here" (i.e. Geneva), he asked in a confidential letter to White Russian Nicolas A. Lemtiougov,[50] at the office of the League of Nations, Bureau of International Labour in Istanbul, to provide him with a complete list.[51] The almost complete list, with two missing names[52] was obtained with great difficulty, according to Lemtiougov, and sent to Geneva. Lemtiougov agreed to Johnson's sharing this list with the interested governments on condition that he must not reveal its source.[53]

Empowering the *Yüzellilikler*

Accepting the *Yüzellilikler* as a distinct refugee group under the auspices of the League led to various political and practical repercussions for both the Turkish

47 "League of Nations. Extension of other categories of refugees", 4 June 1928, p. 3; "The League of Nations. Russian, Armenian, Assyro-Chaldean and Turkish refugees", 30 August 1930, p. 13, LON, C 1518.

48 "League of Nations Committee on International Assistance to Refugees. Report by the Committee submitted to the Council of the League of Nations", 3 January 1936, LON, C-2-M-2-1936-XII_EN, online access via https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/.

49 For example, see "Liste de *réfugiés* vivants de la liste de 150 *réfugiés* turcs", "Liste de *réfugiés* décèdes de la liste de 150 *réfugiés* turcs" and "*Réfugiés* turcs sur la liste de 150 qui ont acquis une autre nationalité", 11 November 1937, LON, S 545, file 7.

50 30 January 1928, Devlet Arşivleri, Cumhuriyet Arşivi, Ankara [hereafter BCA], 030-0-18-01-01-027-76-006.

51 Johnson to Lemtiougov, 9 August 1928, LON, C 1416, R 409/0/8.

52 These were no. 28, who was the leader of Hürriyet ve İtilaf Partisi, Miralay (Colonel) Sadık and no. 129, who was Kara Kazım, son of Hüseyin from the village of Muratlar, Gönen.

53 N. Lemtiougov, Istanbul to Major T.F. Johnson, Geneva, 20 September 1928, LON, C 1416, R 409/0/8.

opposition and the Turkish republic. Above all, this decision meant that the League took one aspect of the Treaty of Lausanne to be 'unjust' and thus, only three years after its signature, opened the way for a discussion of the treaty's validity.

Despite the fact that there were other Turkish exiles, such as ex-Ottoman dynasty members living under similar *heimatlos* conditions, such people were not granted any open protection or support by the League. In 1929, in response to the requests for Nansen passports by members of the Ottoman dynasty, Johnson, agreeing that "It is perfectly true that the members of the late imperial Ottoman family are in exactly the same position as Russian refugees", nevertheless pointed out to his colleague Major Anthony Buxton that "you will doubtless remember that it was with considerable reluctance that the Council agreed to the extension of the Nansen passport system to even restricted categories of analogues refugees".[54] Such reluctance did not, however, apply to the *Yüzellilikler*.

The reason that the *Yüzellilikler* were granted refugee status by the League is thus related entirely to the Lausanne Treaty and this decision represented a direct challenge to the treaty itself. The petitions submitted to the League by the *Yüzellilikler* did not hesitate to remind the parties who had signed the treaty of their moral responsibility for the repercussions of the protocol. Çerkez Reşid in his petition dated 4 March 1928 did not mince his words: "If Turkey does not fulfil the aforesaid Treaty, it is the Powers who signed it who are morally responsible. It is a question of honour for them. That does not mean to say that one would wish to interfere in the internal affairs of Turkey. It is for the Powers to invite the cruel and usurpatory Government of Ankara to do its duty".[55] Similarly, Çerkez Edhem in his earlier letter in September 1927, too, stressed that "in my opinion, I think that in giving me a favourable response to my request, the Governments which are also involved in the Treaty of Lausanne will be, at the same time, protecting their honour".[56]

This somewhat presumptuous language of both brothers should be seen within the *zeitgeist* of the period when, in general, the regime in Turkey was still considered weak in the international arena and, in particular, when Greece continued hostilities towards Turkey, providing a refuge for the Turkish opposition in its territories, in particular in Western Thrace where there was

54 T.F. Johnson to Major A. Buxton, League of Nations, 1 June 1929, LON, C 1416, R/409/0/8.

55 Çerkez Reşid, Athens to the Secretary General of the League of Nations, Geneva, 4 March 1928, LON, C 1423, R/419/2/26/1.

56 Çerkez Edhem, Baghdad to the Secretary General of the League of Nations, Geneva, 15 September 1927, LON, C 1423, R/4/9/1/85/1.

a large Turkish/Muslim minority. Both brothers benefited from this hostile environment. Çerkez Reşid was sufficiently emboldened to demand that the Greek ministry of foreign affairs protest to the Turkish government about the seizure of the possessions of the *Yüzellilikler*, an action which was a result of the failure of the Allies' protection of the rights of the Circassians.[57] He even wrote a letter of protest about the matter addressed to Mustafa Kemal Paşa (Atatürk) and İsmet Paşa (İnönü) accusing them of, among other things, "treacherousness".[58] In this period both brothers were in close contact with the British. While Çerkez Reşid was perceived as a protégé of the British against Turkey,[59] according to Turkish intelligence reports, Çerkez Edhem was planning together with the Kurdish and Armenian groups in Iraq under British auspices to incite revolts in Anatolia.[60] The return address of Çerkez Edhem's 15 September 1927 letter to the League, care of "Haidari Zade Ibrahim Effendi, Sénateur d'Iraq, Baghdad, Iraq", lends further credibility to the allegations about Edhem's dealings. "Haidari Zade Ibrahim Effendi" was Mosul born ex-Şeyhülislam Haydarzade İbrahim Efendi (in office from November 1918 to March 1919), who after leaving Istanbul pursued a new career within the Iraqi government and was a member of the commission headed by King Faysal that visited Northern Iraq in December 1924 to persuade the population there to side with Iraq on the Mosul Question.[61] According to the journalist reporting from the eastern provinces of Turkey for *Vakit*, Haydarzade İbrahim Efendi was even one of the "two treasonous heads who prepared the eastern revolt [the Şeyh Said Revolt]" of 1925.[62]

Another ex-*şeyhülislam*, Mustafa Sabri referred to the exiles, including himself, as "innocent victims" and urged the League of Nations to do something to protect their rights against Ankara, in particular over the denaturalization

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57 Undated, "Yunan Belgeleri 12" [The Greek documents 12], in Cilasun, Emrah, *"Bâki İlk Selam" Çerkes Ethem* ["The Eternal First Salute" Çerkez Edhem] (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2004), p. 222.

58 Halıcı, *Ethem*, pp. 335–6.

59 Duran, Tülay (ed.), "150 liklerden Said Molla'nın Mektubu (II)" [The Letter of Said Molla from *Yüzellilikler* (II)], *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi. Dün/Bugün/Yarın*, 31 (August 1999), p. 58.

60 Halıcı, *Ethem*, pp. 347–57.

61 Atasoy, Osman, "Şeyhülislâm Haydarîzâde İbrahim Efendi'nin Hayatı ve Eserleri (1864–1931)" [The Life and Works of Şeyhülislâm Haydarîzâde İbrahim Efendi (1864–1931)], Unpublished Masters Dissertation, İstanbul Medeniyet Üniversitesi, 2020, pp. 52–3.

62 "Şark Vilayetlerinde (Vakit) Muharrinin Müşahade ve İntibaları: 10. İsyan Hazırlıkları Nasıl Yapıldı?" [The observations and impressions of the *Vakit* writer in the eastern provinces: 10. How were the preparations for the revolt made?], *Vakit*, 26 Muharrem 1344/ 17 Ağustos 1341/ 17 August 1925, p. 1.

law. Like Edhem and Reşid, he too reminded the signatory powers to the Treaty of Lausanne of their responsibilities: "The Ankara government allows itself to do any injustice to us. Should the signatory powers to the Treaty of Lausanne ignore its actions and let Turkey act as it pleases?".[63] Mustafa Sabri had earlier declared his discontent with this law in his famous poem, "İstifa Ediyorum" (I resign), published in his Komotini (later Xanthi) based oppositional newspaper *Yarın* on 29 July 1927. Here Mustafa Sabri not only called the leaders of the republic "a handful of bandits", rejected Turkish nationalism and advised Muslims not to migrate to Turkey, but also responded to the Turkish government which had denaturalized him: "Let dark Ankara be yours/ How could an irreligious man ever be my deputy in the parliament/ How does such a government dare [to represent me]?/ From the beginning I was not subject to it!". He concluded his poem begging God: "Repentance, oh God, repentance for my Turkishness/ Do not count me among the Turkish nation".[64]

Full of political protest, these petitions also included practical and personal demands. Not only did Mustafa Sabri demand Nansen passports for himself and his family,[65] but his son, İbrahim Sabri (no. 113), also demanded help from the Nansen Office in Athens.[66] In his letter, Osman Nuri portrayed himself as a victim of both the Turkish government and the Greek state, which had permitted his wife to be "kidnapped" – in fact, it seems that the woman had run away with a Greek chauffeur – and failed to ensure the return of their child, whom she had taken with her and who, under Islamic law should have stayed with the father. Osman Nuri demanded that the League intervene on his behalf and enable him and his child to move to Bulgaria or Italy.[67] Oddly, Osman Nuri should have had no problem moving to Bulgaria since, as he noted in his 1931 letter to a Bulgarian minister, sent from Shumen, Bulgaria where he eventually settled and continued to be an active member of the Turkish opposition in exile, his Bulgarian citizenship had been recognized by the Bulgarian court ten years earlier and he had been granted the right to work as a lawyer in Bulgaria.[68]

All the petitioners, directly or indirectly, asked the parties which had signed the Treaty of Lausanne to denounce the protocol attached to it or challenge it in order to protect their rights which had been unjustly taken from them.

63 Mustafa Sabri, Komotini, 9 June 1928, LON, C 1423, R/419/2/26/1.

64 Karaca, Emin, *150'likler* [*Yüzellilikler*] (Istanbul: Altın Kitaplar, 2007), pp. 222–35.

65 Mustafa Sabri, Komotini, 9 June 1928, p. 5, LON, C 1423, R/419/2/26/1.

66 İbrahim Sabri, Patras, 12 November 1931 and 1 December 1931, LON S 545, file 4.

67 Osman Nuri to the Secretary General of the League of Nations, Geneva, 5 June 1928, LON, C 1423, R 419/2/26/1.

68 9 February 1931, BCA, 121-11-00-02-50-1-161.

Further they asked the League of Nations to put direct pressure on the Turkish government on their behalf. This did not happen.[69] The League of Nations, however, by recognizing the *Yüzellilikler* as a category of refugees, indirectly challenged the Treaty of Lausanne and further, created a fertile environment for the Turkish opposition in exile to pursue their political and individual interests. One of the most important characteristics of the League's refugee regime in the interwar period was that "refugees were legally defined on a group basis".[70] The validity of the idea that the *Yüzellilikler* in any way formed a choate group is clearly called into question by the fact that there were some *Yüzellilikler* who politically and personally hated each other so much that while escaping abroad, they were careful not even to go to the same country.[71] While for the League it was important that they nevertheless be defined as one group, for Ankara it was equally important that this not be the case.[72] For the opposition, however, which sought to create a united front against Ankara, this construction of a group identity was good news. Osman Nuri's reasoning behind the urgent necessity of widening the oppositional base by including Unionist Vehib Paşa gives a very clear indication of the need for a united opposition to Ankara: "In order to topple the Kemalist government, not only should we ally with Unionist Vehib Paşa, but if required, we should even ally with the Satan".[73]

Creating a 'United' Opposition: La Ligue des Réfugiés Turcs

This international recognition on a group basis was immediately capitalized on by Mehmed Ali, a very prominent figure among the Turkish opposition in exile. He and his friends, among whom there were people who were not part of the *Yüzellilikler* list, established La Ligue des Réfugiés Turcs, with French official permission, in 1930, with its central committee in Paris. Among these people, there was Reşat Halis (no. 17), the Ottoman ambassador to Bern who was among those who had signed the Treaty of Sèvres. Unlike many of his comrades,

69 See for example, Johnson, Geneva to Çerkez Edhem, Baghdad, 5 November 1927, LON C 1423, R 419/1/85/1.

70 Lettevall, Rebecka, "Neutrality and humanitarianism: Fridtjof Nansen and the Nansen passports", in *Neutrality in Twentieth-Century Europe. Intersections of Science, Culture, and Politics after the First World War*, ed. Rebecka Lettevall, Geert Somsen and Sven Widmalm (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), p. 324.

71 Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler*, p. 72.

72 Boyar, Ebru, "Türk-İngiliz İlişkilerinde Prestij Faktörü (1923–1938)" [The prestige factor in Turkish-British relations (1923–1938)], *Belleten*, 78/283 (2014), p. 1163.

73 "Belge 4" [Document 4], 10 August 1932, in Duran, Tülay (ed.), "150 liklerin Gizli Mektupları (III)" [The Secret Letters of the *Yüzellilikler* (III)], *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi. Dün/Bugün/Yarın*, 34 (November 1999), p. 64.

Reşat Halis had a fairly comfortable life with his wife, Abdülhamid II's daughter Şadiye Osmanoğlu, whom he married when they were both in Paris as exiles.[74] Another prominent name in the Ligue was Erkanı Harp Miralayı (General Staff Colonel) Tahir (no. 6), who was a member of the *Kuvva-i İnzibatiye* and had left the country with Damat Ferid.[75] He was an "active" member of Vahdettin's entourage and responsible for Vahdettin's young son, Ertuğrul's education.[76] Non-*Yüzellilik* Ahmed Rıfat, the son of Sadrazam Halil Rıfat Paşa, was a prominent member of the Ligue. While he was a major in the Ottoman army, he escaped to Europe after his father's death in 1902. Unlike his *Yüzellilik* associates, Ahmed Rıfat's escape to Europe was not political, but due to his desire to wander around Europe with the woman he loved.[77] Regardless, his name as the son of Abdülhamid II's beloved *vezir* provided a further connection between the Ligue and the Ottoman elite and imperial structure.[78]

Needing wider *Yüzellilikler* representation in order to attain the recognition of the League of Nations as the representative of the Turkish refugees, Mehmed Ali set to to collect documents (*vekaletname*s) from *Yüzelilikler* living outside France giving him permission to represent them.[79] Two years after the establishment of La Ligue des Réfugiés Turcs, the League of Nations recognized this association as the representative of the Turkish refugees despite the Turkish government's objection, an objection of which Mehmed Ali was well aware since he noted in a letter from July 1932 that the Turkish ambassador at Bern had officially protested about the Ligue to the General Secretary of the League of Nations.[80] A Turkish intelligence report from 1937 downplayed the Nansen Office's contribution to the Ligue by focusing merely on its financial

74 Osmanoğlu, Şadiye, *Babam Abdülhamit. Saray ve Sürgün Yılları* [My Father Abdülhamid. The Years in the Palace and in Exile] (Istanbul: L&M Yayınları, 2007), pp. 88–95.

75 Erdeha, *Yüzellilikler*, p. 217.

76 *T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları*, 16 Nisan 1340 (1924), Devre: II, İçtima Senesi: II, p. 439; Kandemir, Feridun, *Tütüncübaşı Şükrü Anlatıyor. Sultan Vahdeddin'in Son Günleri* [*Tütüncübaşı* Şükrü Explains. The Last Days of Sultan Vahdeddin] (Istanbul: Yağmur Yayınları, 2010), p. 197.

77 Esenbel, Aziz, "Abdülhamid ve Paris Sefiri Arasında Gizli Muharebeler. Sadrazam Halil Rifat Paşanın Oğlu Ahmed Beyin Avrupaya Firarı" [The Secret correspondence between Abdülhamid and the ambassador to Paris. The escape of Ahmed Bey, the son of Sadrazam Halil Rıfat Paşa to Europe], press cutting from Taha Toros Arşivi, Marmara University Open Access System, accessed via http://hdl.handle.net/11424/132520.

78 For example, see how Mehmed Ali introduced Ahmed Rıfat who was elected the "ikinci reis" (the second president) of the Ligue: "sadrı esbak merhum Halil Rıfat Paşazade Ahmet Rifat Beyefendi". See in Bingöl, *150'likler Meselesi*, p. 165.

79 See Annex 18 in Bingöl, *150'likler Meselesi*, p. 266.

80 See the summary of this letter in Duran, Tülay (ed.), "150 liklerin Gizli Mektupları" [The secret letters of *Yüzellilikler*], *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi. Dün/Bugün/Yarın*, 32 (September 1999), p. 49.

contribution: "The Nansen organization, established in Geneva to help White Russians, had started to help various other refugees. In this vein, six to seven years ago, upon Mehmed Ali's application, it started to support various traitors living outside the borders of our country. But this aid is not financially substantial".[81] In fact, Mehmed Ali benefitted from the Ligue's contact and connection with the League of Nations in multiple ways. This recognition allowed the association to issue certificates in the name of the League of Nations, to provide legal advice, to act on the behalf of Turkish refugees as well as other refugee groups and hence to rub shoulders with the League bureaucrats, to lobby against the Turkish government and, thanks to this new official identity, to gain easy access to official bodies, providing information to them.[82]

From its inception and even prior to the official recognition by the League of Nations, the Ligue was busy making itself heard and known. It was through the Ligue, for example, that Johnson received the news of the Greek government's decision to expel the *Yüzellilikler* in Western Thrace in 1930, for the Ligue sent a letter to the League of Nations requesting intervention on this matter on the behalf of the *Yüzellilikler*.[83] The Ligue also sent a letter of protest to the Greek foreign minister, defending these people and fiercely attacking Ankara:

> La Ligue des Réfugiés Turcs cannot let such a crime be committed without raising an indignant protest. Political refugees are not common criminals. The only reproach that can be made against them is that of telling the truth to the people, of making them understand that since the dictatorship has been in power, they have been robbed of their inalienable rights, that the ministry of İsmet Paşa is tainted by horrors and errors committed either by design or through ignorance to the detriment of the vital interests of the nation. In a word, to have wished to play the role of opposition party in Turkey without which there is no obstacle to the demands of the government.[84]

In a similar vein, the Ligue sent a letter in 1932, with Tahir's signature, to the British Foreign Office. Recalling British responsibility for the protocol which

81 12 March 1937, BCA, 121-11-00-02-5-25-1-2.

82 See, for example, "Copie de la liste des 150 réfugiés turcs, addressée le 6 septembre 1935 par l'Office général des réfugiés turcs à Paris", LON, R 3656-1-15279-15279, online access via via https://lontad-project.unog.ch/.

83 Ahmed Rıfat Bey, the President of La Ligue des Réfugiés Turcs, Paris to the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, 26 November 1930, LON, S 545, file 6.

84 La Ligue des Réfugiés Turcs to the Foreign Minister of Greece, 26 November 1930, LON, S 545, file 4.

had produced the *Yüzellilikler*, the letter requested British government intervention on their behalf with the League of Nations. Although this request was officially rejected, in the minutes attached to this letter the British official Alexander Knox Helm, who served as a dragoman at the British embassy in Istanbul and was then appointed to the embassy in Ankara from 1927 to 1930, noted his sympathy for the *Yüzellilikler*: "these people have had a bad time but they are, quite naturally, anti-Kemalist".[85]

The Ligue directly targeted Ankara, too. In 1931, two telegraphs were sent to Mustafa Kemal Paşa protesting his re-election as president of the republic in very strong terms, referring to his rule as an "evil dictatorship".[86] They were read out in the parliament where they were roundly condemned by the MPs, who called the *Yüzellilikler*, and in particular Mehmed Ali and his associates, "traitors to the nation", "dense, mindless", "ruffians condemned to statelessness", "the diggers of the nation's grave, the thieves of the nation's shroud, bad-omened jail birds", among other things.[87] They also created a big commotion both in the Turkish press[88] and among the general public.[89] This reaction drew the Turkish political establishment firmly together around Mustafa Kemal. These telegraphs and the reaction they created were reported as far away as the USA. Without naming the Ligue, J.W. Collins, in *The New York Times*, reported that these telegraphs "came as a bombshell" in Turkey:

> This is the first time in many years that exiled Turkish politicians have shown any signs of activity and their reasons for coming into the open on matters of interested speculation. In some quarters it is believed that they

85 Tahir, La Ligue des Réfugiés Turcs, Paris to the Under-Secretary, the Foreign Office, London, 7 July 1932, The National Archives, London [hereafter TNA], FO 371/16095, pp. 387–9.

86 Quoted in Bingöl, *150'likler Meselesi*, p. 164.

87 *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, Devre: IV, Fevkalede İçtima, Üçüncü İnikat, 14 May 1931, vol. 1, pp. 35–43, quotations from p. 36 and p. 41 (https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d04/c001/tbmm04001003.pdf).

88 Yunus Nadi, "Vatansız Serseriler" [Ruffians without a fatherland], *Cumhuriyet*, 17 Mayıs 1931, p. 1; "Mecliste Okunan Mehmet Ali'nin Telgrafı Derin ve Umumi Bir Nefretle Karşılandı" [Mehmed Ali's telegraph read in the parliament was received with a deep and general hatred], *Vakit*, 15 May 1931, p. 1 and p. 6; "Vatansızların Telgrafları Meclis'te Nefretle Karşılandı" [The telegraphs of those without a fatherland were received with hatred in the parliament], *Milliyet*, 15 May 1931, p. 1 and p. 6; "Gazinin Etrafında Toplanalım. Her Zaman Her Yerde O Bozguncular" [Let's gather around Gazi. Always and everywhere those defeatists], *Milliyet*, 16 May 1931, p. 1 and p. 5; "Hainlerin Gazi'ye Çektikleri Telgraf Meclis'te Tel'in Edildi" [The telegraph wired to Gazi by the traitors was cursed in the parliament], *Yarın*, 15 May 1931, p. 1 and p. 4.

89 "Halkın Nefreti Vatan Hainlerine Karşı Pek Büyüktür" [The hatred of people against the traitors to the fatherland is very great], *Vakit*, 16 May 1931, p. 1.

> are being financed and encouraged by a foreign power, and it is remarked that most of them are now living in French territory. It is not likely that they can cause any actual trouble for the present régime, as they are neither numerous nor powerful. Still their action has served as a reminder that there are Turks who do not approve of the Kemalist government.[90]

This coverage outside Turkey provided a certain level of leverage for Mehmed Ali who was also busy leading a clandestine organization "Osmanlı Mukaddes İhtilal Komitesi" (The Ottoman Committee of the Sacred Revolution) which aimed to restore the Ottoman dynasty in Turkey.[91]

Apart from its work with members of the *Yüzellilikler*, the Ligue des Réfugiés Turcs provided a certain level of official status for non-*Yüzellilik* refugees who were without the protection of the League of Nations by making them members of this association. The Ligue lobbied on their behalf in Geneva and managed to bring their lack of protection by the League of Nations onto the agenda of the Consultative Intergovernmental Commission for Refugees convened on 24 January 1933 in Geneva, in a period when Turkey was already a member of the League of Nations. The aim was to extend the scope of the League of Nations' definition of Turkish refugees to include the Ottoman royal family members, the families of the *Yüzellilikler*, Ottoman subjects born within the modern Turkish borders but who had left the country before the Treaty of Lausanne (thus covering any Armenian or Greek), those Turkish subjects who were "victims of attacks carried out by the government of the Turkish republic on their liberties and their basic rights" and who hence "were obliged to take refuge abroad and were deprived of all protection" (approximately 20,000 people), and those who had escaped from Turkey since 1924 "under the threat of political revenge".[92] Although this request was never accepted, it did result in highlighting the situation of other groups of refugees associated with the Turkish republic. Further, the Ligue was listened to in the League of Nations as a mouthpiece for not only the *Yüzellilikler*, but also for any groups which claimed rights in Turkey.

In the same year as he established the Ligue, Mehmed Ali also started to publish a newspaper in French, *La République enchaînée*, whose publication continued well into 1933. Publishing newspapers was a main explicit part of

90 Collins, J.W., "Angora is annoyed by Turkish exiles", *The New York Times*, 24 May 1931.

91 For this organization, see Halıcı, Şaduman, "Türk İstihbarat Belgeleri Işığında Osmanlı Mukaddes İhtilal Komitesi ve Çalışmaları" [The Ottoman Committee of the Sacred Revolution and its workings in the light of Turkish intelligence documents], *Bilig*, 96 (2021), 61–91.

92 G.A.C.-11-1933, LON, D17535, file 1933 R5614, online access via https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/.

the oppositional activities of the *Yüzellilikler* and other oppositional actors. But such newspapers were mostly in Turkish.[93] Mehmed Ali himself, too, was involved in the publication of such newspapers such as *İntibah* published in Shumen, Bulgaria.[94] The expensive venture of publishing a newspaper in French was, however, different as its target was an international audience. Although an official in the British Foreign Office commented that "How this destitute Turkish exile can expect to run a Paris weekly, on the lines of *La République enchaînée* is a complete mystery to me",[95] according to Turkish intelligence sources, the money for the publication came from various sources: the last caliph Abdülmecid, Abdülhamid II's son Abid, the French newspaper owner François Coty, the sultan of Sumatra, various Indian Muslims, and three Jewish sponsors as well as the British secret service (arranged by Mehmed Ali's English wife).[96] This newspaper united a dispersed array of oppositional elements, both as contributors and readers, not only *Yüzellilikler* but also those who had left the Ottoman empire and Turkey at different times. While people such as Selahaddin Ali and Arif Oruç, who "was recently removed by the current regime",[97] wrote in the newspaper, it was read not only by the Turkish opposition in exile but also by the Armenian diaspora[98] as well as by anybody opposing the Kemalist regime. Apparently Mehmed Ali sent a copy of this newspaper to Dr. Rıza Nur, who had left Turkey in 1926 on political grounds and was then living in Paris. Upon receiving this newspaper, Rıza Nur commented: "A newspaper which is in opposition to Turkey. Let's see, what will it write?"[99]

Even from the few copies of the newspaper which I was able to access at the League of Nations Archives and via the digital platform of the Bibliothèque

93 For details see Halıcı, *Yüzellilik Gazeteciler*.

94 27 October 1931, BCA, 121-11-00-02-50-1-152.

95 T.B. Wildman, British Consul General, Amsterdam to Sir Odo Russell, British Minister, The Hague, 14 January 1930, TNA, FO 371/14575/E. 387, note 1, in Şimşir, Bilal N. (ed.), *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk (1919–1938). Cilt-7 1930–1933/ British Documents on Atatürk (1919–1938). Volume-7 1930–1933* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2006), p. 1.

96 Bingöl, *150'likler Meselesi*, p. 165; Halıcı, Şaduman, "Damat Ferit'in Dahiliye Nazırı Mehmet Ali Bey'in Milli Mücadele ve Sürgün Yılları" [The Years, during the National Liberation War and in exile, of Damat Ferid's minister of internal affairs Mehmed Ali Bey], *Atatürk Üniversitesi Atatürk Dergisi*, 8/2 (2019), pp. 132–3.

97 *La République enchaînée*, 20 February 1933, no. 41, LON, S 545, file 4; For Arif Oruç's activities in Bulgaria, see Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, "A dangerous axis: the "Bulgarian Müftü", the Turkish opposition and the Ankara government, 1928–1936", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 44/5 (2008), 775–89.

98 26 July 1933, BCA, 490-01-00-00-585-20-2, pp. 18–20.

99 Dr. Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım 3. Rıza Nur Atatürk Kavgası* [My Life and My Memoirs 3. The Dispute between Rıza Nur and Atatürk], ed. Abdurrahman Dilipak (Istanbul: İşaret Yayınları, 1992), p. 386 and p. 541.

nationale de France the very aggressive and critical nature of its content is evident. More importantly, these issues show how this newspaper tried to project an image of representing all the oppositional elements to the republican regime, both in Turkey and abroad. For instance, on 15 February 1931, the paper, under the heading "Les martyrs", published the full list of those who were punished for insurrection and the brutal killing of Ensign Mustafa Fehmi Kubilay and two municipal watchmen Hasan and Şevki in Menemen on 23 December 1930. The first page also had long commentaries by Mehmed Ali, who described himself as "ex-minister of internal affairs of Turkey", and editor-in chief Necati Rıfat, accusing the republican government of arbitrary rule, tyranny and terror.[100] In another issue, there was a rather clumsy poem in Turkish by "D. Arsln [sic.]" from Cairo written in Latin script. After insulting the leaders of the republic by insinuation, the author incited the "people" (*halk*) against the Turkish government: "You people!/ Rise up!/ Make yourselves heard!/ Whoever chokes your voice is a dog". In a clear demonstration of his political agenda, he called on them to "put your father [the sultan] into the palace".[101] The desire to revive Ottoman dynastic rule and for the restoration of the caliphate was an important part of the newspaper's discourse. On 20 February 1933, the newspaper fiercely defended the honour of the Ottoman dynasty. Responding to the Istanbul newspaper *Milliyet's* news about the ex-caliph Abdülmecid, his daughter Dürrüşehvar and his son Faruk, it declared: "we make it our duty to unmask these impostures and we demonstrate to Mustafa [Kemal] and his servants, the uselessness of these mystifications which fool no one, neither in Turkey, nor abroad but on the contrary, promote and increase sympathy towards this dynasty".[102]

Mehmed Ali kept up a steady communication with various members of the Ottoman dynasty, in particular, Abdülmecid whom he supported by, for example, arranging for the publication of Abdülmecid's letter countering Mahmut Soydan's claims in his newspaper *Milliyet* about Abdülmecid's actions during the National Liberation War.[103] Mehmed Ali apparently arranged for the publication of this letter in *Muhalefetten Sesler*, a Turkish newspaper published in Syria by Nizameddin Kibar, a staunch opponent of the regime in Turkey and a pro-Kurdish activist. This paper was circulated among the Turkish opposition both in the Middle East and the Balkans and smuggled into Turkey. Mehmed

100 *La République enchaînée*, 13 February 1932, p. 1.

101 *La République enchaînée*, 5 January 1932, p. 4.

102 "Abdul-Medjid, la Princesse Durruchehvar et le Prince Farouk", *La République enchaînée*, 20 February 1933, LON, S 545, file 4.

103 Soydan, Mahmut, *Milli Mücadele Tarihine Dair Notlar. Ankaralı'nın Defteri* [Notes on the History of the National Struggle. The Notebook of a Man from Ankara], ed. Nejdet Bilgi (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2006), pp. 94–5.

Ali also tried to have the letter published in French. By stressing the lack of funds, which hampered this endeavour, and the financial and other difficulties which he and his colleagues, Nizameddin Kibar, who included translations of items from *La République enchaînée* in his newspaper, and Arif Oruç, who had contributed both to *La République enchaînée* and *Muhalefetten Sesler* as well as being involved in the publication of *Yarın* and other oppositional publications,[104] experienced, Mehmed Ali subtly sought to extract money from the ex-caliph for himself and his non-*Yüzellilik* comrades.[105]

The role played by *La République enchaînée* was well-known to the League of Nations, despite any attempt to make it appear as an independent organ of the Turkish opposition. Although the paper might be presented on its front page as "the organ of the Parti Democraté Paysan Turc",[106] it was in fact the publication of the Ligue which acted under the auspices of the League of Nations. The League was thus fully aware that the Ligue was more than a simple non-political refugee organization.

In Turkey, the press coverage of the period unsurprisingly indicates that *La République enchaînée*, which "publishes venom against Turkey and our revolution column after column"[107] was seen as a product of an ongoing international conspiracy against the country.[108] In March 1930, the Istanbul newspaper *Vakit* published a front-page article on *Yüzellilik* activities in Paris and asked: "From whom does the secret treasonous organization, backed by France, which just yesterday signed a Treaty of Friendship [The Turkish-French Treaty of Friendship, 3 February 1930] with us, get help?" It also published a caricature depicting Turkish Prime Minister İsmet Paşa and French Prime Minister André Tardieu, cordially shaking hands as a symbol of the recently signed friendship agreement, while two sinister looking men, one wearing a hat and holding a smoking bomb and one with a long moustache, wearing a fez and gripping a dagger, were standing behind the French prime minister.[109]

104 16 May 1933, BCA, 490-01-00-00-585-20-2, pp. 36–7 and annexes.

105 In *Mektuplar* [Letters], Taha Toros Arşivi, Marmara University Open Access System, accessed via http://hdl.handle.net/11424/125551.

106 Mehmed Ali, presented himself as the head of "Türk Demokrat Partisi" (Turkish Democrat Party), see Mazıcı, Nurşen, "Af Yasalarında 150'likler" [The *Yüzellilikler* in amnesty laws], *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 55/1 (2000), p. 132.

107 "Eski Hafiye? Mahut Mehmet Ali'nin Mahiyeti" [Old spy? The character of notorious Mehmed Ali], *Akşam*, 26 March 1931, p. 2.

108 "150 likler Ağrı Dağı Hadisesine Burunlarını Sokmak mı İstiyorlar" [Do *Yüzellilikler* want to poke their noses into the Mount Ararat incident?], *Vakit*, 7 July 1930, pp. 1–2; "Yüzellilik Mehmed Ali Meğer Büyük Bir Vatanperver imiş de Haberimiz Yok" [Even if *Yüzellilik* Mehmed Ali was a great patriot, we had no news of it], *Yeni Sabah*, 13 October 1939, p. 1.

109 "Yüzellilikler Pariste Faaliyette" [*Yüzellilikler* are active in Paris], *Vakit*, 5 March 1930, p. 1.

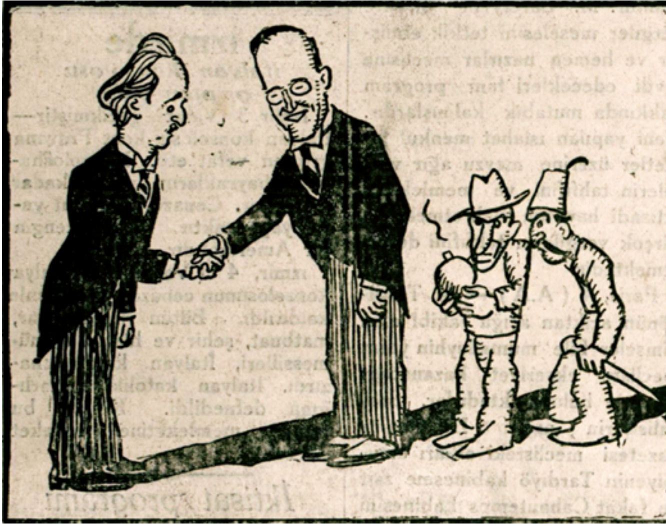

FIGURE 5.1 Turkish Prime Minister İsmet Paşa and French Prime Minister André Tardieu, *Vakit*, 5 March 1930, p. 1

Ankara followed *La République enchaînée* closely and pressured the French government to stop its publication, eventually leading to the closure of the newspaper.[110] Ankara's pressure was very well-known by the oppositional elements[111] and this, to a certain extent, provided Mehmed Ali with credibility among the political opposition in exile.

Further empowered by the support of the League of Nations, Mehmed Ali used and abused his position in *La République enchaînée* and the refugee association. In a letter written from Greece to Johnson in 1931, it was noted that "The Director of the Turkish newspaper which is published in Paris, "La République enchaînée", has just advised the four refugees that the sum of 8,000 francs will be remitted to them as a subsidy through our delegation. They asked me if I have received the sum in question. I should be grateful if you could inform me of your opinion in this matter".[112]

The Ligue acted in the same way with the non-*Yüzellilik* "Turkish political refugee", Namık Hilmi, who was promised by the Ligue 500 francs in advance to be paid by Nansen Office in Athens, a sum for which the Ligue stood guarantor. In an apologetic letter sent from Geneva, Alexandre Kotelnikov in Greece

110 Halıcı, "Damat Ferit'in Dahiliye Nazırı Mehmet Ali Bey", p. 153.

111 See for example, Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım 3*, p. 541.

112 The representative in Greece to Johnson, 5 November 1931, LON, S 545, file 4.

was warned not to take the surety of the Ligue into account as its financial situation was "most precarious".[113]

Mehmed Ali, however, was not unopposed in his position as there was an embedded rivalry among the *Yüzellilikler*. Even Rıza Nur noted that "All of these *Yüzellilikler* are immoral, crooks and go at each other tooth and nail. If they cannot find anybody to swindle, they swindle each other".[114] This general hostility was apparent in the Ligue. In his letter dated 7 August 1932, intercepted by Turkish intelligence, İşkenceci Mülazım (The Torturer Lieutenant) (Mehmed) Adil (no. 50), who was known for the tortures he had inflicted upon the nationalists, accused Mehmed Ali of usurping the position of representative of the *Yüzellilikler*,[115] and he and his comrades, non-*Yüzellilik*s Topalzade Osman Nuri and İsmail Eşref, claimed that Mehmed Ali was corrupt through and through:

> [Mehmed Ali] says I am a great leader and head delegate of the opposition. He hops up and down and blusters that financial assistance that will be made must go through me. This worthless individual forgets his past countless and innumerable sins and abuses. We have absolutely no trust in Mehmed Ali Bey who in the space of 20 days as a minister embezzled 30,000 lira from the nation, who swallowed up tens of thousands of francs which were collected for the 'Mağduriyeti Siyasiye Cemiyeti' [Society for Political Victims] set up in Romania, who is a disgraced criminal condemned for carpet smuggling, who ingested 8,000 French francs entrusted to him to transport Sadık Beyefendi to Europe, who last year had the League of Nations collect 10,000 francs, whose newspaper was closed due to his unprincipled [behaviour] and lack of ideals, and who, blinded by greed, does not know what he is worshipping.[116]

They organized the sending of telegraphs by about 200 of "our friends" in Greece to Max Huber, the president of the International Nansen Office for Refugees, rejecting the authority of Mehmed Ali's Ligue, declaring "we have absolutely no trust in this man, notorious for his endless corruption". They

113 Secretary General, International Nansen Office for Refugees, Geneva to Kotelnikov, Athens, 25 October 1932, LON, S 545, No. 4.

114 Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım 3*, p. 541.

115 "Yüzelliliklerden İşkenceci Adil'in Mektuplarının Özeti, Belge 1" [The summaries of the letters of İşkenceci Adil from *Yüzellilikler*, document 1], 4 September 1932 and "Belge 2" [Document 2], undated in Duran, Tülay (ed.), "150 liklerin Gizli Mektupları (VI)" [The secret letters of the *Yüzellilikler* (VI)], *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi. Dün/Bugün/Yarın*, 37 (February 2000), p. 46.

116 7 August 1932, BCA, 121-11-00-02-11-50-1-136.

"respectfully" requested the Nansen Office to send financial assistance directly to the address in their letter, thus clearly underlining their rejection of Mehmed Ali's position.[117] Shortly after, "L'Office des réfugiés turcs en Gréce" (The Office for Turkish Refugees in Greece) was set up in Thessaloniki by İşkenceci Adil, İsmail Eşref, who falsely claimed to be no. 61[118] on the *Yüzellilik* list, and two other non-*Yüzellilikler*.[119] This short-lived office was recognized by the League but was not granted any financial assistance.[120] A year after the opening of the Greek office, a similar initiative was taken in Bucharest to open "un office des réfugiés turc en Roumania" (an office for Turkish refugees in Romania), but, unlike its Greek counterpart, this office was apparently not hostile to Mehmed Ali, as the news about this initiative was announced in *La République enchaînée*.[121]

Mehmed Ali used *La République enchaînée* against those *Yüzellilikler* who did not support his views and actions. As reported by Istanbul based newspaper *Akşam*, Mehmed Ali accused journalist and eminent author Refik Halid (Karay) (no. 100), who was the director of the Istanbul government's post and telegraph office, and who took a strong position against the National Liberation War, of "selling his pen to Ankara". As a response to this attack, Refik Halid started to publish articles in his Aleppo-based newspaper *Vahdet* revealing all Mehmed Ali's ill-doings.[122] Mehmed Ali then sued Refik Halid for 1000 liras of "moral damages".[123] But it should be noted here that there was an embedded hostility between these two as early as 1923. Refik Halid in his memoirs published in that year, described the ex-minister as "the most novice of the ministers of internal affairs" who "does not have any experience in state affairs". The common element that held Mehmed Ali and Damat Ferid Paşa together was,

117 7 August 1932, BCA, 121-11-00-02-11-50-1-137.

118 The real no. 61 was Kuşçubaşı Eşref's brother Hacı Sami who was killed in 1927 while he was trying to infiltrate into Turkey from Greece in order to assassinate Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

119 L'office des réfugiés Turc en Gréce, Thessaloniki to Kotelnikov, Nansen Office, Athens, 18 November 1932; Kotelnikov, Nansen Office, Athens to Mehmed Adil, L'office des réfugiés Turc en Gréce, Thessaloniki, 22 November 1932; L'office des réfugiés Turc en Gréce, Thessaloniki to Nansen Office, Athens, 26 December 1932, LON, S 545, No. 4.

120 The Nansen Office, Athens to L'office des réfugiés Turc en Gréce, Thessaloniki, 6 February 1933, LON, S 545, No. 4.

121 *La République enchaînée*, 20 February 1933, no. 41, LON, S 545, No. 4.

122 "Eski Hafiye?", p. 2; Karaer, Nihat, *Tam Bir Muhalif Refik Halid Karay. Yüzellilikler Meselesi* [A True Oppositional Figure Refik Halid Karay. The *Yüzellilikler* Question] (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 1998), p. 101.

123 Refik Halid to Rıza Tevfik, 10 September 1933, in Uçman, Abdullah (ed.), *Aziz Feylesofum. Refik Halid'den Rıza Tevfik'e Mektuplar* [My Dear Philosopher. Letters from Refik Halid to Rıza Tevfik] (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2014), p. 119.

he said, "ignorance".[124] For Refik Halid, Mehmed Ali was one of those "two-bit men" who "are obliged to be something and to land something by collecting a few ignoramuses and rascals [around them]".[125]

Ongoing corruption allegations against Mehmed Ali eventually led to his removal from this position in the Ligue by the French authorities and the Ligue was disenfranchised by the League of Nations.[126] The news about Mehmed Ali's fate was heartily celebrated by Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı, who was once Mehmed Ali's close ally. He shared with his fellow *Yüzellilik* Aziz Nuri (no. 40) in Piraeus, Greece, the "excellent and auspicious news" that the "quarrelsome and born swindler, spy and pickpocket Mehmed Ali has at last got the end he deserved".[127] Aziz Nuri and Gümülcineli İsmail had a common past. They had worked against the nationalist forces when they were both in Bursa. Aziz Nuri, who escaped to Egypt in 1913 and, according to Turkish intelligence reports, had served the British and French in the First World War, returned to Istanbul after the war and took an active role in Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası and, with British support, was appointed as head of the party branch in Bursa.[128] In order to prevent the Paris office being handed over to someone else, Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı asked Aziz Nuri to arrange for *Yüzellilik* and non-*Yüzellilik* members of the Turkish opposition in Greece to sign the petitions in French attached to his letter supporting his own appointment to the directorship of the Ligue, for "I will be able to take upon myself this work as an act of sacrifice in the name of the rights and interests of the wretched victimized *Yüzellilikler* and others". He wanted these petitions, endorsed, if possible, by the representative of the Nansen Office in Athens or by the Greek authorities, to be sent to Paris, to the director of the Foreign Service Bureau, the office which had removed Mehmed Ali from the Ligue and started a corruption investigation against him.[129] Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı eventually succeeded in taking control of the Ligue.[130] However, like Mehmed Ali, Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı, too, did not really represent the majority of the opposition, and clashed dramatically and

124 Karay, Refik Halid, *Minelbab İlelmihrab* [From End to End] (Istanbul: İnkilap ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1964), p. 95.

125 Refik Halid to Rıza Tevfik, 17 August 1931, in Uçman, *Aziz Feylesofum*, p. 64.

126 Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı to Aziz Nuri, Piraeus, 16 March 1937, BCA, 121-11-00-02-5-25-1-37.

127 Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı to Aziz Nuri, Piraeus, 16 March 1937, BCA, 121-11-00-02-5-25-1-37.

128 Halıcı, Şaduman, "Yüzellilik Yeşilzâde Aziz Nuri'nin Yunan Kıralı'na Sunduğu Mektup ve Sürgün Yılları" [*Yüzellilik* Yeşilzade Aziz's letter presented to the King of Greece and his years in exile], *9. Uluslararası Atatürk Kongresi, The 9th International Congress on Atatürk*, 12–15 November 2019, ed. Erdem Ünlan and Halil Aytuğ Tokur (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2021), pp. 2295–300.

129 Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı to Aziz Nuri, Piraeus, 16 March 1937 (this is the date given on the copy of the letter), BCA, 121-11-00-02-5-25-1-37.

130 The Turkish Embassy, Athens, 8 January 1937, BCA, 121-11-00-02-1-3-1-103.

very publicly with Mustafa Sabri who lampooned him in a poem: "The oppositional party has only one İsmail but/ he totally astounded the Kemalist bandits / he got a *ferman* to swindle the world/ but this was not sufficient, he also robbed the owner of the *ferman*". Gümülcineli İsmail's response to Mustafa Sabri was very unsavoury. Claiming that Mustafa Sabri had been expelled from Mecca and Jiddah due to his homosexual acts, he described him as having turned into "the carcase of pig due to syphilis and itch" and "a penis coagulated with pus and pustules".[131]

Money, Passports and Morale for the Refugees

The League's empowering of the Turkish opposition was not only on a group level. Individually, these people received money, Nansen passports and travel allowances, although not to the extent that they wished. In September 1929, *Yüzellilik* Rumbeyoğlu Fahreddin (no. 13), the ex-Ottoman minister of public education, now living in Nice and chamberlain of Abdülmecid, the last caliph,[132] requested "a passport of the League of Nations". He also claimed that Turkish refugees were in the same category as Russian *emigré*s, and requested protection of the League for all.[133] A month before, Kiraz Hamdi, who was working as an informant for Ankara,[134] sent a list of the refugees residing in Romania who were without any diplomatic protection and described these 17 people as "unfortunate Ottoman political refugees". This list also contained non-*Yüzellilik* names.[135]

The most prolific petitioner among the *Yüzellilikler* was Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif (No. 52), who was the governor of Kırkağaç who had collaborated with the Greek forces, escaped to Greece after the Turkish victory and ended up in Rhodes, then under Italian occupation. A graduate of Mülkiye Mektebi, Mehmed Şerif, who appears to have been able to write in French, wrote his first letter nine days after the acceptance of the Arrangement, asking Nansen to let him know about the decision of the Council concerning the proposed Arrangement. This late letter might be due to the news traveling slowly or to Mehmed Şerif wanting to find a pretext to reach Nansen and his office directly. Whatever the reason, this letter became one of the many letters which

131 Refik Halid to Rıza Tevfik, in Uçman, *Aziz Feylesofum*, 29 May 1933, p. 108.

132 Bingöl, Sedat, *150'likler Meselesi*, Annex 20, p. 276.

133 Rumbeyoğlu Fahreddin, Nice, 10 September 1929, LON, C 1416, R 409/0/6.

134 Halıcı, "San Remo Görüşmeleri", pp. 269–70 and "Yüzellilik Bir Muhbirin Portresi", pp. 2350–7.

135 Kiraz Hamdi, Constanța, Romania, 12 August 1929, LON, C 1406, R 409/0/6.

Mehmed Şerif would despatch and to which he would receive replies. Indeed, on 17 August 1928, he was informed about the acceptance of the Arrangement, the text of this document even being attached to the letter for Mehmed Şerif's information.[136] Over the years, Mehmed Şerif regularly asked many things from the League of Nations. In 1928, he asked for assistance to go to Berlin to a photographic studio for his professional development,[137] and five years later, in November 1934, for an identity card to enable him to move to Jerusalem or other countries which recognized the 1928 Arrangement.[138] Requesting assistance to move to other countries was a common demand of the Turkish refugees. Circassian Eskişehir'li Sefer Hoca (Sefer Hoca from Eskişehir) (no. 76), for example, who had collaborated with the Greek forces which invaded Eskişehir and headed a Circassian society there, asked, on 24 November 1931, for assistance from Geneva via the Nansen Office in Athens to enable him and his wife, his daughter and his son to move to Syria or another Muslim country, except Iran. As his financial situation was "extremely difficult", he asked for a subsidy of about 2,000 francs for this relocation.[139]

The most common request directed to the League of Nations by *Yüzellilik* and non-*Yüzellilik* refugees was that for financial assistance. Living in Athens and unemployed, ex-Captain Küçük Edhem (no. 62), for example, who was an associate of Çerkez Ethem, approached the Nansen Office in Athens for an advance of 200 Swiss francs, providing a guarantor letter from Mr. Kalligeris, the owner of two big cafés in Athens: "Panhellinion" and "Posidon".[140] Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, too, persistently asked for material support either directly or

136 Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, Rhodes to Dr. Nansen, 9 July 1928 and the High Commission for the Refugees to Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, 17 August 1928, LON, C 1423, R 419/2/34/1.

137 Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, Rhodes to the High Commission for Refugees, Geneva, 20 November 1928, LON, C 1423, R 419/2/34/1.

138 Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, Rhodes to the Secretary General of the League of Nations, 11 November 1934, LON, R 3656-1-15279-15279, online access via https://lontad-project.unog.ch/. Also see Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, Rhodes, 29 September 1929, LON, C 1423, R 419/2/34/1.

139 Athens to T.F. Johnson, the Secretary General of International Nansen Office for Refugees, Geneva, 24 November 1931, LON, S 545, No. 4. Ultimately, Sefer Hoca stayed in Greece and became a Greek citizen. Halıcı, Şaduman, "Yüzellilikler", Unpublished Master's Thesis, Eskişehir Anadolu Üniversitesi, 1998, p. 199.

140 Johnson, Geneva, 11 December 1932, LON, S 545, file 4. While Küçük Edhem was entitled to ask for such benefits from the Nansen Office as a *Yüzellilik*, 15 years later, he sued CHP İzmir MP Haydar Rüştü Öktem, the editor-in-chief and owner of the newspaper *Anadolu* as well as the managing editor of the newspaper, for slander. The reason was that Öktem, in his column, had called Küçük Edhem (now İbrahim Etem İzmirli) a "Yüzellillik", as well as two other things. Bartu, Agah (ed.), *Siyasî, Mühim Bir Dâva. Demokrat Parti ve Yüzellilikler* [An Important Political Court Case. The Democrat Party and the *Yüzellilikler*] (İzmir: Doğanlar Basımevi, 1947), p. 5.

via Kotelnikov at the Nansen Office in Athens. On 10 November 1933, he asked the headquarters of the International Nansen Office for Refugees in Geneva to fund the renewal of equipment for his photography business. Geneva then asked Kotelnikov in the Athens Office to contact Sadıkzade directly to ascertain the amount he needed and whether he would be able to present "solvent guarantors".[141] Geneva's contacting the Nansen Office in Athens in relation to Sadıkzade's request from Rhodes shows how Athens was legally dealing with Rhodes. This presents further evidence of the centrality of the Nansen Office in Athens for the Turkish refugees and gives a clear idea of how Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif was connected with the rest of the *Yüzellilikler* in the orbit of Greece despite the fact that he lived outside Greek territory.

These demands for material support, however, were mostly rejected on the grounds that the petitioners were either not members of the *Yüzellilik* list or that the League did not have funds to offer.[142] But some of the *Yüzellilikler*, such as Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı, managed to benefit from the League's generosity. A letter from the Administrative Director of the Nansen Office, which begins "this refugee's case is well-known to us", shows that in December 1935 and May 1936, Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı received in total 500 Swiss francs in advance, including travel expenses for Greece and Yugoslavia. Apparently, this sum was not sufficient as he applied again in the autumn of 1936 for a further 800 Swiss francs, a sum which was well above the rate that the administrative director of the Nansen Office was authorized to pay.[143] Presumably knowing that his direct appeals to the Nansen Office would not produce any more results, İsmail Hakkı solicited the help of an old acquaintance Monsieur Gibert, the director of *L'Informateur de Seine-et-Oise*. Gibert, who had been in the French army in Thessaloniki under the direct command of generals Sarrail, Guillaumat and Franchet d'Esperey, vouched for İsmail Hakkı's "numerous and very important services" to the French during World War I, services for which he deserved but "unfortunately" was not awarded, the Medal of French Gratitude, a special medal awarded to civilians recognizing their services during the war. Recalling that "when condemned to death, the French authorities had arranged his escape on *Le Caucase*, which clearly demonstrates the

141 Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, Rhodes, 10 November 1933; the Secretary General, International Nansen Office for Refugees, Geneva to M.A. Kotelnikov, Athens, 18 December 1933, LON, S 545, No. 4.

142 For various examples, see LON, S 545, No. 4.

143 Georges Coroni, the Administrative Director of the International Nansen Office, Geneva to Monsieur le Secrétaire général adjoint pour les Réfugiés, Geneva, chargé de la Section des Bureaux internationaux et de la Coopération intellectuelle, the League of Nations, 9 November 1936, LON, R 3656-1-15279-15279, online access via via https://lontad-project.unog.ch/.

concern which he merited", Gibert stated that he believed that "the numerous and important services which he rendered, always without remuneration, merit that today, poor and defeated, one should interest oneself in his fate" and concluded with an offer, if required, to provide a confidential report on "certain services rendered" by İsmail Hakkı. From Gibert's letter İsmail Hakkı thus emerges very much as a "Friend of Allies".[144]

Although not so well-connected, Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı's namesake Çopur İsmail Hakkı (no. 24), who was a member of *Kuvva-i İnzibatiye* and an associate of Kiraz Hamdi Paşa from *İtila-ı Vatan* and who continued his opposition to the Kemalist government in exile by publishing the anti-Kemalist newspaper *İtila* in Xanthi between 1925 and 1930, received on 27 April 1934 an advance of 100 Swiss francs (3,440 drachmas) from the Nansen Office in Athens,[145] a considerable achievement as he was the only Turkish refugee in the lists of the Nansen Office in Athens. He was supposed to re-pay this money in instalments, but the documents show that he failed to do so.[146] Mehmed Refet (no. 109), the owner of the newspaper *Köylü*, asked for an advance of 300–400 francs from Geneva via the Nansen Office in Athens to return to Turkey after the 1938 Amnesty. He eventually got his passport from the Turkish consulate in Athens and left for İzmir in July 1938.[147]

While the League thus provided material support to only a few refugees, the most important effect of its granting of refugee status was related to the morale of the opposition, for its provision implied international support and led to a continuous expectation of action against Turkey by the international community, in particular by France and Britain. In his petition asking for financial assistance, Maan Mustafa, known as Hain Mustafa, Mustafa the Traitor (no. 33), ex-governor of Adapazarı who had been appointed to this position by the Greek occupying forces, declared himself very grateful to "all the great statesmen of England and France", both countries having intervened and rescued him from execution after he was captured by the nationalist forces, a move which allowed him to "regain my life and my freedom".[148] A couple

144 Monsieur Gibert, Directeur de 1' "Informateur", Vorbeil to Monsieur le Secrétaire général adjoint pour les Réfugiés, Geneva, chargé de la section des bureaux internationaux et de la coopération intellectuelle, Société des Nations, 1 November 1936, LON, R 3656-1-15279-15279, online access via https://lontad-project.unog.ch/. While the limited literature on Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı's activities during this period superficially mentions his cooperation with the British, his French connection is not even mentioned.

145 LON, S 545, No. 1.

146 LON, S 545, No. 5, 35–38. He appeared as both "Ismail Hakki Tsapour" and "Ismail Hakki" in the files.

147 Kotelnikov, Athens to G. Coroni Bey, the Administrative Director of the International Nansen Office, Geneva, 27 June 1938 and 30 July 1938, LON, S 545, No. 7.

148 Maan Mustafa, Thessaloniki, 6 December 1932, LON S 545, No. 4.

of years later, Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, representing himself as one of the "martyrs" of the protocol,[149] begged the League to take action against Turkey, now a member of the League of Nations, which pursued "violent aggression" against the *Yüzellilikler*.[150] Any opportunity to open up discussion of the Treaty of Lausanne was used by the *Yüzellilikler*. During the discussions about the modification of the Straits Regime set up by the Treaty of Lausanne, Sadıkzade, citing human rights, wanted the League to request the Turkish government to modify the protocol concerning the *Yüzellilikler*.[151] This reliance on the League was similar to the reliance of Said Molla (no. 98), who was the leading figure of The Friends of England Association, an institution which became synonymous with the Ottoman intellectual surrender to British imperialism in the Armistice period (1918–22) in Turkish nationalist historiography[152] and the owner of the newspaper *Yeni İstanbul* (later re-named *Türkçe İstanbul*), "upon the philanthropic sentiments of the League" to come to his aid.[153]

Exploiting the League of Nations

Such "philanthropic sentiments" and the system adopted by the League in relation to the *Yüzellilikler* were undoubtedly open to exploitation on different levels. To what extent such exploitations were a result of the League's connivance or the disharmony between different League offices or the inefficiency of Nansen Offices or deception of the League by certain individuals is open to discussion. It is, however, certain that the League's implementation of the 1928 Arrangement was not systematized, giving rise to many irregularities in the League's treatment of Turkish refugees.

One of the major problems which the League struggled with over the years was to have a clear idea of the number of *Yüzellilikler*. According to the published

149 Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, Rhodes to the Secretary General of the League of Nations, 11 November 1934, LON, R3656/1/15279/15279, online access via https://lontad-project.unog.ch/.

150 Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, Rhodes to the Secretary General of the League of Nations, 30 April 1935, LON, R3656/1/15279/15279, online access via https://lontad-project.unog.ch/.

151 Sadıkzade Mehmed Şerif, Rhodes to the Secretary General of the League of Nations, 27 April 1936, LON, R3656/1/15279/15279, online access via https://lontad-project.unog.ch/.

152 Kuran, Ahmed Bedevi, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İnkılâp Hareketleri ve Millî Mücadele* [The Revolutionary Movements in the Ottoman Empire and the National Struggle] (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2010), p. 748; Tunaya, *Mütareke Dönemi*, p. 465.

153 Said Molla, Nicosia, Cyprus to Johnson, Geneva, 3 January 1929, LON, C 1423, R 419/0/124.

International Nansen Office figures in 1935, there were only 60 Turkish refugees in different parts of the world.[154] Only two years earlier, this official League figure was 115.[155] On the other hand, according to la Ligue de Réfugiés Turcs's list of September 1935, only 99 of the *Yüzellilikler* were still alive, although this list had, oddly, included non-*Yüzellilik* names such as Nizameddin Kibar, a close ally of Mehmed Ali, described as "the former prefect of the province of Bursa".[156] Three years later, *Cumhuriyet*, discussing who would benefit from the 1938 Amnesty, provided the figure of 85 for those *Yüzellilikler* who were still alive, while another Istanbul newspaper, *Tan*, reduced this number to 74.[157] Apart from simple deception, as was the case with the Ligue's list, this discrepancy between the Nansen Office's figures and Turkish figures could be related to the fact that according to the League's definition, a *Yüzellilik* lost his "Turkish refugee" status, once he adopted another nationality. However, adoption of another nationality did not lead to the loss of *Yüzellilik* status either for the Ligue or for the Turkish republican authorities.

While it is thus possible to account for the discrepancies in the lists of *Yüzellilik* numbers, it is very difficult to find a rational explanation for the irregularities on the ground. One obvious irregularity was the odd system of counting Turkish refugees adopted by the International Nansen Office in Athens whereby it totally ignored the definition of the Arrangement of 1928. Athens produced the highest figures for Turkish refugees, resulting, for example, in a number of 46 for 1933–34. This number was very high even for Turkish authorities who did not pay any attention to whether a *Yüzellilik* had adopted another nationality, hence loosing *Yüzellilik* status. According to a Turkish intelligence report prepared in August 1933, the number of *Yüzellilikler* definitely living in Greece was 13, with 14 potentially living there in that year. Thus, the total number was 27, much lower than the Athens figure of 46.[158]

What accounted for the very high Athens Office numbers was that families of these *Yüzellilikler* were included on the list. This practice was not a secret to Geneva which received, starting in 1932, yearly reports from Athens including information about Turkish refugees. The figures below, obtained from the

154 The International Labour Office, "La Société des Nations et les réfugiés. Activité de l'Office international Nansen", *Informations Sociales*, 56/3 (21 October 1935), p. 113.

155 20A/8302/686 G.A.C.-21-1933, 8 December 1933, p. 4, LON, D17535, file 1933 R5614, online access via https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/.

156 "Copie de la liste des 150 réfugiés turcs, adressée le 6 septembre 1935 par l'Office général des réfugiés turcs à Paris", LON, R3656/1/15279/15279, online access via https://lontad-project.unog.ch/.

157 Mekki Said, "Büyük Af Projesi", *Cumhuriyet*, 30 May 1938, p. 7; "Siyasî Af Kanunu" [The political amnesty law], *Tan*, 31 May 1938, p. 10.

158 Bingöl, *150'likler Meselesi*, Annex 20, pp. 271–8.

TABLE 5.1 Turkish refugees in Greece (from the official files of the Nansen Office in Athens (closed in 1938))

Year	Total	Those who left Greece and their destinations	Women and children
1932[a]	50	20 (3 to Egypt; 11 to Yemen; 6 to Transjordan)	–
1932–33[b]	48 (corrected, 46)	–	–
1933–34[c]	46	2 (to Syria)	–
1932–35[d]	42	2 (to Syria)	–
1935–36[e]	40	–	7 women
1936–37[f]	38	–	7 women and 4 children
1937–38[g]	35	–	10 women and 4 children

a “Rapport sur l’activité de la représentation en Grèce depuis la fondation de l’Office Nansen jusqu’au 30 Juin 1932”, LON, S 545, No. 6.
b “Rapport sur l’activité de la représentation en Grèce de l’Office International Nansen pour les réfugiés à partir du 1 – er juillet 1932 jusqu’au 1-er juin 1933”, LON, S 545, No. 6.
c “Rapport sur l’activité de la représentation en Grèce de l’Office International Nansen pour les réfugiés à partir du 1 juin 1933 jusqu’au 1 juin 1934”, LON, S 545, No. 6.
d “Rapport sur l’activité de la représentation en Grèce de l’Office International Nansen pour les réfugiés à partir du 1 juillet 1932 jusqu’au 30 juin 1935”, LON, S 545, No. 6.
e “Rapport sur l’activité de la représentation en Grèce de l’Office International Nansen pour les réfugiés à partir du 30 juin 1935 jusqu’au 30 juin 1936”, LON, S 545, No. 6.
f “Rapport sur l’activité de la représentation en Grèce de l’Office International Nansen pour les réfugiés à partir du 30 juin 1936 jusqu’au 10 juin 1937”, LON, S 545, No. 6.
g “Rapport sur l’activité de la représentation en Grèce de l’Office International Nansen pour les réfugiés à partir du 1 juin 1937 jusqu’au 31 mai 1938”, LON, S 545, No. 6.

yearly reports, demonstrate that the Nansen Office in Greece extended the Turkish refugee category in contravention of the 1928 Arrangement.

This extension meant that the number of people who benefitted from the refugee status under the League of Nations had increased. It is clear that families of *Yüzellilikler* received Nansen passports through the Nansen Office in Athens. For example, two *Yüzellilikler*, Mustafa Sabri and his son İbrahim Sabri, and their wives and unmarried children were issued with Nansen passports, as were Mustafa Sabri’s son-in-law, Ali Vasıf, who was not a *Yüzellilik* but a prominent member of the Turkish opposition abroad, his wife and child.[159] Kotelnikov, who wrote to both the French and British embassies for visas on

159 Kotelnikov, Athens to T.F. Johnson, 27 November 1931, LON, S 545, No. 4.

behalf of Mustafa Sabri's extended family,[160] further supported Mustafa Sabri and İbrahim Sabri's request for a subsidy of 2,500 francs from the Nansen Office for their travel expenses to the Yemen via Egypt.[161] In the period when this family was treated very favourably by the League of Nations, Mustafa Sabri, his son and his son-in-law were very active against Kemalist Turkey in Western Thrace.[162]

While the Nansen Office in Athens saw no problem over issuing Nansen passports for Mustafa Sabri's family members regardless of whether they were covered by refugee status or not, two years earlier, Major Johnson in Geneva adopted a very firm stance on the application of the 1928 Arrangement when it came to Fatma Sultan. The daughter of Murad v, Fatma Sultan, who was living in exile in Bulgaria, asked for Nansen passports for herself and her family through the intermediary of the Bulgarian representative at the League of Nations. Johnson's response to Major A. Buxton was that "The list of these 150 political refugees does not, however, include the name of any member of the late imperial Ottoman family and, strictly speaking, it would not therefore appear possible to grant the latter the benefit of the Arrangement in question".[163]

In reality, it appears that Nansen passports were not so difficult to acquire if you knew how to do it. According to a Turkish intelligence report, a certain Kazım Efe from Greece travelled to Lebanon or Syria on a Nansen passport and his friends claimed that he was a member of the *Yüzellilikler* list.[164] But in fact, he was not one of the *Yüzellilikler* as there were only three *Yüzellilik* Kazıms by 1936, and they were either dead or lived outside Greece.[165] Identity theft was not unknown in the case of obtaining Nansen passports. In 1938, a bizarre set of correspondence found in the League of Nations files demonstrates the overall confusion. On 28 March 1938, Georges Coroni Bey, the Administrative Director of the Nansen International Office for Refugees in Geneva wrote to Kotelnikov in Athens asking whether a "Haidar Kyazin" was the *Yüzellililik* "Kiasim du village Chain bey d'Ada Bazar" (in the original *Yüzellilik* list no. 78 "Adapazarı Şahinbey Köyünden Kazım") and, if so, asked Athens to help Haidar Kyazin obtain a Nansen passport to travel to France. Coroni Bey even annexed

160 Kotelnikov to the British Consul General in Athens, 14 November 1931 and Kotelnikov to the French Consul in Athens, 18 November 1931, LON, S 545, No. 4.

161 Kotelnikov, Athens to T.F. Johnson, 27 November 1931; Kotelnikov, Athens to T.F. Johnson, 27 November 1931; Kotelnikov to T.F. Johnson, Geneva, 7 December 1931, LON, S 545, No. 4.

162 For example, see "Mustafa Sabri İskeçeye Müftü Olmıya Çalışıyor" [Mustafa Sabri is trying to be the Mufti of Xanthi], *Vakit*, 13 March 1930, p. 3.

163 T.F. Johnson to Major A. Buxton, 1 June 1929, LON, C 1416, R/409/0/8.

164 Beirut, 29 June 1937, BCA, 121-11-00-02-1-3-1-70.

165 5 February 1932, BCA, 121-11-00-02-1-3-1-72 and undated, BCA, 121-11-00-02-1-3-1-159.

to his letter the updated lists, with their own number sequences, of *Yüzellilikler* showing who was alive, who was deceased and who had adopted another country's nationality.[166] Shortly after this letter, it appears that the Nansen Office in Athens wrote to the Greek foreign ministry and asked for its assistance:

> I have the honour to send you herewith a copy of a request to the Nansen International Office for Refugees in Geneva by the political refugee Haidar M. Kyazin. The office believes that the person concerned appears on the list of 150 Turkish refugees established by the protocol of the Lausanne Conference, Kiazim of the village Chain bey of Ada Bazar (no. 46).
>
> In any case, we would be grateful if you would facilitate Mr. Kyazin in obtaining a Nansen passport which is essential for his trip to France.[167]

Apparently, the Nansen Office in Athens did not answer Coroni Bey's letter. On 22 April, Coroni Bey therefore asked whether Athens was in a position to respond favourably to Haidar Kyazin's request.[168] Surprisingly, on 30 April, Athens replied to Geneva stating that Haidar Kyazin was not *Yüzellilik* Kazım of the village of Şahinbey from Adapazarı and promising to obtain information about Haidar Kyazin. Oddly, Athens had already written to the Greek foreign ministry, in effect supporting Haidar Kyazin's identity as *Yüzellilik* Kazım and had even forwarded the updated Geneva *Yüzellilik* lists to the ministry. A further peculiarity arises when one checks these lists where *Yüzellilik* Kazım of the village of Şahinbey from Adapazarı appeared as both dead and alive (no. 46 on the alive list; no. 32 on the deceased list).[169] Coroni Bey, however, did not abandon Haidar Kyazin and wrote again to Athens to inquire about the investigation about him.[170] In response, on 30 July 1938, Athens repeated that Haidar Kyazin was not *Yüzellilik* Kazım. Further, the letter informed Geneva that due to the 1938 Amnesty in Turkey, Haidar Kyazin could obtain a passport from the Turkish consulate in Athens, so indicating that Nansen passports were no longer applicable for Turkish exiles.[171]

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166 Georges Coroni Bey, Geneva to Kotelnikov, Athens, 28 March 1938, LON, S 545, No. 7.

167 [The Nansen Office, Athens] to the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs in City [Athens], 7 April 1938, LON S 545, No. 7.

168 Georges Coroni Bey, Geneva to Kotelnikov, Athens, 22 April 1938, LON, S 545, No. 7.

169 [The Nansen Office, Athens] to Georges Coroni Bey, Geneva, 30 April 1938, LON S 545, No. 7. Lists are dated 11 November 1937 and entitled "Liste de *réfugiés* vivants de la liste de 150 *réfugiés* turcs" and "Liste de *réfugiés* décèdes de la liste de 150 *réfugiés* turcs".

170 Georges Coroni Bey, Geneva to Kotelnikov, Athens, 22 July 1938, LON, S 545, No. 7.

171 [The Nansen Office, Athens] to Georges Coroni Bey, Geneva, 30 July 1938, LON S 545, No. 7.

This lack of precision and confusion on the League's part in following the procedures which it itself had set up was also very clear in the case of Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı who took control of the Ligue after Mehmed Ali's removal, despite the fact that he was now an Albanian citizen and had hence lost his refugee status.[172] Similarly, Kiraz Hamdi Paşa, Albanian in origin and living in Constanţa, Romania, was already a holder of an Albanian passport, when he approached the League about Turkish refugees in Romania.[173] According to a Turkish intelligence report from 1932, Çopur İsmail Hakkı and İşkenceci Adil had both already received Greek citizenship by 1932.[174] Obviously, as explained earlier, this did not create an impediment to Çopur İsmail Hakkı's obtaining material benefits from the Nansen Office or İşkenceci Adil's setting up a refugee office in Thessaloniki recognized by the League of Nations, despite the fact that both men had lost their refugee status according to the 1928 Arrangement.

These people were not alone in attaining other states' passports. For example, while Aziz Nuri was busy writing to the League of Nations in his 'Turkish refugee' capacity, he, according to the Turkish intelligence reports, travelled extensively in the Middle East on Greek, British and Jordanian passports.[175] Although prominent Ottoman intellectual Rıza Tevfik (Bölükbaşı) (no. 16), who was put in the *Yüzellilikler* list as he was one of the signatories of the Treaty of Sèvres, was, as early as 1923, a holder of a passport of Transjordan, where he worked for King Abdallah,[176] he appeared with *heimatlos* status in the 1937 list of the League of Nations.[177] He did not, however, apparently himself feel any desire to be a part of a refugee group demanding political and material benefits, as evident in his 1924 letter: "I am very pleased with my present freedom, liberty and even my material life, and I have no intention of changing it. I do not want anything from anyone, and I do not take account of anybody".[178] Years

172 "*Réfugiés* turcs sur la liste de 150 qui ont acquis une autre nationalité", 11 November 1937, LON, S 545, No. 7.

173 Halıcı, "Yüzellilik Bir Muhbirin Portresi", p. 2349. See also "Refugies turcs sur la liste de 150 qui ont acquis une autre nationalité".

174 Bingöl, *150'likler Meselesi*, p. 155.

175 Halıcı, "Yüzellilik Yeşilzâde Aziz Nuri", pp. 2312–18.

176 RTB-423–28 Ocak (January) 1923, at Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul. Due to the pandemic, I was not able to see the passport, but the catalogue entry gives the details as follows: "A passport with an Amman seal, belonging to Rıza Tevfik and his wife Nazlı Hanım".

177 "Liste de *réfugiés* vivants de la liste de 150 *réfugiés* turcs", 11 November 1937, LON, S 545, file 7.

178 Rıza Tevfik, Amman to Rıza Turgud Bey, 27 August 1924 in Duran, Tülay (ed.), "Yakın Tarihimizde "Yüzellilikler". Rıza Tevfik (Bölükbaşı) Beyin Mektupları" [*Yüzellilikler* in our recent history. The letters of Rıza Tevfik (Bölükbaşı) Bey], *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi.*

later, although he had yearnings for Istanbul,[179] Rıza Tevfik was still happy with the life he led: "In good health, and good humour/ I am not old but an oldish young man/ Not everybody is as fortunate as I am/ in eastern lands where I am very much revered".[180]

Conclusion

In a book published for the tenth anniversary of the League by the Secretariat of the League of Nations, the position of Turkish refugees was presented as a part of a humanitarian success story of refugee aid and settlement: "Thanks to the efforts of the League, through the High Commission and with the help of the International Labour Organisation and various Governments and private organisations, the Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean and Turkish refugees are gradually being settled in the Near East, or, through the facilities given by identity cards, are finding means to emigrate to countries where they have relatives or friends or are in a position to support themselves".[181]

In reality, these 150 Ottoman subjects, the *Yüzellilikler*, were recognized as the first and only Muslim refugee group in the interwar period by the League of Nations as the result of political, not humanitarian, consideration, related to the fact that they were active opponents of the new regime in Turkey and seen as "Friends of the Allies". The 'fluidity' of the *Yüzellilik* numbers gave a flexibility to the system which allowed the inclusion of those not covered by the Arrangement of 1928 and gave considerable autonomy to certain oppositional figures such as Mehmed Ali. The importance of the League's provision of refugee status was, apart from any material assistance, that it created an apparently united political opposition group, recognised as such by the international community. This gave a considerable morale boost to the political opponents of the new Turkish regime and served to undermine, or attempt to undermine, the government in Ankara.

Dün/Bugün/Yarın, 28 (May 1999), p. 54. For a bleak portrayal of Rıza Tevfik's life in exile, see Mazıcı, "Af Yasalarında 150'likler", p. 95.

179 Kandemir, Feridun, *Rıza Tevfik'in İtirafları. Hayatı-Felsefesi-Şiirleri* [The Confessions of Rıza Tevfik. His Life, His Philosophy and His Poems] (Istanbul: Yağmur Yayınları, 2013), p. 195.

180 Rıza Tevfik, *Serabı Ömrüm* [The Mirage of My Life] (Istanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1949), p. 316.

181 *League of Nations. Ten Years of World Cooperation*, p. 276.

CHAPTER 6

Surviving in Nazi Berlin: Husni al-ʿUrabi's 89 Months in Exile

Peter Wien

Husni al-ʿUrabi (1894–1955), a co-founder of the Egyptian Communist Party in the 1920s, spent the years between late 1931 and early 1939 as an involuntary exile in Berlin, a most unlikely place for a person of his political background. I introduce the story of his experiences as exemplary for a concept that I call the *liminality of exile*. In this context, liminality indicates a status of being stuck on the threshold, being neither here nor there. Exile leaves a mark on a person's placement in the world and one's self-perception: the nuance between being *home* and *in place*.[1] For certain kinds of exile, at certain historical moments, this matter of self-perception becomes a matter of existence, if not survival. Moral joins physical dislocation in a hostile environment where the exile has to make difficult choices for or against adjustment, adaptation and adoption of standards in a society under dictatorial rule. An exiled person without protection needs to find his or her way in the thicket of daily provisions, legal challenges and the policing of the margins of society. If the person is lucky, he or she joins together with other such 'liminals' at the margins who can offer each other relief. In the present chapter, the dis-location takes place in Berlin, the capital of Hitler's Germany, during a period starting shortly before the Nazi takeover and ending just before the outbreak of World War II.

Husni al-ʿUrabi's story as he told it in his memoirs would have been intriguing without his stint under Nazi rule already.[2] In 1921, al-ʿUrabi co-founded the Egyptian Socialist Party, which became the Communist Party in 1922. Several trips to Moscow that the ambitious and, according to some accounts, quite reckless young man undertook in the early 1920s to establish contact with the

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1 For a recent example for the usage of the term in migrant studies see Kirk, Kate, Ellen Bal and Sarah Renee Janssen, "Migrants in liminal time and space: an exploration of the experiences of highly skilled Indian bachelors in Amsterdam", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43/16 (2017), 2771–87. I elaborate on the concept of liminality of exile in Wien, Peter, "Exile as liminality: tracing Muslim migrants in Fascist Europe", in *Claiming and Making Muslim Worlds*, ed. Jeanine Elif Dağyeli, Claudia Ghrawi and Ulrike Freitag (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), pp. 78–80.

2 al-ʿUrabi, Mahmud Husni, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa: 1931–1938* [Eighty Nine Months in Exile: 1931–1938] (Cairo: Matbaʿat al-Tawakkul, 1948).

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Third International were instrumental in a radicalization of the party away from the moderately socialist positions of bourgeois members. Al-ʿUrabi served as General Secretary of the party for a while, and his travels to the Soviet Union in 1922 and 1923 led him via Berlin, where he also made contacts with the German Communist Party (KPD).[3] In 1924, the Wafd government suppressed communist-led strikes and had the Egyptian communist leadership arrested, a move from which Egyptian communists only really began to recover after World War II.[4]

Al-ʿUrabi spent several years in prison. His relationship with the Communist Party afterwards is more difficult to determine.[5] On the one hand, he claimed that he had severed all his links to the party and lived in poverty and unemployment. According to other sources, al-ʿUrabi left the party in 1928 only, but continued to exert influence. He undertook another trip to Moscow in 1927 and attended Comintern committee meetings in the presence of Stalin. He also continued to publish essays on socialist and anti-imperialist topics in Egyptian magazines.[6] The authorities nevertheless did not lose sight of al-ʿUrabi, who decided, according to his memoirs, in 1931 that it was time to leave Egyptian soil for a while after the establishment of the authoritarian premiership of Ismaʿil Sidqi (1875–1950). Many European countries had barred him from entry in previous years, and the only place that granted him a visa was Greece. If we follow his account, however, he was told after his ship's arrival in Piraeus that he had to leave the country again before nightfall. Yet somehow, he managed to convince the Arabophile German consul to issue him a one-year residency permit for a stay that eventually extended over almost the rest of the decade.[7]

3 Wien, Peter, "The culpability of exile. Arabs in Nazi Germany", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 37 (2011), pp. 334–5.

4 Agwani, Mohammed S., *Communism in the Arab East* (London and New York: Asia Publishing House, 1969), pp. 3–9; Beinin, Joel and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882–1954* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1998), pp. 140–54; Ismael, Tareq Y. and Rifaʿat El-Saʿid, *The Communist Movement in Egypt, 1920–1988* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990), pp. 17–22, 25–31; more recently Ginat, Rami, *A History of Egyptian Communism: Jews and their Compatriots in Quest of Revolution* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2011), pp. 55–127.

5 See a biographical article based on his writings and interviews with him and close relatives and acquaintances, Lutfi, Hamdi, "Qissat awwal hizb shuyuʿi fi Misr" [The story of the first communist party in Egypt], part 2, *Al-Siyasi*, 2 September 1979, p. 10.

6 Ginat, *A History of Egyptian Communism*, pp. 156–60, 171–6. A collection of his articles from this period is in al-ʿUrabi, Mahmud Husni, *Maqalat al-ʿUrabi: Majmuʿat Maqalat Qayyima fi'l-Adab, wa'l-Ijtimaʿ wa'l-Tarikh, wa'l-Iqtisad* [Al-ʿUrabi's Articles: A Collection of Valuable Articles about Literature, Society, History, and the Economy], ed. al-Hami Amin (Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-Ahliyya al-Kubra, n.d.).

7 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 5–14; Beinin and Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882–1954*, p. 194; Lutfi, "Qissat awwal hizb shuyuʿi fi Misr".

How credible are the memoirs al-ʿUrabi wrote about his sojourn in Germany? Some of his reports are corroborated by archival and other source material, some strike the reader as somewhat fantastic. For one, the account of his acquisition of a German visa is probably a hoax. There is evidence in Russian archives that his trip to Germany via Greece was planned once more to be a stopover on the way to Moscow to approach the Comintern with the intention to wrest back control over the Egyptian Communist Party. The visa to the Soviet Union that he waited for never materialized.[8] Altogether, however, the memoirs paint a vivid picture of a precarious life in Berlin. They contain stories about an interrogation by the Gestapo, about amorous adventures, attempts at getting employment as an Arabic instructor at the university (which failed due to his communist past), and a great deal of interactions with a demi monde that consisted of other exiles, but also Jews who he met at the margins of National Socialist society. The fact that al-ʿUrabi was a lot more engaged in communist activities at the time of his arrival than he was later willing to admit adds a silent subtext and an eerie urgency to his account of the early years in Berlin. At the same time, his files in the German archives, also include letters that he sent to Hitler asking for intervention on his behalf to be employed as a university lecturer, or better, to get an Egyptian passport and return home. I have covered the content and implications of these letters elsewhere.[9] Moreover, al-ʿUrabi's name appears in the German foreign service archives as it is related to a translation project of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in an attempt to counter unauthorized versions that flooded the Arab book market. To add insult to injury (from a Nazi official's perspective), many of these translations were of poor quality and indeed quite critical of its content. In 1938, the Arab nationalist and Nazi interlocutor Shakib Arslan, at the time in exile in Geneva, recommended al-ʿUrabi to the foreign office's Middle East division and the propaganda ministry as a possible translator. Arslan had not met al-ʿUrabi in person but assured Berlin that he had given up his Bolshevist convictions. At the same time, al-ʿUrabi participated in an Arabic-German dictionary project, which was probably part of the *Mein Kampf* translation venture. While the latter came to naught, the foreign office decided against al-ʿUrabi's proposals for a dictionary but provided funding to – *nota bene* – the well-known Arabist Hans Wehr instead. Hans Wehr's version of the dictionary, which he eventually

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8 Ginat, *A History of Egyptian Communism*, pp. 178–9. Ginat mentions on p. 175 an earlier trip to Greece, probably in 1930. His correspondence with Comintern while in Berlin is documented in Soviet archives.

9 Wien, "The culpability of exile", pp. 334–8.

completed after World War II, remains widely used as the most important work of its kind until today, both in German and in its English translation.[10]

When al-ʿUrabi came to Berlin in 1931, he arrived in a Germany that was in the middle of an economic crisis, bracing for dark years to come. His expectations certainly did not prepare him for his eight-year ordeal. He believed that one year would suffice to sit out the authoritarian wave in Egypt. However, the Egyptian government revoked his citizenship in early 1932 because of allegations that he had been in touch with the German Communist Party and traveled to Russia after his arrival in Berlin. The German authorities were unable to corroborate these allegations, but suspicions remained and made his life subsequently difficult.[11] The title that al-ʿUrabi gave to the memoirs of his stay in Nazi Berlin, *89 Months in Exile*, suggests that he was indeed counting the days, which, given his dire economic situation, is understandable. The memoirs are an at times, as it seems, purposefully naïve, at times sharp and witty account of life on the margins of society. However, his portrayal of Berlin between the time just prior to Hitler's takeover and the brink of World War II offers remarkably little insight into the political tensions and pressures non-white people were exposed to under Nazi rule. When he published the work in 1948, he seemed more interested in conveying the libertarian freedoms he enjoyed, in contrast to the social constraints that most people in his home town were subject to, and the absurdities he encountered, in a fashion reminiscent of the tradition of nineteenth century Egyptian travelers like Rifʿa Rafiʿ al-Tahtawi.[12]

Egyptians like al-ʿUrabi indeed suffered from discrimination in Nazi Germany, but his unclear immigration status exacerbated the position that he

10 A lot of the material used in this chapter was retrieved from the papers that the late Gerhard Höpp bequested to the Zentrum Moderner Orient, ZMO, Berlin [hereafter ZMOHöpp]. Correspondence between the Foreign Office and Arslan in ZMOHöpp, 1.12.79: BArchP, AA FC, Nr. 15205, Pol VII 1257, Chekib Arslan an Gesandten von Hentig [?], Geneva, 23 August 1938; AA an Herrn Oberregierungsrat Knothe, Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, gez. v. Hentig, Berlin, 30 August 1938. The note on the dictionary project in: ZMOHöpp, 1.12.79: BArchP, AA FC, Nr. 15205, AA Pol. VII 122, [AA?] an Geheimrat Prof. Dr. Moritz, Berlin Lankwitz, gez. Schlobies, Berlin, 31 December 1938. Wild, Stefan, "National Socialism in the Arab Near East between 1933 and 1939", *Die Welt des Islams*, 25 (1985), 147–70, on Wehr, see p. 169.

11 ZMOHöpp, 1.12.17: BArchP, AA, Film 57341: AA Pol VII 1809, M. Hosni el-Orabi, An das Orientalische Referat, Ministerium des Ae[u]sseren, Berlin, 27 October 1936. In this document, al-ʿUrabi asked that a confirmation be sent to the Egyptian ambassador that the allegations had been unfounded. It took another three years until al-ʿUrabi was allowed to return.

12 al-Tahtawi, Rifʿa Rafiʿ, *An Imam in Paris: Account of a Stay in France by an Egyptian Cleric (1826–1831)*, trans. Daniel L. Newman (London: Saqi, 2004).

was neither here nor there, and that therefore, norms somehow did not apply to him, while at the same time, he continuously lived a precarious life.[13] When he arrived in Berlin and found himself stateless, he had to find out quickly that it would not be easy to sustain himself, especially as his initial attempts to work as a foreign correspondent for Egyptian newspapers led nowhere. He had to downgrade to cheaper accommodation several times, moving in with working class landladies and other roommates with little means.[14] One landlady on Friedrichstraße, Mrs. Stielke, rented her other room to a female American student. Al-ʿUrabi was quite entranced with Ms. Madeline "Maksunj" (Maxon?) and the features of her physique and character. They quickly developed a close, probably even intimate relationship and she became the first of several female companions during his stay. With a lot of time on their hands, they started to pay attention to the oddities of their host society so that, one day, al-ʿUrabi invited Ms. Madeline along to an interview with the president of a popular nudist club. He asked the president such pointed questions as: What do religious men think of the movement? Do you let non-members enter the club? The latter question the president negated, but to the former he replied that there were many priests and rabbis among their members.[15]

The story turned into full parody when al-ʿUrabi and his girlfriend joined a Mr. Koch to visit a club of the Nudist Workers' Union that he presided over. When they witnessed a nudist gymnastics sessions, al-ʿUrabi couldn't help but find the view repugnant: "The strange thing that I would like to describe to you [i.e. his Arab readers] is that this sight did not arouse desire in me, but on the contrary, repulsion". Both then politely declined Koch's offer to accompany him to one of their nighttime swimming pools.

In this account, al-ʿUrabi placed himself along with Madeline outside the frame of the foreign society, bewildered by the fact that he could not grasp what the things he saw stood for, what they represented with regard to German society. He thus reversed the spectator position that Orientalism had reserved for the western visitor to Middle Eastern cities.[16] Yet al-ʿUrabi, the involuntary exile, was not in control, he remained in limbo, unable to impose his story and his frame of mind on his hosts. When the Egyptian magazine he used to write

13 Höpp, Gerhard, "Zwischen Universität und Straße: Ägyptische Studenten in Deutschland 1849–1945", *Würzburger Geographische Manuskripte*, 60 (2002), p. 40.

14 ZMOHöpp, 1.12.35 is a synopsis Gerhard Höpp prepared to compile his findings about al-ʿUrabi. Page 3 documents a number of different addresses he held between 1932 and 1935, extracted from his correspondence with German authorities.

15 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 23–7.

16 On the Western gaze and the problem of representation see Mitchell, Timothy, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 1–33.

for ceased to employ him, he desperately started to look for work, along with thousands of Germans at a time of global economic crisis. He signed up for a film projection class in a facility near his home, but was puzzled when his instructor asked him if he had a job for him at the movie theater that al-ʿUrabi was planning to open in Cairo, as he supposed. How, then, should he, Husni, find a job when even the teacher was looking for one, wondered al-ʿUrabi? In another instance, a fellow migrant, an Algerian owner of a variety show called Nasr Ben Ibrahim offered him work because he wanted to help a fellow Muslim. But when he asked if al-ʿUrabi was able to eat fire or glass, he had to answer in the negative.[17]

Subject and object are again reversed when one time, al-ʿUrabi stumbled upon a sign at a street entrance in Bayreuther Straße, which read "Society for the Strengthening of the Relations between the Orient and Germany". Hoping he might find support there, he knocked and met some of the fellows, who offered that al-ʿUrabi could write a press digest for the society in the hope that later on, he would be able to help them out establishing contacts in Egypt. The relations they were hoping to strengthen, as the society's name suggested, were apparently non-existent. When al-ʿUrabi attended a board meeting, however, all the German scholarly members did was to obsess about his last name, which they dissected and analyzed as to its origin, in a parody of German scholarship and academic habitus. The Egyptian took on the same role as the bewildered observer that the orientalist cliché in turn would have reserved for a traveling male white ethnographer in exotic lands.[18]

The Nazi takeover took place more than a year into al-ʿUrabi's sojourn in Berlin. The upheaval had tangible effects on his life, though it seems from his memoirs that he did not even notice the momentous change that had happened. There is no word about the persecution of communists among whom he certainly had acquaintances if not close friends. After his initial mishaps, al-ʿUrabi had found work as an Arabic tutor at the Berlin Seminar for Oriental Languages, but he was laid off again at the beginning of the summer semester of 1933 because, unbeknownst to him, the German foreign office had alerted the Seminar about his communist past.[19] His severance may or may not have been a direct result of the establishment of the Nazi regime, but al-ʿUrabi certainly found himself once more in a hostile environment. Whatever his

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17 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 43–5, 52–3.

18 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 32–8.

19 See the correspondence between the Seminar and the Prussian Ministry for Science, Art and Public Instruction (Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung) in December 1932 in ZMOHöpp, 1.12.38: GStArchB, I. HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 2 Tit. X Nr. 124 adh. N Bd. 12.

immediate reaction was, he was at the time more interested in a new love affair with Elfriede, the daughter of a Berlin Orientalist (Dr. Bergmann). He had been giving her Arabic lessons, because she worked for the Berlin film studios and was preparing to travel to Egypt for a project. They fell in love, became engaged but eventually had to dissolve their engagement following pressure from Elfriede's family.[20]

Yet, at this point, while al-ʿUrabi was trying to get over his failed love affair, the repercussions of the new times started to hit closer to home. His friend Ben Ibrahim, the variety show owner, told al-ʿUrabi in early 1934 that he was out of work, too, due to the Third Reich's labor laws. He had been living on his savings lately. One early morning, al-ʿUrabi was taken to the Horst-Wesselhaus for interrogation. He knew the facility near Alexanderplatz from his earlier visits to Berlin when it had been known as the Liebknecht Haus and communist headquarter. The Gestapo had taken it over in the meantime. The Egyptian, who remembered the hidden rooms and couloirs, was brought to number 271 on the third floor. Instead of the disaster that the reader might have expected to befall a known communist, al-ʿUrabi seemed to experience the interrogation as an outsider, an observer unaffected by the events. He even seemed to get along with his interrogator, who asked him questions about Jewish members of the Egyptian Communist Party. To his astonishment, the man presented a photograph of al-ʿUrabi at age 13 or 14. It seemed, though, that the officer was more impressed with the Egyptian's resilience in the face of misfortune than he was interested in his political convictions. The Nazi system of oppression did not even become a topic of the interrogation scene as al-ʿUrabi described it. The agent made it clear that they knew everything about him, but, apparently, they wanted to leave a good impression. He asked al-ʿUrabi to excuse the trouble and advised him to stay away from politics. He also told him that, if he ever needed help in anything, he should not hesitate to come back to him. Al-ʿUrabi later wondered why his interrogator, then, did not know that all he needed was work. But regardless, the police would help him most if they left him alone. After that, the Nazi forces apparently did not bother him again. If their intention had been to win him over as an informant, the attempt apparently did not recur. As far as al-ʿUrabi was concerned, he started to disappear more and more into the twilight of an exile demi-monde.[21]

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20 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 81–106. See Hanisch, Ludmila, "Akzentverschiebung – Zur Geschichte der Semitistik und Islamwissenschaft während des 'Dritten Reichs'", *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 18/4 (1995), p. 219, Hanisch alleges that al-ʿUrabi fell victim to a purge of non-Germans. However, other Arab native speakers remained at the institute as tutors.

21 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 114, 117–24.

Ben Ibrahim was once more the connection that helped al-ʿUrabi land a job as an extra in the UFA studios. What he encountered there was, however, more akin to the abstraction and othering that a participant in the human zoo of a *Völkerschau*, a colonial exhibition during the Wilhelminian period, would have experienced.[22] The production al-ʿUrabi was supposed to participate in involved scenes in North Africa. On an early February morning, al-ʿUrabi made the acquaintance of 20 North Africans and a woman of mixed origin, as well as of one further Egyptian. Nearly all of them had ended up in Germany as former soldiers of the French army in World War I. Like Ben Ibrahim, they had either defected or become prisoners of war, and then adopted Germany as their new homeland. Most of them were illiterate and spoke heavily accented German, earning their living in what al-ʿUrabi called "eastern" professions, such as selling peanuts, and working in variety shows. Al-ʿUrabi thus found himself among a group of Arabs who all had much darker skin, had different hair and different comportment and moves, and spoke differently – to the extent that he preferred conversing with them in German. When they learned that he also wanted to apply for an acting position, they became suspicious and told him that he should better find employment which accorded with his intellectual appearance. He promised to remain last in line so that he would not snatch a job from them. At first, the studio people did not even want to let him in because they took him for a German, but they accepted him anyway because they were in such dire need of extras. To make him look the part, though, they painted his face brown. When he finally got out to act, al-ʿUrabi turned out to be completely inept because of his educated habits, and his difficulty in understanding the other extras in their conversations. To his shame and his colleagues' amusement he was fired on the spot.

The episode of Husni al-ʿUrabi's interrupted acting career offers insights into the liminality of the exile existence. He felt more akin with his host society than with fellow Arabs, due to his level of education and his language capacities, and even in terms of a racialized self-perception. When it came to making a living, however, this kind of kinship offered him no capital, and as a consequence, his hosts brownfaced him and turned him into an easily recognizable 'other', yet to no avail as his intellectual habitus gave him away. Al-ʿUrabi stood at a place where he was not capable of fulfilling expectations. The story, thus, became a trope for the misunderstandings between an exile and Nazi society.

22 See for example Dreesbach, Anne, *Gezähmte Wilde: Die Zurschaustellung "exotischer" Menschen in Deutschland 1870–1940* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2005).

Al-ʿUrabi subsequently entered a "bohemian life",[23] which he came to appreciate despite its hardships. Until the end of his Berlin ordeal, he spent a great deal of time seeking distraction at Café "Tsinz" (Zins?) on Tauentzien Straße, which was known to attract people from all walks of life due to its moderate prices. At this time, an increasing number of Jews entered his circle of friends, too. Al-ʿUrabi witnessed their predicament, he felt empathy for them, but the account of his memoirs offers little ethical reflection about their ordeal. While he cared for his friends, he continued to display an observer's attitude. He remained on the fence.

One of these Jewish friends was a poet, a Mr. Schafrin (?), who told al-ʿUrabi that he used to be a millionaire and owner of a cigarette factory, but that he had lost everything due to the Nazis' anti-Jewish policy. He now lived at a female benefactor's house, but was ready to emigrate and wondered if al-ʿUrabi could mediate for him, through his friends and family, to get access to Egypt. Apparently, the Egyptian's home country that had rejected its proper child had now turned into a desirable place for someone else's, in another inversion of the usual center-periphery hierarchy of the imperialist world.

Schafrin became al-ʿUrabi's access point to a world of bohème, but one of necessity, not of choice. Schafrin himself had to serve as some sort of consort for his landlady in exchange for her sheltering him. On one of his visits to Schafrin at his landlady's villa (probably still in 1934 or 1935), al-ʿUrabi met Irene, who became a new love interest. Irene was a Jewish writer with contacts in the community. She suggested that he should take up teaching Arabic to German Jews who were getting ready to emigrate to Palestine, but who could not access official institutions teaching languages anymore. Jewish orientalists themselves were busy teaching Hebrew, so al-ʿUrabi's services were badly needed because language capacities were said to facilitate access to immigration visas. Al-ʿUrabi was puzzled, but apparently not by the idea that he as an Arab should facilitate Jewish migration to Zionist Palestine, but more by Irene's charm. Later, Irene, who wrote for the *Jüdische Rundschau*, offered to place ads for al-ʿUrabi in the paper. At the time, the *Rundschau* was unable to pay its contributors and remunerated them in kind in the form of free advertisement.[24]

23 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, p. 142.

24 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 133–43, 149–57, 188–9. See the advertisements in *Jüdische Rundschau*, 16 November 1934, p. 15: "Arabische Kurse f[ür] Anf[änger] u[nd] Fortgeschritt[ene] bei ehem[aligem] Lektor bill[ig] Orabi ..." ["Arabic courses, beginners and advanced levels, by former tutor, cheap"], again 11 December 1934, p. 7, and numerous times between 1933 and 1935. Copies of originals in ZMOHöpp, 1.12.78 which also contains a list of the advertisements, compiled by Gerhard Höpp.

Al-ʿUrabi thus started a new career, conveying its story in his usual jocular manner. His first student, an ophtalmologist at Olivaer Platz, asked him to prove his citizenship because an earlier teacher had concealed that he was Iranian and had taught him Farsi instead. Of course, another student had to be a beautiful young woman in her mid-twenties, apparently not Jewish but of Spanish origin, who had an Egyptian pen friend. Al-ʿUrabi had to pull all his strength together to avoid caving in to her seductive powers. After a while he also took on English lessons and thus kept himself afloat until his departure for Egypt in late 1938.[25]

Al-ʿUrabi acknowledged in his memoirs that the catastrophe ("nakba") of the Jews in Germany brought relief to his own needs. To some of his students he became like family. They gave him keys to their houses, and presents such as clothes, or a typewriter. Some even remained in touch with him after his return to Egypt until World War II broke out, and some of those who left Germany continued to write to him. From today's perspective, these are chilling remarks as it seems that al-ʿUrabi's Jewish students gave away their possessions to him knowing that they were not in need of them anymore. Who knows what became of those who stopped writing in September 1939? The tragedy of Germany's Jews hit al-ʿUrabi with all its force when his friend Schafrin committed suicide, probably still in 1934 or 1935. Al-ʿUrabi assumed that his unemployment and the humiliations by his landlady had "dried up his manliness". In this remark, al-ʿUrabi did not establish the obvious link between his friend's death and Nazi persecution, though he was perfectly aware of this "nakba" going on. His account suggests that he lived his exile life in denial of his friends' predicament. One day, on May Day, on his way to visit Irene, with the Nazis out in the streets marching with flags, badges and music, young and old, he was merely annoyed by the inconvenience and retardation while he was on his way to see his girlfriend.[26]

It is difficult then to see what the motive of al-ʿUrabi's writing was. His memoirs came out in 1948, ten years after al-ʿUrabi's return to Egypt, around the time of the creation of the state of Israel and when the Palestinian *nakba* was unfolding. The daily press and intellectual journals of Egypt were full of reports and reflections about the interlinkage between the fate of Europe's Jews, their migration to Palestine, and the implied threat to the Palestinians. The fact that the author gave next to no room to such reflections in his book might indicate that he was not interested in pondering the meaning of his past for his present. Instead, he seems to have faithfully put contemporaneous notes about his

25 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 190–8.

26 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 188, 199–200.

immediate impressions into print. These notes reflected the clues of a marginal man who spent more than seven years in limbo.

On the other hand, the memoirs contain fantastic episodes that are almost certainly fictional, such as the following one. When al-ʿUrabi took up teaching Arabic to Jews it reminded him of how he had lost his previous job at the Seminar for Oriental Languages, and he felt emboldened to write another one of his letters to Hitler. The lack of respective records in the archives makes the rest of the account in the memoirs dubious, when al-ʿUrabi claims he received a reply from the "Führer" three or four days later. The latter wrote that he had turned over the file to Foreign Minister von Neurath ("von Rath," in al-ʿUrabi's account). When he did not hear from the foreign minister for several days, he went to seek him out. Von Neurath actually received him, listened to his grievances and acknowledged his awkward position as a stateless exile in Germany. However, he said that he could not force the Egyptian government's hand to re-instate him as a citizen, and, on top of this, he had no time to take care of his concerns because he and his comrades were busy pursuing a revolution. Expelling him to a third country, as al-ʿUrabi suggested in order to find work there, was not an option either because he had done nothing wrong. Al-ʿUrabi then replied that von Neurath was like his landlady, Frau Sauer, when al-ʿUrabi had asked her to mediate in a conflict with a roommate. Al-ʿUrabi had pushed that without a solution to the quarrel, one of the two would have to move out. The landlady replied that al-ʿUrabi would have to be the one because the other one owed her several months rent, whereas al-ʿUrabi had always paid on time, so losing him as a tenant was less of a loss for her then losing the other one. The minister liked this story because of its "Egyptian logic" and he promised to write to the Egyptian government.[27]

If anything, the author of this story presented himself as a master of survival. He moved between the sphere of artists and bohème on the one hand and of Nazi grandees on the other hand, with wit and elegance. Even if the account was probably at least partially fabricated, the malleability of the exile person that speaks out of it makes al-ʿUrabi's involvement in the German project to produce an official Arabic version of *Mein Kampf* for the Middle Eastern market less surprising.

Al-ʿUrabi's opportunistic attempts to cozy up to Nazi propaganda circles appear in a strange light when taken together with his friendship and at least limited solidarity with Jewish Berliners. He had a file in the Gestapo headquarters, was a former communist, and socialized with Jews, yet the diplomats of the Wilhelmstraße would still receive him. Take, for example, another one

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27 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 158–67.

of his contacts, a medical doctor, who was a friend and student of his, hence probably a Jew. In a bout of deep homesickness in 1936, al-ʿUrabi asked this friend about ways to leave Germany and enter Egypt clandestinely. The friend then put al-ʿUrabi in touch with a member of a secret trafficking organization, who even suggested that he could get a transfer to Paris and a passport for free in exchange for delivering a set of papers. Al-ʿUrabi decided against the offer, though, because, as he writes, he did not share the group's political opinions, the nature of which he left undefined. Still, he undertook preparations for another attempt at a secret passage by ship to Egypt in 1937, which, however, did not come to fruition. It is more than likely that this latter channel was also one, which usually German Jews would have used to circumvent emigration and immigration restrictions.[28]

At this point in the book, the narrative of al-ʿUrabi's memoirs takes an unexpected turn towards one of meaning and fulfillment through a political cause. His meanderings were brought to an end when he ran into a group of young Arab students who managed to convince him to join their Arab Club and, to his great surprise, even elected him as their president. What attracted him was that he "… saw life pulsing in these young men ablaze with enthusiasm, and I could see the youthful strength [*al-futuwwa wa'l-quwwa*], the faith, and the innocence written on the faces of these young lions [*ashbal*]. I had thought that the flame of the upheaval that I felt inside of me had gone out a long time ago …".[29] Al-ʿUrabi described how he immediately got to work to organize and politicize the group of men of mixed origins, making the Palestine problem the prominent cause of the organization, even naming a section of the Club "Higher Committee for the Defense of Palestine in Europe – Berlin Main Center". Al-ʿUrabi takes on a role in the story as the patron of a community of radical anti-imperialist Arab students in Berlin who managed to get the attention of the German authorities. Now, al-ʿUrabi had direct access to foreign office diplomats and built a Europe-wide network of like-minded organizations. He even allegedly elicited a declaration from the Reich chancery that "the Führer promises the Arabs as a man of honor that he will defend the Palestinians in their cause at all times, and that he will not miss an opportunity to raise Germany's voice in defense of the Arabs". At the same time, he continued to be worried that aligning with Germany would mean giving up independence.[30]

28 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 234–48.

29 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, p. 253.

30 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 252–92, quote on p. 277. Compare Gesemann, Frank and Gerhard Höpp, "Araber in Berlin (bis 1945)", in *Araber in Berlin*, ed. Frank Gesemann,

Aside from the fact that no such declaration by Hitler has been documented so far, the narrative of this episode follows conspicuously closely a script of Arab nationalist activism, including the rejection of a direct alignment with the Nazis, to be taken at face value. German Gestapo files confirm al-ʿUrabi's leading involvement in these organizations, but do not offer clarification about how and why he joined them.[31] Berlin was brimming with nationalist and anti-imperialist activities within the foreign student community at the time, so that it is credible that al-ʿUrabi got embroiled in it during the later years of his sojourn in Berlin. But the story of his Arab nationalist awakening as a sudden epiphany ("Where did all this energy come from, after seven years of misery?"[32]), and his claim that he was called on to take the lead as a seasoned political organizer appear to be a vindication of his meandering years and the inherent contradictions of his acts and alliances, just in time before he left Berlin to return to his native Egypt.

This assessment finds support in the narrative disconnect between the pages in al-ʿUrabi's memoirs that recount his experience with the Arab Club on the one hand, and the rest of the book on the other hand, where he did not display Arab nationalist leanings. The stories about the Club do not name names of other activists. Also, the inherent contradiction between the increasing militancy of the Palestine Committee and the important services that al-ʿUrabi rendered to Berlin Jews preparing for migration are not addressed. On the contrary, his account of the activities of the Club and the Committee is mixed with a familiar story when one day, after leaving the Club office, a very attractive woman in her late thirties or forties, a Ms. Elsa Zilg ("Zilj") approached him. She told him of her emigration plans, maybe to Egypt. Naturally, he agreed to give her Arabic lessons. So, on a different day, Ms. Zilg came by while he was writing up telegrams for the Committee, one of them addressed to Hitler, telling him to beware of the day of the final reckoning over the Nazi party, and to consider if he had done enough for the cause of Palestine by then. Al-ʿUrabi

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Gerhard Höpp and Haroun Sweis (Berlin: Der Ausländerbeauftragte des Senats, 1998), p. 38. In contrast to al-ʿUrabi's account, the article only documents a letter to Hitler that contained a plea that he should use his influence to achieve justice in Palestine.

31 ZMOHöpp, 1.12.79, BArchP, AA FC, Nr. 15205: AA Pol VII 1775, Geheime Staatspolizei, Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt an AA, i.A. gez. Dr. Best, Berlin, 15 December 1938 (Auf das an die Staatspolizeileitstelle Berlin unmittelbar gerichtete Schreiben vom 10.11.1938 -Nr. Pol. VII 1543). ZMOHöpp, 1.12.79, BArchP, AA FC, Nr. 15205: AA Pol VII 1775, Geheime Staatspolizei, Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt an AA, i.A. gez. Dr. Best, Berlin, 15 December 1938 (Auf das an die Staatspolizeileitstelle Berlin unmittelbar gerichtete Schreiben vom 10.11.1938 -Nr. Pol. VII 1543). The undersigned Best remarked that al-ʿUrabi was not an Arab, but an Egyptian, and a former communist.

32 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, p. 255.

showed his work to Ms. Zilg, who thought he was busy with literary projects. As if the nonchalance of their common liminality had taken her over, too, she only glanced at what he had written, and al-ʿUrabi was not sure if she had grasped the implication. Instead, they held the lesson and afterwards she took him out to eat and watch a play, and they had a terrific time.[33]

Renewed romance, however, came at a cost, because, as al-ʿUrabi himself purported, the hero of our story had become involved with a Mata Hari-like figure. Al-ʿUrabi's Palestine activism had started to attract the attention of British journalists, who had paid the Club a visit and published articles at home spreading fantastic assumptions about its financial means and arms arsenal. Indeed, the German foreign office had to reassure the British embassy after receiving complaints about the Arabs' seditious activities.[34] Al-ʿUrabi, in turn, remained suspicious about the source of the detailed information that the British government had presented. In his account it dawned on him that his new girlfriend, Ms. Elsa Zilg might be a mole working on behalf of London when she started stalking him finding all sorts of excuses to spend more time together. The fact that she offered to type the letters he wrote on behalf of the Club triggered his mistrust, and indeed, one day he was called to the police station, where an officer held a document under his nose asking if he knew the typewriter the piece had been written on. Al-ʿUrabi assured him of his ignorance, but the officer impressed on him that according to a new law, he could be found guilty by association for a false statement, which then would carry the same sentence as the original crime, which in his case would be the death sentence for the spreading of propaganda. Infuriated he immediately broke off all contact with Ms. Zilg, and when she stalked him again in the street, he berated her for ratting on him, which she vehemently denied. Al-ʿUrabi banned her from visiting him in his room, but the next day she waited for him once more in the street to tell him that things weighed heavily on her conscience and that she wasn't strong enough to live any longer, but that her honor demanded that she put things straight: "I am the one who informed on you to the police. But what am I to do when you are blind to my love for you? For you, my status is far below that of an Arab youth. Jealousy has made me stray from the right path". Al-ʿUrabi did not believe her.[35]

33 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 273–7.

34 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 269–73, 275. ZMOHöpp, 1.12.15, BArchP, AA, 15203 FC. The file contains a copy of the telegram sent to Hitler, and al-ʿUrabi's report about British complaints concerning an elderly Syrian resident of Berlin who had given the Committee financial assistance.

35 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 281–95.

While the newly minted harbinger of Arab nationalist righteousness hardened his position vis-à-vis the alleged Jewish Mata Hari, some of Ms. Zilg's statements as they are related in the memoirs raise doubts as to whether al-ʿUrabi was not indulging his own paranoia. After all, his new lover's position in life was as precarious as his, she may have considered al-ʿUrabi a fellow traveler, and maybe even a possible exit route for her in the case that they became permanently involved and he got his Egyptian nationality back. It is also thinkable that the German security agencies put her under pressure to inform about the Berlin bohème. Nowhere in his account does al-ʿUrabi put a confession about being a British spy into her mouth, and his verbatim documentation of her self-defense was strangely disconnected from the single-minded conclusions that he drew from it. When he refused to give her further Arabic lessons, she suggested they should "just remain friends to support each other in a country that is the most severe in the way it treats the outsider [stranger, foreigner: "al-gharib"]". The Mata Hari story seems to accord well with the author's self-styling as an invulnerable freelancer and womanizing jester that runs through the memoirs. Yet there is tragedy that continues to enwrap Elsa Zilg's character and that al-ʿUrabi failed to reconcile with his own uncompromising stance toward her. As was his habit in the memoirs, he refused to reflect on the marginality of his Berlin companions. In a way, this disconnect makes the story appear all the more authentic, an impression that is supported by the fact that al-ʿUrabi added a direct translation of Ms. Zilg's farewell letter to her "dear Husni", dated Berlin, 2 August 1938, to close off this storyline. In the letter, she complained bitterly about al-ʿUrabi's harsh treatment of her and swore to her deep love for him: "Everything is bearable except that you believe I am wicked and a liar", she wrote. She asked his forgiveness for having informed on him: "I had not known that such a thing was in me, … we are constantly in a struggle between the forces of good and evil". When al-ʿUrabi decided to meet her once more after he had received the letter, he rebuked her and asked straight away "Since when have you been working for the British?" She was shocked and answered: "I am a woman from a good family and of wealth. I don't hire myself out to anyone. But I love my people and I detest the Germans and the Arabs …". Al-ʿUrabi, interrupting her said "your problem does not concern me.[…] You should know that I would tear off your head with my own hands, except that people like you are not worth the effort in our eyes". She thought for a while, then smiled bitterly and said: "You are truly a sportsman, and I take you at your word". Then they parted.[36]

36 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 296–7.

In absence of any explicit evidence for Ms. Zilg's culpability as a British spy, al-ʿUrabi's retort is quite shocking in the light of his awareness of her predicament as a Jew in Nazi Germany, regardless of her apparent wealth or family background. He was ready to present himself as driven by nationalist vigor in this confrontation between an Arab defender of Palestine and a supposed hater of the Arabs or even Zionist agent. Her "problem", which was probably the plight of the Jewish people, did not concern him at this moment. Apparently, solidarity and empathy had gone once the Arab Club had returned purpose to him. Yet only shortly afterwards, another one of his former students, a Mr. Lehmann, who had heard about al-ʿUrabi's imminent departure for Egypt, approached him for a favor. His late mother had bequeathed her precious engagement ring to him before she died, and Lehmann, worried that the Nazis might confiscate it, asked his former Arabic teacher to accept it for safekeeping. Al-ʿUrabi obliged without hesitation.[37]

Conclusion

When al-ʿUrabi finally left Berlin for Cairo in December 1938, his departure was timely. As war broke out in September 1939, the German authorities detained a group of more than 20 Egyptians to hold them to ransom for Germans who had been interned simultaneously in Egypt, and eventually to use them for the German propaganda machinery. The fact that al-ʿUrabi was known to the respective circles in the Nazi government apparatus makes it possible that he would have suffered a similar fate.[38]

An in-depth assessment of the effect that al-ʿUrabi's exile had on his efforts to re-integrate into Egyptian society and its political and intellectual circles and his later life remains outside the scope of this chapter. There are indications, however, that he struggled to fend off allegations of pro-Nazi tendencies.[39] His book was clearly an attempt to explain his experiences, and the liminality of the migrant existence played a crucial role in it. When he was in Berlin, he tried to stabilize the precarious circumstances of his life in

37 al-ʿUrabi, *89 Shahran fi'l-Manfa*, pp. 312–13.

38 Höpp, Gerhard, "Der verdrängte Diskurs: Arabische Opfer des Nationalsozialismus", in *Blind für die Geschichte? Arabische Begegnungen mit dem Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Gerhard Höpp, Peter Wien and René Wildangel (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2004), pp. 215–68, here pp. 220–1.

39 A lead yet to follow is Gerhard Höpp's notes in ZMOHöpp, 1.12.35, Mahmud Husni al-ʿUrabi. Al-ʿUrabi only regained his citizenship after the 1952 Revolution. Lutfi, Hamdi, "Qissat awwal hizb shuyuʿi fi Misr", last part (4), *Al-Siyasi*, 16 September 1979, p. 10.

whatever way possible. Once at home he carried echoes of these adjustments with him, retaining a portion of his liminality, but always re-adjusting.

Al-ʿUrabi tried to make his account interesting by emphasizing the absurd experiences of his sojourn, but he also had to vindicate himself as an Arab nationalist whose loyalties should not be doubted. He probably tried to counter allegations of Nazi collaborations when he emphasized the distance that he kept. His interactions at the margins of society, however, suggest that the distance was not of his own choosing, and that he had to rely on support wherever he could find it.

All memoirs remain textual accounts, and the reader is left to decide if she or he trusts the narrator's reliance on facticity. Regardless, al-ʿUrabi's book offers powerful testimony for the difficulties of coming to terms with migrant conditions. Migration pushes people into precarious places where threatening experiences occur, but where opportunities open up as well. Forced exile and transnational displacement exacerbate the liminal status, especially within oppressive political contexts. Al-ʿUrabi's memoirs read like a survivor story, the autobiography of a person who withstands against all odds. His inability to reflect deeply on the empathy for the people he encountered at the margins of society may just be a function of the liminality of his existence, which left him in a peculiar state of mind. It might also be a consequence of the political contingencies of the time when he published his memoirs on the 89 months he spent in exile.

CHAPTER 7

Regional Careers: Doctors' Mobility across the New Frontiers of the Interwar Middle East

Liat Kozma

The medical profession in the Middle East was highly mobile in the interwar years. Hundreds of doctors studied and then worked miles away from their place of birth, sometimes crossing borders newly erected following World War I. In fact, medical students and doctors were more mobile throughout their lifetime than most other professional groups – for two reasons: first, the limited number of medical schools in the Middle East, and second, the flexibility of the profession itself. Graduates of medical schools could find employment anywhere in the region and even across the globe.

The purpose of this chapter is not merely to argue that these men (and a handful of women) were highly mobile, but also to trace their specific trajectories. One set of questions is related to students' mobility: what were the available options for medical education, and how attractive were medical schools? Where did students come from? Who could study close to home, and who had to travel for their studies? The other set maps graduates' mobility: how did medical studies affect geographic mobility after graduation? What employment opportunities were available locally, regionally and globally? Finally, what was the local and regional impact of the medical faculties in the Middle East?

I argue that the scarcity of medical schools in the region created communities of doctors who were largely or even exclusively dependent on studies abroad. I also argue that these schools' uneven geographical distribution created specific hubs, which were responsible for the professional training of most Middle Eastern doctors and formed the basis for regional and international mobility. I also distinguish between countries that exported and imported doctors – or both. Finally, these regional trajectories are placed in the context of both political and institutional developments: the collapse of the Ottoman empire and the formation of the mandates on the one hand, and the establishment of new medicals schools on the other.

The present work departs from existing scholarship that focuses on the formation of national medical communities.[1] The present work, by contrast,

1 See particularly Sonbol, Amira, *The Creation of a Medical Profession in Egypt, 1800–1922* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991); Chiffoleau, Sylvia, *Médecines et médecins en*

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views the national and the regional as two interconnected levels of analysis. The interwar medical community in the Middle East, I argue, was partly a combination of several national communities and partly a single community whose members shared educational and professional connections. Elsewhere, I showed, for example, how annual medical conferences sponsored by the Egyptian Medical Association from 1931 onwards sustained these connections at the regional level.[2] Moreover, the circulation of medical journals by national associations and medical faculties in the Middle East ensured that regional scientific dialogues would be maintained year-round.[3] In this chapter I go back to the first contact – medical education – and connect the formation of national medical communities to the regional mobilities it enabled.

The interwar period affected doctors' mobilities in specific ways. The postwar replacement of the Ottoman with British and French political frameworks affected licensing policies as doctors now had to meet these countries' licensing requirements rather than Ottoman and Anglo-Egyptian ones. This political transformation also eliminated the usability of Ottoman Turkish language education and created an advantage for medical education in English or French. The postwar years also entailed political impediments or incentives for various ethnic groups: for Armenians prevented from returning home or, in a different ways, for Jews who studied in Beirut and then immigrated to Palestine. These political developments should be kept in mind when mapping migration trends.[4]

This chapter is based on published data and alumni lists and lists of Egyptian and of Palestinian physicians who graduated from the American University of Beirut (AUB, known as the Syrian Protestant College [SPC] until 1921), and St. Joseph University's medical school, also located in Beirut.[5] The data I build

Egypte: construction d'une identité professionnelle et projet médical (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997); Abugideiri, Hibba, *Gender and the Making of Modern Medicine in Colonial Egypt* (London: Ashgate, 2010); and Dewachi, Omar, *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

2 Kozma, Liat, "Doctors crossing borders: the formation of a regional profession in the interwar Middle East", in *Middle Eastern and North African Societies in the Interwar Period*, ed. Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 123–43.

3 These journals are under-researched. They include *al-Majalla al-Tibbiyya al-Misriyya* (Cairo), *Majallat al-Maʿhad al-Tibbi* (Damascus), and *al-Majalla al-Tibbiyya al-ʿIlmiyya* (Beirut) and *al-Majalla al-Tibiyya al-Filastiniyya* (Jerusalem).

4 Geographical terms are challenging in this period of changing political boundaries. For the purpose of this volume, I chose to use interwar boundaries to define national categories of doctors as these reflect the national professional communities during these years.

5 Sources include The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni, 1870–1952* (Beirut: Alumni Association, 1953); Université Saint-Joseph, *Liste officielle médecins et pharmaciens diplômés de la Faculté française de Beyrouth: 1887–1922* ([Beyrouth]: Imprimerie catholique, 1922); *Bulletin annuel de la Faculté française de médecine et de pharmacie de Beyrouth*, 1932,

on is not uniform. Some lists of medical professionals include place of birth and others do not; lists of alumni are available for certain dates but not others, and some provide more information about specific individuals and less about others. The virtual maps of mobility I provide here are therefore tentative, but also highly suggestive.

This chapter begins with a history of medical schools in the region and a review of what we already know about the mobility of medical students, within and from the Middle East. These go back to the nineteenth century and the establishment of medical schools in the region. The second section zooms in on Mt. Lebanon to explain how it became a major producer and exporter of medical doctors. The third section examines the export of medical students and the import of medical personnel. I describe three medical communities – the Palestinian, Iraqi, and Egyptian, which had to rely, partially or exclusively, on medical education abroad. I also examine the demand for medical doctors in British-governed Palestine, Iraq, Egypt, and Sudan. Finally, I look at the student bodies of Beirut's two faculties of medicine, the St. Joseph (for 1910–1922) and the AUB (1920–1939) to demonstrate these schools' role as regional hubs of medical education.

Available Medical Venues

My starting point is the small number of medical schools in the region. Sultan Mahmud II and Muhammad ʿAli, respectively, established the first modern medical schools in Istanbul and Cairo in 1827. The Qasr al-ʿAini Medical School in Cairo attracted mostly Egyptian students, and a few North African and Lebanese ones. The Istanbul school attracted students from both the Asian and European parts of the Ottoman empire.[6] The SPC's medical school (established

1937, 1947; *Listes officielles des médecins, vétérinaires, dentistes, sages-femmes, pharmaciens et aides-pharmaciens exercant lear professions en Egypte au 31 Décembre 1922* (Cairo: Imprimerie Nationale, 1923); Palestine Department of Health, *List of Doctors, Pharmacists, Dentists and Midwives who have been Licensed in Accordance with the Various Ordinances Regulating Their Professions* (Jerusalem: Government of Palestine, Department of Health, 1930, 1935, 1940, 1946); *The Official Gazette of the Government of Palestine*; Government of Palestine, *Palestine Civil Service List* (Alexandria: Whitehead Morris, 1931–1939).

6 Sonbol, *The Creation of a Medical Profession*, pp. 21–51; Demirhan Erdemir, Ayşegül, "The first Turkish medical faculty: an important chapter of Turkish medical history", *Studies in the History of Medicine & Science*, 14/1–2 (1995), 41–66; Demirhan Erdemir, Ayşegül, "The importance of Haydarpasha Medical Faculty (the first Turkish medical faculty) (1903–1933) from the point of view of Turkish medical history and some original results", *Hamdard Islamicus*, 20/1 (1997), 61–75.

in 1867) and the St. Joseph University's medical school (established in 1883) attracted students from the entire region, who studied medicine in English or French, respectively.[7] Two latecomers were the Damascus Medical School (established in 1903), which attracted local students and taught in Ottoman Turkish (the school was absorbed, after World War I, into the newly-founded Syrian University); and Baghdad's College of Medicine (established in 1927), which also attracted mainly locals.[8]

We do not know what attracted each specific student to a specific school, but a few generalizations can be made. A crucial factor was the language of instruction. Beirut's medical schools attracted students with a good command of English or French, which gave an advantage to graduates of English, American, or French missions. The Istanbul and Damascus schools were more attractive to graduates of the Ottoman school system. Qasr al-ʿAini taught in Arabic until 1893 and then changed to English – limiting its accessibility to Arabic-speaking students.[9] Another factor was physical accessibility. It is not surprising, for example, that after the establishment of Beirut's first faculty of medicine in 1867, most students hailing from Mt. Lebanon and its immediate surrounding chose one of Beirut's faculties whereas most of Qasr al-ʿAini's students were Egyptians.

In addition to medical schools in the region, from the 1830s, both Egypt's governors and Ottoman sultans sent students for medical studies or post-graduate training to Europe. In Egypt, these were sent abroad throughout the nineteenth century and staffed Qasr al-ʿAini and the Egyptian medical system upon their return.[10] Similarly, graduates of the Imperial Medical School (Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Şahane) in Istanbul were sent to Europe for specialization and upon their return were integrated in the school's teaching staff. By the 1880s, Paris became suspect in the eyes of the Ottoman government, as it had become home for opposition groups and individuals, and the preferred destination

7 Verdeil, Chantal, "Naissance d'une nouvelle élite ottomane. Formation et trajectories de médicins diplômés de Beyrouth à la fin du XIXe siècle", *Revue du Mondes Musulman et Méditerranée*, 121–122 (2008), 217–37.

8 Dewachi, *Ungovernable Life*, pp. 83–104; Blecher, Robert Ian, "The Medicalization of Sovereignty: Medicine, Public Health, and Political Authority in Syria, 1861–1936", Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 2002, pp. 167–212.

9 Sonbol, *The Creation of a Medical Profession*, pp. 106–13; al-Minawi, Mahmud, *Hukama Qasr al-ʿAini* [Qasr al-ʿAini's Doctors] (Cairo: Nahdat Masr, 1999), pp. 25–6, 369–70.

10 Reid, Donald M., "Arabic thought in the liberal age twenty years after", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 14/4 (1982), pp. 350, 354.

became Berlin. Those who travelled at their own expense studied, for example, in Geneva and Paris, where they met fellow independent Ottoman students.[11]

Historians have studied specific European universities as hubs for international medical students. Pierre Moulinier mapped the origins of foreign students in the Paris Faculty of Medicine during the nineteenth century. Some did not have medical schools at home, while others were trained as medical auxiliaries in their native universities (Algiers or Dakar, for example), and came to France to upgrade their degree to a medical doctor, rather than mere auxiliary.[12] Similarly, Daniel Panzac traced 329 medical students from the "East" – the Balkans, the Ottoman empire and North Africa – who studied in Paris from 1833 to 1889. Of these, 52 came from Istanbul, 33 from Anatolia, 45 from Algeria, 41 from Egypt, six from other Arab provinces of the Ottoman empire and two from Tunisia. The larger numbers from the Ottoman center and Egypt are not surprising. In both cases, the respective authorities had sent students for medical studies and post-graduate training. As for Algeria, the partial training in Algiers explains the drive to travel to Paris for further studies.[13] Paris is far from being an exception. From 1876 to 1914, for example, Swiss medical schools attracted hundreds of foreign medical students. Historians focused on the disproportional number of Jews and of women in Swiss medical schools – two groups pushed by East European universities' quota policies to pursue their education elsewhere.[14]

Other historians studied the formation of national medical communities in global and regional contexts. Until 1920, around 55 Iranian medical students studied abroad. From 1928 to 1935, and as part of his reform efforts, Reza Shah sent 125 Iranian students to study medicine abroad, 84 percent of whom studied in France. Farzin Vejdani associates Iranians' choice of the AUB with their Baha'i identity and the university's proximity to the Baha'i leadership

11 Yıldırım, Nuran, "Le rôle des médecins turcs dans la transmission du savoir", in *Médecins et ingénieurs ottomans à l'âge des nationalismes*, ed. Méropi Anastassiadou-Dumont (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003), pp. 131–2; Kieser, Hans-Lukas, "Turkey's elite diaspora in Switzerland (1860s–1920s)", in *Médecins et ingénieurs ottomans*, ed. Anastassiadou-Dumont, pp. 363–4.

12 Moulinier, Pierre, "Naître hors de la métropole et se former à Paris: le cas des docteurs reçus à la faculté de médecine de Paris au XIXe siècle", *Outre-Mers: Revue d'Histoire*, 97 (2009), 193–211.

13 Panzac, Daniel, "Les docteurs orientaux de la faculté de médecine de Paris au XIXe siècle", *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 75–76 (1995), 295–303.

14 Mysyrowicz, Ladislas, "Les étudiants 'Orientaux' en médecine à Genève (1876–1914)", *Gesnerus: Swiss Journal of the History of Medicine and Science*, 34 (1977), 207–12; Bonner, Thomas N., "Pioneering in women's medical education in the Swiss universities 1864–1914", *Gesnerus: Swiss Journal of the History of Medicine and Science*, 45 (1988), 461–73.

in Palestine.[15] Meropi Anastassiadou-Dumont shows that by the end of the nineteenth century, 50 percent of the members of Istanbul's Imperial Medical Association (Cemiyet-i Tıbbiye-i Şahane) were Greek. These gained their education in Pisa, Paris, Montpellier, Vienna, Zurich, and Geneva. They participated in international conferences and published articles in international medical journals.[16] Finally, the lack of medical schools in Bulgaria meant that the local medical community of the late nineteenth century was the product of European faculties.[17]

Taken together, these examples of nineteenth-century regional and global mobilities provide the background for the discussion of the interwar years. The scarcity of medical schools had already created a tradition of professional mobility. Students' missions to Europe, moreover, had already made education abroad a viable option. These early models were accessible to prospective medical students and inspired their educational and career trajectories in the interwar years.

The Educational Renaissance of Mt. Lebanon

Setting the background for the interwar mobility of Middle-Eastern physicians also entails understanding Lebanon's role as a hub for medical education, the birthplace of many of the region's doctors. Whereas it would have been reasonable to assume that its students originated from Lebanon's larger cities, or specific villages that experienced substantial or particularly early missionary intervention, this is far from true; in fact, Beirut's Lebanese medical students hailed from dozens of different villages.

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, Mt. Lebanon and Beirut became educational battlegrounds between religious and national groups, including local communities, the Ottoman authorities, and American and European missionaries. Local schools had existed before the arrival of American missionaries in the 1820s, but from the 1830s, the number of missionary, governmental,

15 Vejdani, Farzin, "The Iranians of AUB and middle class formation in the early twentieth-century Middle East", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43/4 (2016), 486–506; Azizi, Mohammad Hossein and Farzaneh Azizi, "Government-sponsored Iranian medical students abroad (1811–1935)", *Iranian Studies*, 43 (2010), 349–63.

16 Anastassiadou-Dumont, Méropi, "Médecine hygiéniste et pédagogie sociale à Istanbul à la fin du XIXe siècle: le cas du docteur Spyridon Zavitziano", in *Médecins et ingénieurs ottomans*, ed. Anastassiadou-Dumont, pp. 64–5.

17 Kenderova, Stoyanka, "Construire une nation saine et vigoureuse: les médecins bulgares au XIXe siècle", *Médecins et ingénieurs ottomans*, ed. Anastassiadou-Dumont, pp. 186–8. For Romania, see Evleth, Donna, "The 'Romanian Privilege' in French medicine and anti-Semitism", *Social History of Medicine*, 11 (1998), 213–32.

and communal schools grew significantly. These schools offered new skills, that prepared students for higher education and the professions. Catholic schools, in particular, targeted mainly the sons of the elite for secondary and later university education.[18] Multiple schools were opened in the main urban centers of Beirut and Tripoli, but also in Mt. Lebanon's villages, which enjoyed dozens of schools already by the early 1880s. In 1883, Shahin Makaryus reports 65 schools in Beirut, 11 in Tripoli, ten in Sidon, five in Tyre, three in Baʿalbek and three in Hasbaya, in addition to unnumbered schools in ʿAbey, ʿAintoura, Marj ʿAyun and more.[19] About 30 years later, Ottoman officials Muhammad Bahjat and Rafiq al-Tamimi provide a list of missionary schools in Lebanon, sorted by mission and district, which is far from exhaustive. The region of Tyre, for example, had 15 schools and Tripoli, 76.[20] By 1920, there were no less than 986 schools in Lebanon alone.[21]

None of the available sources provides the exact distribution of these schools. It is clear from information they do offer, however, that competition between different missionary groups, the Ottoman government, and local communities created the basis for a Lebanese medical community. This educational renaissance is significant because it created the main reservoir for medical students. The entrance exams for Beirut's medical schools made them particularly accessible to graduates of missionary schools, although graduates of the local and Ottoman schools did possess the required languages skills as well.[22]

Three villages in Mt. Lebanon will suffice as examples for its booming medical educational scene. First, Deir al-Qamar, which became, during Amir Bashir's reign, Mt. Lebanon's administrative, cultural and commercial center, which linked the coastal region, Mt. Lebanon and the Syrian hinterland.[23] By

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18 Falk, Edward A., "Lyon to Liban: language, nation and faith in the Jesuit schools of Ottoman Lebanon", *Entangled Education: Foreign and Local Schools in Ottoman Syria and Mandate Lebanon (19–20th Centuries)*, ed. Julia Hauser, Christine B. Lindner and Ester Möller (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg in Kommission, 2016), p. 166; Ferguson, Susanna, "'A fever for an education': pedagogical thought and social transformation in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, 1861–1914", *Arab Studies Journal*, 26 (2018), 58–83.

19 Makaryus, Shahin, "Al-Maʿarif fi Suria" [Education in Syria], *al-Muqtataf*, 7 (1883), 534–7.

20 Bahjat, Muhammad and Muhamad Tamimi, *Wilayat Bayrut* [Beirut District] (Beirut: Mabaʿat al-Iqbal, 1916), vol. 1, pp. 143, 159.

21 Abou al-Shamat, Hania, "The Religious Educational Divide in Nineteenth Century Lebanon: Institutional Roots of Communal Educational Choices", Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Southern California, 2008, p. 23.

22 Verdeil, "Naissance d'une nouvelle élite ottomane", p. 2.

23 Zachs, Fruma, "Commerce and merchants under Amīr Bašīr II: from market town to commercial centre", *The Ottomans and Trade*, ed. Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet (*Oriente Moderno* XXV/1, 2006) (Rome, 2006), pp. 56–7.

mid-century, the village hosted two French missionary schools, the Soeurs de Saint Joseph l'Apparition School (established in 1832), and a Jesuit school, which targeted specifically the sons of the landholding elite.[24] By 1930, it had produced at least nine doctors, four pharmacists and two dentists. The first qualified physician was Ibrahim Najjar, who studied medicine in Qasr al-ʿAini as early as 1842 and returned to Mt. Lebanon, where he worked as a physician.[25] The next generation of Deir al-Qamar's medical students graduated with the first cohorts of the SPC medical school. Salim Jalkh graduated with the third cohort in 1874, and joined Mt. Lebanon's Council of Public Instruction. Sulayman Mashakah graduated with the fourth cohort in 1875 and returned to Deir al-Qamar as a physician. Salim ʿAmmun graduated with the school's fifth cohort in 1876 and served at Mt. Lebanon's administrative council. His classmate Dawud Mashakah served in the Ottoman military, and later as a municipal physician and the ʿAintoura orphanage doctor. Dawud Bishara Nahhul graduated in 1875 from the SPC's pharmacy school, and later became the vice-president of the medical pharmacist society of Beirut and of Beirut's administrative council.[26] Later graduates moved further: Habib Karam who graduated from the AUB in 1891, settled in Cairo; Nakhlah Karam, graduated in 1894, and served in the Egyptian military; ʿAbdallah Kikk graduated in 1905 and settled in Helwan, Egypt. Habib Yusuf Rihan did his BA at the SPC and then left for Harvard, where he completed his medical studies, after which he returned to Egypt in 1919 and then worked as an instructor at Beirut's Dentistry School.[27]

Second, Shweir, which served as the central station of the Presbyterian church in Mt. Lebanon, was a home for two primary schools – a Protestant American one and a Jesuit one – and one American high school.[28] Its sons started graduating from the SPC's medical school in the 1880s – a total of seven doctors and three pharmacists by 1932. Khalil Saʿadah was the first. He graduated in 1883 and moved to Egypt. He was not the last one. Salim Tanyus Ghusn and Nasib Tibsharani graduated from the AUB in 1900, and found a job in the Egyptian military and then in the Egyptian government. Fu'ad Tanyus Ghusn graduated from the SPC in 1913, and became Tripoli's head physician and later Beirut's municipal doctor. He then became the editor of the Lebanese medical journal and one of the founders of Lebanon's medical association. Jurjus

24 Ferguson, "'A fever for an education'", p. 69.

25 Nidal Nasrallah, *Muʿjam al-Atibba'* [Doctors' Lexicon] (Beirut: Dar al-Ratib al-Jamiʿiyya, 2004), p. 6.

26 The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni*, pp. 3, 5–6.

27 The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni*, pp. 23–4, 29, 57, 73.

28 Gracey, John Talbot, *The Missionary Year-book for 1889–90* (New York: Felming B. Revell, 1889), p. 207; Milad, Rizqallah, *Dalil al-Shweir wa-nawahiha* [A Guide to al-Shweir and its Area] (Beirut: Matbaʿat Tabara, 1923), pp. 55–6, 59–60.

Murhij graduated from the pharmacy school in 1897 and opened a prosperous pharmacy in Khartoum. Rizqallah Baʿqlini graduated from the St. Joseph in 1899. He served as a regional doctor and then a medical officer in the Ottoman army. He returned to Shweir and worked as a physician at the French dispensary in the village. Iliya Mitri Salibi (graduated 1901) immigrated to San Jose, California. Nasib Habib Hammam (1932) worked in both Shweir and Tripoli.[29]

Third, ʿAbey hosted one of the first American schools in Lebanon, the Protestant Theological Seminary, which served as the SPC's preparatory department. Unlike its Catholic counterparts, the American missionary education offered scholarships and thus offered social mobility to non-elite boys.[30] Its first medical student was Qaysar Ghurayyib, who graduated from the SPC in 1874 before settling in Palestine. Brothers Salim Faris and Amin Faris Haddad were a physician and a pharmacist who settled in New York after their graduation in 1888 and 1890, respectively. Na'if Amin Hamza move to Palestine and worked for the Palestine health department, before his appointment as assistant manager of Haifa's government hospital. Finally, Badiʿ Naqqad graduated from the St. Joseph in 1919 and returned to his hometown.[31]

Due to the early missionary activity and local initiative in Mt. Lebanon, then, the level of education offered to men in the Lebanese countryside was high, and opened doors for medical education from very early on. Moreover, as discussed below, this medical education rarely benefited the villages themselves, as most doctors immigrated elsewhere. Finally, we see the extent of these men's migration: as private practitioners, they found employment regionally and globally; they also found employment in the Ottoman government and military, and later as government officials in the mandate authorities.

In the Absence of a Medical School: Palestine, Egypt and Iraq

From the late nineteenth century onwards, we can observe the emergence of two substantial medical communities without a medical school: the Iraqi and the Palestinian-Arab. Both were homes for flourishing urban centers with elites capable of sending their sons to medical schools. These urban elites were also capable of paying for medical services, and thus of sponsoring a small

29 The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni*, pp. 13, 33, 38, 41, 93; Université Saint-Joseph, *Liste officielle médecins et pharmaciens*, p. 8; *Bulletin annuel de la Faculté française*, 1932, p. 119.

30 Ferguson, "'A fever for an education'", pp. 75–6.

31 The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni*, pp. 4, 22, 30, 124; *Bulletin annuel de la Faculté française*, 1932, p. 138.

community of medical doctors. By the 1927 establishment of the Baghdad College of Medicine and the 1948 establishment of the State of Israel, each had medical communities composed of hundreds of doctors educated exclusively abroad.

The Arab and Armenian Palestinian medical community that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century was characterized by the absence of a medical school on the one hand, and the surplus of Lebanese doctors on the other. Beirut's medical schools were attractive to Palestinian students because travel to Beirut was easier and cheaper than travel to Cairo. Secondary education in missionary schools, moreover, provided students with the language skills and required curricula to pass entrance exams. When we look at lists of medical doctors who worked in Palestine in three points in time – 1920, 1930, and 1946 – for which the fullest lists are available, we find diversity in places of origin and education. For 1920, we have 59 doctors, for 38 of whom we have the place of birth. Of those, 21 (55 percent) were native to Palestine, and less than half of those worked within ten km. of their place of birth. Twelve (32 percent) of Palestine's doctors were Lebanese-born and the rest (13 percent) originated in Anatolia, Syria or Transjordan. We know the graduation place for 47 doctors, 38 (81 percent) of whom graduated from the SPC, four (8.5 percent) from Istanbul, and three (6 percent) from the St. Joseph.[32]

For 1930, the place of birth is known for 63 out of 115 doctors. Seventy percent of them were born in Palestine, 22 percent in Lebanon and the rest in Syria, Anatolia, and Transjordan. As for place of education, we have data for 78 doctors: 80 percent graduated from the SPC/AUB, 13 percent from Istanbul and the rest from Montpellier, Athens, and the St. Joseph. For 1946, we have a list of 210 doctors, but a place of birth of only 114, of whom 89 (78 percent) were born in Palestine, 19 (16.7 percent) in Lebanon, and the rest in Anatolia, Syria or Transjordan. Out of 148 whose place of graduation is known, 117 (79 percent) graduated in the SPC/AUB.[33]

Eighty-two Arab and Armenian men and one Arab woman worked at the Palestine department of health during the mandate period. We have the birthplace of 62 of those: 70 percent were born in Palestine, 20 percent in Lebanon, and the rest in Transjordan, Turkey, and Syria. We have the place of study of

32 The data discussed here is based on *The Official Gazette of the Government of Palestine*; The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni*; Government of Palestine, *Palestine Civil Service List*, 1931–1939.

33 Based on *The Official Gazette of the Government of Palestine*; The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni*; Government of Palestine, *Palestine Civil Service List*, 1931–1939; Palestine Department of Health, *List of Doctors, Pharmacists, Dentists and Midwives*, 1930, 1946.

all but four: 66 (85 percent) out of these 78 studied at the AUB, six percent in Istanbul and the few others in Athens, Cairo, Edinburgh, and Montpellier.[34]

Several conclusions may be drawn from these data. First, the centrality of Lebanon's faculties of medicine in the production of Palestine's medical community – although we still know very little about the European or American schools in which others studied. Second, we see how significant Mt. Lebanon was as doctors' place of birth, but we also see it decreasing throughout the mandate years. Finally, when we look closely at the health department, we see overwhelming reliance on AUB graduates.

Sara Farhan's work on the Iraqi medical profession reached similar conclusions. As Farhan notes, throughout the Ottoman period Iraqis had to travel for higher education, mainly to Istanbul and Beirut, where they met students from other parts of the empire. From there students continued to Austria, Germany, or France for further specialization. Beirut in particular was a destination for students with means. The SPC sent agents to Egypt, Palestine, Anatolia, Greece, Cyprus, and Iraq to trace prospective students. Beirut, moreover, attracted Iraq's minorities, particularly Christians and Jews, who had access to foreign language education, while the Muslims preferred Istanbul or Cairo and from 1903 Damascus as well. The latter's advantage was its proximity but its disadvantages included inadequate buildings and teaching hospital and limited capacity.[35]

During the interwar period, foreign-trained doctors had the possibility of enrolling in the civil health administration or military medical services, or working as private practitioners. Whereas Iraqi-born doctors preferred the civil service, which allowed working in their own communities, military service was open to foreign doctors, usually AUB graduates, who also had a good command of English. Unlike the civil service, military service also enabled private practice and thus additional income. Medical officers were recruited regionally, and not only in Iraq.[36]

Finally, the Egyptian medical profession is particularly interesting since, unlike other colonial contexts and more than other white-collar professions locally, it had a long precolonial history. The Qasr al-ʿAini Medical School produced hundreds of physicians in its first six decades of operation. In 1893, shortly after the British occupation, it was transferred to British hands, its

34 Government of Palestine, *Palestine Civil Service List*, 1931–1939.

35 Farhan, Sara, "The Making of Iraqi Doctors: Reproduction in Medical Education in Modern Iraq, 1869–1959", Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, 2019, pp. 42, 47–8, 81–9.

36 Farhan, "The Making of Iraqi Doctors", pp. 191–3.

language of instruction became English, school fees were introduced, and cohorts were significantly reduced subsequently. The school slowly recovered in the 1910s and returned to Egyptian hands in the 1920s. It was during these decades that Egyptians travelled to Beirut and to European capitals for their medical education, whereas Egypt became a home for Syrian, Lebanese, Greek and Italian physicians.[37]

Among importing countries, Sudan stands out as a country that produced very few doctors but attracted many. It offered employment to young doctors, particularly AUB graduates. Egyptians and Lebanese, particularly graduates of Beirut's universities, served in mid-level posts that required modern training. Lebanese served as head clerks, intelligence officers, and financial officers. They also served as doctors, and some became specialists in diseases endemic to southern Sudan. In 1927, the Kitchener Medical School in Khartoum started producing medical doctors and these gradually replaced the Egyptians and Lebanese.[38]

This mobility also enabled the education and employment of women. No medical education was available for women in the Middle East before the 1920s. Sabat Islambouli and Mary Eddy graduated from the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania already in 1890, and Hilana Barudi in London, about a decade later.[39] The Egyptian government sent six students to England in the 1920s, and opened the doors of the local school to women only in 1929.[40] Women started studying medicine and dentistry at the AUB in the 1920s. They included Edma Ilyas Abu Shadid, who received her medical degree in 1931 and later settled in Baghdad, and Anna Iskandar Sethian, who graduated in 1937 and found a job at the Royal Hospital in Baghdad. Salwa Habib Khuri graduated from the AUB at 1936, settled in Palestine and worked at the department of health. Ida Jacob Kuenzler-Alamuddin, daughter of Swiss missionary Jacob

37 Sonbol, *The Creation of a Medical Profession*, pp. 106–13; al-Minawi, *Hukama Qasr al-ʿAini*, pp. 25–6, 369–70.

38 Sharkey, Heather, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 75; *Listes officielles des médecins.*

39 Mallika Rao, "Meet the three female medical students who destroyed gender norms a century ago", *Huffpost*, 4 August 2014, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/19th-century-women-medical-school_n_5093603, accessed 2.9.2022; Fleischmann, Ellen, "'I only wish I had a home on this globe': transnational biography and Dr. Mary Eddy", *Journal of Women's History*, 21 (2009), 108–30; ʿAbabnah, Salim, *Muʿjam Aʿlam al-Tibb fi al-Taʾrikh al-ʿarabi wa al-Islami* [A Lexicon of Great Doctors in Arab and Islamic History] (Amman: Al-Bayruni, 2010), p. 346.

40 'Abd al-Ra'uf, Hasan, "al-Tabibat al-Misriyyat wa-talibat al-tibb" [Egyptian female doctors and students], *al-Majalla al-Tibbiyya al-Misriyya*, 16 (1933), 711–15.

Kuenzler, graduated from the AUB in 1936 and worked in missionary hospitals in Amman and Tiberias.[41]

Regional Hubs: The St. Joseph and SPC/AUB Medical Schools

Several works have examined the mobility of medical students to Beirut and of medical doctors after their graduation. As Falb Kalisman shows, Beirut's universities became hubs of higher education for the entire region, and created transnational networks and identities. Their graduates were integrated into mandatory civil services. Degrees gained at the AUB/SPC and St. Joseph granted graduates employability throughout the Arabic-speaking world, in mandate territories and beyond. By the early 1930s, for example, over half the employees of the Palestine department of education were AUB graduates.[42] As we have seen above, the figures for the department of health were even higher.

Hratch Kestenian examined Armenian medical students. He ascribed these students' choice to study at the AUB to the following factors: the closure, in 1888, of the medical department of the Central Turkey College, which American missionaries established in ʿAintab in the mid-1870s; the SPC's change of language of instruction from Arabic to English in the early 1880s; the opening of missionary hospitals in Anatolia; the preference for graduates of missionary schools in admission and fees; and finally, improved transportation between Beirut and southeastern Anatolia. Subsequently, from 1885 until the end of World War I, Armenian students constituted the largest non-Arab ethnic group at the SPC: 140 (56 per cent) out of 250 Armenian students studied at the AUB School of Medicine.[43] Kestenian's conclusions are important for our mapping of regional educational choices as well.

Chantal Verdeil has shown the widespread scope of medical students' mobility during the late Ottoman period. She mapped the origin and first place of employment of SPC and St. Joseph's medical students from 1871 to 1914. Verdeil found that 24 percent of them came from Mt. Lebanon, 15.5 percent from Beirut, 16.5 percent from other parts of the Levant; 25.5 percent from Anatolia, and the rest from Egypt and the Balkans. As for their first place of employment, 34 percent found employment away from their places of origin,

41 The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni*, pp. 206, 247, 248, 257.

42 Falb Kalisman, Hilary, "Bursary scholars at the American University of Beirut: living and practicing Arab unity", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 42 (2015), 599–617.

43 Kestenian, Hratch, "A Portrait of Armenian Student Life at the Syrian Protestant College, 1885–1920", Master Dissertation, American University of Beirut, 2015, pp. 5–22.

most notably in Egypt and Sudan.[44] My analysis departs from her work in two main respects. Whereas she treats the entire period as one unit of analysis, and analyzes mobility by *vilayet*s, I offer a more nuanced resolution, in terms of both periodization and focus on the city or village level. I also take these questions to the post-World War I period and look at the impact of the region's imperialist divisions on mobility patterns.

Some data was already collected and analyzed in the interwar period. In 1924, Rockefeller Foundation representatives, Drs. George Vincent and Richard Pearce, prepared a comprehensive report on the status of medical education in Syria and Lebanon. The report opens with the following observation:

> In our incidental travel, we could not fail to see [the AUB's] influence in every part of the country we covered – in Cairo, Haifa and Damascus, we met graduates in positions of importance, and all proud of their association with the University. This University draws students from the entire Near East and, since the war, as automobile routes have opened up, it has tapped Persian and territory in the neighborhood of Baghdad. On the other hand, enrollment from Anatolia has dropped off since the development of Turkish National spirit, and there have been fewer Armenians except those which may be classed as refugees.[45]

The report further explained the school's attractiveness as being (alongside the St. Joseph and the "struggling Arabic School in Damascus"), the only one south of Istanbul, north of Cairo, west of India and east of Athens. The English-speaking British administration in Iraq, Palestine, and Sudan, moreover, was in constant demand of the school's graduates. Qasr al-ʿAini medical school, moreover, did not meet Egypt's needs, and thus many students came from Egypt. The report further anticipated increased demand from Iran and Iraq.[46]

In 1927, the St. Joseph Medical School's administration reported to the Rockefeller Foundation delegate that "11 or 12" of the current students were from Iran, "about 12" from Iraq, "about 36" from Egypt, and the rest Syrian or Lebanese. The report further stated that school graduates had joined the Iraqi civil administration and military. Dr. Khayat, it reported, a professor of forensic

44 Verdeil, "Naissance d'une nouvelle élite ottomane", pp. 217–37.

45 Rockefeller Archive Center [hereafter RAC], Collection RF, Group RG2, Series S1927/833A, Fa# 308, Box 551, Folder 3692, "Medical Education in Syria", p. 1.

46 RAC, Collection RF, Group RG2, Series S1927/833A, Fa# 308, Box 551, Folder 3692, "Medical education in Syria", pp. 54–55.

medicine at Baghdad's Faculty of Law was a St. Joseph Medical School graduate, and had appointed a fellow graduate to Iraq's civil medical service.[47]

According to the report, 237 graduates of the medical department held government offices. These included 25 physicians working in Syria or Lebanon, 37 in Palestine, 39 in Egypt, 56 in Sudan, six in Iraq, and 65 in Turkey.[48] In 1927, the school's administration reported that 40 percent out of its 450 graduates worked in Syria, 21 percent in Egypt, 12 percent in British Sudan, seven percent in the US, three percent in Iraq, almost two percent in Brazil, and the rest in Turkey, Greece, Iran, Cyprus, other parts of Latin America and Europe.[49]

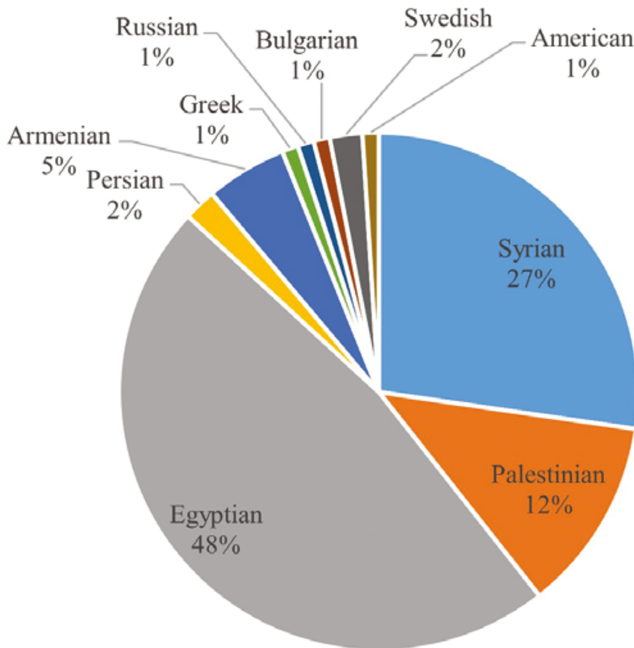


DIAGRAM 7.1 Medical students at the AUB by origin, 1923/4, according to the Rockefeller Foundation report
Note: RAC, Collection RF, Group RG2, Series S1927/833A, Fa# 308, Box 551, Folder 3692, "Medical education in Syria", p. 51

47 RAC, Collection RF, Group RG2, Series S1927/833A, Fa# 308, Box 551, Folder 3692, "Medical education in Syria", p. 254.

48 RAC, Collection RF, Group RG2, Series S1927/833A, Fa# 308, Box 551, Folder 3692, "Medical education in Syria", p. 53.

49 RAC, Collection RF, Group RG2, Series S1927/833A, Fa# 308, Box 551, Folder 3692, "Medical education in Syria", pp. 140–2, 211.

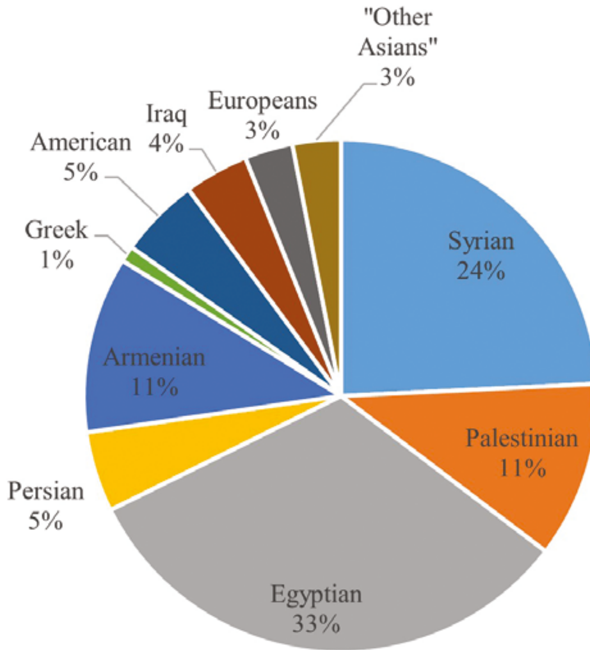


DIAGRAM 7.2 Medical students at the AUB by origin, 1926/7, according to the Rockefeller Foundation report
Note: RAC, Collection RF, Group RG2, Series S1927/833A, Fa# 308, Box 551, Folder 3692, "Medical education in Syria", p. 53

Diagrams 1 and 2 show the distribution of AUB medical students by national/ethnic origin in academic years 1923/4 and 1926/7, respectively. The difference lies mainly in the decreased number of Egyptian students, which parallels the increased cohorts in Qasr al-ʿAini. Indeed, the breakdown of the number of students per year reveals a drop in first-year admissions from seven to two Egyptian students per cohort.[50]

In addition to the Rockefeller Foundation's report, alumni lists of both the AUB and the St. Joseph enable a more detailed and longer-term analysis of students' trajectories. In what follows, I first look at the St. Joseph's students around World War I, and then at the AUB students in the interwar period. My dataset for the St. Joseph ends in 1922, and I therefore analyzed the years

50 RAC, Collection RF, Group RG2, Series S1927/833A, Fa# 308, Box 551, Folder 3692, "Medical education in Syria", p. 187.

immediately preceding World War I, namely 1910–13, and then the years immediately following the war (1919–22) – four cohorts for each, 89 and 112 students, respectively. Analysis of the St. Joseph medical students' origins for 1910–13 reveals that 42 percent came from Lebanon, 30 percent from Anatolia, 7.8 percent from Syria, 5.6 percent from Egypt, and the rest from Palestine, Iran, Greece, Transjordan, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Lithuania and Mauritius. The figures for the immediate postwar years are rather similar – 43 percent from Lebanon, 20.5 percent from Anatolia, 11.6 percent from Syria, 10.7 percent from Egypt, 7.1 percent from Palestine, and the rest from Greece, Sudan, England and France.[51]

What we learn from this data is as follows. The proportion of Lebanese students remains constant. The percentage of students from Turkey drops from 30 percent to 20 percent, which is compensated by a small increase in the percentage of Egyptian, Palestinian and Syrian students. The St. Joseph served Egyptian students, who often returned to their country of origin. We can also trace the mobility within Lebanon: the 38 students in the earlier period came from 28 different villages, cities, or towns; in the later one, there were 48 students from 32 different locales. Unlike the AUB graduates, who, as seen below, chose to remain in Beirut after their studies, the St. Joseph graduates who stayed in Lebanon spread to dozens of villages, including their place of birth.

Whereas data for place of birth is comprehensive, data for place of work refers only to 1919–21, and is incomplete. Several trends can be traced: migration to the US and Europe; the continued reliance of students from Turkey on the St. Joseph, though in smaller numbers; and Sudan as a career option, mainly for Lebanese students. Students from Anatolia (some of whom were clearly Armenian) who graduated before World War I all returned to their homes in Anatolia.[52]

The comparison of AUB students in the 1920s and 30s reveals several trends (see Table 7.1). First, the marked decrease in Egyptian students from 22.5 percent to two percent, probably due to the Egyptianization of the Egyptian Faculty of Medicine and the subsequent increase of its cohorts. Second, the increase in Turkish students from 4.5 percent to 25 percent. Less drastic trends are the increase in Palestinian students from 14.4 percent to 29 percent, and a parallel decrease of Lebanese from 35 percent to 26 percent. These figures should be read with caution, since AUB alumni records provide only partial data.[53]

51 Université Saint-Joseph, *Liste officielle médecins et pharmaciens*.

52 Université Saint-Joseph, *Liste officielle médecins et pharmaciens*.

53 The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni*.

TABLE 7.1 AUB medical students in the interwar Middle East by countries of birth and work[a]

Country of birth	No. of students, 1920s	No. of students, 1930s	Country of work	No. of graduates, 1920s	No. of graduates, 1930s
Lebanon	39	25	Lebanon	22	41
Egypt	25	2	Syria	16	14
Syria	17	8	Palestine	25	38
Palestine	16	28	Egypt	37	8
Turkey	5	24	United States	8	8
Iraq	1	2	Turkey	1	1
Jordan	2	0	Iraq	1	7
Brazil	2	2	Jordan	6	4
Poland	1	0	Sudan	20	1
Iran	1	0	Brazil	3	0
Cyprus	1	0	Peru	1	0
UK	1	0	Iran	0	1
US	0	5	Ethiopia	1	0
TOTAL	111	96	Venezuela	1	0
			Mexico	0	1
			UK	0	1
			TOTAL	142	125

a The American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni*.

Comparison between workplaces of the 1920s and 30s reveals several trends. First, the sharp decrease in demand for AUB graduates in both Egypt and Sudan (from 26% and 14% to 6.4% and 1%, respectively). As noted above, this decline can be explained by the Egyptianization of the Faculty of Medicine and its increased cohorts, which met the local demand for physicians. A second trend is the increase in students from Palestine and Iraq (from 17.6% and 1% to 30.4% and 5.6%, respectively), attributable to the increased demand in both British mandates for English-speaking physicians, and to the increase in English-language education in both territories. Comparing the countries of birth and work for AUB graduates in the 1920s reveals the following picture: the syphoning off of students from Lebanon and Syria, particularly to Egypt and the Sudan. A more nuanced look at city or village of birth reveals a more specifically Lebanese migration trend – out of the countryside to Beirut and

abroad. The 39 Lebanese students originated from 24 different cities and villages, and 19 out of the 22 physicians who worked in Lebanon did so in Beirut. Medical education offered upward mobility and socialization into the urban bourgeoisie. Returning to the countryside entailed downward social mobility and lower living standards, which doctors were not happy to accept.

As for Egypt, students originated from different parts of the country, including Zagazig and Dikirnis in the Nile Delta, and Mallawi, Mir, Asyut and Akhmim in Upper Egypt. Doctors' place of employment was evenly distributed: 37 doctors working in 21 different places, including the Nile Delta and Upper Egypt, probably due to the government's policy of distribution.

In the 1930s, we see a reversed trend: more students worked in Lebanon than did those born there, particularly among students from Turkey, mainly Armenians. Here as well, the AUB remained a significant provider of medical education and medical doctors to Palestine, and to a lesser extent to Iraq. Whereas the 1910s were characterized by an even distribution of students from Anatolia, in the 1930s, these originated from multiple towns across southern Turkey, not far from the Syrian border, such as Gaziantep, Adana and Diyarbakır.

In Palestine, we witness in the 1930s a similar trend to what we have seen in Lebanon already at the beginning of the twentieth century – a diversification of place of origin. In the 1920s, Palestinian students' place of birth was evenly distributed between Nazareth, Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Ramallah – the country's main urban centers, which had also enjoyed missionary educational facilities since the late nineteenth century. While Jerusalem and Jaffa remain the main places of origin in the 1930s, they are supplemented by smaller cities, such as Gaza, Acre and Nablus, but also villages such as Qubab, Bisan and ʿAnabta – a total of 15 cities, towns and villages. As in Lebanon, students who originated in the countryside did not return there. Most graduates worked in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa and Nablus, and only one or two in smaller cities such as Ramla, Acre and Safed.

The maps below summarize my findings by demonstrating transformations, between the 1920s and the 1930s, of doctors' educational and professional paths – the shifting role of Egypt and Turkey as exporters of students and as professional opportunities. They demonstrate the extent to which Lebanon continued to be a major source of students – particularly its countryside – a process which mostly pushed educated youth to study in Beirut, but these did not return home.

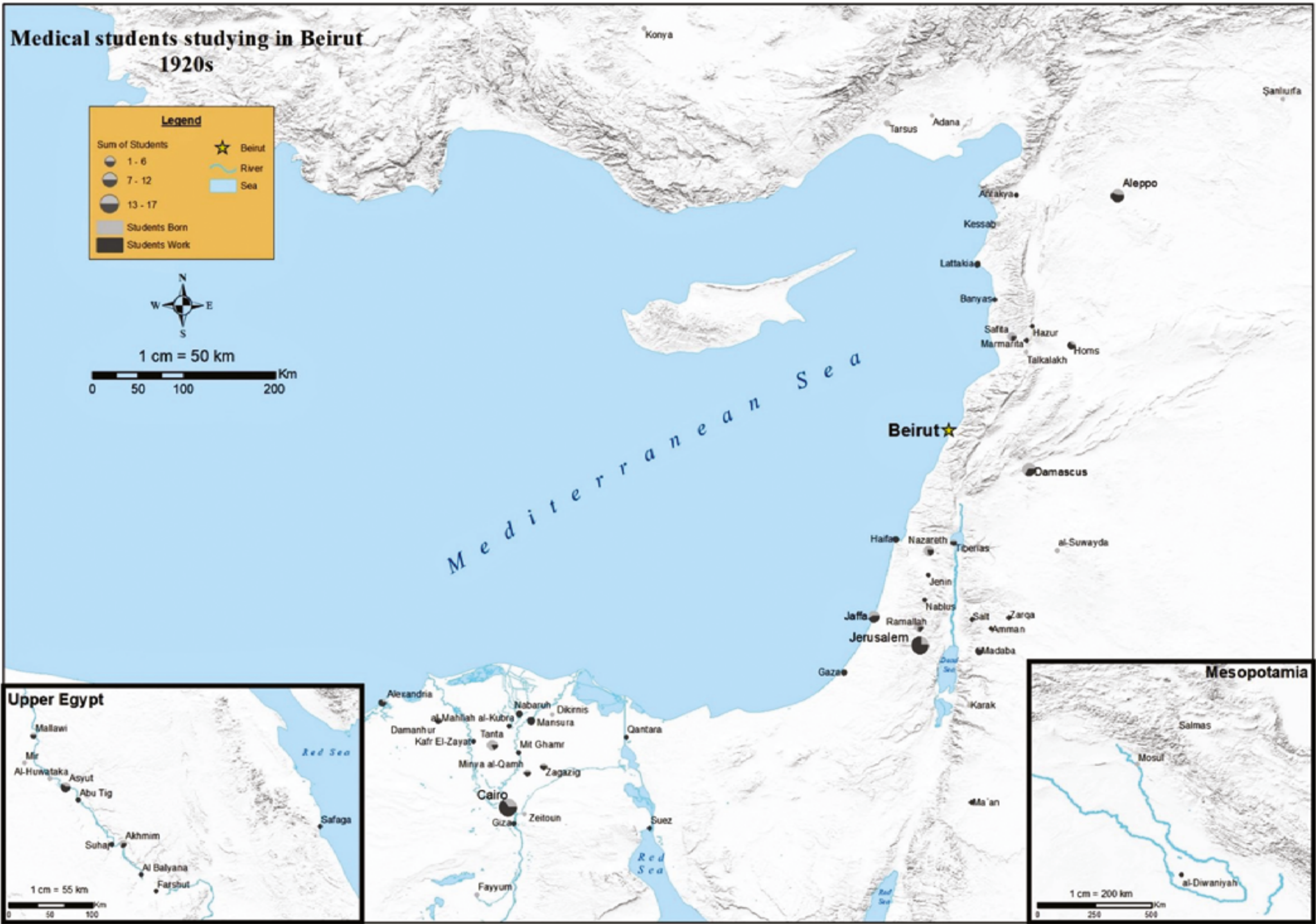
Conclusion

This chapter focused on the education and career paths of Middle-Eastern medical students and doctors in the interwar years, after the collapse of the Ottoman empire. I chose doctors because medicine was a profession that required formal training in specific urban centers in the region, and the map of these available educational venues changed over time. These specific medical schools created a 'draining basin' of sorts, which attracted students locally as well as regionally. Beirut's medical schools in particular attracted students from the entire region, as well as from dozens of villages in Mt. Lebanon. Upon graduation, Lebanese and Palestinian physicians were attracted mainly to the urban centers and rarely returned home to their villages.

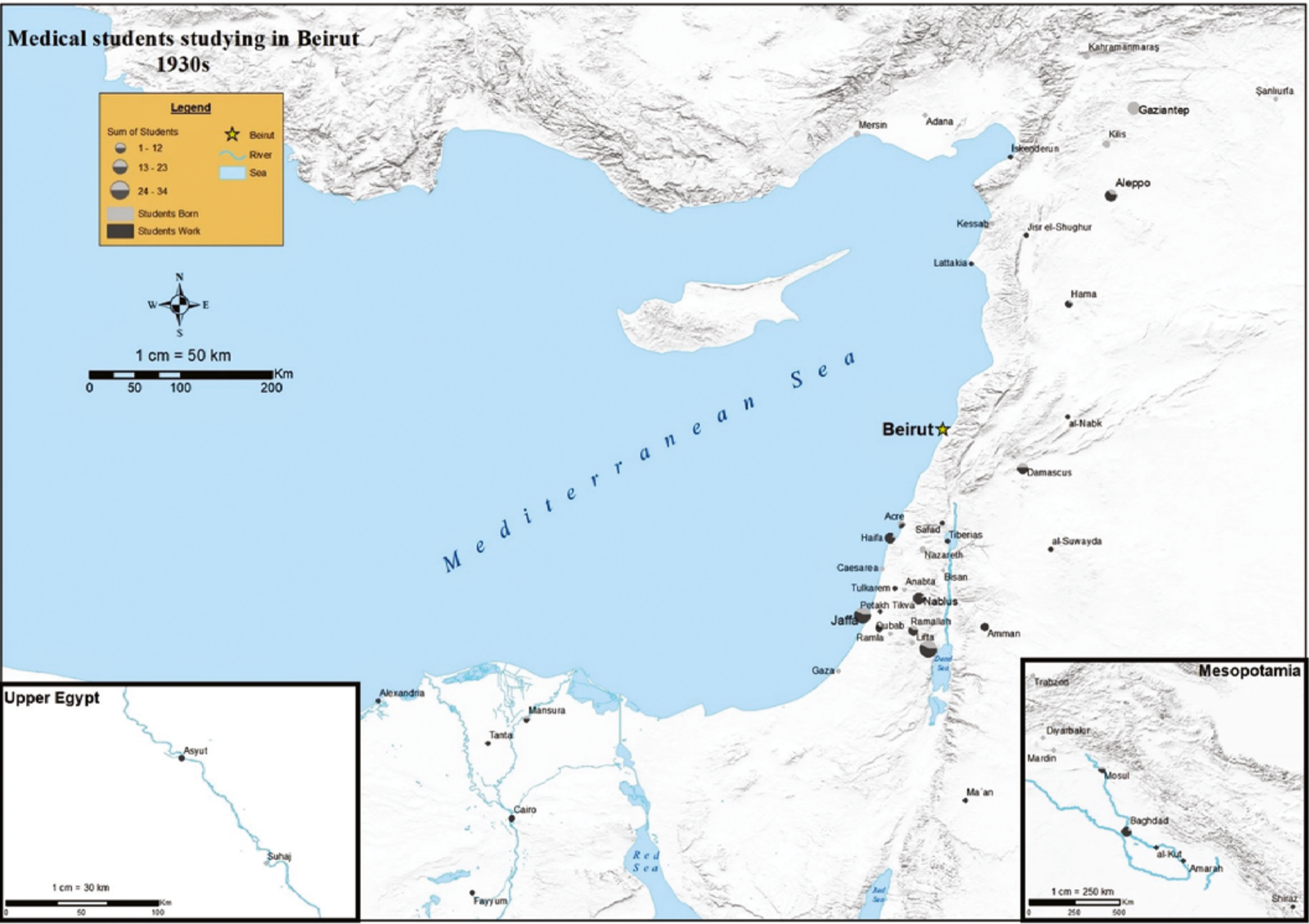
The result of these processes was the creation of Beirut as a regional hub for medical doctors. Graduates of the SPC/AUB and the St. Joseph had classmates throughout the region as well as globally. Paris, Geneva, London, Montpellier and other cities became hubs for Middle-Eastern and global connections that often lasted decades, through personal correspondences, circulation of medical journals and regional conferences. This was particularly true of Iraq and Palestine, whose medical communities relied on education abroad more than did others. The political, professional, and scientific implications of this connectivity would be a topic for a different research. World War II, the end of the mandates and the foundation of new nation-states, had a substantial effect on career trajectories: boundaries between Israel and its neighbors, the forced and voluntary migration that followed Israel's foundation, the different laws and licensing policies of independent states, as well as regional alliances and rivalries affected who could work and who could study where. These factors, however, and their impact on the professions, would be the topic for future research.

Acknowledgments

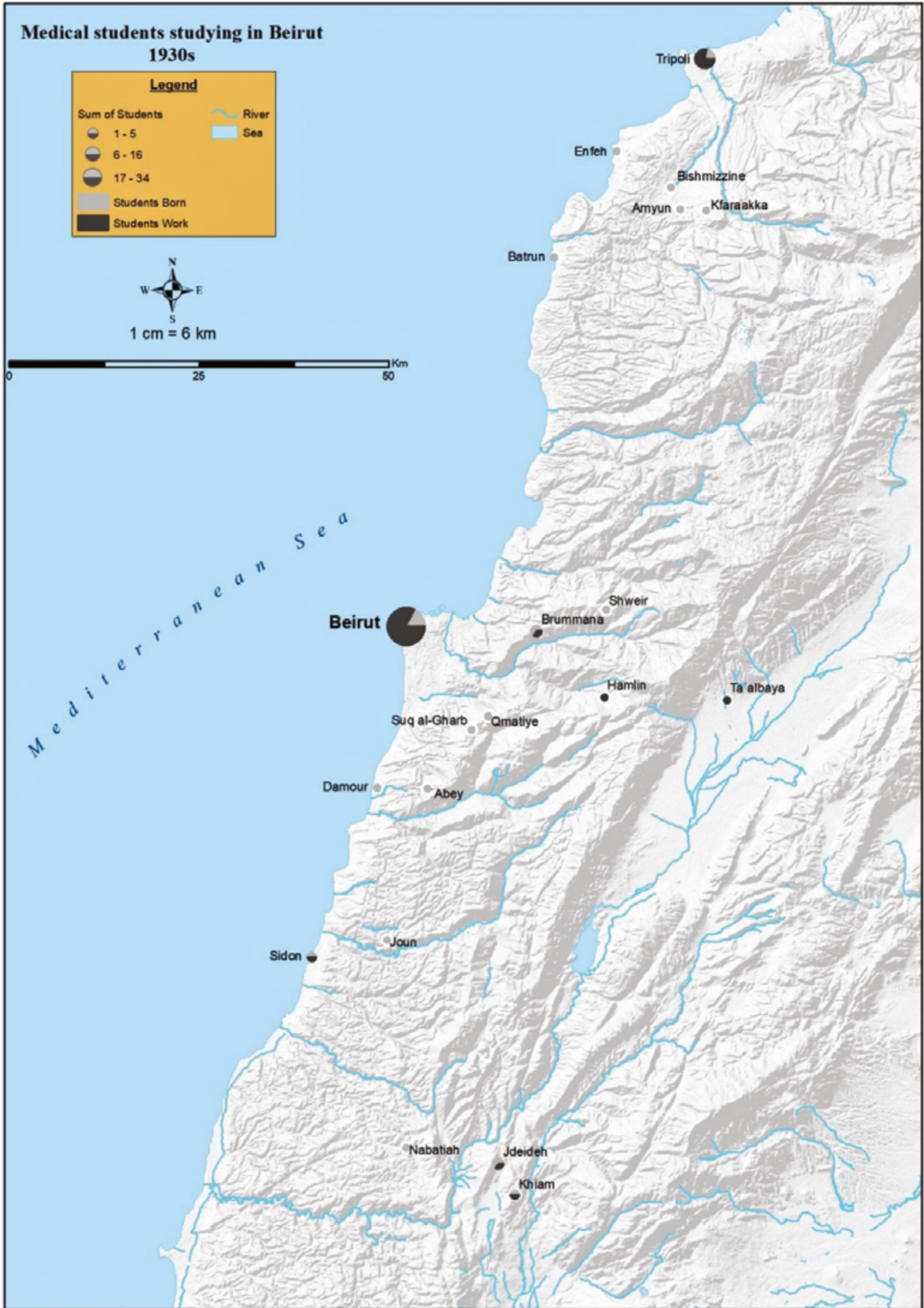
Research for this chapter was funded by the European Research Council, grant ERC-2016-COG, Mideast Med, grant 723718.



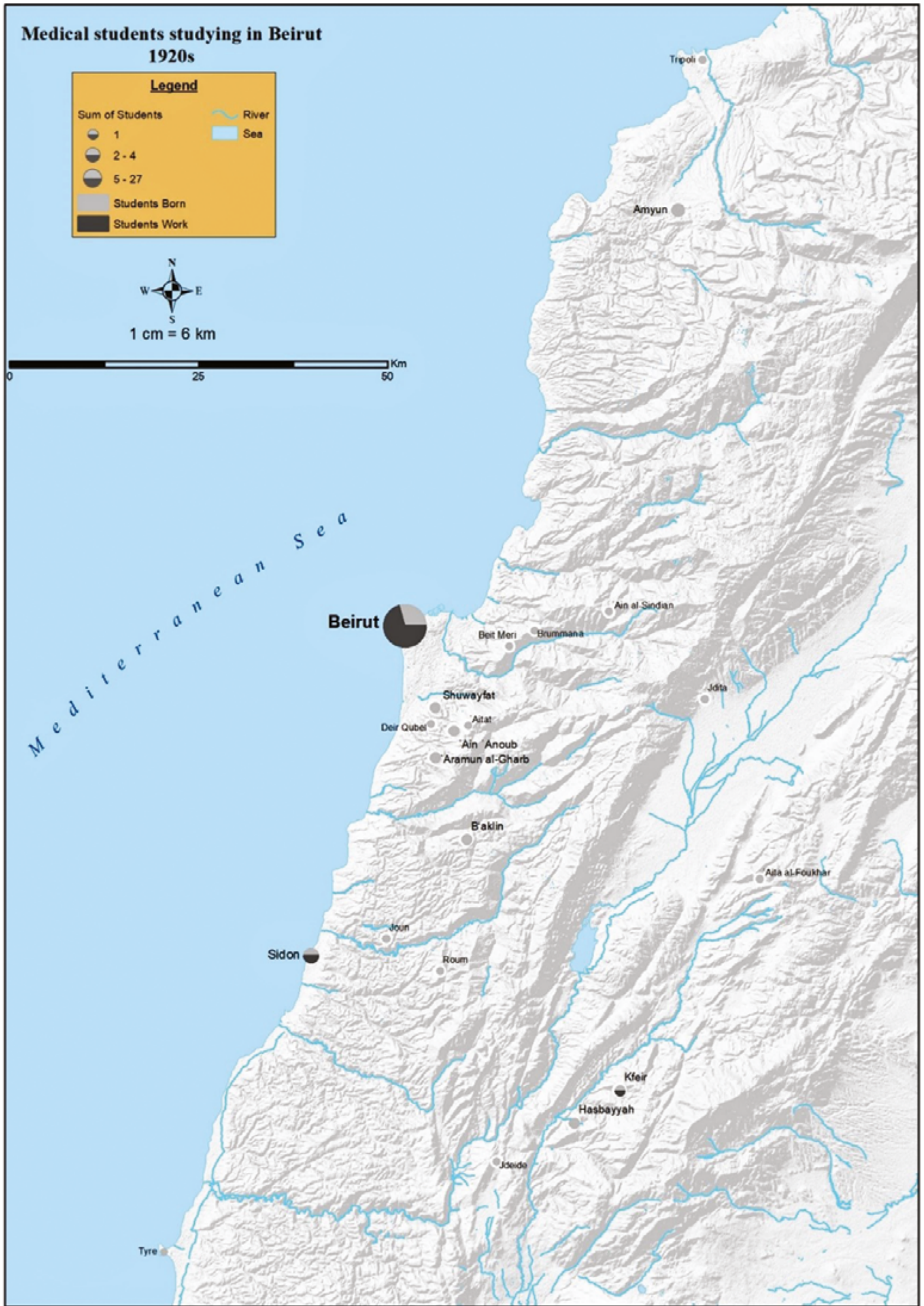
MAP 7.1 Medical students studying in Beirut in the 1920s. Map created by the Center for Computational Geography, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem



MAP 7.2 Medical students studying in Beirut in the 1930s. Map created by the Center for Computational Geography, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem



MAP 7.3 Medical students from Lebanon studying in Beirut in the 1930s. Map created by the Center for Computational Geography, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem



MAP 7.4 Medical students from Lebanon studying in Beirut in the 1920s. Map created by the Center for Computational Geography, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

CHAPTER 8

Strolling through Istanbul: Egyptians in 1930s Turkey

Amit Bein

In a novel published in 1933 by the Turkish feminist writer Nezihe Muhiddin, the main protagonist is a young lady named Belkıs, who is facing various personal challenges after winning a beauty pageant. At a particularly low point in her life, she takes refuge with a wealthy young Egyptian banker who is in Istanbul for vacation. The novel describes him as a refined and well-mannered Arab man with a perfect command of Turkish, and who is a regular visitor to Istanbul.[1] Contemporary Turkish readers would not have viewed this description as out of the ordinary. From at least the late nineteenth century, wealthy Egyptians had developed the habit of taking extended vacations in the old imperial capital, the Bosphorus, and the Aegean region of Anatolia, particularly during the hot summer months. The development of safer and more reliable modes of transportation across the Mediterranean had contributed to that trend before the Great War. The situation changed dramatically during the four-year long global conflict and the struggle over Anatolia that followed it, but a gradual recovery in the number of Egyptians who vacationed in Turkey appeared to be taking place in the late 1920s. That is despite the introduction of new travel regimes and regulations within the former Ottoman space, such as new passports, customs, and currencies. Once the political situation in Anatolia relatively stabilized, the traffic of Egyptian travelers to Turkey was given a new lease of life.[2] The number of visitors in the early 1930s was still a far cry from the prewar period, but Ankara saw benefits in encouraging greater mobility of Egyptians to Turkey, regardless of its efforts to accentuate and augment the distinctions between new Turkey and former Ottoman territories in the Middle East.

1 Nezihe Muhiddin, “Güzellik Kraliçesi” [The beauty queen], in Nezihe Muhiddin, *Bütün Eserleri* [The Complete Works], ed. Yaprak Zihnioğlu (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006), vol. 1, pp. 117–204. The interaction between Belkıs and the young Egyptian man is most detailed on pages 164 and 197.

2 “Ila’ ayna yusafir sukkan Misr” [Where the residents of Egypt travel to], *al-Musawwar*, 7 October 1932, p. 9.

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The Turkish government and various stakeholders in Istanbul and western Anatolia were very aware of the potential advantages of increased mobility of travelers from the Middle East to Turkey. To facilitate that, republican Turkey's first and most important travel agency during the interwar period, the National Turkish Tourist Agency (Milli Türk Seyahat Acentalığı), indeed opened two of its first foreign offices in Cairo and Beirut in the late 1920s.[3] This was part of a broader effort to attract foreign visitors to Turkey, which was refocused following the onset of the global economic crisis in 1929. Accordingly, the Turkish government organized in May 1930 a five-day international conference in Istanbul, aimed at exploring ways to promote the country as a tourist destination for international visitors.[4] Conversely, the authorities in Ankara were not particularly interested in encouraging citizens of Turkey to travel abroad in general, and across the new borders within the former Ottoman space in particular. However, attracting to Turkey visitors from the Middle East, and particularly from Egypt, was perceived by Turkish decision-makers and stakeholders as beneficial for its positive economic impact, and for potentially projecting through visitors positive images of the Kemalist republic in the face of growing skepticism toward Turkey's reforms and policies in Islamic circles and among Arab nationalists. The Turkish government was therefore particularly eager to host Egyptian shapers of public opinion such as journalists, government officials, professionals, and businesspeople. Overland, Turkey encouraged the extension of train services to the Middle East, with plans to eventually connect its railway system to Iran and Iraq on the one hand, and Egypt on the other. In 1926, an agreement was signed with the Simplon Orient Express to extend its European service to Istanbul with a new leg from Haydarpaşa on the city's Asian side to Aleppo in Syria, en route to various Middle Eastern destinations such as Baghdad and Tehran on the one hand, and Damascus, Beirut, and Cairo on the other.[5] From Egypt, however, the shortest route to Turkey was by ship from Alexandria. European-owned steamship lines maintained regular service on this route. But in 1930, the Turkish government decided to establish its own weekly service between Istanbul and Alexandria, with stops

3 Akçura, Gökhan, *Turizm Yıl Sıfır* [Tourism Year Zero] (Istanbul: Om Yayınevi, 2002), p. 46.

4 "Le tourisme", *Bulletin périodique de la presse Turque*, no. 77 (April-June 1930), p. 10; "Turizm Kongresi Dün Açıldı" [Tourism congress opened yesterday], *Cumhuriyet*, 1 June 1930, p. 1; U.S. Department of Commerce, *The Promotion of Tourist Travel by Foreign Countries* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931), p. 56.

5 "Travaux publics: chemins de fer", *Correspondance d'Orient*, February 1933, p. 84; "Europe-Asie par le Simplon-Orient-Express et le Taurus Express", *Comœdia*, 13 May 1933, p. 4.

in İzmir and Piraeus. This was the Republic of Turkey's first international maritime line.[6] Ankara expected and hoped that the investment in the line would facilitate mobility between Anatolia and the Land of the Nile, and along with an increase in train-based transportation from Syria and Iraq, would translate into economic and political benefits for Turkey.

The early 1930s witnessed the beginning of concerted Turkish efforts to cultivate a positive image of Turkey in Egypt and to present it as a desirable travel destination for Egyptian vacationers. As part of this endeavor, the Turkish government secretly subsidized the publication of a pro-Kemalist bilingual Turkish-Arabic journal in Egypt, and the activities of a Cairo-based telegraphic news agency that disseminated in the Middle East Arabic and French translations of flattering news and opinion pieces from the Turkish press.[7] At the same time, the Turkish government began inviting Egyptian shapers of public opinion, particularly journalists and intellectuals, for subsidized visits to Turkey aboard the new Alexandria-Istanbul steamship line, with the expectation that in return they would contribute to propagating in Egypt a positive image of Turkey as a progressive state that was welcoming to Egyptian visitors.

In October 1931, the prominent Egyptian journalist Mahmud Abu al-Fath sailed to Turkey on the invitation of the Turkish government and was given the rare opportunity for a personal interview with Mustafa Kemal. The timing was no coincidence. The former editor-in-chief of *al-Ahram*, Egypt's newspaper of record, was invited to meet the Turkish president just weeks before the scheduled beginning of bilateral negotiations between Cairo and Ankara on a planned Turkish-Egyptian treaty of friendship and cooperation. Mustafa Kemal dedicated four hours to the meeting with the Egyptian visitor, in which he praised Egypt and the historical friendship between the peoples of Turkey and Egypt and invited the Egyptian people to visit Turkey. Abu al-Fath was also given the opportunity to meet Prime Minister İsmet İnönü and Foreign Minister Tevfik Rüştü Aras, who both similarly emphasized the bonds of brotherhood between the two peoples and their desire to alleviate any tensions that had marred the relations between the governments of Egypt and Turkey in the previous years. The veteran Egyptian journalist included these messages in featured columns that were published prominently on the pages of *al-Ahram*.[8]

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6 "La navigation", *Bulletin périodique de la presse Turque*, no. 78 (June-August 1930), p. 12; Akçura, *Turizm Yıl Sıfır*, pp. 206–7.

7 The journal was named *Muhadenet/Mukhadana*. The news agency was *al-Anba' al-Sharqiya* [The Eastern News]. Devlet Arşivleri, Cumhuriyet Arşivi [hereafter BCA], 30.10.0.0–84.557.5, 10 December 1937.

8 "Mandub al-Ahram fi 'Asimat Turkiya" [al-Ahram's representative in the capital of Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 1 November 1931, p. 4; "Mu'ahadat al-Sadaqa bayna Misr wa-Turkiya" [Treaty of

Beyond political messaging, the Turkish side was also interested in communicating to the Egyptian public the amity of the people of Turkey and their country's attractiveness as a tourist destination. Abu al-Fath was therefore hosted in Turkey for five weeks, during which time he was taken on tours not only of Ankara and Istanbul, but also of Bursa, İzmir, and several other vacation spots in Western Anatolia. His columns, entitled "al-Ahram in Turkey", celebrated the vibrancy of the young republic, commented positively on the effects of its policies and reforms, and included ebullient descriptions of the sights and sites of Turkey. The veteran journalist's praises for the efficiency and convenience of the new Turkish Alexandria-Istanbul shipping line drove home his Turkish-sponsored invitation to his readers to visit Turkey for its historical, cultural, and natural attractions, as well as for observing its transformation into a modern state.[9]

The Turkish authorities were welcoming to visitors from Egypt, whether they were Muslim or Christian, so long as no missionary activity took place on their soil. In July 1932, for example, the Cairo-based American missionary Donald Atwell led an all-male group of 40 vacationers, including Egyptian Muslims and Christians, on a tour of Istanbul and its environs. Among them were attorneys, merchants, physicians, teachers, and most significantly from Ankara's perspective, journalists from the dailies *al-Ahram* and *al-Jihad*. This came into play when the Turkish steamship that carried the group from Alexandria was coincidentally boarded in İzmir by Prime Minister İnönü and Foreign Minister Aras. As soon as the two Turkish statesmen found out that Egyptian journalists chanced to be aboard, they invited the visitors to an impromptu interview in which they sang the praises of the brotherly Egyptian people and heartily invited them to visit the friendly nation of Turkey. Subsequently, the Egyptian travelers were met at the docks in Istanbul by Turkish reporters, and their visit was celebrated in the Turkish press as reflecting the close relationship between the peoples of Turkey and Egypt. The journal articles omitted the fact that it was a YMCA-organized group, oftentimes referring to the visitors as "our coreligionists". On their first day in the old imperial city the visitors were taken

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Friendship between Egypt and Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 3 November 1931, p. 4; "Türkiye ve Mısır" [Turkey and Egypt], *Cumhuriyet*, 24 October 1931, p. 3; Goldschmidt, Arthur Jr., "Abu al-Fath, Mahmud", in Goldschmidt, Arthur Jr., *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt* (Boulder, Col.: Lynne Reiner, 2000), p. 12.

9 Abu al-Fath, Mahmud, "al-Ahram fi Turkiya" [Al-Ahram in Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 8 December 1931, p. 1; Abu al-Fath, Mahmud, "al-Ahram fi Turkiya", *al-Ahram*, 10 December 1931, pp. 1, 12; Abu al-Fath, Mahmud, "al-Ahram fi Turkiya", *al-Ahram*, 19 December 1931, p. 1; Abu al-Fath, Mahmud, "al-Ahram fi Turkiya", *al-Ahram*, 22 December 1931, pp. 1, 2; Abu al-Fath, Mahmud, "al-Ahram fi Turkiya", *al-Ahram*, 24 December 1931, pp. 1–2.

to lectures and meetings with Turkish officials and members of professional associations. But most of the rest of their three-week stay in Istanbul and its environs was devoted to leisure and tourism.[10]

The *al-Ahram* journalist in the group was an Egyptian Copt named Tawfiq Habib, who was much better known by his peculiar nom de plume 'The Old Journalist'.[11] In columns published in Egypt's newspaper of record, he reported on the visitors' encounters, experiences in touring the historical and cultural treasures of Istanbul and the region's natural beauty, and in vacationing in a summer resort on the city's Asian side. During the first week, the group devoted the daytime to visits of palaces, museums, mosques, and other historical and cultural sites, but also attended lectures on the past successes and future goals of the Turkish republic. At night, they spent their time in some of the city's finest restaurants and night clubs. Habib shared with his readers his impressions from many of these places and establishments. For example, he reported that one of the main draws of some of the more popular taverns and cabarets was the fact that their waitresses and entertainers were oftentimes young and beautiful Russian girls from the city's substantial community of White Russian refugees from the Soviet Union. He thus presented the European side of Istanbul as offering the visitors the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the Byzantine and Ottoman treasures of the past, the Kemalist achievements of the present, and various types of traditional and modern entertainment. The second half of the group's vacation was mostly spent in relaxation on a fashionable beach in Suadiye, on the Asian side of Istanbul, and in short excursions to the Adalar (Princes' Islands) and to the thermal hot springs in Yalova. Habib reported that on the beach his group interacted with Turkish citizens of various ethnic and religious backgrounds, including Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, as well as with some foreign vacationers, including Bulgarian, Russian, British, and American tourists. They communicated with one another in a

10 "Mısır'lı Seyyahlar Geldi. Elehram Muhabiri İsmet Pş. İle Görüştü" [The Egyptian travelers arrived. The *al-Ahram* correspondent met with İsmet Paşa], *Cumhuriyet*, 30 July 1932, p. 1; "Mısır'lı Misafirler İdarehanemizde" [The Egyptian visitors in our establishment], *Cumhuriyet*, 5 August 1932, p. 2; "al-Sayyah al-Misriyun fi al-Asitana" [The Egyptian travelers in Istanbul], *al-Ahram*, 2 August 1932, p. 4; "Şehrimizdeki Mısır'lı Misafirler" [The Egyptian visitors in our city], *Cumhuriyet*, 12 August 1932, p. 2; Yunus Nadi, "Bir Kardeşlik Tezahürü: Türk'ler ve Mısırlı'lar" [A manifestation of brotherhood: Turks and Egyptians], *Cumhuriyet*, 15 August 1932, p. 1.

11 For Tawfiq Habib and his column "On the margins", see Rizk, Yunan Labib, "Story-telling", *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, no. 797, 1–7 June 2006 [Original offline. Mirrored in: https://www.masress.com/en/ahramweekly/13250, accessed 29 January 2020].

mix of Arabic, French, and English, which suggests that many of the Egyptians were not conversant in Turkish.[12]

Habib's writings were greatly appreciated by Turkish stakeholders, who therefore sought to amplify the impact of his promotion of Turkey as a desired travel destination. First, they sponsored the collection of his columns and their publication in a book form. It was headlined by the statement that "Turkey is the best summer destination for Egyptians" and its first pages were occupied by advertisements for the Turkish-owned Alexandria-Istanbul steamship line, the thermal hot springs in Yalova, the Alexandria branch of the Turkish government-owned *İş Bankası*, and other tourism and business-related Turkish enterprises.[13] Second, as the summer season of 1933 was approaching, the Turkish government offered Habib another visit to Istanbul, all expenses paid, in return for publishing more of his impressions of Istanbul and his environs. The proposal must have been alluring because he took the offer after already having in place plans to travel to Greece and the Adriatic coasts of Italy and Yugoslavia. This time around, Habib's visit to Turkey consisted of more propaganda than leisure. During his 11-day stay in Istanbul he was taken on a tour of the recently founded *Halkevleri* (People's Houses), visited a modern textile factory, was shown around a new library, and met a Turkish feminist activist who shared with him the virtues of the liberating reforms of the Kemalist government. Upon his return to Egypt Habib yet again published a book about his impressions and adventures abroad over the summer, again praising Istanbul and its environs as favorable travel destinations for Egyptians, but now putting much more emphasis on the achievements and the merits of the Ankara government that sponsored his trip.[14]

The preface for Habib's book was written by an even more prominent Egyptian intellectual, Fikri Abaza, a former critic of the Kemalist regime turned enthusiastic admirer after a visit to Turkey in 1933. This nationalist writer, destined to become known in Egypt as the Dean of Journalists, was so impressed by what he saw that he argued that Middle Eastern societies should emulate many of the reforms and policies of the Turkish government.[15] In a series of

12 al-Sihafi al-ʿAjuz, *Ala' al-Hamish: Rihlat Iksbris bayna Iskandariya wa-Istanbul* [Express Journey between Alexandria and Istanbul] (Cairo: Matbaʿat Fu'ad, 1932), pp. 8–9, 26–30, 38–64, 75–7.

13 al-Sihafi al-ʿAjuz, *Ala' al-Hamish*, unnumbered first pages.

14 al-Sihafi al-ʿAjuz, *Rihlat Sayf ila' Turkiya wa-al-Yunan wa-Yujuslafiya wa-Italiya* [Summer travel to Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Italy] (Cairo: Maktabat al-Fajala al-Misriya, 1933), pp. 24–75.

15 al-Sihafi al-ʿAjuz, *Rihlat Sayf ila' Turkiya*, pp. v–vi; Gershoni, Israel- and James Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995),

columns he published in *al-Ahram* in summer 1933, Abaza elaborated on his experiences in Turkey and on the merits and achievements of the Ankara government. In a column entitled "Long live the Turks", for example, the Egyptian nationalist writer shared his great admiration for the success of the Turkish government in implementing policies of economic nationalism and in convincing the common people to embrace them. To illustrate the point, he relates how on one occasion his group dined at a restaurant in Istanbul and ordered a bottle of whiskey. The Egyptian diners were astonished and at the same time very impressed when the patriotic Turkish waiter responded that he was willing to serve them only local alcoholic beverages such as Turkish rakı, wine, or beer. Abaza was even more surprised when on another occasion he returned to his hotel room after an excursion outside Istanbul, only to discover that his expensive foreign cigarettes had been disposed of by a hotel attendant. When confronted, the man did not hesitate to admit his actions, explaining to the Egyptian visitor that he was more than ready to supply him with Turkish cigarettes and matches instead. Rather than perceiving these acts as rude, unwelcoming, and unprofessional, Abaza in fact lauded them as praiseworthy patriotic actions that illustrated the successes of Turkey's popular mobilization for its national interests, which should be adopted in Egypt too. He went on to reject depictions of modern Turkey as being "atheistic, unbelieving, and licentious", attesting that the mosques in the old imperial capital were in fact full of worshippers who performed their religious duties as of old, save for the fact that they were dressed differently and had ridden themselves of many superstitions and false practices. Indeed, Abaza unabashedly declared that Turkey should be a preferred destination for a visit and a cause for celebration for Egyptians, rather than for derision and criticism based on unfounded slanders.[16] The Turkish government certainly appreciated the sentiment, albeit not necessarily Abaza's somewhat peculiar examples of the forms of hospitality offered by Turkish service providers at restaurants and in hotels.

The summer of 1933 in fact witnessed a much more concerted Turkish effort to promote Turkey as a tourist destination and enhance its image in Egypt as a friendly beacon of transformative reforms. With the assistance of surrogates and supporters in Egypt, a 15-member delegation consisting of journalists and senior physicians, dubbed the "friendship delegation", was invited to visit Turkey.

pp. 97–8; Jacob, Wilson Chacko, *Working Out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial in Colonial Modernity, 1870–1940* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 203–5.

16 Abaza, Fikri, "Yasha! Yasha! … Yashasin Turklar" [Long live the Turks], *al-Ahram*, 31 July 1933, p. 7; Abaza, Fikri, "Yawm al-Jumʿa!…" [Friday], *al-Ahram*, 2 August 1933, p. 7; Goldschmidt, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 1.

The high-profile delegation, headed by Dr. Ali Ibrahim Pasha, vice-rector of Cairo University and the dean of its Medical School, was given the opportunity to travel free of charge. Its members included officials from Egypt's ministry of health and several other government agencies, as well as prominent journalists from popular periodicals such as *al-Ahram* and *al-Muqtataf*, who reported on the tour.[17] The Turkish hosts went out of their way to make the trip enjoyable and informative. The Egyptian visitors were welcomed warmly in Istanbul and Ankara and flattering reports on their exploits appeared daily in the Turkish press. These included meetings with members of professional associations, visits to various Kemalist institutions, and lectures on the progress and successes of New Turkey. The Egyptian group was also shown around the city and was given the opportunity to visit Istanbul's historical and cultural treasures, as well as to sail along the Bosphorus and to the Adalar. At the end of this part of the visit they were taken to Yalova, famous for its thermal hot springs, which made it a favorite vacation destination for Mustafa Kemal. The Turkish leader indeed happened to be in the spa town at the time, so it was arranged for the Egyptian delegation to meet with him there rather than in Ankara. The president of the republic congratulated the visitors very warmly as unofficial representatives of a brotherly nation, wished them well, and called on them to share with their fellow Egyptians the Turkish people's great affection for them and their desire to welcome more Egyptian visitors to their country. From Yalova the group proceeded to Bursa, and from the second Ottoman capital to the new republican capital city. In Ankara they were received at the railway station by Turkish government officials and were lodged for the duration of their stay in the Ankara Palas, the city's fanciest hotel. This was a treatment usually reserved for official guests of Turkey. Indeed, during the Egyptian group's 20-day stay the visitors were given the VIP treatment that was usually reserved for foreign diplomats and officials. Their experiences in visiting various institutions, establishments, and sites were covered widely and prominently by both the Turkish and the Egyptian press, signifying the importance attached to the visit at least from Ankara's standpoint.[18]

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17 "Da'wat ba'dh Kibar al-utaba' li-Ziyarat al-Bilad al-Turkiya" [Invitation to some of the senior physicians to visit Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 11 August 1933, p. 6; "Bayna Misr wa-Turkiya" [Between Egypt and Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 11 August 1933, p. 4; Ramzi, Husayn, "Li-Ziyarat Turkiya" [Visiting Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 12 August 1933, p. 7; "Mısır Heyeti Cumaya Geliyor" [The Egyptian delegation arrives on Friday], *Cumhuriyet*, 16 August 1933, p. 2; "al-Utaba' wa-al-Sahafiyun al-Misriyun fi-Turkiya" [The Egyptian physicians and journalists in Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 18 August 1933, p. 4.

18 "Mısırlı Misafirlerin Gezintileri" [The excursions of the Egyptian visitors], *Cumhuriyet*, 20 August 1933, p. 1; "Wafd al-Widad fi Turkiya" [The friendship delegation in Turkey],

The reports in the Egyptian press by members of the delegation were very flattering to Turkey, undoubtedly to the delight of the Turkish sponsors of the trip. The reports not only praised the successes of the Turkish reforms but also proposed that they should serve as role models for the implementation of similar policies in Egypt and the Middle East. Furthermore, they refuted what they termed unjust criticisms of Turkey's attitude toward Islam and the peoples of the Middle East, and called for the strengthening of the friendly ties between the peoples and governments of Egypt and Turkey. This message featured prominently in columns in *al-Ahram*, published by the rising young journalist Ahmed al-Sawi Muhammad, and in the influential monthly *al-Muqtataf* by its veteran editor-in-chief Fuad Sarruf. The two journalists shared with their readers both general information on the Kemalist republic, its institutions, and reforms, and anecdotes on their personal experiences in Turkey. Their reports included information for the general reader as well as of specific interest to people contemplating visits to Turkey, such as regarding the state of Istanbul's entertainment options and nightlife. For example, al-Sawi Muhammad described the lively audience he encountered while watching a film at a Turkish movie theater. In another instance, Sarruf and Muhammad described their impressions of Turkish night clubs. They dwelt on descriptions of the mainly male clientele as well as on the ubiquitous presence of White Russian female servers, and commented that the nightlife scene in the old imperial city was three times as large as that of Cairo. Ankara was a different story altogether. Their description of the heart of the republican government focused on aspects other than historical and cultural gems or entertainment. Instead, the onus of their discussion of Ankara was on the vibrancy of the young Turkish republic, the effectiveness of its government, and the virtues of its leader Mustafa Kemal. Echoing the Kemalist propaganda, both journalists rejected any assertion that Turkey was a dictatorship, suggesting instead that it was a democracy in the making, already with strong democratic foundations.[19]

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al-Ahram, 21 August 1933, p. 6; "Mısırlı Misafirler Şerefine Dün Verilen Ziyafetler" [Banquets given yesterday in honor of the Egyptian visitors], *Cumhuriyet*, 21 August 1933, p. 2; "Mısırlı Misafirler" [The Egyptian visitors], *Cumhuriyet*, 23 August 1933, p. 2; "Mısırlı Misafirler Ankarada" [The Egyptian visitors in Ankara], *Cumhuriyet*, 27 August 1933, p. 5; "Mısırlı Misafirlerimiz Geliyorlar" [Our Egyptian visitors are arriving], *Cumhuriyet*, 28 August 1933, p. 2; "Mısırlı Misafirler" [The Egyptian visitors], *Cumhuriyet*, 29 August 1933, p. 5.

19 "Wafd al-Sahafiyin wa-al-Utaba'al-Misriyin fi Turkiya" [The delegation of journalists and physicians in Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 24 August 1933, p. 4; al-Sawi, "Ma Qalla wa-Dalla" [Brief and useful], *al-Ahram*, 3 September 1933, p. 1; al-Sawi, "Ma Qalla wa-Dalla", *al-Ahram*, 5 September 1933, p. 1; al-Sawi, "Ma Qalla wa-Dalla", *al-Ahram*, 6 September 1933, p. 1; al-Sawi, "Ma Qalla wa-Dalla", *al-Ahram*, 7 September 1933, p. 1; A.S.M., "Fi al-Tariq ila' Anqara (4)" [On the road to Ankara], *al-Ahram*, 16 September 1933, pp. 1, 13; A.S.M.,

The reports of the members of the delegation created quite a buzz in Egypt, which elicited additional publications on Turkey's attractions. The popular illustrated weekly *al-Musawwar*, for example, came out in September 1933 with a full-page article on "Modern Turkey", which included captioned photos from various Turkish cities, including an assemblage of both new institutions and sights and of old historical, cultural, and natural treasures that would have appealed to prospective travelers. Indeed, just like the press reports of members of the "friendship delegation", these photos and their accompanying texts were framed as an invitation for Egyptians and other Arabs to visit Turkey, old and new, natural and manmade.[20]

The Turkish efforts to elicit positive commentary on Turkey and attract more Egyptian travelers was informed by a combination of political and economic rationales. In late 1932, Turkish-Egyptian relations reached an unprecedented low following an incident in a reception in Ankara between Mustafa Kemal and the Egyptian ambassador to Ankara. The so-called 'fez incident' or 'tarbush affair', in which the president of Turkey reportedly talked with derision about the Egyptian diplomat's headgear, spiraled into a diplomatic crisis that was fueled by angry publications in the Egyptian and Turkish presses. Although the issue was formally solved by January 1933, its memory was not immediately erased. Meanwhile, the Turkish government-owned Istanbul-Alexandria steamship line was facing financial difficulties because the number of passengers did not increase as much as was expected when it was inaugurated in 1930.[21] The Turkish initiatives to bring to Turkey Egyptian influencers was largely aimed at addressing these two challenges. There was some immediate return on the investment. At least in the case of *al-Ahram* journalist al-Sawi Muhammad, he indeed shifted from writing very critical articles about the Kemalist government during the height of the 'fez incident' in late 1932,[22] only to change his tune completely after visiting Turkey in summer 1933, as described above and in other publications of his in the years that followed.[23] As for the fez or tarbush more specifically, Egyptian visitors to Turkey may have

"Fi al-Tariq ila' Anqara (5)", *al-Ahram*, 30 September 1933, pp. 1, 11; Sarruf, Fuad, "Min al-Qahira ila' Anqara" [From Cairo to Ankara], *al-Muqtataf* (October 1933), pp. 336–50; Sarruf, Fuad, "Min al-Qahira ila' Anqara", *al-Muqtataf* (November 1933), pp. 439–53.

20 "Turkiya al-Haditha" [Modern Turkey], *al-Musawwar*, 15 September 1933, p. 13.

21 Bein, Amit, *Kemalist Turkey and the Middle East: International Relations in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 66–9, 195.

22 al-Sawi, "Ma Qalla wa-Dalla", *al-Ahram*, 9 December 1932, p. 1; al-Sawi, "Ma Qalla wa-Dalla", *al-Ahram*, 10 December 1932, p. 1.

23 "Mısırda Türkiye" [Turkey in Egypt], *Cumhuriyet*, 30 March 1935, p. 3; al-Sawi, "Ma Qalla wa-Dalla", *al-Ahram*, 11 November 1938, p. 1.

felt a certain pressure to change some of their articles of clothing and their headgear, or perhaps regarded it as an opportunity to do so, just as many had done while visiting European countries in the interwar period. For example, a photo of the 'friendship delegation' taken at the docks in Alexandria showed its members wearing their tarbush just before boarding the Turkish steamer to Istanbul. However, subsequent photos taken upon their arrival in İzmir and then in Istanbul show them all either wearing fedoras or no headgear at all.[24] At the same time, it appears that the Turkish authorities did not require that Arab visitors to dispense with more traditional headgear while on Turkish soil. The Turkish and Arabic press indeed published in the 1930s photos of Egyptian visitors to Istanbul wearing their tarbush while visiting the old imperial city. This was likely seen as annoyance in a country were wearing the fez had been prohibited since 1925, but not an issue bothersome enough to risk inflaming new 'tarbush incidents' and undermine the efforts to attract more Egyptian travelers and improve Turkey's image in Egypt.

The quest to increase the number of Egyptian travelers to Turkey became particularly acute in summer 1933, as the growing financial losses of the Istanbul-Alexandria steamship line almost led to its cancellation. A decision was indeed taken by the Turkish government in June 1933 to suspend the line. The decision was finally rescinded, but only as a result of a concerted opposition of stakeholders in Istanbul and its environs, invigorated by a public campaign in support of the line, led by the popular Istanbul daily *Cumhuriyet*. For the time being the steamship line was saved. But it was clear that without significant increase in the number of travelers, and with financial losses continuing to pile up, the line would not remain in operation for long. Renewed efforts were therefore invested in boosting Egyptian tourism to Turkey. In early April 1934, Mehmet Sadettin Serim, the director of State Maritime Lines (Devlet Denizyolları), travelled to Alexandria to discuss with Egyptian officials, merchants, businesspeople, and other stakeholders how to increase the traffic aboard the Turkish steamships. One initiative, for example, included the promotion of discounted tickets for 11-day cruises and tours of İzmir, Istanbul, and Athens. In addition, in June 1934 the Turkish government adopted new regulations that lowered the custom dues and tariffs on travelers arriving in Turkey from Alexandria and Piraeus aboard Turkish steamships. A small office of the government-controlled Touring and Automobile Club of Turkey (Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu) already operated on the premises of the

24 "Mısırlı Misafirlerimiz", *Cumhuriyet*, 19 August 1933, p. 1; "Wafd al-Wadad" [The friendship delegation], *al-Musawwar*, 25 August 1933, p. 9; A.S.M., "Fi al-Tariq ila' Anqara (3)", *al-Ahram*, 10 September 1933, p. 1.

government-owned İş Bankası branch, which was established in Alexandria in early 1933. To boost this modest presence, two new Turkish tourism offices were opened in early 1935 in Cairo and Alexandria. These branches were entrusted with promoting Turkey as a desirable travel destination and served as agents for Turkey's State Maritime Lines, State Railway Administration (Devlet Demiryolları İşletmesi), and Touring and Automobile Club. In a related move, the presidents of the Turkish and Egyptian touring clubs announced the joint establishment of a Turkish-Egyptian Friendship Association, with its stated aim being to stimulate trade and tourism between the two countries and strengthen the social and cultural bonds between the two peoples.[25] In Cairo, meanwhile, the Turkish-government-subsidized journal *Muhadenet* invested significant real estate on its pages for the promotion of Turkey as a tourist destination. Its proprietor even pledged to publish free of charge any ad for Turkish hotel, rental property, or tourism-oriented business which was interested in attracting Egyptian visitors. All was done with the aim of attracting Egyptian travelers who might earlier not have considered Turkey as an attractive tourist destination.[26]

The Turkish press optimistically touted the arrival of hundreds of Egyptian travelers in summer 1934 as possible harbingers of the awaited increase in the number of tourists from Egypt.[27] Perhaps some of the most surprising Egyptian visitors during that summer were the members of a group from Alexandria, which consisted of youth affiliated with the Young Men's Muslim Association, and was led by Abd al-Wahhab al-Najjar, an Islamic scholar and author of popular books on the early history of Islam. Considering Turkey's reputation by the mid-1930s as a bastion of secularism, the choice of Istanbul as the destination of choice for a group of 22 boys affiliated with a pan-Islamic organization was far from obvious. The Turkish authorities certainly saw it as an opportunity to boost their assertion that their government was neither opposed to Islam per se, nor hostile toward non-Turkish Muslims in the Middle East. The group's travel was therefore reported on at some lengths in the Turkish and Egyptian presses, accompanied by positive commentaries and photos, from the moment they left Alexandria and until they finally departed from Istanbul on their way

25 "İskenderiye'de Bir Büro Açıldı" [A branch opened in Alexandria], *Cumhuriyet*, 9 January 1933, p. 6; "Mısır'da Bir Türkiye Turizm Bürosu Açılıyor" [A Turkish tourism office opens in Egypt], *Cumhuriyet*, 9 April 1935, p. 4; "Türk-Mısır Dostluk Cemiyeti" [The Turkish-Egyptian Friendship Association], *Cumhuriyet*, 28 January 1935, p. 5; "Kahirede Bir Büro Teşkil Edildi" [A branch established in Cairo], *Cumhuriyet*, 19 May 1935, p. 2.

26 Bein, *Kemalist Turkey and the Middle East*, pp. 194–8.

27 "Şehrimize 350 Mısırlı Seyyah Geldi" [350 Egyptian travelers arrived in our city], *Cumhuriyet*, 18 July 1934, p. 2.

home. Beginning as almost a semi-official visit, the group first paid due honor to the Turkish struggle for independence by visiting the Republic Monument in Taksim Square (Taksim Cumhuriyet Anıtı), laying a wreath and observing three minutes of silence in honor of the fallen, shortly after arriving in the old imperial city. The rest of their visit, as reported in the press, was more conventional. In the following three weeks the youth group visited mosques, palaces, and museums in Istanbul, traveled to the Adalar and sailed along the shores of Bosphorus, were led on excursions to Bursa and Yalova, and visited the beating heart of Kemalism in Ankara. In short, they were taken on a tour that combined history, culture, nature, and contemporary politics, which was by then the usual package marketed by Turkey to prospective tourists. While in Turkey, the group's leader al-Najjar encountered no issue when going out and about dressed in the traditional garb and headgear of a Muslim scholar, and guiding a group of tarbush-wearing boys.[28]

Evidently, this and most other outreach efforts were for the most part to and through Egyptian men, but in spring 1935 an opportunity presented itself to burnish Turkey's brand through Egyptian women as well. In April, Turkey hosted a well-publicized conference of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA, later renamed the International Alliance of Women). Among the delegates arriving in Istanbul for the meeting were prominent feminist activists from the Middle East, with a particularly large and high-profile group arriving from Egypt. Led by the veteran and world-renowned feminist activist Huda Shaʿrawi, the Egyptian delegation included a dozen activists ranging in ages from their 20s to their 50s. Already admirers of Turkey's state-led feminist reforms, which at the time were perceived by many a feminist as very progressive rather than limited and paternalistic, the Egyptian feminists appeared primed to serve as ambassadors of good will on Turkey's behalf. Shaʿrawi and her colleagues were willing contributors to Turkey's efforts to project a welcoming image of a fraternal modernizing state to the Egyptian people. En route to

28 "Mısırlı İzciler Geliyor" [Egyptian scouts are arriving], *Cumhuriyet*, 21 July 1934, p. 2; "Mısırlı Bir Kafile" [An Egyptian group], *Cumhuriyet*, 4 August 1934, p. 1; "Mısırlı Kafilesi" [The Egyptian group], *Cumhuriyet*, 5 August 1934, p. 3; "Firqat ak-Kashafa al-Misriya fi Istanbul" [The Egyptian scouts group in Istanbul], *al-Ahram*, 7 August 1934, p. 4; "Firqat al-Kashafa al-Misriya fi Istanbul," *al-Ahram*, 8 August 1934, p. 4; "Rihlat al-Shuban al-Muslimin ila Turkiya" [The travel of the Young Muslims to Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 13 August 1934, p. 11; "Kahramanlar Diyarı Türkiyeye Can Atarız" [Craving to [visit] Turkey, the land of the heroes], *Cumhuriyet*, 14 August 1934, p. 2; "al-Shuban al-Muslimin fi Turkiya", *al-Musawwar*, 31 August 1934, p. 25. For information on the Boy Scouts movement in Egypt until the mid-1930s, see Naqash, Shafiq and ʿAli Khalifa, *al-Haraka al-Kashfiyya fi al-Aqtar al-ʿArabiyya* [The Scouting Movement in the Arab Countries] (Beirut: Matabaʿat al-Kashaf, 1936), pp. 99–120.

Istanbul aboard a Turkish steamship from Alexandria, they were greeted personally by the governor of İzmir. Shaʿrawi responded with a laudatory speech on Turkey's reforms in general and its promotion of women's rights in particular, which was duly published in the Turkish press and distributed in Egypt in Arabic and French translations. Upon arriving in Istanbul, the Egyptian delegation laid a wreath at the Republic Monument in Taksim, where Shaʿrawi gave another speech, which was yet again published in the Turkish and Egyptian presses, alongside photos of the event. The following days witnessed similar photo opportunities and speeches by Shaʿrawi and her colleagues in other sites in Istanbul, before and during the international suffragist conference. The veteran Egypt feminist Saiza Nabarawi, for example, declared Turkey to be the most hospitable country to the suffragists, compared with the European states that hosted earlier conferences. She went on to commend the Kemalist republic for its inspiring and laudable love of progress in general, and its commitment to the emancipation of women in particular. From Turkey's perspective, the royal treatment given to the Egyptian visitors was a complete success. In her memoirs, written a decade later, Shaʿrawi indeed attested that when she headed back to Egypt at the end of the conference she was more determined than before to dispel any negative notions about Turkey among the Egyptian people. In the months that followed, she in fact published newspaper articles and embarked on a series of public lectures in which she was full of praise of Turkey, its leaders, and its people. Similarly, the mouthpiece of the Egyptian Feminist Union, *l'Égyptienne*, followed suit with very positive publications on the delegates' experiences in Turkey, including a whole volume dedicated to the topic on the conference's one-year anniversary.[29]

Turkey's success in cultivating high profile supporters and recommenders within the Egyptian intelligentsia was notable, and yet it failed to translate into significant increase in the number of Egyptian travelers to Turkey. The consequence was that the Alexandria-Istanbul steamship line continued to incur financial losses that finally led to its cancelation in summer 1935, five years after its inauguration. In order to prevent a similar public backlash against the earlier short-lived cancellation decision in 1933, this time around the formal action was of indefinite suspension with possible resumption sometime in the future. It never did in the 1930s, despite some push by stakeholders to relaunch the steamship line, at least for the summer tourism season. Subsequently, after summer 1935 maritime transportation between Turkey and Egypt was

29 Bein, *Kemalist Turkey and the Middle East*, pp. 155–66.

carried out only by foreign steamship lines, most important of which was the Romanian steamship line from Constanţa to Alexandria by way of Istanbul.[30]

This cancellation of the line took place just as various regional developments were influencing the relations between Turkey and Egypt in opposing ways. On the one hand, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 elevated its perception as a common threat for Ankara and Cairo. Concerns with the aggressive policies of the Fascist regime affected similarly the relations between the British colonial overlords of Egypt and the local nationalist movement, leading to an agreement that paved the way for the formal independence of Egypt in 1936. The new Egyptian government and the Turkish authorities sought to implement a political rapprochement and increase their economic cooperation as part of the efforts to build a regional block against Italy's expansionist aspirations. On the other hand, the intensification in 1936 of the struggle between Turkey and Syrian nationalists over the future of Alexandretta threatened to poison Turkey's relations with Egypt. The district, newly named by Turkey as Hatay, emerged as a major issue in regional and international affairs in the late 1930s. Syrian nationalists sought to strengthen their weak hand versus Turkey, and vis-à-vis the French colonial authorities, by mobilizing Arab support for their cause throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Subsequently, the perception of Turkish aggressive demands to annex a purportedly Arab land affected Turkey's image very negatively among pan-Arab nationalists, at a time in which their influence was on the rise throughout the region, including in Egypt. In these circumstances, Egyptian visitors were seen as a potential ambassadors of good will who could potentially both support the rapprochement efforts between Ankara and Cairo and help counter anti-Turkish propaganda in Egypt.

Such an opportunity seemed to present itself in summer 1936, when a large and high-profile group of Egyptian students and professors made its way to Germany by way of Turkey. They were heading to the highly anticipated Summer Olympics in Nazi Berlin as informal representatives of newly independent Egypt. Therefore none other than newly elected Prime Minister

30 "Iskenderiye Vapur Seferleri Kalkıyor" [The steamboat line to Alexandria is being cancelled], *Cumhuriyet*, 6 December 1935, pp. 1, 6; "Mısır Seferlerinin İhdası İsteniyor" [The renewal of the line to Egypt is requested], *Cumhuriyet*, 18 December 1935, p. 2; Abidin Daver, "İskenderiye Seferleri Bir An Evvel Başlamalıdır" [The line to Alexandria should be restarted immediately], *Cumhuriyet*, 2 February 1936, p. 1; "İskenderiye Seferleri İhya Edilmelidir" [The line to Egypt should be revived], *Cumhuriyet*, 6 July 1936, p. 7; "İskenderiye Vapur Seferleri" [The steamship line to Alexandria], *Cumhuriyet*, 12 September 1936, p. 2; "Yeni Vapurlar ve Harici Hatlar" [New steamships and foreign lines], *Cumhuriyet*, 4 June 1937, p. 2; "Turkey to increase merchant fleet", *Financial Times*, 23 April 1938, p. 7.

Mustafa al-Nahhas came to the docks in Alexandria to see off the delegation of ten professors and 94 students.[31] The Turkish government viewed the group's passage through Istanbul as an opportunity to gain favorable coverage in the Egyptian press, and perhaps win some hearts and minds among its promising young men. Subsequently, Ankara turned the delegation's ten-day stay in Turkey into a semi-official visit, all expenses paid by Turkey. The propaganda efforts began as soon as the Romanian steamer that carried the group entered the Straits region. When the ship neared Çanakkale, the site of the heroic World War I Battle of Gallipoli, which was oftentimes credited to the leadership of Ottoman army colonel Mustafa Kemal, it was boarded by the governor of the province, who came to greet the Egyptian visitors in person. They were then given a lecture on the valiant defense of the Straits during the Great War, to which the Egyptian visitors responded with cries of "Long live Mustafa Kemal Atatürk" and "Long live independent Turkey", before throwing into the water a wreath in honor of the fallen. In Istanbul, the group was received and feted by various officials and entities, including the governor of Istanbul, Istanbul University, and the Turkish Touring and Automobile Club. The group's week-long stay in the old imperial city included the usual mix of visits to Istanbul's cultural and natural treasures, along with tours of modern institutions such as the university, hospitals, and *Halkevleri*. In addition, the Egyptian visitors were taken on short excursions to Yalova and its famous hot springs and Bursa and the adjacent Uludağ Mountain, before proceeding to Ankara. Par for their course, the Turkish authorities sought to thus expose the visitors both to Turkey's traditional tourist attractions and to its modern Kemalist institutions. The efforts of the Turkish hosts did not go unnoticed. The Turkish and Egyptian press reported that as the large Egyptian group departed Turkey en route to Germany, its members expressed their heartfelt gratitude for their hosting by their "eastern brothers" and their political leaders.[32]

31 "Rihlat al-Tulaba al-Misriyin ila' Uruba hadha al-ʿam," *al-Ahram*, 9 July 1936, p. 9.

32 BCA, 30.10.0.0–200.367.10, 29 July 1936; "Le visite en Turquie des universitaires égyptiens", *Ankara*, 23 July 1936, p. 6; "Mısırlı Talebeler Geldi" [The Egyptian students arrived], *Cumhuriyet*, 17 July 1936, pp. 1, 7; "Kahire Üniversitesi Profesör ve Talebesinden Mürekkep 100 Kişilik Bir Gurup İstanbulda" [A group of 100 people which includes professors and students from Cairo University is in Istanbul], *Yeni Yol*, 18 July 1936, p. 1; "Mısırlı Talebelerin Ziyaretleri" [The trips of the Egyptian students], *Cumhuriyet*, 23 July 1936, p. 2; "Tulaba al-Misriyun fi Turkiya" [Egyptian students in Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 25 July 1936, p. 10; Nasif, Majd al-Din, "al-Shabab al-Masri wa-Turkiya" [The Egyptian youth and Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 1 August 1936, p. 1; "Şarkın Atası ve Büyük İnkılabları", *Cumhuriyet*, 20 August 1936, p. 2; "Atatürk Çanakkaleyi Bir Defa Daha Kurtardı" [Atatürk saves Çanakkale again], *Cumhuriyet*, 20 July 1936, p. 1; "Boğazların Askeri İşgali Dün Tamamlandı" [The

The broader context of developments in Turkey's regional affairs, however, spelled trouble for Ankara's outreach efforts, as the conflict over the future of Alexandretta heated up in 1937. This resulted in negative public opinion in Egypt to such a degree that it led to a hiatus in the annual hosting of high-visibility Egyptian visitors. In fact, perhaps fitting the political atmosphere of the time, the highest profile Egyptian visitor to Turkey that year was a known critic of the Kemalist government who arrived aboard a train from Syria. Abd al-Wahhab Azzam was a scholar, journalist, and future president of Cairo University who was well-known for his very critical publications on Turkish reforms and policies in the 1930s.[33] Hailing from a prominent family, he was the brother of Abd al-Rahman Hasan Azzam, a senior Egyptian diplomat who was destined to become in 1945 the first secretary-general of the Arab League, as well as the maternal grandfather of the future al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. Azzam spent almost two months in Turkey in summer 1937, later publishing his impressions in a series of articles entitled "Between Cairo and Istanbul" and in a book chapter two years later. He reported that he visited Istanbul twice before, the latest being in 1929, but that following the acceleration and radicalization of the nationalist and secularist policies of the Kemalist government he had decided to stay away from Anatolia thereafter. What convinced this well-travelled writer to visit Turkey again in 1937 is not explained. His impressions of late 1930s Turkey are peculiar in that he oftentimes opts to convey to his readers some messages by indirect references and by silences in his text, rather than through explicit criticisms of Turkey. For example, when describing his train ride across the Syrian-Turkish border, Azzam relates at some length about how he was feeling as if crossing what used to be the frontier lands between the Abode of Islam in Syria to the south and the lands of the Byzantine infidels to the north. In contrast to most visitors to 1930s Turkey, he simply says nothing about the passage of the train through Ankara and about his impressions of the center of Kemalism, which had undergone tremendous changes since his last visit in 1929. As for Istanbul, he focuses on nostalgic descriptions of its glorious Islamic imperial past and says hardly nothing about its secular republican present. Indeed, his writings on the visit focused quite clearly, albeit implicitly, on what he believed the Turkish people had lost as a result of the dissolution of the Ottoman empire

militarization of the Straits completed yesterday], *Cumhuriyet*, 22 July 1936, p. 1; "Mısırlı Kardeşlerin Ziyafetinde" [In the banquet for the Egyptian brothers], *Cumhuriyet*, 25 July 1936, p. 2.

33 Bein, *Kemalist Turkey and the Middle East*, pp. 168–9.

and the secularization of the republic.[34] This was the exact opposite of the type of publications produced by most other Egyptian visitors to Turkey in the 1930s. Moreover, while he too reported on the friendliness of ordinary Turks toward Egyptians and other Middle Eastern Muslims, he explained that attitude in terms of the common Turks' deep religiosity, and expressed hope that this would ultimately lead Turkey to become more formally Islamic again.[35] Indeed, his long visit to Turkey did not change Azzam's outlook on the secular republic, which was far from the very positive impressions observed in the publications of most other Egyptian visitors in the 1930s.

As the decade was nearing its end, the Turkish government made in summer 1938 a new push to burnish its public image in Egypt through hosting visitors. Tourism was less of a consideration by that time. The main aim was to help alleviate the negative effects on Egyptian public opinion of Turkey's successful pressures to detach Hatay from Syria, and to aid the nascent rapprochement between Ankara and Cairo. For these purposes, Foreign Minister Aras made his first formal visit to Egypt in April 1938 and talks were held on reciprocal visits by the Egyptian foreign minister and perhaps even by King Faruk. The former materialized when Egyptian Foreign Minister Abd al-Fattah Yahya visited Ankara in June 1939, whereas the latter never took place.[36] In this context of efforts to improve the diplomatic relations between the two states, Turkey invited for a visit another group of Egyptian university students and professors, and separately, an Egyptian athletic team. The immediate goal was to reiterate its public stance of friendship toward Egypt, which was part of a broader aim to hinder the efforts of nationalists in Syria to mobilize Egyptian support during the struggle over Alexandretta. Ankara sought to counter with reports and photos of Turkish hospitality toward their Egyptian visitors, the negative effects of reports in the Arabic news media about attacks on Arabs

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34 Azzam, Abd al-Wahhab, "Bayna al-Qahira wa-Istanbul – 2" [Between Cairo and Istanbul], *al-Risala*, 6 December 1937, pp. 1963–4; Azzam, Abd al-Wahhab, "Bayna al-Qahira wa-Istanbul – 3", *al-Risala*, 6 December 1937, pp. 2062–3; Abd al-Wahhab, Azzam, "Bayna al-Qahira wa-Istanbul – 4", *al-Risala*, 3 January 1938, pp. 14–16.

35 Azzam, Abd al-Wahhab, *Rihlat* [The Voyages] (Cairo: Matbaʿat al-Risala, 1939), pp. 272–98.

36 "Awal Wazir Kharijiya Yazur Misr Rasmiyan" [The first official visit of the foreign minister to Egypt], *al-Ahram*, 10 April 1938, p. 1; "Hariciye Vekilimiz İskenderiye ve Kahirede Halk Tarafından Çoşkun Tezahüratla Karşılandı" [Our Foreign Minister was received with exuberant cheering by the people of Alexandria and Cairo], *Ulus Sesi* (Mardin), 11 April 1938, p. 1; "Mısır Hariciye Nazırı Abdülfettah Yahya Paşa Ankarada, Majeste Kral Faruk Yakında Türkiyeye Gelecek" [The Egyptian Foreign Minister Abd al-Fattah Yahya Pasha is in Ankara, His Majesty King Farouk will come to Turkey soon], *Ulus Sesi* (Mardin), 19 June 1939, p. 1; "Wazir Kharijiyat Misr fi Anqara" [The Egyptian Foreign Minister in Ankara], *al-Ahram*, 20 June 1939, p. 1.

in the district and Turkish pressures during the run-up to the referendum that would lead to the autonomy of Hatay in September 1938, and ultimately to its annexation to Turkey in July 1939.[37]

The Turkish authorities covered the expenses of both the group of about 30 Egyptian students and professors and of that of about a dozen athletes, which arrived in Istanbul in early July 1938. The focal point of the athletes' visit was a friendly competition with Turkish counterparts in Istanbul's main athletic stadium. Thousands of spectators watched the competitions, including the visiting Egyptian students and professors, alongside the Egyptian ambassador to Turkey, hundreds of Egyptian vacationers in Istanbul, and senior Turkish government and city officials. The rest of the university delegation's time in Istanbul was devoted to the by-then regular itinerary of visits to touristic sites of historical, cultural, and natural beauty and significance, along with a dose of propagandistic lectures and visits to modern institutions of the Turkish republic. The Egyptian athletes too were treated to the same types of tours, and both groups were received by the governor of Istanbul. Reports on their experiences in the city and its environs were covered regularly in the Turkish and Egyptian daily presses. As with the earlier sponsored visits of Egyptian groups in the 1930s, Turkey sought to harness the visits to its outreach efforts and public diplomacy initiatives, highlighting the positive experiences and impressions of the Egyptian travelers, and expecting that the visitors might become ambassadors of good will on Turkey's behalf.[38]

The 1930s witnessed the arrival of thousands of Egyptians travelers, among them hundreds who were informal guests of the Turkish government. The high hopes that the Turkish authorities and other stakeholders had for them to contribute to a significant increase of Egyptian tourism and to improving the countries' bilateral ties never fully materialized. Yet the initiatives themselves attest to the fact that Turkey was certainly not invested in complete distancing of New Turkey from all former Ottoman territories in the Middle East. Ankara and stakeholders in Istanbul and its environs sought to ease the mobility and increase the passenger movement between the two countries for economic and political reasons. Tourism was seen as an important means to inject needed hard currency into the Turkish economy, and as potential boost for Turkey's public diplomacy initiatives toward Egypt. Much more than any

37 "Suriye Matbuatının Hedefi Arab Alemini Türkiye Aleyhine Kışkırtmak İstiyorlar" [The Syrian press wants to incite the Arab World against Turkey], *Cumhuriyet*, 17 June 1938, p. 1.

38 "Mısır Üniversitelileri Şehrimizde" [Egyptian university students in our city], *Cumhuriyet*, 6 July 1938, p. 2; "al-Fariq al-Riyadi al-Masri fi Turkiya" [The Egyptian athletic team in Turkey], *al-Ahram*, 4 July 1938, p. 8; "Vali, Mısırlı Atletlere Bir Ziyafet Verdi" [The governor gave a banquet to the Egyptian athletes], *Cumhuriyet*, 6 July 1938, p. 6.

ideological dictates or concerns, it were pragmatic considerations that influenced the goals and initiatives regarding the efforts to attract Egyptians to Turkey. Likewise, the decisions to establish the Turkish steamship line between Alexandria and Istanbul in 1930, and to suspend it indefinitely in 1935, were based primarily on pragmatic economic considerations. The Turkish outreach to Egyptian visitors in fact remained steady throughout the 1930s, but the initial hopes that a substantial number of Egyptian tourists could be attracted to Turkey mostly faded by the end of the decade. Some enthusiastic Egyptian supporters of Turkey were in fact disappointed that Ankara did not invest more of its limited resources in promoting tourism and economic ties with Egypt, but none accused the Turkish government of disinterest in Egyptian travelers.[39] Those Egyptians that did travel to Turkey mostly were already positively disposed toward the Kemalist government before their visit, and overwhelmingly returned home full of praise for Turkey as a friendly nation, a tourist destination, and in some cases as a role model for non-European reformist modernity.

39 Khanki Bey, Aziz, *Turk wa-Ataturk* [Turk and Atatürk] (Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-Misriya, 1938), pp. 142–3.

CHAPTER 9

Borders of Mobility? Crime and Punishment along the Syrian-Turkish Border, 1921–1939

Jordi Tejel and Ramazan Hakkı Öztan

Contemporary developments have renewed interest in the study of borderlands and cross-border mobility in the Middle East. The rise of ISIS and the latter's symbolic acts at defying the Sykes-Picot Accords of 1916 have squarely turned scholarly attention back to the borders. So did the millions of refugees who sought shelter, as violence engulfed the region, by crossing the almost century-old borders. As part and parcel of these developments, the construction of border walls has gained momentum across the region. The Turkish-Syrian border, for example, which was once a site of visa-free travel back in the early 2000s, now features a well-surveilled wall, which, as a trend, parallels similar developments elsewhere in the Middle East.[1] In approaching these contemporary issues, a certain strand of literature portrayed the introduction of international borders to the Middle East as the drawing of lines in the sand,[2] an artificial partitioning that brought diplomatic closure to an otherwise contested historical space.[3] A more critical body of literature, on the other hand, examined the ways in which the post-Ottoman settlements ruptured the socio-demographic dynamics in what were in other circumstances multi-ethnic border regions: borders not only disrupted older circuits

1 We particularly have in mind the border walls between Egypt and Gaza, or Saudi Arabia and Yemen, but this process is certainly a global trend. Interestingly, 19 walls and barriers were built between 1945 and 1991, and in the following decade only seven walls were added to the 13 that survived the Cold War. Following the events of 9/11, however, 28 walls were completed or planned up to 2012. Vallet, Élisabeth and Charles-Philippe David, "Introduction: the (re)building of the wall in international relations", *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 27/2 (2012), p. 113. Since then, the fortification of borders worldwide has continued unabated.

2 Barr, James, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2011).

3 Yapp, Malcolm E., *The Making of the Modern Middle East 1792–1923* (New York: Longmann Group, 1987); Simon, Reeva S., "The imposition of nationalism on a non-nation state: the case of Iraq during the interwar period, 1921–1941", in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, ed. James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 87–104; Fromkin, David, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009).

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of mobility – whether economic, social, religious – but also separated social groups from one another, even breaking up simple family units in the process.[4]

Taken as a whole, both strands of literature approach the post-Ottoman borders from top-down perspectives that frame the making of borders as historical outcomes reflective of diplomatic and political settlements originating far away from the borderlands. A new generation of historians, however, has suggested the necessity of studying the "lived experience of territoriality" in order to show how borderlanders at once adapted to, if not shaped, the social and economic dynamics that developed in the newly established borders.[5] For one, Ottoman patterns of mobility that had been consolidated for generations did not disappear overnight, as imperial networks remained resilient in many ways well into the early 1930s.[6] Even if international boundaries introduced new political realities, "older geographies continued to make their presence known, even when reformulated in the presence of borders and states".[7] After all, the institution of borders did not solely seek to curtail movement in the region. Borders not only created their own local mobilities, but also helped regulate,[8] channel, and at times facilitate movement that was cross-regional, if not global.[9]

Building upon this literature, this chapter frames the introduction of borders to the Middle East as a re-ordering of the region's existing "regimes of mobility".[10] To be sure, the scholarship has long analysed border making from

4 Yeğen, Mesut, "The Turkish state discourse and the exclusion of Kurdish identity", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 32/2 (1996), 216–29; Bozarslan, Hamit, *La question kurde* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1997), pp. 304–9; Laurens, Henry, *L'Orient arabe. Arabisme et islamisme de 1798 à 1945* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2002), pp. 185–269.

5 Ellis, Matthew H., *Desert Borderland: the Making of Modern Egypt and Libya* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), p. 8. For a similar approach to the late Ottoman period, see Blumi, Isa, "Agents of post-Ottoman states: the precariousness of the Berlin Congress boundaries of Montenegro and how to define/confine people", in *War and Diplomacy: Russo-Turkish War and Berlin Treaty*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz and Peter Sluglett (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011), pp. 226–52.

6 Schayegh, Cyrus, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017).

7 Abou-Hodeib, Toufoul, "Involuntary history: writing Levantines into the nation", *Contemporary Levant*, 5/1 (2020), 44–53.

8 Fletcher, Robert S.G., "Running the corridor: nomadic societies and imperial rule in the inter-war Syrian desert", *Past and Present*, 220/1 (2013), 185–215.

9 Huber, Valeska, *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

10 For an elaboration on this concept see Schiller, Nina Glick and Noel B. Salazar, "Regimes of mobility across the globe", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39/2 (2013), 183–200. For a recent application of this concept to the Middle East, see Tejel, Jordi and Ramazan

an angle of cross-border mobilities, but in so doing, scholars often prioritised long-distance mobility by studying networks of trade, trafficking and pilgrimage routes between distant actors and sites.[11] In this chapter, we are instead interested in mobilities created on a local level as a result of new borders. By privileging the local over the long-distance, we hope to chart the ways in which the introduction of borders to the Middle East created their own patterns of mobility and show the ways in which these new, alongside the old, circuits were negotiated on the ground through the example of the Syrian-Turkish border. Introduced in October 1921, the border soon turned into a zone of competition between the Kemalist resistance in Ankara and French authorities in Syria, whereby two emerging centres of power tested one another out well into the late 1930s.

In what follows, the first section traces the irregular warfare that characterized the interstate competition in the early 1920s, and then examines how a boundary regime gradually emerged in the Turkish-Syrian borderland from 1926 to 1929. This was when French and Turkish authorities detailed the bilateral practices of border governance in a bid to regulate borderland mobilities. The second and third sections will then turn to myriad examples of borderland mobilities, with particular emphasis on smugglers, fugitive women, as well as criminals who were accused of theft, murder, and kidnapping. By placing an emphasis on illegal infringements of the Turkish-Syrian border, we seek to focus on the borderlanders who viewed the international frontier for what it was – that is, the realm of separate sovereignties and hence an opportunity to benefit from disconnected jurisdictions. In doing so, we hope to demonstrate that such borderland mobilities led both states to cooperate in increasing border surveillance, which was accompanied by its own bureaucratization.

Drawing on Turkish, US, British, and French diplomatic records as well as Turkish and Syrian press articles, the chapter will accordingly underscore the paradoxical impact of borderlanders' mobility on the consolidation of the border regimes. On the one hand, borders helped connect locals on the two

Hakkı Öztan (eds.), *Regimes of Mobility: Borders and State Formation in the Middle East, 1918–1946* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022).

11 Green, Nile, "The road to Kabul: automobiles and Afghan internationalism, 1900–40", in *Beyond Swat: History, Society and Economy along the Afghanistan-Pakistan Frontier*, ed. Benjamin Hopkins and Magnus Marsden (London: Hurst and Company, 2013), pp. 77–91; Tagliacozzo, Eric, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Kane, Eileen, *Russian Hajj: Empire and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2015); Kozma, Liat, *Global Women, Colonial Ports: Prostitution in the Interwar Middle East* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2017).

sides of the Turkish-Syrian border; smugglers, petty criminals, and fugitives relied on networks of trust which were reinvigorated, or at least kept alive despite – or rather because of – the delineation of new borders. On the other hand, the introduction of anti-smuggling measures and extradition systems gradually turned borders into social institutions, with the concrete effects of a frontier, as power relations began to unfold between state agents and borderlanders.[12] Drawing a parallel with Nadir Özbek's research on the Ottoman gendarmerie in the rural areas, we can argue that cross-border criminality and infringements enable us to explore "human interaction within the context of quotidian politics".[13] As in the late Ottoman era, official awareness of contraband flows and daily cross-border mobility served in many ways as a catalyst for institution formation and the expansion of state power.[14] Despite on-going diplomatic tensions between Turkey and France, cooperation and exchange of information constituted alternate ways for these states to interact among themselves or with locals along the newly established borders, too.[15]

Crucially, the chapter will show that the cooperation between French Syria and Turkey in order to track fugitive outlaws and borderlanders along the common border led to a push for standardization with regard to international practices of extradition. As a result of the lack of human and material resources, however, such practices were accompanied by informal procedures which sought to solve the common problems on the spot. Through tracing these episodes, we will argue that a view from the borderlands of the newly established states in the Middle East allows us to challenge the idea that the end of the most important empires after World War I brought about a radical change, whereby "formally [imperial] plural legal orders were transformed into state-dominated legal orders" that were singular and national.[16] Indeed, informal and extra-legal arrangements between French and Turkish authorities

12 Abou-Hodeib, Toufoul, "Sanctity across the border: pilgrimage routes and state control in Mandate Lebanon and Palestine", in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, ed. Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 383.

13 Özbek, Nadir, "Policing the countryside: gendarmes of the late 19th-century Ottoman empire (1876–1908)", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 40/1 (2008), p. 48.

14 Blumi, Isa, "Thwarting the Ottoman empire: smuggling through the empire's new frontiers in Yemen and Albania, 1878–1910", *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 9/1–2 (2003), 251–70; Öztan, Ramazan Hakkı, "Tools of revolution: global military surplus, arms dealers and smugglers in the late Ottoman Balkans, 1878–1908", *Past & Present*, 237/1 (2017), 167–95.

15 Fletcher, Robert, *British Imperialism and the Tribal Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Schayegh, *The Middle East*, pp. 9–10.

16 Benton, Lauren, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 209.

to fight cross-border criminality showcase many afterlives of the imperial legal orders throughout the interwar Middle East.

From a Restless Frontier to a Tenuous Boundary Regime, 1921–1929

The collapse of the Ottoman empire paved the way for diverse projects of modern statecraft in the Levant and Mesopotamia under French and British colonial oversight. However, the drawing of territorial and political boundaries that underpinned these new state configurations quickly led to a period of fluidity and uncertainty, particularly in the border areas where colonial penetration was fiercely challenged by a variety of state and non-state actors. Even though World War I ended formally in 1918, the dissolution of imperial polities – from Eastern Europe to the Caucasus and the Middle East – had left behind several zones of post-war violence.[17] This was particularly the case in border regions which often became the very arenas where interstate rivalries began to unfold, often in violent ways. Among these "shatter zones",[18] the provisional frontier between Turkey and Syria held an important place.

Here, much like in other parts of the former Ottoman empire, several activists and local chieftains responded to the institution of colonial rule by forming armed bands in order to resist foreign occupation. Even though they were ideologically heterogeneous, these local actors were "engaged in similar forms of rebellious activities that had a common anti-imperialist motivation".[19] Following a script of resistance inherited from the late Ottoman times, the participants in these anti-colonial insurgencies were the "veterans of wars to save the Ottoman state".[20] In exploiting these organic linkages, rebel leaders, such as Ibrahim Hananu who led an anti-French revolt from 1919 to 1921 to the north of Aleppo, tapped into moral and material support from Ankara, the centre of

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17 Gerwarth, Robert and John Horne (eds.), *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

18 Bartov, Omer and Eric D. Weitz (eds.), *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

19 Yenen, Alp, "Approaching transnational political history: the role of non-state actors in post-Ottoman state-formation", in *Transnational Actors Crossing Borders: Transnational History Studies*, ed. Steffi Marung and Matthias Middell (Leipzig: Leipzig University Press, 2015), p. 269. See also Parsons, Laila, *The Commander: Fawzi al-Qawuqji and the Fight for Arab Independence, 1914–1948* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016).

20 Provence, Michael, "Ottoman modernity, colonialism, and insurgency in the interwar Arab East", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 43/2 (2011), p. 207.

Kemalist resistance against the scramble for Anatolia.[21] Ankara coupled these efforts by using intense propaganda that promoted notions of "Muslim nationalism" in a bid to rally several Arab and Kurdish chiefs to a struggle against the French.[22]

By early 1919, in parallel with the formation of similar associations in Anatolia, a network of activists established what came to be known as the 'Committees for Turco-Kurdish Independence', with branches across the southeastern Anatolian towns, such as Urfa, Mardin, Diyarbakır, and Jazirat ibn Umar.[23] The objective of these activities was to keep the sources of rebellion alive and regain the former Ottoman provinces of Aleppo and Mosul, both of which were considered to be historically linked to Anatolia.[24] These organizations and their contentious activities certainly forced the French to overstretch their military presence in the region,[25] but the armed bands operating along Turkey's southern frontiers soon lost their utility as Ankara neared a victory vis-à-vis the Greeks in western Anatolia. With the potential of a diplomatic settlement on the horizon, Mustafa Kemal opted to severe his links with the armed groups active in northern Aleppo that he had formerly supported.[26] By October 1921, Turkey and France signed the Ankara Agreement, whereby both sides agreed that the boundary between Turkey and Syria would follow in large part the tracks of the Baghdad railway.

While Turkey and France agreed on the boundary in broad terms, the exact delimitation of the international borderline on the ground continued to be a contentious affair. This was particularly the case in the eastern part of the border in Syrian Jazira, where both sides interpreted the vague clauses of the

21 Watenpaugh, Keith David, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 125.

22 Zürcher, Erik J., "The vocabulary of Muslim Nationalism", *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 137 (1999), 81–92.

23 For a detailed account on the role of eastern cities during the National Independence Movement, see Bozan, Oktay, *Millî Mücadele Döneminde Diyarbakır, 1918–23* [Diyarbakır during the War of National Independence, 1918–23] (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2016), pp. 255–312.

24 For example, this position formed the gist of the Turkish claim over Mosul. See Dündar, Fuat, "Statisquo: British use of statistics in the Iraqi question, 1919–32", *Crown Paper* (Brandeis University), No. 7 (2012), pp. 1–63.

25 Flateau, Cosima, "La sortie de guerre de l'Empire ottoman: Grande Guerre, guerre nationale, guerre coloniale à la frontière syro-turque, 1918–1923", *Les Cahiers Sirice*, 17/3 (2016), 29–45.

26 Mizrahi, Jean-David, "La répression du banditisme sur les confins de la Syrie mandataire: nouveaux Etats et nouvelles frontières dans le Moyen-Orient des années 1920", *Relations internationales*, 114 (2003), 173–87.

agreement by asking for the rectification of the borderline to their benefit.[27] Coupled with other issues between the two countries, such as the existing customs difficulties as well as the continuing Lausanne negotiations, Ankara resorted to the use of armed bands in its southern border once again in order to exert pressure upon France.[28] These tactics certainly cast a long shadow on the French commitment to bring peace and order to northern Syria, as Ankara's anti-French propaganda proved particularly effective in Syrian Jazira. The latter region gradually became the bone of contention, as Turkish manoeuvres hindered the advance of French troops into the region well into the mid-1920s.[29] Ankara's activities strengthened indirectly the positions of various unions, opposition parties, and anti-colonial committees in France that continually raised concerns about the financial viability of maintaining the mandatory rule in the Levant.[30]

It is within this context, marked by both external and internal constraints, that the French High Commissioner saw the launching of a profitable economic programme in Syria as a tool which could serve to justify its "civilising" mission in the Levant.[31] This vision was particularly significant for the Syrian Jazira, where the French hoped to settle nomadic tribes.[32] The agricultural development of the region as such would not only serve the French imperial interests, but also help counter Ankara's manoeuvres to extend influence into this region. It soon became clear to the French, however, that the existing Kurdish and Arab nomadic communities were neither sufficiently large, nor very willing to transition to a settled life. The French High Commissioner

27 Mameli-Ghaderi, Soheila, "Le tracé de la frontière entre la Syrie et la Turquie (1921–1929)", *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains*, 207 (2002–2003), 125–38.

28 Öztan, Ramazan Hakkı, "The last Ottoman merchants: regional trade and politics of tariffs in Aleppo's hinterland, 1921–1929", in *Regimes of Mobility: Borders and State Formation in the Middle East, 1918–1946*, ed. Tejel and Öztan, pp. 80–108.

29 Altuğ, Seda and Benjamin T. White, "Frontière et pouvoir d'Etat: La frontière turco-syrienne dans les années 1920 et 1930", *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 103 (2009), 91–104.

30 Huvelin, Paul, *Que vaut la Syrie?* (Marseille: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, 1919); Poulleau, Alice, *À Damas sous les bombes: journal d'une française pendant la révolution syrienne, 1924–1926* (Yvetot: Imprimerie Bretteville, s.d.); Bonnardi, Pierre, *L'Imbroglio syrien* (Paris: Rieder, 1927).

31 Velud, Christian, "La politique mandataire française à l'égard des tribus et des zones de steppe en Syrie: L'exemple de la Djézireh", in *Steppes d'Arabie. Etats, pasteurs, agriculteurs et commerçants: le devenir des zones sèches*, ed. Riccardo Bocco, Ronald Jaubert and Françoise Métral (Paris: PUF, 1993), pp. 70–1.

32 This was a developmentalist vision that had existed for the Jazira since late Ottoman times. See Dolbee, Sam, "The Locust and the Starling: People, Insects, and Disease in the Late Ottoman Jazira and After, 1860–1940", Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 2017, pp. 104–65.

found the solution to be that of settling in the area the incoming waves of Christian migrants and refugees from Turkey from 1922 onwards, most notably the Armenians and Syriacs.[33] By 1925, French authorities decided to expand this policy and include Kurdish refugees who had been fleeing repression by the Turkish government after the collapse of the Şeyh Said Rebellion.[34] Taken as a whole, the settlement of these refugees was intended to serve the two complementary goals of stabilising the frontier and increasing the agricultural production of the Upper Jazira.[35]

These competing state visions along the Syrian-Turkish borderland unfolded against a backdrop of a restless frontier, where the local tribesmen saw opportunities in being situated in the midst of two jurisdictions, whose limits were yet to be fully defined. For the tribes living in the region, the borderland had indeed turned into a zone of opportunity. This was the case with a certain Mustafa from the Atmalı tribe who, after his escape from the Antep prison, ended up stealing 107 sheep right before he was caught trying to cross the Syrian frontier.[36] Over the years, cross-border raiding would slowly evolve into the most common type of cross-border 'criminal' activity across the border regions in the entirety of the Levant.[37] Even though French and Turkish authorities readily blamed one another for encouraging these cross-border raids and benefitting from the broader destabilization of the border regions, it was the developments elsewhere that provided the incentive to tackle these problems. In particular, the outbreak of the Şeyh Said Rebellion in early 1925 reminded Ankara of the significance of cooperating with the French vis-à-vis

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33 Velud, Christian, "L'émergence et l'organisation sociales des petites villes de Jézireh, en Syrie, sous le mandat français", *URBAMA*, 16–17 (1986), 85–103; Tatchijan, Vahé, *La France en Cilicie et en Haute-Mésopotamie. Aux confins de la Turquie, de la Syrie et de l'Irak* (Paris: Karthala, 2004).

34 Olson, Robert, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925* (Austin: Texas University Press, 1989), pp. 107–27.

35 White, Benjamin Thomas, "Refugees and the definition of Syria, 1920–1939", *Past & Present*, 235/1 (2017), p. 143.

36 Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes [hereafter CADN], *Ankara Ambassade*, 36/PO/1, 149, "Délégation à Constantinople de la République Turque au représentant de la République Française", 12 Novemer 1923.

37 Here, we are certainly referring to what constituted a crime from states' point of view. For tribes, cross-border raids were often a way of maintaining among, or restoring an equilibrium to, borderlander tribes. See van der Steen, Eveline, *Near Eastern Tribal Societies during the Nineteenth Century. Economy, Society and Politics between the Tent and Town* (London: Routledge, 2014). For an analysis of raiding, see Toth, Anthony B., "The Transformation of a Pastoral Economy: Bedouin and States in Northern Arabia, 1850–1950", Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oxford, 2000, pp. 153–205.

cross-border circuits that could easily get out of central control.[38] The start of the Great Syrian Revolt in the summer of 1925 in Hauran, on the other hand, made the French realize "the danger of allowing this Turco-French controversy to drag on while the internal crisis in the French-mandated territory continued unabated".[39]

It was against this backdrop that Turkey and France signed the Ankara Convention of Friendship and Good Neighbourly Relations on 30 May 1926. First and foremost, the convention provided for a clearer delimitation of the international frontier. At its western edge, on the Mediterranean coast, the new boundary ran just north of the district of Alexandretta. This territory was located at the crossroads of Anatolia and the Levant, and in particular the city of Alexandretta had "the potential to be developed as a major modern port that could serve as a Mediterranean outlet for northern Syria, Iraq, and potentially Iran too".[40] Farther to the east, the middle part of the new border ran alongside completed sections of the Baghdad Railway, from northeast of Aleppo to Nusaybin/Qamishli. At its eastern edge, that is the Upper Jazira which is also known as the Duck's Bill, the border had an important strategic value in that it allowed Syria access to the Tigris River before it crossed from Turkey to Iraq and control over the main road connecting Mosul to Syria and Anatolia. The fate of these two distant territories in northern Syria became tightly connected, for Ankara conditioned its recognition of the frontier in the Upper Jazira section on the establishment of a semi-autonomous entity in Alexandretta under Turkish patronage.[41]

Crucially, however, the convention of 1926 laid the foundations of a 'boundary regime' along the Turkish-Syrian border, signalling a push for bilateral cooperation not only to facilitate borderlanders' mobility but also to contain circuits of cross-border criminality. In doing so, the convention ultimately sought to enable "cross-border exchange of intelligence, border and migration control, surveillance of exiles and asylum seekers as well as the establishment of specific extradition procedures and expulsion measures" – practices that

38 The National Archives, London [hereafter TNA], FO 424/538, "Turkey: Annual Report, 1925", p. 11.

39 Güçlü, Yücel, "The controversy over the delimitation of the Turco-Syrian frontier in the period between the two World Wars", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 42/4 (2006), p. 645.

40 Bein, Amit, *Kemalist Turkey and the Middle East: International Relations in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 42.

41 TNA, FO 371/13075, E1467, 20 March 1928, p. 147. This was the case in the mid-1920s as well, Altuğ, Seda, "The Turkish-Syrian border and politics of difference in Turkey and Syria (1921–1939)", in *Syria: Borders, Boundaries, and the State*, ed. Matthieu Cimino (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), pp. 66–8.

had dated back to the late nineteenth century.[42] Article 6, for instance, noted that both countries committed to the "suppression of acts of brigandage and smuggling in the frontier region"; that is, a zone 50 kilometres in breadth on either side of that frontier.[43] Article 9, on the other hand, paved the way for cross-border mobility for "persons domiciled within five kilometres of either side of the frontier", while also introducing new practices of border control by providing those borderlanders involved in farming and commerce with an annual frontier card or *passavant*.[44]

Protocol III on frontier surveillance was also key to this convention; on the one hand, the competent authorities were summoned to "warn each other as promptly as possible of any act of pillage or brigandage that may be committed in their territory" and employ "every means in their power to prevent the offenders from crossing the frontier" (Article 3).[45] On the other hand, "should one or more armed persons, after committing a crime or offence in the neighbouring frontier zone, succeed in taking refuge in the other frontier zone, the authorities of the latter zone shall be bound to arrest such persons and to place them, in accordance with the law, at the disposal of the judicial authorities, together with their booty and arms" (Article 4).[46] While Article 7 defined the competent authorities responsible for the application of this convention, Article 8 encouraged both sides to establish "caracols [sic]" or police stations as frontier gates.[47]

The effects of this convention on the ground were not immediate, though. By and large, "borders did not create quick *fait accomplis*", across the region for the number of "customs officials, gendarmes, policemen, and soldiers was kept to a minimum".[48] Because smugglers, tribes and criminals of all kinds

42 Härter, Karl, "Security and cross-border political crime: the formation of transnational security regimes in 18th and 19th century Europe", *Historical Social Research*, 38/1 (2013), p. 102; Smiley, Will, "The burdens of subjecthood: the Ottoman state, Russian fugitives, and interimperial law, 1774–1869", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 46/1 (2014), 73–93.

43 League of Nations (1926–1927). Convention of Friendship and Good Neighbourly Relations, with Procès-Verbal of Signature. Signed in Angora, May 30, 1926. Treaty Series No. 1285, vol. 54, pp. 195–229 (here p. 201).

44 League of Nations (1926–1927). Convention of Friendship, p. 203. *Passavant*s were issued to landowners and their families as well as to their labourers.

45 League of Nations (1926–1927). Convention of Friendship, p. 217.

46 League of Nations (1926–1927). Convention of Friendship, p. 217.

47 League of Nations (1926–1927). Convention of Friendship, p. 219.

48 Schayegh, Cyrus, "The many worlds of ʿAbud Yasin; or, what narcotics trafficking in the interwar Middle East can tell us about territorialization", *American Historical Review*, 116/2 (2011), p. 278.

continued to infringe the border without being seriously molested, a new Franco-Turkish Protocol for the improvement of the surveillance along the Turkish-Syrian frontier was signed on 29 June 1929.[49] As a result of this new accord, a permanent border commission began to work on the definitive delineation of the Syrian-Turkish boundary at its eastern section; that is, between Nusaybin and Jazirat Ibn Umar.[50] The work of this commission resulted in the dramatic increase in the number of border posts and guards. In 1930, 138 posts were settled along the border. While these posts were to be used by borderlanders holding *passavant*s, 14 other border gates were established for travellers.[51] Even if the border began to be demarcated as such, it was ultimately the increased encroachments of smugglers and criminals from 1929 onwards that would test the viability of the Turkish-Syrian boundary regime – one that took nearly a decade to establish.

Smugglers and the Consolidation of the Boundary Regime

Smuggling had long been an important part of the cross-border illicit circuits along the Turkish-Syrian border. Back in the early 1920s, however, when the discrepancy in tariff regimes between Turkey and Syria was too low to encourage wide-scale smuggling, the illegal exchange of goods was largely limited to those that were produced under a state monopoly. As such, the smugglers took advantage of the local price differences, smuggling tobacco, matches, sugar, salt, gas, and any other commodities that were light in bulk, but high in value. With the onset of the Great Depression of 1929, the worldwide economic trend shifted to protectionism and countries began to take measures designed to benefit their home economies, which often took the form of heightened tariffs, import quotas, and clearing agreements. This was also the case in the Turkish-Syrian border, where Turkey became increasingly protectionist after 1929, while French Syria continued to adhere to the practices of free trade and its tariffs remained low, in line with the mandatory open-door policies.[52] The corresponding tariff discrepancies led to the expansion of the illicit economy in the border region, whereby the smuggling of goods that were subject to the

49 For the full text, see CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2136, “Protocole”, 29 June 1929.

50 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/1482, “Protocole d’abornement de la frontière turco-syrienne signé à Angora le 22 juin 1929”.

51 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2152, “Le Délégué Adjoint pour le Haut Commissaire aux Services spéciaux des cazas d’Azaz et de Jerablus”, Aleppo, 23 July 1930.

52 For a history of these tariff discrepancies, see Burns, Norman, *The Tariff of Syria, 1919–1932* (Beirut: American Press, 1933), pp. 52–66.

highest tariff rates inside Turkey became highly profitable for those in northern Syria. In particular, the situation led to the smuggling of textiles from Syria into Turkey, most notably the cheap Japanese silk and cotton cloth that catered for the peasantry deeply impoverished by the global recession.[53]

By late 1931, Şükrü Kaya, the Turkish minister of interior affairs, highlighted the significance of the problem in a lengthy report, noting that Ankara had spent the past decade trying to integrate southern Anatolia into its national economy, most notably through promoting the port of Mersin and extending the national railway grid to Diyarbakır.[54] Yet, the booming of smuggling from the early 1930s onwards, he noted, stood to reverse all the progress that had been made thus far, as Aleppo began to restore its earlier position as the centre of trade across the region.[55] While the developments along the Turkish-Syrian border began to reverse long-term trends, they had immediate consequences for Ankara's coffers. In a public speech, İsmet İnönü "estimated the loss caused to the state by smuggling at £T. 20 to 25 million a year, apart from the prejudice caused to local industry by the illicit introduction of non-taxed foreign goods", the majority of which came into the country via the southern border.[56] In the province of Mardin alone, for example, around 260,000 bolts of fabric were consumed per year, while Ankara's annual quotas for the import of textiles from Syria stood at a mere 3,000 bolts. This meant that the regional need for textiles was largely met by the burgeoning black market operating along the Turkish-Syrian border.[57] In addition to the loss of customs revenues, the extent of these illicit circuits also came at the expense of domestic textile producers, whether located in Bursa or in Diyarbakır, as they failed to compete with the invasion of cheaply produced foreign cloth.[58]

In 1932, the ministry of justice issued a new anti-contraband law by which the government established specialized courts (*İhtisas Mahkemesi*) to deal with smuggling in areas where the flow of illicit goods was considerable.[59] In that regard, the Gaziantep and Adana Specialized Courts proved to be extremely

53 Öztan, Ramazan Hakkı, "The Great Depression and the making of Turkish-Syrian border, 1921–1939", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 52/2 (2020), 311–26.

54 Devlet Arşivleri, Cumhuriyet Arşivi [hereafter BCA], 30.10.0.0., 180.244.6, 5 December 1931.

55 For an analysis of the struggle between Turkey and France over the hinterland of Aleppo, see Öztan, "The last Ottoman merchants".

56 TNA, FO 371/15381, E6375, "Prevention of smuggling on frontiers of Turkey", Ankara, 28 December 1931, p. 391.

57 Öztürk, Saygı, *İsmet Paşa'nın Kürt Raporu* [İsmet Paşa's Report on Kurds] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2007), p. 25.

58 Öztan, "The Great Depression", p. 6.

59 "Askeri ve İhtisas Mahkemeleri Hakkında Kararname" [Decree on the Military and Specialized Courts], *Resmi Gazete* [Official Gazette], 26 January 1932.

active. According to the local press, in 1934 alone, the specialized court in Gaziantep reportedly ruled on 4,250 cases.[60] By the same token, in 1935, 620 prosecutions had taken place before the Adana Specialized Court, and judgment had been pronounced in 505 of the cases. In addition to sentences of imprisonment, six month-long banishment had been passed on the natives of Malatya, Niğde, Van, Elaziz (Elazığ) and Kayseri, while pecuniary fines amounting to the sum of 71,780 Turkish liras had been imposed.[61] These legal measures underpinned the broader "national" battle against contraband, whereby border authorities sought to seize foreign commodities, particularly textiles.[62] As border guards increased their presence along the frontier, incidents against border authorities on both sides of the line increased as well, which was regularly reported by the local press.[63] Surveillance along the border, as Turkish authorities later noted, became particularly effective after 1932 when the military commanders began to lead the customs protection agency. Supported by a justice system that was armed with specialized courts, border authorities managed to curb smuggling by the mid-1930s, in particular that of silk textiles and salt.[64]

Yet, the consolidation of the border regime was not a one-sided affair, as cross-border flows naturally required transnational efforts at policing the Turkish-Syrian borderland. In line with the bilateral conventions signed in the late 1920s, Turkish authorities accordingly exchanged hundreds of communications with their French counterparts, requesting rapid and diligent action in dismantling the illicit coalitions along the border. In their reports, Turkish authorities often highlighted the complicity of Armenian, Kurdish and Arab communities who turned the northern sectors of the border into a warehouse that dumped goods into Turkey.[65] Such detailed information obtained from the Syrian side of the border, albeit not always accurate, illustrates how the struggle against contraband helped expand Turkish intelligence gathering

60 Metinsoy, Murat, "Rural crimes as everyday peasant politics: tax delinquency, smuggling, theft and banditry in modern Turkey", *Crime, Poverty and Survival in the Middle East and North Africa: the 'Dangerous Classes' since 1800*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019), p. 144.

61 TNA, FO 371/20067, E688, 27 January 1936, pp. 264–5.

62 CADN, 1SL/1/V/2145, Sûreté Générale, Aleppo, 6 June 1935.

63 "Hudut Eşkiyası: Suriye Hudut Komisyonu bu Meseleyi Konuşacak" [Border bandits: the commission for Syrian border will discuss the issue], *Cumhuriyet*, 17 November 1931, p. 3.

64 Varlık, Bülent, *Umumî Müfettişler Toplantı Tutanakları, 1936* [Minutes of the Meetings of General Inspectors] (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2010), pp. 233–4.

65 See for instance a list of shops and their estimated value prepared by the governor of Urfa in 1938. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2145, "Kazim Demirer (Vali d'Urfa) au Adjoint du Haut Commissaire pour le Mohafazat d'Alep", Urfa, 3 September 1938.

throughout the 1930s along the border zones.[66] Just as the French had co-opted some Kurdish tribal leaders for intelligence purposes, Turkey also sought to gather information among anti-French Syrians from the frontier zone.[67] This network of informants was supported by an expanding infrastructure of border gates and border posts[68] complete with mechanised units,[69] telegraph lines, and mounted guards.[70] In order to bolster morale and encourage service, distinctions were awarded to agents who proved to be particularly zealous in their struggle against smuggling activities along the Turkish-Syrian frontier.[71]

In parallel, smugglers became a target of both governmental and public opinion campaigns, in which the former were depicted as traitors to the "homeland" (*vatan*), and the "nation" (*ulus*).[72] Such discourse was supported by a slow but steady transformation of the Turkish penal code throughout the 1930s whereby punishments became tougher, in particular with regard to offences that threatened the "nation" and "state security" such as smuggling and the production of forged money.[73] Hardening conditions for smugglers were also reflected in how gendarmes treated the former. In July 1933,

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66 In 1927, the Turkish Intelligence Service Millî Emniyet Hizmeti (MAH) was established with the support of the Germans in order to combat communism, Kurdish and Armenian nationalism, Turkish monarchists as well as developments in Hatay province – almost all issues were tightly connected to Turkey's southern border. Şükrü Ali Ögel was its first director between 1927 and 1941. Göç, Eray, "Türk İstihbaratının Tarihsel Gelişimi" [Historical evolution of Turkish intelligence services], *Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3/2 (2013), p. 100. MAH was an organization that preceded the later Turkish National Intelligence Agency (MİT).

67 Öztürk, *İsmet Paşa'nın*, p. 27.

68 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2145, "Création de postes douaniers à Akçe-Koyounli, Muslimie", 3 April 1938.

69 In early 1938, the General Directorate of Turkish Customs (Gümrükler Genel Müdürlüğü) decided to purchase European motorbikes together with armoured cars and trucks to better monitor the Turkish-Syrian border. CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2145, "Répression de la contrebande en Turquie. Sûreté Générale des territoires Syrie Nord, Muslimie", 11 May 1938.

70 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2145, "Répression de la contrebande en Turquie. Sûreté Générale", Jarablus, 1 April 1938.

71 See some examples in the hagiographic study prepared by Şahin, Eyüp, *Türk Polis Teşkilatının Şanlı Geçmişinde ve Cumhuriyete Giden Yolda. İz Bırakan Polisler* (Ankara: Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü Basımevi, 2004), pp. 37, 183, 313–14.

72 "Kaçak ve Kaçakcılık" [Contraband and smuggling], *Yenilik*, 5 June 1936, p. 1; "Kaçakçılara Öğüt: Kaçakçılar Vatana Düşmandır" [Advice to smugglers: smugglers are enemies of the nation], *Yenilik*, 30 June 1936, p. 3; "Kaçak İşi Önemli bir Yurt ve Ulus İşidir!" [Contraband is an important national problem], *Yenilik*, 3 July 1936, p. 1.

73 While Turkey adopted in 1927 the liberal Italian penal code of 1889, between 1931 and 1938, Turkish lawmakers introduced important modifications to the original, borrowing an important number of articles from the 1930 criminal code approved by the Fascist Italian regime in 1930. As a result, the 1939 version of the Turkish code was quite different from

for instance, a group of 35 "brigands" were being transferred from the Kozan prison to Adana. Before reaching their destination, the prisoners tried to run away. The escort called on them to stop but as this was ignored, they fired on the escaping prisoners, killing 30 of them outright, whilst five were severely wounded and three of them died on their way back to Kozan. Soon afterwards, the public prosecutor, the government medical officer and the gendarmerie commander from Kozan held an investigation on the spot. Ultimately, however, the escort was exonerated of all charges.[74]

In parallel, by November 1932, the local power of *vali*s and *kaymakam*s was also strengthened to "protect" Turkey's southern frontier; they could issue arrest orders without any judicial warrant and the governor of Mardin took direct command over the mounted *jandarma* regiment to improve border surveillance.[75] More telling are perhaps the statistics of killed and wounded smugglers at the Turkish-Syrian border. According to Seyfi Düzgören, between 1932 and 1936, 87,000 smugglers had been arrested, 207 killed and 130 wounded.[76] In a later report, the figures, particularly with regard to the number of arrested smugglers, were more modest, yet still telling about the increase of border incidents: between 1931 and 1938, around 40,000 smugglers were caught alive, and close to 300 were killed in border clashes.[77] Protecting the "nation's wealth" by all means had indeed become Ankara's primary concern.[78]

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the 1927 original. See Miller, Ruth A., *Legislating Authority. Sin and Crime in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 107–114.

74 TNA, FO 371/16981, E4957, 2 August 1933, pp. 81–3.

75 Cigerli, Sabri and Didier Le Saout, *Les Kurdes. L'émergence du nationalisme kurde (1874–1945) dans les archives diplomatiques françaises* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2019), pp. 317–18.

76 Varlık, *Umumî Müfettişler*, p. 202.

77 BCA, 490.1.0.0. 1455.38.1, "Gümrük Tarife ve Kanunları ile Gümrük Muhafaza Teşkilatı Hakkında Bilgiler" [Customs duties and decrees, and information on the Organization of Customs Control], Ankara, July 1938, p. 40.

78 Of course, border guards were also victims of this low-level, albeit permanent, violence along the Turkish-Syrian border. Serving as a policeman or soldier in the border posts was indeed a dangerous job. Diplomatic records reveal that in many instances gendarmes and soldiers were assaulted and shot. On attacks on Syrian border agents, see for instance, CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2131, "Crime dans la region de Derbessie. Sûreté Générale", Qamishli, 18 October 1940. For a Turkish assessment of these attacks, see for instance BCA, 30.10.0.0., 127.914.9, "Suriyeli Eşkıyanın Sınırımızı Geçerek Bir Erimizi Şehit Ettiği Hakkında Rapor" [A Report on the martyrdom of a Turkish soldier by a Syrian bandit who crossed into our borders], Ankara, 14 May 1929; BCA, 30.10.0.0., 128.920.35, "Diyarbakır, Koçhisar, Mardin ve Elâzığ'da Meydana Gelen Silahlı Çatışma, Adam Öldürme ve Soygun Olaylarına Dair" [About armed conflicts, murders, and thefts that took place in Diyarbakır, Koçhisar, Mardin and Elazığ], Ankara, 8 April 1931.

From Fugitives to Criminals: Contours of Legal Pluralism

Smugglers' cross-border mobility was not, however, the only concern in the eyes of Turkish and French mandate authorities. Border legal pluralism provided structures that enabled some subjects to outmanoeuvre the law and others to call it into play. As in most border regions, once fugitives crossed from one country to another, their status and the laws that applied to them changed. Unsurprisingly, much of the paperwork produced by border authorities was concerned with cross-border criminality and subsequent extradition requests. The types of crimes reported by both administrations as well as their social and economic impact varied, of course, from the almost banal theft of one mule (or ox, camel or cow) to cross-border raids perpetrated by bands of 300 men stealing up to 600 head of sheep[79] as well as instances of rape,[80] kidnapping,[81] murder,[82] and looting of goods – in particular, gold liras and jewellery.[83]

The 1926 convention required the submission of extradition requests through the ordinary diplomatic channels, together with all the legal documents establishing the nature of the crime or offence. Nevertheless, it was only after the establishment of the Permanent Commission in 1929 that these diplomatic channels materialized, as the governors of the Turkish border provinces, such as Antep, Urfa, and Mardin, as well as the French adjunct-delegates of Latakia, Aleppo, and Deir ez Zor, gathered every six months to discuss all unsolved border-related issues, including extradition of criminals, exchange of stolen goods, and the disarmament of tribes on the frontier zone.[84] In addition, meetings between low-level officials took place on a regular basis, whilst minor frontier questions were settled on the spot.

79 BCA, 30.10.0.0., 128.922.14, "Suriyeli Aşiretlerin Sınır Tecavüzleri Hakkında Asayiş Raporu" [Report on public order about the border infringements by Syrian tribes], Urfa Gendarmerie, 4 July 1932.

80 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2051, "Bulletin hebdomadaire (Qamishli)", 18–14 April 1943.

81 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2126, "Services spéciaux (Alep) au Qaymmaqam de Birecik", Arab Pounar, 23 April 1938.

82 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2145, "Procès-verbal de la réunion entre les autorités frontalières de premier degré à Jerablus", 11 October 1938; CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2145, "Deux citoyens turcs tués", Extraits du Bulletin, Alexandretta, 21 December 1938.

83 For details, see CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2155, "Statistiques sur les activités transfrontalières (1.1.1938 au 30.6.1939)".

84 BCA, 30.10.0.0., 230.549.3, "Beyrut'ta Toplanan Türkiye-Suriye Daimi Hudut Komisyonunca Verilen Kararlara İlişkin Türk Heyeti Başkanı Ali Galip Bey'in Raporu" [The Report by Ali Galip Bey, the head of the Turkish Delegation, on the decisions taken by the Permanent Commission of the Turkish-Syrian Border convened in Beirut], Urfa, 22 December 1929.

In 1935, Turkey and French Syria agreed upon a modification of the 1929 Frontier Protocol with regard to the surveillance of the Turkish-Syrian border. More precisely, Article 3 expanded the power of border authorities to arrest offenders as well as to take all measures in order to compensate any damages in the border area.[85] As bilateral cooperation against contraband and tribal cross-border raids bore some results by the mid-1930s, new challenges became more prominent in the correspondence exchanged and new agreements. In 1936, for instance, the Turkish consulate in Beirut submitted to the French High Commissioner an official demand for further collaboration between all Turkish and French mandate security services on three issues: judicial affairs (inquiries concerning petty criminals and, if relevant, their arrest); drug and women trafficking, forgery, and international crime; and, the fight against "the communist and terrorist movements".[86] Following the official Turkish annexation of Alexandretta in 1939, the two countries signed in Ankara a new Convention of Friendship and Good Neighbourly Relations, which came to settle all territorial issues. In addition, the new text introduced some modifications to earlier versions in order to better fight against cross-border criminality while targeting in particular political activities against the respective governments.[87]

Despite the negotiation of a working framework of bilateral cooperation along the Turkish-Syrian border, a number of factors complicated the neat application of regulations. Binationality was one such element, as the correspondence between the two border authorities reveals that an important number of borderlanders were holders of both passports at the same time. Taking advantage of their status, they could cross the border without being molested, while exploiting their privileged position either to take refuge in one of the two countries or to undertake illicit activities such as contraband.[88] Ultimately, unlike the 1929 Protocol, which did not sort out problems related to binationals, the 1940 new Convention of Friendship and Good Neighbourly Relations foresaw that "any acquisition of nationality, in any circumstances, if it is prior to an offence for which extradition of an individual is requested, will

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85 CADN, Ankara, 36PO/1/153, "Echange de lettres relatif à la remise des criminels dans la zone frontalière turco-syrienne", Direction des Affaires politiques et commerciales, Istanbul, 11 April 1935.

86 BCA, 30.18.1.2., 61.7.20, Beirut, 11 April 1936.

87 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2136, "Convention syro-turque d'amitié et de bon voisinage, Gabriel Puaux, Haut Commissaire de la RF en Syrie et au Liban à M. le Délégué du Haut Commissaire auprès de la République syrienne à Damas", Beirut, 25 April 1940.

88 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2145, "Répression de la contrebande en Syrie. Services spéciaux du Levant", Afrin, 22 October 1940.

not be used as an obstacle to the delivery of offenders (…)".[89] Nevertheless, by the early 1940s, borderlanders could still play off the existing legal pluralism in the border zone, particularly in the Upper Jazira which suffered from a belated delimitation of the Turkish-Syrian boundary and the poor quality of the civil registers. As such, thousands of inhabitants in the Syrian *caza* (district) of Tigris were not registered at all and in other cases they had obtained Syrian citizenship while keeping their Turkish passports.[90]

Like smugglers, individuals taking refuge on the other side of the border also relied on networks of trust and older geographies. This was the case for women escaping from "honour killings" who tended to find shelter in the house of a male relative – often that of a brother, a cousin, or an uncle.[91] Seemingly, women wishing to remarry or simply start a new life in the neighbouring country took refuge in their relatives' households. At times, women arranged their own abduction by their "true lovers" in order to run away and get married on the other side of the border. However, elopement (*pê-revin* in Kurdish, *kaçışma* or *kaçma* in Turkish) could lead to subsequent acts of revenge from the "deserted" groom or husband's clan.[92] Although some "fugitive" women returned home either due to the mediation of relatives or the intervention of border authorities, correspondence between border authorities reveals that some cross-border movements were thoroughly planned. French authorities gave information, for instance, that a female Turkish national from Ziyaret (Urfa) had abandoned the village, with her daughter, leaving her husband behind. Crucially, she had also taken with her jewellery and the title deeds for house property. Once she crossed the border, she sought refuge in her parent's house in Alishar (Syria) where she allegedly married another man.[93]

In the same vein, far from being alien to the new legal and political developments, borderlanders were fully aware of the advantages legal pluralism offered to them. This was the case of Rabia, newly married to a Turkish citizen,

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89 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2145, "Répression de la contrebande en Syrie. Services spéciaux du Levant", Afrin, 22 October 1940.

90 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2195, "Sur les relations frontalières", Lt. Lannurien (Services spéciaux à Ayn Diwar) au Délégué Adjoint du Haut Commissaire (Alep), Ayn Diwar, 9 April 1941.

91 CADN, 1SL/1/V/2161, Le Délégué Adjoint du Haut Commissaire à Alep au Lieutenant des Services spéciaux à Arab Pounar, Aleppo, 2 August 1937. On "honour killing" reports see, for instance, CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2134, "Rapport mensuel sur les relations frontalières", Arab Pounar, 3 June 1938; CADN, 1SL/1/V/2144, Le Délégué Adjoint du Haut Commissaire à Alep à Selim Feyzi Gönen, Consul general de la Turquie à Alep, Aleppo, 12 December 1940.

92 See Yalçın-Heckmann, Lale, *Tribe and Kinship among the Kurds* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991), pp. 247–53.

93 CADN, 1SL/1/V/2134, Le Lieutenant Doumeyrou, Services spéciaux d'Ayn-el-Arab au Délégué Adjoint du Haut Commissaire à Alep, Ayn al-Arab, 1 August 1939.

who had abandoned her marital home by late 1939. As the marriage had not been consummated and since Rabia had been registered in 1922 as Syrian, the latter deserted her husband and moved into Syria. Despite Turkish claims for "extradition", legally she could not be handed over to Turkish authorities.[94]

In fact, "desertion" of the conjugal domicile was not included in the different conventions signed by both countries as a legitimate reason for extradition. Therefore, the official response to husbands' claims depended by and large on border authorities' willingness to cooperate or not in this matter. Against this backdrop, on-going diplomatic relations and personal views rather than transnational law could have an impact on officials' decisions, ultimately based on their "discretionary power".[95] In 1937, for instance, the adjunct-delegate to the French High Commissioner in the Aleppo province consented to hand over most of the "fugitive" women seeking shelter in Syrian territory, for they were perceived as "guilty" of marital desertion.[96] Three years later, however, the newly appointed adjunct-delegate in Aleppo argued that whilst the delivery of these women was indeed a common practice in the border area, there was no legal obligation resulting from the accords sealed with Turkey to follow such a policy. More importantly, the French official considered that deserting the conjugal domicile was not a crime or an act of brigandage. Consequently, restitution of women was not possible "unless we apply the same regime to women that we do for cattle".[97]

Borderlanders' room for manoeuvre was not limitless, however. Despite mutual accusations, cooperation rather than conflict prevailed in Franco-Turkish relations from 1929 onwards. Moreover, correspondence exchanged on these very accusations show that we need to go beyond formal diplomatic channels to better understand how the Turkish-Syrian border – as a social institution – created its own dynamics and mobilities. According to French statistics, between 1929 and 1935, the French had released through informal channels 348 people out of 976 requests presented by Turkish authorities, that is 35.7 per cent. In contrast, Turkey had delivered 114 criminals out of 461 requests (24.7 per cent) to their French counterparts. The same problem remained with

94 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2161, Services spéciaux, Ayn al-Arab, 16 February 1940.

95 On the notion of discretionary power see Lipsky, Michael, *Street-Level Bureaucracy. Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1980).

96 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2161, Le Délégué Adjoint du Haut Commissaire à Alep au Lieutenant (Services spéciaux) à Arab Pounar, Aleppo, 2 August 1937.

97 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2144, Le Délégué Adjoint du Haut Commissaire à Alep au Lieutenant de la Gendarmerie Légion à Azaz, Aleppo, 7 February 1940. See also Tejel, Jordi, "Des femmes contre des moutons: franchissements féminins de la frontière turco-syrienne (1929–1944)", *20&21. Revue d'histoire*, 145 (2020), 35–48.

regard to official extradition procedures: while Turkey had delivered only one individual out of 25 demands (four per cent), French authorities had extradited seven people out of 52 regular requests (13.46 per cent).[98]

Whether accurate or not, these statistics reveal that informal arrangements were more frequent than official extradition procedures. Everyday practices at the border were thus heavily informed by ground-level customary cooperation between low-level officials who could favour informal arrangements, regardless of political tensions and limitations of legal texts.[99] In Turkey, although the first general inspectorate and provincial governors played a central role in monitoring the security situation in the provinces adjacent to the Turkish-Syrian border,[100] the frontier officials on both sides were granted definite authority with a view to expediting necessary transactions about outlaws and criminals and dealing with them in such a way as to be a deterrent to others. Thus, for instance, persons arrested for committing highway robberies and crimes in the frontier zone and escaping to the corresponding zone, were returned with their loot and arms without an extradition procedure.[101] Therefore, as in other border areas, "the proximity of multiple, often conflicting judicial authorities made the frontier a 'zone': a particular space differentiated from nearby areas in terms of the rules that applied or were suspended there".[102]

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98 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2144, "Extradition d'individus par les autorités turques et syriennes", Le Haut Commissaire de la France à Basri Riza Bey, Consul général de la Turquie à Beyrouth, Beirut, 15 February 1935.

99 For a list of cases "solved" on the spot thanks to informal extraditions of criminals and fugitives, see for instance CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2134, "Rapport mensuel sur l'application des accords frontaliers", Services spéciaux, Arab Pounar, 1 February 1938.

100 Koçak, Cemil, *Umumî Müfettişlikler (1927–1952)* [General Inspectorships (1927–1952)] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), pp. 72–81.

101 The method to be adopted for returning criminals without an extradition procedure was as follows: a) the *Qaimmaqam*s of the frontier *caza*s of both governments informed the frontier authorities of the corresponding side of such criminals and on receipt of this information the corresponding side immediately arrested the person wanted by either of the governments; b) after this action had been carried out, the criminals were returned on request either by the Frontier *vali* on the Turkish side or the Services spéciaux of the *mohafazat* on the Syrian side; c) the handing over into custody was to be carried out only on the request of these authorities and in this manner, and such requests had to contain a description of the criminal and of the nature, date, and place of the crime as well as other particulars. The same informal system was implemented at the Turkish-Iraqi border from 1930 onwards. See TNA, AIR 23/374, "Procès-Verbal of the 8th Permanent Frontier Commission held at Mardin", Air Headquarters (Himaidi) to Special Service Officer (Arbil and Mosul), Himaidi, 27 November 1930.

102 Beverley, Eric Lewis, "Frontier as resource: law, crime, and sovereignty on the margins of empire", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 55/2 (2013), pp. 243–4.

Ground-level cooperation also included other minor affairs such as the restitution of lost animals (e.g. mostly sheep, goats, and donkeys) and borderlanders, particularly children, in part because the lack of any significant physical barriers along the shared border meant that humans and animals accidently penetrated into either Syrian or Turkish territory. More often than not, border authorities simply delivered them without producing paperwork: "47 goats and sheep accidentally penetrated into Syria. They were delivered to the Qaimmaqam of Suruç".[103]

Finally, the frontier officials took responsibility for mediating between local populations in order to avoid endless rounds of cross-border tribal raids gearing up to dispense "justice" according to customary law. Either individually or collectively perpetrated, a crime committed against another tribe reflected on the whole clan. As such, the tribal chieftains played a central part in either the resolution or irresolution of a given conflict.[104] Chieftains' position was, nevertheless, reinforced by border authorities, which sought to consolidate social connectors between the state authorities and the tribesmen. Naturally thus, border authorities and tribal leaders were in constant contact in order to secure peace and stability along the Turkish-Syrian border.[105]

In some instances, the actual resolution of the registered problem by the frontier officials was less important than re-establishing a certain equilibrium between borderland tribes. On 17 July 1933, for instance, the chief of the Syrian Milli tribe had allegedly stolen 58 oxen in the Siverek area (Turkey). During the meeting of the secondary authorities held in Akçakale in January 1934, the Turkish delegate stated that 27 oxen were still in the possession of Milli Mehmed Bey, while the remaining ones had since been sold. Thereafter, it was decided to examine this case, together with the subsequent theft of 400 sheep that resulted from the confrontation between two opposing tribes. After a series of meetings, both chieftains put aside their mutual claims, although the stolen oxen had not been restored.[106]

Precisely, because keeping stability along the border zone and/or good relations with local chieftains was crucial for frontier officials, the latter accepted

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103 For several instances of restitution of lost animals, see for instance CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/2134, Rapport bi-hebdomadaire sur l'application de l'Accord d'Ankara, Ayn al-Arab, 22 January 1941.

104 van der Steen, *Near Eastern Tribal Societies during the Nineteenth Century*, p. 117.

105 See Velud, "La politique mandataire française". For a similar argument with regard to British Iraq, see Dodge, Toby, *Inventing Iraq: the Failure of Nation Building and a Future Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 83–100.

106 CADN, FA, 36PO/153, "Septième session de la Commission Permanente frontalière", Damascus, 29 June 1935.

the tribal customs as the new 'normal'. Reports from the border zone and local newspapers are riddled with examples in which groups of tribesmen illegally crossed the boundary to abduct cattle and women, in order to claim justice and compensation.[107] Moreover, as the British did in Iraq, at the insistence of the French officials, provision for a separate tribal jurisdiction was included in the French mandate's legal regime. Thus, crimes committed between tribes were not brought before civil courts; only offenses perpetrated between sedentary populations or by tribes against settlers were submitted to regular tribunals.[108]

According to these regulations, in the settlement of blood feuds, tribes required the guilty party, in addition to paying "blood money" (*diyet*), to hand over one or more women from his clan to the family of the victim for the purpose of marriage.[109] Importantly, the woman in question "continued to belong to her own kin group even though she lived in the tribe of her husband".[110] Therefore, by borrowing pre-existing Ottoman legal frameworks under the pretext of tradition – albeit adapting it to new purposes – Turkish and French authorities came to encourage practices that paradoxically not only entailed further cross-border infringements but also helped (re)-connect older geographies despite the establishment of new boundaries.

Conclusion

Introduced in 1921 after contentious negotiations between the Kemalist resistance and French authorities, the Turkish-Syrian border quickly became the very site of interstate competition, testing the viability of the post-war settlement between the two countries, if not across the region. As such, the border quickly turned into a zone of low intensity guerrilla warfare, as the coming of colonial authority to the Levant continued to be challenged by a plethora of actors, with differing agendas. From 1925 onwards, however, the regional developments dictated the delimitation of the border, thereby starting a lengthy process that would ultimately result in the emergence of a boundary regime by 1929. As such, the authorities on both sides of the border committed themselves

107 "Suriye'ye Kadın Kaçıran Haydutlar" [Bandits who abducted women to Syria], *Akşam*, 20 August 1929; On the common practice of abducting women in exchange for cattle, see CADN, 1SL/1/V/2051, "Bulletin d'information hebdomadaire, du 27.12.1942 au 3.1.1943", Ras al-Ayn, 4 January 1943.

108 CADN, FB, 1SL/1/V/988, "Législation bédouine", Beirut, 11 July 1929.

109 Efrati, Nora, *Women in Iraq. Past Meets Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 23.

110 van der Steen, *Near Eastern Tribal Societies during the Nineteenth Century*, p. 218.

to settling border issues through bilateral commissions which would feature the participation of local administrators. It had therefore taken nearly a decade for French and Turkish authorities to negotiate a *new* regime of mobility that was poised to regulate the cross-border circuits of labour, exchange, and travel, in a piece of land now divided by an international frontier.

The willingness of the French and the Turks to cooperate in surveilling the border, however, encountered serious challenges, particularly after the Global Depression in 1929 – an important watershed that reshuffled the existing commodity, labour, and capital flows. The developments across the Turkish-Syrian border soon began to reflect some of these globally-rooted changes, as the borderlanders – impoverished by the economic downturn – began to plug themselves into increasingly profitable illicit networks that crisscrossed the border zone. Eager to contain these illegal linkages, Ankara not only passed anti-smuggling legislations, but also started demarcating the border further by increasing the number of border posts, gates, and mechanized and cavalry units. The cross-border nature of smuggling also pushed Turkish authorities to cooperate more directly with their French counterparts from the early 1930s onwards. The border was as much a resource for smugglers, however, as it was for fugitive women and a variety of 'criminals' accused of theft, murder, and kidnapping. Borderlanders' agency had an ambivalent impact, though. Each time those criminalized by one border authority found refuge across the border, their crossings further consolidated the institutionalisation of the border, contributing decisively to the continuous reshuffling of the emerging regime of mobility in the Turkish-Syrian borderland.

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CHAPTER 10

Interwar Territoriality and Soviet-Turkish Convergence across the Aras River

Onur İşçi

In 1893, Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer published one of the first English language books on the history of Russian-Turkish relations. Latimer was an English-American author from Baltimore who gained considerable fame in popular nonfiction. Her best-known works appeared in a series on European history, which included *Russia and Turkey in the Nineteenth Century*, receiving high acclaim from critics at the time.[1] Latimer begins with a rudimentary survey of two distant rivals for an American readership, but towards the end of her book, she turns to the similarities between Russian and Turkish politics of modernization in an otherwise conflict-prone narrative. Since the publication of Latimer's book, many scholars have pointed to the historiographical border between Russian and Turkish studies. Until recently, however, few had the linguistic skills and familiarity with native archives to cross that border. Hence, similar developments in the two countries' histories have rarely been recognized as such.

Over the past few years, historical scholarship on Russia and Turkey has grown, and an increasing number of publications have stressed the parallels in the developmental arc of these two countries.[2] Adeeb Khalid, for instance, argues that "in the quest for civilization" Soviet and Turkish state policies amounted to impressive attempts to transform and thus homogenize the respective backwards populations.[3] In ideological terms, Bolshevik and Kemalist regimes were a world apart, but as Khalid suggests, both originated from the same phenomenon: the collapse of the European imperial order

1 Latimer, Elizabeth Wormeley, *Russia and Turkey in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1893).

2 See for instance Hirst, Samuel J., "Anti-Westernism on the European periphery: the meaning of Soviet-Turkish convergence in the 1930s", *Slavic Review*, 72/1 (2013), 32–53; and İşçi, Onur, "Yardstick of friendship: Soviet-Turkish relations and the Montreux Convention of 1936", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 21/4 (2020), 733–62.

3 Khalid, Adeeb, "Backwardness and the quest for civilization", *Slavic Review*, 65/2 (2006), 231–51.

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in the flames of World War I.[4] The Bolsheviks saw tsarist Russia's backwardness as a result of its participation in an exploitative imperialist order, which aligned with the Weltanschauung of the Kemalist leadership that looked at the Ottoman state's underdevelopment from a similar window. This comparative approach has been vital in helping us to see the Soviet Union as part of a broader process that Charles Maier has called "territorialization", in which identity markers have increasingly overlapped.[5]

An obvious place to look for concrete results of Turkey's convergence with the Soviet Union is the permeable eastern frontier, where the two states' imperial predecessors had waged a life and death struggle over the Caucasian borderlands. In his recent account of the struggle between the Romanovs and Ottomans, Michael Reynolds demonstrates how "fear of partition led the Ottoman state to destroy its imperial order, whereas the compulsive desire for greater security … spurred the Russian state to press beyond its capacity and thereby precipitate its own collapse".[6] The absence of a Russian threat in this region and the Soviet Union's conspicuous silence during the Kurdish uprisings against the Ankara government in the 1920s and 1930s was more than a sequential step in Soviet-Turkish exchange and illustrates why it contrasted with the popular surge of antagonistic groupings elsewhere.

Through joint patrolling of the border, Turkish and Soviet governments took concrete precautions against cross-border smuggling of material goods and trafficking of arms. The Ankara government benefitted from this convergence in a different way, as the Soviet-Turkish exchange along the border drove local Kurdish tribes into isolation. Since the very onset of the republic's proclamation, Kurdish insurgency constituted the most significant concern in Turkey's eastern policy. Three main Kurdish rebellions (Şeyh Said, Ararat and Dersim) broke out during this period and Moscow's reversal of imperial Russian policy towards Kurdish notables significantly contributed to Turkey's civilizing mission and quest to consolidate central authority in its eastern provinces.

While the Russian empire incessantly pursued local and temporary alliances with Kurdish notables and tribes in order to exploit their grievances against the Ottoman state, the Soviet Union consistently remained aloof to the Kurdish question. In 1927, Soviet ambassador in Ankara, Yakov Suritz, openly told Turkish Foreign Minister Tevfik Rüştü (Aras) that the USSR would stick to

4 Khalid, "Backwardness and the quest for civilization", p. 234.

5 Maier, Charles S., *Once Within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016).

6 Reynolds, Michael A., *Shattering Empires: the Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 1.

its principle of non-interference vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue, but that Turkey needed to be careful as Moscow was aware of British designs for an independent Kurdistan.[7] Looking at Soviet records, it would be fair to suggest that Stalin perceived Kurdish nationalism as a feudal movement open to exploitation by Western imperialism. On the rare occasions that Soviet newspapers wrote about Kurdistan, they referred to "a tribal nation, which was separated by the impassable mountainous terrains of greater Mesopotamia".[8] But the question still remains: Did Ankara and Moscow work together to transform the borderlands that they shared?

The present chapter seeks to answer this question by looking at eastern Anatolia as a case study. First, I will look at cross-border cooperation on the Aras River along the Iğdır Valley and the construction of a joint irrigation facility – the Serdarabad Dam – that transformed the Soviet-Turkish border. I seek to explain the meaning of this cooperation and why it was at odds with an increasingly territorializing order elsewhere in Europe. I will then turn to the politics of collaboration between Ankara and Moscow during the late 1930s to demonstrate the difficulties that both sides faced while working together. My chapter is thus in keeping with recent works on Soviet-Turkish convergence during the interwar period.[9]

The Turkish-Soviet Border and the Serdarabad Dam

Like a prism that scatters rays of light, eastern Anatolia reveals much about the interwar exchange between Ankara and Moscow. This territory had become a formal part of the Russian Empire after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78, and was merged into the greater Karskaia Oblast until 1921, when the Soviet Union gave it back to the Ankara government. The agreement to retrocede Kars was the product of a broader interwar exchange between nationalist Turks and internationalist Bolsheviks, who found themselves in an unusual convergence.

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7 Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation [hereafter AVP RF], f. 4, op. 39, pap. 242, d. 53268, l. 219, Suritz to Rüştü, 22 April 1927.

8 While Turkish demographic studies on the size of the early to mid-twentieth century Kurdish population vary greatly, in 1937, when the Dersim rebellion broke out in Turkey, Soviet reports indicated approximately 1,500,000 Kurds residing in Turkey, "Kurdy", *Большая Советская Энциклопедия* [The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia], 2nd ed. (Moscow: Soviet Encyclopedia, 1953).

9 Balisteri, Alexander, "A provisional republic in the southwest Caucasus: discourses of self-determination on the Ottoman-Caucasian frontier, 1918–19", in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, ed. Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian and Ali Sipahi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), pp. 62–88.

A shared resentment against the Western dictated international order permeated Soviet-Turkish relations in the 1920s and 30s. Interstate cooperation, joint-ventures and cross-border trade ultimately paved the way for engineers and workers from either side of border to work together, ultimately remaking the borderlands they shared.

The border between Turkey and the Soviet republics of the Caucasus was defined by the 1921 Treaty of Kars, which succeeded an agreement signed in Moscow earlier that year. Demarcation proved to be extremely difficult due to the ongoing war in central Anatolia and a landscape that was at times inaccessible. When groundwork was finally completed in 1926, the boundary followed an irregular course for about 367 miles across the area east of the Black Sea. From west to east it traversed three distinct terrains: (1) the rugged mountainous area along the Georgian highlands; (2) a high, and dissected plateau along the Akhurian River that divides Soviet Armenia and northeastern Anatolia, and (3) the greater valley of the Aras River.

The third section of the Soviet-Turkish border has several distinct characteristics that sharply contrast with those of the first two terrains. Just east of the confluence of the Arpaçay (Akhurian) with the Aras River, the latter drops abruptly from the Armenian plateau to the point where it is joined by Nijni Karasu. At the confluence of these streams, where the Iğdır Valley ends, decreased elevation leads to climatic conditions that almost mimic the Mediterranean. The portion of the Aras flowing along the Iğdır Valley is also altered by meandering streams, with low banks, a sandy bed, shifting bars and many cut-offs and large islands. This complex pattern is especially notable between the towns of Kiti (present-day Çalpala) and Serdarabad (Oktemberyan), where in 1927, the Turkish and Soviet governments completed an irrigation agreement, providing for the construction of a dam.[10] The project site was located northwest of Kiti about a quarter of a mile from a bridge over the Aras.

The person who exclusively orchestrated Turkey's border negotiations with the Soviet and Iranian governments throughout the 1920s was Foreign Minister Tevfik Rüştü (Aras).[11] When Aras took office, Soviet-Turkish relations had already been on a cordial footing thanks to the 1921 Treaty of Kars and the ensuing 1925 Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship. But the texts of these

10 "Kars'da İmza Edilen Sular İtilafnamesile Serdarabat Barajının İnşasına Dair Müzeyyel Protokol" [Additional Protocol for Treaty on Water Resources and the Construction of the Serdarabad Dam in Kars], *Resmi Gazete*, 1168, 25 June 1927.

11 When the surname law was introduced in 1934, Atatürk personally proposed that Tevfik Rüştü take "Aras" for his services in facilitating the agreements with Moscow and Tehran on the Aras River.

initial treaties were too broad and both parties quickly realized the need for an unambiguous agreement to facilitate stronger cooperation. As early as 1924, the Soviet ambassador in Ankara, Jacob Suritz, pleaded with his government to ease cross-border trade regulations in the Caucasus. Suritz complained that Turkish merchants in Kars had to apply to Tbilisi for permission to engage in small-scale commercial activities since the Soviet Bank for Foreign Trade (Vneshtorg) was not allowed to operate in Turkey, and since the trade monopoly did not permit Turkish merchants to export consumer goods to the Soviet Union.[12]

It took nearly three years before Ankara and Moscow enacted a new treaty on the equitable distribution of transboundary water resources on the Aras River.[13] Customs regulations and border patrol made things excruciatingly slow as Moscow and Ankara were trying to undertake joint projects. Tevfik Rüştü Aras and Jacob Suritz agreed to set up a customs-free construction zone around the Serdarabad Reservoir, which would be 1500 meters long and 100 meters wide on each side of the Aras River. But that too proved to be insufficient. Hence the 1928 Border Treaty between Turkey and the Soviet Union came into being. This set up a perimeter of ten kilometers on either side of the entire border, which facilitated commercial and cultural exchange between the inhabitants of neighboring townships. Unlike previous agreements, the 1928 Border Treaty was quite specific.[14]

Article 3 of the treaty laid out the circumstances under which a person could travel across the designated customs-free zone. For construction work, cross-border commerce and joint agricultural ventures workers and merchants had considerable freedom of mobility, and residents now had the ability to stay in the neighboring country for as long as six months for personal reasons. The 1928 treaty paved the way for a much broader exchange that included collaboration in times of natural disasters or transfer of medicine and doctors to fight epidemics. Special pass-cards were introduced for those who intended to remain in the neighboring country for longer periods. Article 5 of the treaty

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12 AVP RF, f. 4, op. 39, pap. 238, d. 53178, Diary of Ambassador Suritz, 24 August-9 September 1924.

13 "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Sosyalist Şuralar Cumhuriyeti İttihadı Hududlarını Teşkil Eyleyen Nehir, Çay ve Dere Sularından İstifadeye Dair Mukavele" [Protocol on Equitable Water Distribution from Rivers, Streams and Creeks that Constitute the Border Between Turkey and the USSR], *Resmi Gazete*, 649–650, 4 August 1927.

14 "Hudud Mıntıkası Ahalisinin Türkiye ile Soviyet Hududundan Mürurlarına Dair Türkiye Cümhuriyeti ile Sosyalist Şuralar Cumhuriyetleri İttihadı Arasında Akdolunan Mukavelenamenin Tasdiki Hakkında Kanun" [Ratification of the Treaty between Turkey and the Soviet Union Regarding Border Crossing Rights of the Residents of the Soviet-Turkish Border], *Resmi Gazete*, 4136, 6 August 1928.

stipulated that both parties had the right to build as many irrigation canals as they needed so long as they did not tamper with the river's thalweg.

The Soviet-Turkish Border Treaty of 1928 was the product of a shared desire to regulate cross-border commerce, which frequently obscured territorial demarcations. The Soviet Union's trade relations with most of Turkey's eastern provinces, including Erzurum and Kars, were managed by ZakGosTorg (Transcaucasian Export-Import Office).[15] In terms of transfer and installation of industrial equipment to the countries of the East, the Soviet Union also had two economic organizations. The first one was Eksportstroi, which was responsible for the production in all countries of the East (except Turkey) of design works, the export and assembly of equipment and the provision of technical assistance and assistance for industrial construction. The second one was Turkstroi, which was responsible for the implementation of credits spared by the Soviet government for industrial construction in Turkey.[16] By the mid-1930s, although Turkstroi was investing heavily in Turkey's industrialization (prime examples of which were the two textile factories in Nazilli and Kayseri) economic cooperation between Ankara and Moscow proved to be a long-drawn out process. Particularly in eastern Anatolia, Turkstroi's operations were hampered by mismanagement and a lethargic bureaucracy on both sides. In that sense, the construction of the Serdarabad Reservoir sits well within a broader story of interwar Soviet-Turkish cooperation, but it also demonstrates the difficulties faced by both parties.

Soviet engineers completed the construction of the Serdarabad Dam in less than two years, and by 1930 it became fully operational. Turkey's leaders initially agreed to pay half of the cost, but soon they realized that they also needed a regulator and canals for irrigation. In 1937, the Ankara government balked at the figure that their Bolshevik counterparts were asking for – approximately one million rubles. Despite sweeping reforms in the nascent republic, on the eve of the Great Depression the Turkish economy had not recuperated from the Great War, constantly strained by pending Ottoman debt installments. With shortage of hard currency and bleak balance of payments prospects, Turkey was in no condition to pay their debt (indeed not until 1953) for the Serdarabad Dam let alone find additional resources to pay for a dam regulator

15 Russian State Archive of the Economy [hereafter RGAE], f. 413, op. 13, d. 164, l.1, Report of the Soviet Trade Mission in Turkey for 1931.

16 In 1936 the Politburo decided to join the two trusts together under Eksportstroi, in order to create a more rational administration. They were merged under Eksportstroi in 1937. RGAE, f. 7297, op. 38., d. 309, Molotov to Ordjonokidze, 25 December 1936.

and irrigation canals.[17] By contrast, irrigation began on the Soviet side as soon as the reservoir was linked to the Armenian banks of the Aras River. In other words, villagers on the Turkish side of the river were not able to utilize the Serdarabad Reservoir.

In 1935, five years after the construction of the reservoir, the Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü embarked on his famous eastern tour (*Şark Seyahati*), when he ruefully admitted that residents of the Iğdır Valley urgently needed water and that the regulator and irrigation canals became much more than a necessity. "This is not simply a matter of economic development but our political responsibility to the people" proclaimed the Turkish prime minister and proceeded to visit the canals on the Armenian banks of the Aras.[18] The Armenian prime minister and agricultural minister, who accompanied İsmet İnönü during the tour, provided round estimates of their total cost – 80,000 Turkish lira for the regulator, which made the total cost 200,000 lira including the canals. The real problem was finding the right engineers and technical expertise. Once again, Turkey relied on the Soviet government to provide concrete and technical equipment. Even though the Turks had not yet paid the money they owed for the dam and its reservoir, the Soviets agreed to take a step further in 1936 and undertook the building of the dam's regulator and irrigation canals for the Turkish banks of the Aras.[19] The project was delayed as both parties haggled over the price, over whether the cost of the labor to be provided by the Turkish government was included in the estimate.[20]

Roughly a year later, in January 1937, hoping to avoid further delays in the construction of the Serdarabad reservoir's tunnel and the dam regulator, the Turkish ambassador in Moscow, Zekai Apaydın, sent a letter to Turkstroi's director. Apaydın communicated his government's response to an earlier conversation he had had with Soviet engineers about the channel construction on the Turkish banks of the Aras River. Looking at Turkstroi's proposals, drawn up in two versions, the Turkish ministry of public works made the following observations: (1) Since the tunnel and canal construction projects were estimated at a total value of approximately 350,000 Turkish liras, both of the exploration projects proposed by Turkstroi which cost respectively 106,000 and 173,000 liras seemed to be overly exaggerated; (2) the Turkish ministry of public works,

17 *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi*, 8. Dönem, 26. Birleşim, 1. Oturum, p. 52, 6 January 1950.

18 İnönü, İsmet, *Şark Seyahati Raporu* [The Report of the Eastern Tour] (Istanbul: Başvekalet Matbaası, 1935).

19 Turkish Diplomatic Archives [hereafter TDA], TSID 9106721, Ambassador Zekai Apaydın in Moscow to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara, 18 August 1936.

20 RGAE, f. 7297, op. 38., d. 309, l. 47, Apaydın to Zolotarev, 23 January 1937.

upon receipt of an acceptable Soviet proposal and a revised number regarding Turkey's share in the total cost of the Serdarabad Dam Project, would transfer the necessary funds to the Directorate of Turkstroi, hoping that the organization would then materialize the project by their own means.[21]

In response to Apaydın's letter (dated 9 January 1937) on the construction of irrigation facilities in the Iğdır Valley, Turkstroi director A. Zolotarev suggested that during their preliminary talks in April 1936, they had agreed to exchange technical expertise, whereby Soviet engineers would travel to Turkey to become acquainted with Turkish equipment and engineers on the site. Zolotarev was first deputy head of the chief administration for the engineering industry and a long-established senior industrial official. As a first step to launch the project, Zolotarev commissioned a chief Soviet engineer, Tatarintsev, in May 1936 to go to Erivan, where a meeting with Turkish engineers was to take place. Tatarintsev stayed there until late June 1936, waiting for the arrival of Turkish engineers. When the Turkish delegation finally arrived on 29–30 June 1936, the two teams explored the construction zone and results of their survey were reported to the General Inspector of Eastern Anatolia in Iğdır – Tahsin Uzer.

Tatarintsev also wrote a memorandum to the governor of Kars, expressing his opinion that it was necessary to devise the project's blueprints completely, demarcating the main canal route as well as the irrigation network *before* the construction began. The governor of Kars replied that he would transmit this message to the Ankara government but Tatarintsev had not received an answer for days when he decided to leave the site and departed for Moscow on 9 July 1936. Nearly three months later, in late September, Turkstroi finally provided the Turkish embassy with a detailed program and estimates for research and design work, in the context of a memorandum drafted by Tatarintsev. The Soviet officials and Turkstroi were notified of Turkey's response, which had been drafted by the ministry of public works. Much to the Soviets' dismay, however, Ambassador Apaydın abruptly informed Zolotarev that the Ankara government found the recent Soviet proposals unacceptable.

Hence, in an irritated tone, Zolotarev told Apaydın that they had lost no less than six months in construction and "by no means through the fault of Turkstroi". Essentially, what Turkey proposed to Turkstroi was to limit the cost of labor for the canal's construction, to which Turkstroi replied positively and said that they were ready to negotiate the Turkish proposal.[22] For more than ten long months, the Ankara government continued bargaining, ultimately conceding that 350–400 people a day at the height of construction would be

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21 RGAE, f. 7297, op. 38., d. 309, l. 38, Apaydın to Zolotarev, 9 January 1937.

22 RGAE, f. 7297, op. 38., d. 309, l. 39–40, Zolotarev to Apaydın, 21 January 1937.

included in the estimate.[23] Finally, Apaydın and Zolotarev were able to resume negotiations, when the Turkish government came back with a much lower figure. Zolotarev told Apaydın that he would need some time since the Soviet team of engineers had been dispatched to different cities due to the long break in negotiations. The ambassador asked if Turkstroi had any other priorities in Turkey at the moment, to which Zolotarev replied "yes, in Ankara, İzmit, and İzmir".[24]

Mindful of an impending war in Europe, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR repeatedly urged the transportation ministry to intensify their work in Turkey's eastern provinces and to promote Soviet machinery and technical exports. Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov sent Turkstroi's director Zolotarev a number of astringent notes, reminding him of the vital political importance of this region, which was located in the immediate vicinity of Soviet Transcaucasia. What was particularly disturbing for Litvinov was the recent increase in the activity of foreigners, "in particular the Germans operating in Eastern Anatolia". German firms were receiving requests from local authorities for the construction of small industrial enterprises, such as electric stations, wagons, dams and canals. While the Soviets recognized that they could not match the capacity and breadth of these foreign firms, which were providing the Turks with long-term credit lines, they still hoped to expand Soviet operations on normal commercial terms, "if, of course, Soviet organizations showed enough initiative and flexibility". But, some in Moscow thought that local authorities might not be fully representative of the official Turkish position. Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs Boris Stomoniakov, for example, told Zolotarev that a small but typical example was the water pipeline project in Kars. According to the information received from the consul in Kars, the local governor accepted the conditions of German technical experts but his decision was overruled by the Ankara government, which found the German quote for pipes too expensive.[25]

Stomoniakov was right. On 21 June 1937, Zolotarev received a telephone call from the Turkish ambassador, who wished to see him for a discussion on the 1932 Soviet-Turkish credit agreement for eight million US dollars. With the knowledge and consent of Litvinov, Zolotarev visited the Turkish ambassador on 23 June, accompanied by his deputy, A.S. Trabun, who was the author of a recently published Russian-Turkish Textile Dictionary. In his conversation with Zolotarev, the Turkish ambassador drew attention to the Soviet-Turkish

23 TDA, TSID 910684, Apaydın to Aras, 31 January 1937.

24 TDA, TSID 912998, Litvinov to Apaydın, 5 October 1937.

25 RGAE, f. 7297, op. 38., d. 309, l. 57, Stomoniakov to Zolotarev, 13 March 1937.

agreement's payment schedule, which limited the right to use the loan by a certain period of time (within four years from the date of signing the agreement). Until the expiry of the four-year term, it was suggested in the agreement that if the Turkish side omitted this deadline, then the question of using the loan after the expiration of the agreement would be negotiated on the basis of mutual consent. Zolotarev responded by arguing that after Turkstroi's recent operations in December 1936, the loan agreement had expired. The ambassador asked him to raise the issue of another loan, so that the Turkish side could receive an additional loan for 770,000 US dollars. Zolotarev gave an evasive answer to this and advised the ambassador officially on this issue to address the demarche through the Soviet foreign ministry.[26]

After another protracted round of internal discussions, the Soviet leadership decided that a speedy construction of the canal and tunnel for connecting the Serdarabad Reservoir with the Iğdır Valley was beneficial in terms of (1) freeing the Soviet side from their obligation to supervise equitable distribution of water on the Iğdır Valley and (2) providing the Turkish government with the overall amount of their outstanding debt for the entire project – including half of the cost of the dam construction from seven years earlier. Moscow stated that the Turkish government owed altogether 1,041,163 rubles for the whole thing, including the loss of value over the past seven years and other amortization charges from the day the USSR opened the dam in 1930.[27] Despite difficulties in launching the long-delayed construction in Iğdır, the scope of Turkstroi's projects in Turkey on the eve of World War II demonstrates the political significance Moscow attributed to their continued cooperation with Ankara.

Ultimately, Soviet support for Turkish industrialization in 1937 had mixed results. The Serdarabad Dam regulator and irrigation canals were part of a larger Soviet commitment that had helped Ankara launch its first Five-Year Plan (1932–37). Turkey had already been receiving substantial support for years, but 1937 seemed a showcase year for collaboration. In that year alone, Turkey completed three factories, all equipped to varying degrees with Soviet-sponsored machinery: a cotton-mill factory in Nazilli; a merino factory in Bursa; and an artificial silk factory in Gemlik. The Nazilli plant was Turkey's fourth and largest textile mill, with a production capacity of 20 million meters (1,800,000 kilograms) of coarse cotton fabrics for peasants as well as fine fabrics for urban consumers. Much of the construction work for Turkey's textile

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26 RGAE, f. 7297, op. 38., d. 309, l. 139, Apaydın to Zolotarev, 23 June 1937.

27 TDA, TSID 990123, Protocol on the construction of the Iğdır Valley Tunnel connecting the Serdarabad Dam, 4 November 1937.

industry was financed by Eksportstroi's Turkish counterpart, Sümer Bank, and this development brought new life into remote towns, triggering an influx of people looking for much-needed jobs, housing, schools for their children, and a cultural environment.

But there were many setbacks, stemming from Eksportstroi and Sümer Bank's failure to fully harmonize their efforts, with consequent interruptions in work.[28] After its opening, it took another eight months for the Nazilli plant to reach full capacity, delaying the eight million rubles' worth of textile products that were to be exported to the Soviet Union. Equally, however, collaboration suffered from the two sides' ambition. Moscow and Ankara were frequently overzealous, commencing ventures with no specific deadline, cost, or technical specifications. The planned construction of a short-wave national radio station in Ankara, for example, was ultimately aborted, along with several other local stations in the Aegean. For Soviet Ambassador Lev Karakhan and others concerned about German propaganda, it was a particularly frustrating failure, since this was a project in which the Soviet economic and cultural challenge to German influence in Turkey had been particularly entwined.[29]

In 1937, Soviet-Turkish interaction was also hampered by the appalling transformation in Moscow's political and diplomatic leadership. The Great Terror saw almost all of Moscow's notable Turkey experts purged, imprisoned, or executed. In less than four months, the host of men with whom Ankara had been intimately acquainted but were now disgraced included Lev Karakhan, recalled from his position as ambassador in Ankara, and Andrei Bubnov, who had accompanied Voroshilov in the famous Soviet grand delegation to Ankara in 1933. Turkey's ailing leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was deeply resentful of the treatment of people to whom he had shown personal favor in Ankara's corps diplomatique for nearly two decades. When he received the new Soviet ambassador M.A. Karskii's request for *agrément*, only weeks after Lev Karakhan's execution in September 1937, Atatürk told Litvinov that one after another, the Soviet officials who were recommended to him as persons deserving of Turkey's confidence and esteem had been either disgraced or executed as persons inimical to the very government that entrusted them with their missions. "Who, therefore, can I trust?" he asked Litvinov tersely.[30]

In October 1937, Turkstroi director Zolotarev and his deputy Trabun became the next victims of the Great Purge. Zolotarev's position had been central to

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28 TDA, TSID 888234, Report on Eksportsroi and Sümer Bank, 3 June 1937.

29 RGAE, f. 7297, op. 38., d. 309, l. 90, Stomonyakov to NKTP, 22 March 1937.

30 TDA, TSID 4999348, Turkish request for extension of Karakhan's diplomatic mission in Ankara, 27 April 1937.

the Soviet-Turkish joint ventures in eastern Anatolia, but as early as June 1937, he had been reprimanded for unproductive spending of public funds and for conducting work from the Turkstroi budget without approved estimates.[31] In fact, the two trusts Turkstroi and Ekportsroi had been merged into one unified trust under Ekportstroi in early 1937 and the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry had never conducted an all-round survey of the organization's work in Turkey, which included many other operations in Nazilli and Kayseri. On 29 October 1937, Zolotarev and Trabun were arrested.[32] They were found guilty of "allowing overpayments for machinery (30 percent to 80 percent higher than existing prices)", "exaggerating per diem expenses of Turkish workers and trainees", and "economic waste of public funds of the USSR".[33]

As World War II approached, it became increasingly hard to maintain the relationship of the interwar period. The dismissal and subsequent arrests of Zolotarev and Trabun came as a major blow to Turkstroi's operations in eastern Anatolia. Just when Soviet engineers and workers were making progress in Iğdır after countless rounds of negotiations and seven years of bargaining, the Serdarabad project was postponed indefinitely. The much-needed regulator and canals would not be finished until 1953, when the Ankara government paid off its remaining debt to the Soviets. What was more, in 1938 Stalin decided to close Soviet consulates in Kars and İzmir, leaving only the Istanbul consulate open. Responding to the Turkish ambassador's protests, Stomoniakov told him that the Soviet Union was closing most consulates in other countries, including Afghanistan and Iran.[34] In a subsequent meeting at the Turkish embassy in Moscow, Ambassador Apaydın told Stomoniakov that the Turks were disturbed by the Soviet desire to close consulates, but would agree to the Soviet proposal provided that all (including Istanbul) Soviet consulates were closed.[35] With the outbreak of war in 1939, Soviet-Turkish cooperation ultimately came to a spectacular end.

From Serdarabad to Arpaçay

Through the fog and filthy air of World War II, Ankara and Moscow gradually drifted apart and the snowcapped towns along the banks of Aras became

31 RGAE, f. 7297, op. 38., d. 309, l. 143, Zolotarev to NKTP, 17 June 1937.
32 TDA, TSID 873245, Apaydın's report on Zolotarev's arrest, 29 October 1937.
33 RGAE, f. 7297, op. 38., d. 309, l. 146, Sovnarkom to NKTP, 9 June 1937.
34 AVP RF, f. 5, op. 18, pap. 148, d. 144, l.2, Diary of Stomonyakov, 8 January 1938.
35 AVP RF, f. 5, op. 18, pap. 148, d. 144, l. 5, Diary of Stomonyakov, 8 January 1938.

dilapidated frontier garrisons. The (re)territorialization of the Soviet-Turkish frontier led to a steep population decline in the greater Kars region. To illustrate, Kars's population, which plunged to a meager 200,000 in 1927 from 385,000 in 1914, was around 400,000 by the mid-1930s mainly due to the Soviet-Turkish joint ventures and a sustainable peace on the Russian border.[36] With the advent of war from 1939 through the mid-1940s, and the ensuing conflict with the Soviet Union in the 1950s, population growth fell behind Turkey's overall growth rate, which was about 14 percent per annum.

In fact, there was nothing unusual about the fate of eastern Anatolia in a volatile political climate. The Second World War and its immediate aftermath was characterized by similar population movements, sweeping designs for displaced peoples and complex patterns of repatriation across the whole world. From war prisoners to Holocaust survivors and civilians who lost their homes during the war, millions of people journeyed between countries and continents, hoping to find a way back to their motherlands, or reach new destinations and promised lands. Yet problems of post-war displacement and repatriation turned out to be a much more difficult enterprise than the leaders of the new world order had imagined at the Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco conferences. One underlying reason was the extension of Stalin's control over and beyond Soviet borderlands, which meant that population resettlement and state reconstruction would be a deeply politicized issue and a source of conflict. This was particularly the case for places wrecked by war, such as Crimea or Eastern Europe. But in the case of eastern Anatolia, contours of human mobility took on a different form. After the war, rumors of Stalin's designs over eastern Anatolia and schemes of creating a greater Armenia led to further demographic decline on the Turkish side and, unsurprisingly, cross-border human mobility ceased for nearly two decades.

The question of territoriality in eastern Anatolia throughout the twentieth century relates closely to the twists and turns of Russian-Turkish diplomatic relations. The Serdarabad Dam was originally built with diversion gates on each side of the Aras River so that it would benefit both countries. As bilateral affairs turned sour in the 1940s, the Soviets, who controlled the dam, refused to allow any water to go to Turkey until they were paid one million rubles. By 1950, when Turkey was on its way to becoming a NATO member, there was some apprehension in Ankara that even if they paid their debt, the Soviet government would create difficulties. Speaking before the Turkish Grand National

36 Ural, Selçuk and İlyas Topçu, "İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yıllarında Kars'ın Nüfusu" [The Population of Kars during World War II], *Iğdır Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 12 (2017), 385–416.

Assembly in January 1950, Minister of Foreign Affairs Necmettin Sadak declared that they would fulfill their financial obligations to Moscow regardless of diplomatic problems and that if the other side created difficulties "they would not refrain from any measure".[37] Yet, the Turkish government was acutely aware that some type of cooperation with the USSR was necessary if Turkey was to develop any irrigation works in the wide Iğdır plain, which some Turks referred to as "Turkey's Egypt".[38] Two decades after the Soviet government arrested the Turkstroi representative Zolotarev and shelved the construction of the Serdarabad regulator, there were still no irrigation canals on the Aras. Turkish farmers tried to build small diversion dams on the Turkish side of the river, but by the 1950s, changes in the water level either washed out the dams or left them dry. Some members of the Turkish parliament were convinced that the Soviets have deliberately caused the water level to fluctuate.

Despite such Turkish rumors, throughout the 1940s and 1950s, when the Aras became a firm divisional marker between the two states, Moscow carried out extensive economic programs in both the Armenian SSR and in southwest Georgia. In stark contrast with eastern Anatolia, the Soviet side of the Aras River had many industrial facilities, including clothing factories, fruit and vegetable canneries, rubber plants, textile mills and sugar beet refineries. The Soviet Union had hydroelectric stations even on tributaries, such as the one on the Razdan River, which falls from Lake Servan to the Aras. eastern Anatolia's relative underdevelopment was visible from the Soviet side of the border.

Almost half a century after the Serdarabad Dam's construction, Turkey and the Soviet Union agreed to build a second dam in eastern Anatolia in 1973 – this time on the Arpaçay (Akhurian) River, which is about a hundred miles north of the Serdarabad Dam.[39] The Arpaçay flows along the border between eastern Turkey and western Armenia. Regulating the currents of four transboundary rivers in the Caucasus, the Arpaçay Reservoir has a capacity of over 500 million cubic meters and is the main water supply for several towns on either side of the Turkish-Armenian frontier. Construction work for the Arpaçay Reservoir was commenced in 1975 and for the next five years, Soviet-Turkish relations were

37 *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi*, 8. Dönem, 26. Birleşim, 1. Oturum, p. 52, 6 January 1950.

38 *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi*, 9. Dönem, 94. Birleşim, 1. Oturum, p. 138, 10 June 1953.

39 Armenian water managers had first proposed the reservoir in the mid-1940s, but the geopolitical situation had kept it on the drawing board. The two sides signed their first protocol for the project in April 1963 but due to problems similar to those that had hampered the Serdarabad Dam (protracted negotiations, arguments over funding, difficulties traversing the border, etc.), the Arpaçay Dam took over two decades to finish.

once again marked by a striking convergence across the river's basin.[40] As engineers and workers from two opposing Cold War states crossed a customs-free zone around the project site, there was even a thin ray of hope for rejuvenation in this otherwise dilapidated area. Interstate cooperation between the Soviets and the NATO allied-Turkey might have boded well within the détente milieu, when Cold War tensions were mostly eased. Indeed, a rapprochement between the two states had already been in place since the mid-1960s and the enactment of the Arpaçay project, which came only months after the US embargo against Turkey over the Cyprus dispute, surprised hardly anyone. In that sense, the nature of Soviet-Turkish collaboration was mostly pragmatic and did not aim at "unmixing" of borderlands between the two countries.

In its preamble, the Arpaçay agreement of 1973 made references to its precursor – the Serdarabad agreement of 1927 – which stipulated cooperation, labor mobility and equitable distribution of the eastern Anatolia's water resources in almost identical terms.[41] Because Serdarabad was directly linked to the projected Arpaçay Reservoir through the Aras River, the treaty also suggested that the existing (Serdarabad) dam controller might be reconstructed to ensure necessary water withdrawal amounts and the new regulator would be equipped with stream gauges.[42] Bringing to mind Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü's observations about eastern Anatolia in his eastern tour of 1935, Russian scholars contended that each year the agriculture of this region suffered significant losses due to droughts and accompanying decreases in crop yields because of insufficient irrigation. Hence taming the Aras River through Soviet developmental aid once again became a necessity to (1) prevent flooding caused by thawing of the snow cover and rainfall and (2) make use of the river flow, which was not used and discharged in the Aras River.

Beyond their proximity and topographical parallels, the Arpaçay and Serdarabad Reservoirs are also very similar in terms of their historical contexts. To be sure, the Arpaçay Reservoir could be seen as a Cold War development story with an unusual interwar prelude in Serdarabad. Much like the Soviet

40 *Resmî Gazete*, 15288, 7 July 1975.

41 As before, negotiations for joint-construction got delayed in 1974 with Ankara and Moscow bargaining over the price of construction (16,6 million rubles). When the project was finally ratified in 1975, both parties agreed to share the burden evenly, but the Soviets pledged to compensate for Turkey's losses (4.4 million rubles) due to projected delays in the Turkish side of the border. In other words, Moscow's lump sum rose to 12.7 million rubles as opposed to Turkey's 3.9 million.

42 Shnyrov, E.P., "Construction of the Arpachai reservoir", *Hydrotechnical Construction*, 12 (1978), 1101–4.

sponsored Aswan High Dam in Egypt or the American sponsored Akosombo Dam in Ghana, the Arpaçay Dam was the product of a Cold War superpower rivalry over developmental aid to the Third World. But both the Serdarabad and Arpaçay reservoirs, which were built on a shared river basin between two ideologically different states, demonstrate a consistent framework for Moscow's and Ankara's joint projects across the past century – the quest for development in the sense of the pursuit of parity with the West.[43]

43 Hirst, Samuel J. and Onur İşçi, "Smokestacks and pipelines: Russian-Turkish relations and the persistence of economic development", *Diplomatic History*, 44/5 (2020), 834–59.

CHAPTER 11

Muslim Migration and Nation-Building in Interwar Yugoslavia and Turkey

Leyla Amzi-Erdogdular

Demographic engineering became an attractive device in the interwar period as a corrective to the religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of empires in the Middle East and Eastern Europe.[1] With the demise of the Ottoman, Habsburg, and Russian empires at the end of World War I, the paradigm of a homogenous nation-state was considered the solution to the tensions and issues that characterized the late period of imperial rule. Lord Curzon's infamous phrase, "unmixing of peoples" came to be seen as a necessary principle to resolve such imperial legacies perceived to be interfering with the progress of the nation-states. This chapter analyzes the ways in which two post-imperial states, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Turkish Republic both employed migration of Yugoslav Muslims in their respective nation and state building processes.

Earlier post-Ottoman nation-building projects set a pattern, shaping the nature of states' physical expansion and the relationship of the state toward its non-national others, those who were yet to be called minorities. Beginning with the Greek War of Independence in 1821, the treatment of different Muslim and generally non-Orthodox Christian populations, became the grim component of state building in the Balkans. Former Ottoman domains, Serbia and Montenegro, as autonomous provinces and later independent kingdoms, made advancements in homogenizing their lands through expulsions, massacres, and intimidation, as well as administrative measures. The remaining Muslims were rendered minorities at the turn of the twentieth century.[2] The new states felt the tangible consequences of these demographic changes: towns of Niš and Vranje, integral to transregional trade networks, lost their economic significance with the demise of their urban Muslim merchants and artisans after

1 I am grateful to Alush Amzi, Damir Imamović, Nevila Pahumi, Piro Rexhepi, and the participants of the conference on *Middle Eastern and Balkan Mobilities in the Interwar Period (1918–1939)* for their help and valuable comments in completing this study.

2 Bandžović, Safet, *Iseljavanje Bošnjaka u Tursku* [Bosniak Migrations to Turkey] (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, 2006).

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the Serbian independence. Similarly, in Bulgaria, Muslim emigration to the Ottoman empire following war-time violence, changed the social structure and role of the remaining Bulgarian Muslims.[3] The policies of homogenization were not aimed at Muslims only. Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece wanted to attract their coreligionists who were loyal to the other or professed no national affiliation, in order to bolster their numbers and therefore, claims to more territory. National governments did not wish to entirely eliminate populations overwhelmingly involved in agricultural production in the Balkans as that would have drastic economic consequences. Agricultural colonization and population transfers were then considered to allow for the replacement of non-desirable populations and minimize the economic impact of such demographic changes.

The watershed moment for Balkan Muslims came with the Balkan Wars (1912–13), in which Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria swiftly overran the remaining Ottoman territories in Europe in 1912. Albania declared independence the same year. The Ottoman empire lost most of its European territories. Muslims living in Macedonia fell victims to all the victors of the First Balkan War. The scale of violence and the sight of destitute migrants in Istanbul and other cities amplified the shock of losing Ottoman Europe.[4] Over 600,000 Muslims were killed in the regions taken over by Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, and another 400,000 took refuge in the Ottoman territories.[5] For the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which assumed power in the Ottoman empire, the victory of former subjects who had carved their nation-states out of Ottoman territories, beckoned an ominous reality to which they reacted with similar logic. For the Muslims remaining in the Balkans, it was an alarming illustration of their future under new rulers, realized when the same demographic policies continued in the campaigns of World War I. As a consequence some Muslims migrated to the Ottoman empire as soon as they were able during and after World War I. They continued to migrate even after the dissolution of the Ottoman empire, to newly founded Turkey.

In addition to the general trend of homogenizing their populations to assert rights to land within their borders, the new Balkan states also laid claims to each other's territories. This in turn made the demographic policies all the more urgent as the claims were based on populations that were supposedly

3 Methodieva, Milena, "Reform, Politics and Culture among the Muslims in Bulgaria, 1878–1908", Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2010, p. 43.

4 On the significance of the Balkans see Boyar, Ebru, *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans: Empire Lost, Relations Altered* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

5 McCarthy, Justin, *Death and Exile: the Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1996), p. 164.

left outside the designated borders. Greece and Bulgaria exchanged their populations on a voluntary basis in 1919, and the compulsory exchange of Muslims from Greece and Orthodox Christians from Turkey was brokered by the League of Nations in 1923. Romania settled Aromanians from Macedonia to its regions with Muslim and Bulgarian populations; while Yugoslavia worked to Slavicize its southern regions by expulsion and colonization.[6] Population of Albania was predominantly Muslim, as well as Catholic and Orthodox Christian; while there was significant Albanian presence in Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Greece.

By accepting nation-states as units in international relations, the League of Nations also created minority issues. However, the sponsors of the League and the Treaty of Versailles did not consider upholding minority rights: "More harm would in the end be done by unnecessary interference than, even at the risk of a little local suffering, to allow these minorities to settle down under their present masters", commented one British official.[7] The logic of nation and state building expected assimilation, and when that was not possible, expulsion. The issue became more complicated for the European Jews and Muslims, who were viewed through the lens of religious and not national identity – racialized not only as impossible to assimilate, but also lacking national character and a national home. Anticipation of violence and internationally-sanctioned solutions such as the Greek-Turkish population exchange, legitimized state population management in terms of numbers, bodies, and space in the international arena.[8] The interwar pattern of large scale migrations made violence and suffering an integral part of nation building – a modern process that continues to shape our world.

Yugoslav Muslims

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was formed in 1918 as a culmination of South Slavism – the idea that Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs were one nation. Yugoslavia incorporated a variety of territories with different historical and political experiences, and a linguistically, religiously, and ethnically diverse population. These were Habsburg provinces of Slovenia, Croatia, and

6 For the Aromanians, see Nikola Minov's chapter "Cursed in Heaven: the colonization of the Aromanians in Southern Dobruja" in this volume.

7 Mazower, Mark, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage, 1998), pp. 54–5.

8 Iğsız, Aslı, *Humanism in Ruins. Entangled Legacies of the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), p. 11.

Bosnia Herzegovina, where Slovenia and Dalmatia belonged to the Austrian, and Croatia, Slavonia, and Vojvodina to the Hungarian part; while Bosnia Herzegovina, having been under Ottoman rule until 1878, was managed by the Habsburg ministry of finance. Serbia and Montenegro were independent kingdoms. Sandžak, Kosovo, and Macedonia, designated as Southern Serbia, ceased to be Ottoman only several years earlier as a consequence of the Balkan Wars. Muslim populations were present in Bosnia Herzegovina, Southern Serbia, and Montenegro comprising majorities in some of these regions. They were also ethnically and linguistically diverse, including Slav Bosnians, Albanians, Turks, Torbeš, Gorani, and Roma, who along with Germans, Hungarians, Bulgarians, and Italians became minority populations in the new Yugoslav kingdom. In conceptualizing the state and its organization, Serbia prevailed in 1921 with a constitution that outlined a centralized state system. Serbian hegemony was further expanded when King Aleksandar I suspended the constitution and established a dictatorship in 1929.

Muslims who became Yugoslav citizens had very different prior experiences of their position and role within the state. Bosnia Herzegovina was a Habsburg province since 1878, preserving its nominal Ottoman sovereignty until it was fully annexed in 1908. The Habsburgs saw Bosnian Slav Muslims as valuable in establishing authority in the province and worked on integrating their elites and organizations into the imperial structures. Bosnian Muslims received education in the imperial schools and universities, participated in cultural and political associations, and built an Islamic Community overseeing the pious endowments and religious education that allowed them a degree of autonomy within the Habsburg system. They had, under relatively comfortable conditions – in comparison to post-Ottoman Muslims elsewhere in the Balkans, assessed their prospects as Muslims in Europe.[9] This experience of social and political mobilization, taking part in administration, judiciary, and education, and participation in the representative bodies of the province, had a decisive influence on the position and activities of Bosnian Muslims in Yugoslavia.

Although many in Bosnia were supportive of the South Slavic state, some deemed staying within the Habsburg monarchy a safer solution for Muslims. To that end, a group of Bosnian politicians submitted a memorandum to the Habsburg authorities in 1917 asking for Bosnia to be included in the Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy. Sandžak Muslims evaluating their prospects at

9 Amzi-Erdogdular, Leyla, “Alternative Muslim modernities: Bosnian intellectuals in the Ottoman and Habsburg empires”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 59/4 (2017), 912–43.

the time, petitioned Austria-Hungary for their region to be incorporated into Bosnia Herzegovina, rather than Montenegro, as they "belonged to it by history and language".[10] Others sought autonomy for Bosnia Herzegovina whatever the future state. Appeals were made for British intervention in Kosovo; for Kosovo to be put under provisional international administration; and even occupied by the United States.[11] All feared being incorporated into Serbia.

Muslims in Macedonia, Sandžak, and Kosovo, were Ottoman subjects until the Balkan Wars. Regional nationalist movements and their related territorial aspirations crystalized during the early twentieth century in the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek struggles over Ottoman Macedonia and its population, as well as the Albanian autonomous movement.[12] Due to violence during the Balkan Wars and World War I, these regions already lost over half of the Muslim population by the time of their inclusion in Yugoslavia.[13] The remaining Muslims in what came to be called Southern Serbia were seen as a problem by the Serbian and Yugoslav states from the onset.

Different state and institutional systems of these regions were integrated into the Yugoslav state structures. In the 40 years as part of the Habsburg monarchy, Slav Muslims in Bosnia Herzegovina had established a number of social and political organizations, as well as the Islamic Community – a partially autonomous religious institution. These institutions had a significant role in safeguarding basic rights and limited political organization in times of wide-ranging changes in the region. The religious institutions in the southern regions of Yugoslavia were developed as integral to the Ottoman state and therefore had no such prior political experience, while late-Ottoman political and public organizations and their activists were banned and exiled outright. In the immediate aftermath of World War I, it was the Islamic Community to which Muslims turned hoping it would protect their interests. Its head, the *Reis ul-ulema*, was the Istanbul-educated modernist and Pan-Islamist, Džemaludin Čaušević, who was a supporter of South Slav unity and the creation of Yugoslavia. As soon as the Serbian troops entered Bosnia Herzegovina,

10 Kamberović, Husnija, "Projugoslavenska struja među muslimanskim političarima 1918. godine" [Pro-Yugoslav current among Muslim politicians in 1918], *Historijska traganja*, 3 (2009), p. 95.

11 Elsie, Robert and Bejtullah Destani (eds.), *Kosovo, a Documentary History: from the Balkan Wars to World War II* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018), p. 270.

12 Sohrabi, Nader, "Reluctant nationalists, imperial nation-state, and neo-ottomanism: Turks, Albanians, and the antinomies of the end of empire", *Social Science History*, 42/4 (2018), 835–70.

13 According to the 1911 census 1,241,075 Muslims lived in the regions that were incorporated in Yugoslavia, and only 566,478 Muslims remained in 1921, McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, p. 164.

Čaušević began receiving reports of violence directed at Muslims in Bosnia, Sandžak, and Kosovo.[14] He strongly urged the government in Belgrade to intervene. Čaušević's statement about violence and massacres committed by the Serbian forces appeared in *Le Temps* in 1919. The authorities in Belgrade asked him to withdraw the statement as it compromised the international image of the new South Slav kingdom, which was at the time still negotiating its borders and state of minorities at the peace conferences following the war.[15] Committee for the National Defense of Kosovo (*Komiteti i Mbrojtes Kombëtare së Kosovës*) founded in Albania by Kosovars who were veterans of the Albanian national activities during the Ottoman and Young Turk period and some of whom held high positions in the Albanian government, informed the League of Nations and the British government in detail about massacres and expulsions committed by the Serbian forces, calling for their diplomatic sanction and protection of the vulnerable population.[16]

Considering that the Kingdom was created as a nation-state of the South Slavs, non-Slavic populations and even its Slav Muslims as Muslims, were not envisioned as constituent peoples. The Slav Muslims were seen as potentially assimilable, as had already been worked out in the nineteenth-century definitions of South Slavic brotherhood, where an attempt was made to distinguish between "the Turks" as the non-Slavic Ottomans, and "our Turks", that is, Bosnian Muslims who were dominant populations in Bosnia Herzegovina and Sandžak.[17] Similar theories, although much less entertained, were put forward about Yugoslav Albanians, presenting them as Albanized Serbs. Yet that did not prevent the outbursts of violence, dispossession, and discrimination directed at them in the Yugoslav Kingdom. The term "Turk" continued to be used for all Muslims and in a pejorative sense. In the context of nationalizing, "Turk" became a useful tool for othering and an ethnic designation making the migration to Turkey a logical development. It is therefore no surprise that the Yugoslav authorities in the interwar period (as well as post-World War II) encouraged Albanians to officially declare themselves Turks.

As Muslim religious and political leaders appealed to the Yugoslav government to stop the violence perpetrated against Muslims, reports also came from regional government officials warning of possible rebellions in reaction

14 These reports are in the Gazi Husrev Beg (GHB) Library, Arhiv Islamske Zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini, Fond Ulema-medžlis. See for instance, 2061/18, 27 November 1918, and 2123/18, 8 December 1918.

15 Malcolm, Noel, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p. 162.

16 These documents are published in Elsie and Destani, *Kosovo*.

17 Hajdarpasic, Edin, *Whose Bosnia?: Nationalism and Political Imagination in the Balkans, 1840–1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), p. 203.

to the continued pressure on the population. Political consequences of such acts were considered when the authorities in Belgrade called for restraint. One such massacre in 1924 in Šahovići left several hundred Montenegrin Muslims dead in a span of two days. Their houses and land were seized by the local perpetrators of the massacre.[18] The survivors resettled in Bosnia and Turkey. The news of this massacre spread quickly. As a consequence, another such massacre was avoided only when the town leaders offered to vote for the ruling party, and to help speed up Muslim migration to Turkey in their region.[19] Similar acts of violence and terrorization of Albanian population were reported in the memorandum to the League of Nations by three Catholic priests working as missionaries in Kosovo in the 1920s. The memorandum cites instances of massacres, assassinations, imprisonment, and forced labor.[20] Muslim migrations to Turkey in the first years after World War I were caused primarily by such acts condoned and sometimes committed by the local officials and the government. As the infamy of such deeds spread, fear and anxiety sometimes incited entire villages to migrate.

Some took to the mountains and organized uprisings and disruption of state activities in the region. The bands called *Kaçak*s operated in Kosovo, Macedonia, and Sandžak. Being close to the Albanian border, they used it as staging ground and shelter from the Yugoslav gendarmes and military.[21] The activities of the larger pro-Bulgarian/Macedonian VMRO bands were even more destructive, making Macedonia a volatile region for years into Yugoslav statehood. This

18 See Rastoder, Šerbo, "Tri neobjavljena svjedočanstva o pokolju nad Muslimanima u Šahovićima novembra 1924. godine" [Three unpublished testimonials regarding the massacre of the Šahovići Muslims in November 1924], *Almanah – Časopis za proučavanje, prezentaciju I zaštitu kulturno-istorijske baštine Bošnjaka/Muslimana*, 7/8 (1999), 249–57; Šabotić, Sait, "Zločin u Šahovićima u crnogorskoj istorijografiji" [The crime in Šahovići in Montenegrin historiography], *Almanah*, 45–46 (2009), 329–42; also referenced in Đilas, Milovan, *Land Without Justice* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1958), pp. 206–8, where the author named his father among the perpetrators.

19 Bandžović, *Iseljavanje Bošnjaka u Tursku*, pp. 393–5.

20 Bisaku, Gjon, Shtjefën Kurti and Luigj Gashi, *The Situation of the Albanian Minority in Yugoslavia: Memorandum Presented to the League of Nations* (1930). The English translation of the original French can be found at http://albanianhistory.net/1930_Bisaku-Kurti-Gashi/index.html.

21 See Fazliu, Hamdi, "Ligji mbi reformën agrare dhe kolonizimin e trevave Shqiptare sim jet për zbrazjen e tyre nga elementi autokton Shqiptar" [Agrarian reform law and colonization of Albanian territories as a means of emptying these regions of the Albanian autochthonous element], *Gjurmime Albanologjike*, 40 (2010), 99–106; and Čengić, Hajrudin, *Borba za opstanak Bošnjaka u Sandžaku, 1919.–1926.g.: Istina o Jusufu Mehonjiću i Huseinu Boškoviću* [Struggle for Bosniak survival in Sandžak 1919–1926: Truth about Jusuf Mehonjić and Husein Bošković] (Sarajevo: n.p., 1999).

precarious situation contributed to individual decisions by local inhabitants to migrate even before state involvement. The central government offered amnesty to *Kaçak* members in the form of unimpeded migration to Turkey as an opportunity to leave Yugoslavia forever. When that did not work, it was the massive reprisals that not only affected the family and relatives of the outlaws, but sometimes entire villages. The change in political leadership and help from the new King Zog of Albania (who had come to power with Yugoslavia's aid) finally brought the *Kaçak* activities to an end after 1925.

Yugoslavia established centralized control over districts populated by Muslims through loyal appointees from Belgrade in Southern Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina. Muslim majority regions were then singled out for an intensive land reform beginning in 1919.[22] Land was taken away from large and small Muslim landowners under rather unfavorable terms that included nominal compensation to be paid out over several years. Appropriated land was then given to local Slav Orthodox Christian tenants (who in Bosnia made up two thirds of all tenants); to Serbian war veterans; and colonized by exclusively Slav Orthodox Christian populations from Montenegro, Herzegovina, and Lika, often referred to in the government sources as "our element". Land reform was not unique to the Balkans. It was an attempt by the ruling elites to create landowning peasantry as a deterrent to the communist threat across Europe. However, it was successful in eastern and central Europe, in Czechoslovakia and the Baltic states, where large estates were in the hands of ethnic minorities.[23] Land reform and colonization in Yugoslavia was most intensive in Kosovo and western Macedonia, dominated by Albanian-speaking Muslims. There, the government did not even make an effort to present the alienation of properties as a legal measure, so the land-grab took many forms including seizure by government officials and local Orthodox Christian Slavs, intimidation, and ransom. Even the Yugoslav Prime Minister Pašić secured a large property in Kosovo, while King Aleksandar took over a Muslim estate in southern Macedonia for himself.[24] Personal properties and entire villages in Macedonia were taken from their Albanian and Turkish owners to be colonized as part of the "nationalization" plan.[25]

22 Land reform was also implemented in other select regions, though on a much smaller scale.

23 Mazower, *Dark Continent*, pp. 13–14.

24 Bandžović, *Iseljavanje Bošnjaka u Tursku*, p. 419.

25 A recorded 381,245 hectares of land were seized in what is today Kosovo and western Macedonia; Islami, Hivzi, *Studime Demografike: 100 Vjet Të Zhvillimit Demografik Të Kosovës* [Demographic Studies: 100 Years of Kosovo Demographic Development] (Prishtinë: Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës, 2008), p. 284.

The aims of colonization were manifold: to boost the Slavic landowners in predominantly non-Slavic inhabited regions; to bring about the expectation that the colonizers or their very presence would intimidate locals to migrate; and to drastically reduce the local Muslims' land allotments so that they were insufficient for basic survival, thus forcing them to migrate.[26] The Yugoslav colonization project was not unique. Scrambling to secure rights to territory, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey all engaged in colonization in one way or another. Colonization, as a form of migration, represented an important element of interwar nation and state building. The notion of "return" to a respective "national cradle" explained away internal and transregional colonization and migration in nationalist terminology. Yugoslav authorities hoped that giving out land would impede migration of Slavic Yugoslavs to Europe and the Americas and even encourage some to return and Slavicize Macedonia and Kosovo by settling on free land there.[27] The significant efforts at colonization were evident in the many schemes and debates on how exactly the best results could be achieved. Stories even circulated that the Yugoslav government intended to settle 40,000 White Russian émigrés on the left bank of the Vardar River in Macedonia. The Turkish consul in Skopje had not taken this rumor seriously at first, but a Skopje deputy confirmed it, adding that Yugoslavia was planning to settle the Russians in its strategic regions "just like the Ottomans once did with the Yörük!"[28] Whereas no White Russian colonization took place in Macedonia, nor were the more radical proposals for large scale expulsions carried out, the outcome of interwar colonization of southern Yugoslavia did yield a ten percent increase in Serbian population in Kosovo.[29] Medium and small level landowners were the most affected by the land reform and illegal usurpation. Impoverished, they easily decided to migrate to Turkey.[30] Land reform and expropriation also included the vast properties of the Islamic pious endowments (*vakuf/vakëf/vakıf*). Especially symbolic were the seizures of endowment properties that supported the operation of prominent mosques and Sufi lodges with their schools and soup kitchens, and public baths leaving

26 Banac, Ivo, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 301.

27 Brunnbauer, Ulf, "Emigration policies and nation building in interwar Yugoslavia", *European History Quarterly*, 42/4 (2012), p. 618.

28 Devlet Arşivleri, Cumhuriyet Arşivi [hereafter BCA], 030.10.251.693.1, 26 December 1931.

29 Brunnbauer, "Emigration policies and nation building", p. 620.

30 Bosnian landlords owned an average of just over 120 acres. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 367. For large landowners see Kamberović, Husnija, *Begovski zemljišni posjedi u Bosni i Hercegovini od 1878.–do 1918. godine* [Bey Land Ownership in Bosnia Herzegovina, 1878–1918] (Sarajevo: Ibn Sina, 2005).

them without income and unable to operate. Some, like the fifteenth-century Burmali Mosque that visually defined Skopje's main thoroughfare were simply torn down. The symbolism of these changes together with the tangible breakdown of socioeconomic systems that supported the Muslim communities, as well as the discrimination they experienced as an alternative, were significant in motivating Muslims to migrate.

Education was likewise employed in the policies of demographic engineering. Schools in Albanian language were prohibited. A limited number of state schools in Kosovo taught in Serbian with a program that was meant to promote the common identity of Serbs, Croats and Slovens to Albanian children who would accept it as their own. It was soon realized that these schools, by teaching nationalism, "trained" the Albanians for their own national resistance.[31] The state then encouraged religious schools, *mekteb* and *medresa* – the so called "Turkish schools", – hoping that the conservative religious education would leave the Albanians "backward, unenlightened, and stupid", according to one official writing in 1921.[32] The networks of clandestine Albanian schools operated throughout the interwar period with books smuggled from Albania. Both the religious and the clandestine Albanian schools served as centers of political and anti-migration activity, making their work even more treacherous to the authorities. Intellectuals, teachers, and students were particularly undesirable as they advocated against emigration and toward political organization. One report to the ministry of war in 1938 warned against educated Albanians who, familiar with their rights and laws of the land, promoted Albanian language and published leaflets calling on Albanians not to migrate and to stand up for their rights.[33] It further expressed concern that such Albanian students could join "our" students who were leaning toward communism.[34] Limiting non-Slavs to religious education was also meant to encourage religious, rather than national identity.[35] The religious organization and religious identification of the various Yugoslav Muslims was further reinforced by an official acceptance of religious, but not national diversity of Yugoslav Muslim

31 Kostovicova, Denisa, "'Shkolla Shqipe' and nationhood: Albanians in pursuit of education in the native language in interwar (1918–41) and post-autonomy (1989–98) Kosovo", in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 162.

32 Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 299.

33 Bandžović, *Iseljavanje Bošnjaka u Tursku*, p. 432.

34 Bandžović, *Iseljavanje Bošnjaka u Tursku*, p. 432.

35 Kostovicova, "'Shkolla Shqipe' and nationhood", p. 162.

citizens.[36] In a catch-22 situation, the Muslims were then deemed backward and "fatalistic" because of their failure to "progress" and develop national consciousness. The state tended to explain Muslim migrations from Yugoslavia to Turkey that continued into the 1950s, as an innate Muslim inability to adjust to the modern world. The Yugoslav attitude toward its Muslims corresponded to the contemporaneous stance of various European nation-states toward their Jewish citizens, who were likewise deemed alien and resisting assimilation.[37]

Political activity too, needed to be expressed in religious and not national terms. Two political parties emerged among Yugoslav Muslims, the Jugoslovenska Muslimanska Organizacija (Yugoslav Muslim Organization), or JMO in Bosnia Herzegovina, and İslam Muhafaza-i Hukuk Cemiyeti (Organization for the Preservation of Muslim Rights), or Cemiyet/Xemijet/Džemijet in Macedonia, Kosovo, and Sandždak, representing ethnically and linguistically diverse Muslims who spoke Turkish, Albanian and Bosnian. Both parties' papers were named justice, *Pravda* published in Sarajevo, and *Hak* in Skopje. The papers advocated for Muslim political engagement and against migration that was weakening the Muslims demographically, in order to stop their further marginalization. Both parties exercised limited political power through coalition building. Cemiyet and its paper, *Hak* were banned in 1925 and its leader imprisoned. JMO continued to play a limited role in Yugoslav politics but despite its name, could not represent Muslims beyond Bosnia Herzegovina – not even in Sandžak. Having struggled against migration to the Ottoman empire during the Habsburg occupation, Bosnian Muslims and in particular the Islamic Community already had decades of experience in advocating against migration. Yet, for those determined to leave, *Reis ul-ulema* Čaušević appealed to Turkey to get involved, so that the migrants could at least receive some compensation for their properties that were otherwise undersold, forcefully appropriated, or abandoned to the state.[38]

The profoundly prejudiced attitude toward Muslims and especially Albanians was not only an exercise in Serbian chauvinism, for it had tangible political, social, and economic goals. Yugoslav administration along with the military and the intellectuals suggested certain steps to accelerate emigration of unwanted non-Slavic populations and clear the land for colonization, achieving economic and also the state's security goals along the Albanian

36 A government report reiterated the thesis that "there are no national minorities in our southern regions", Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 298.

37 See Mazower, *Dark Continent*, pp. 59–60.

38 Emgili, Fahriye, *Yeniden Kurulan Hayatlar: Boşnakların Türkiye'ye Göçleri, 1878–1934* [Reestablished Lives: Bosniak Migrations to Turkey, 1878–1934] (Istanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2012), pp. 348–9.

border. The recommendations of the Inter-ministerial Conference on the Resettlement of the Non-Slavic Element from Southern Serbia were parallel to those of the Serbian Cultural Club, an organization of Serbian intellectuals and representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church expressed over the course of the late 1930s. They suggested policies that would make the life of local Muslim populations difficult and push them to migrate to Turkey, while at the same time make it administratively easy to leave. An agreement with Turkey was seen as vital. Some of the suggestions included strict enforcement of minute laws and fines, from taxation to building code; sanitary and veterinary inspections in villages preventing the sale of animals and goods; frequent compulsory military service and forced labor on public projects; exclusions from positions in government service and in higher education; and diminishing tobacco growing in tobacco-growing areas.[39] A prominent Serbian intellectual also suggested bribing the Muslim clergy to encourage migration in their sermons and even seeking out agitators from Turkey who would disseminate rumors about the splendor of life in Turkey and the free land being given to the emigrants.[40] Dispossession, exclusion from positions in the local administration, government, military, and education, together with the void in the sociocultural fabric of Muslim inhabited regions had far reaching ramification on the Muslim populations' understanding of their place in Yugoslavia and their decision to migrate to Turkey. Finally, the economic underdevelopment of regions in which Muslims lived and poverty became the tipping point for many who had nothing else to lose.

It is important to note that, despite these measures, the aim was not to force the entire Muslim population of the southern regions into exile, but to reduce it enough so that colonization and assimilation could take place. While Bosnian Muslims were already Slav, many nationalists suggested that their Christianization (or as they put it – "return" to the Christian faith) would solve the problem. Even Albanians were seen as a population that could be assimilated after their demographic predominance in Kosovo and Macedonia was weakened. This was especially pertinent at the time of tensions with Albania. The geopolitics of the Adriatic Sea overshadowed the relationship between Yugoslavia and Albania, since Italy worked to expand its spheres of influence in

39 Jovanović, Vladan, "Interministerijalna konferencija Kraljevine Jugoslavije o iseljenju "neslovenskog elementa u Tursku" (1935)" [Inter-ministerial conference of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on the resettlement of the non-Slavic element to Turkey], *Prilozi*, 35 (2006), pp. 117–8; see also Bajrami, Hakif, 'Konventa Jugosllavo-Turke e Vitit 1938 për Shpërngulen e Shqiptarëve" [1938 Yugoslav-Turkish convention on Albanian migration], *Gjurmime Albanolgjike*, 12 (1982), 243–69.

40 Bandžović, *Iseljavanje Bošnjaka u Tursku*, p. 429–30.

Albania and along the Adriatic coast where it shared a border with Yugoslavia. Furthermore, the possibility of Albanian expansion into Albanian majority areas of Yugoslavia, led Belgrade to streamline the undesired populations to Turkey, rather than Albania. To that end Yugoslavia made it more cumbersome to receive travel documents for Albania. An official of the Yugoslav ministry of foreign affairs suggested simply ethnically cleansing a spatial belt of Albanian population along the Albanian border.[41] Considering that Yugoslavia occupied parts of northern Albania after the conclusion of World War I and retreated only at the insistence of the League of Nations in 1920, Albania too discouraged all Yugoslav Albanian migration. Whether it was its expansionist aims or desiring to keep a buffer against further Slav expansion, Albania certainly preferred the Albanian population in Yugoslavia to remain put.

Public opinion in Yugoslavia was guided by Serbian interests in the south and was in line with its political and diplomatic goals. "Turks to Asia" was a slogan simplifying the solution for the unwanted Muslim populations, as they were all disparagingly blended into one group. Belgrade paper *Politika* ran cover page opinion pieces already in 1923 projecting an assortment of Serbian geopolitical interests, xenophobia, pseudohistorical explanations of the "south Serbia problem", and a need to be "rid of its burden", that is, its Muslim populations.[42] The press presented the land reform ordinances as necessary to provide land to landless veterans "who fought for freedom". Muslim landowners were portrayed as rich and greedy, hiding their estates from the government undertaking land reform and looking forward to going to Turkey where they would acquire even more land. The idea that "Muslim wealth" needed to be distributed extended to women too: the myth that "Muslim women" owned plenty of gold jewelry led to the Yugoslav government officials drafting the population transfer parameters to limit one necklace per person.[43]

Ivo Andrić, better known as the Yugoslav Nobel laureate, was also one of the highest-ranking Yugoslav diplomats in the interwar period. Andrić's diplomatic correspondence reflects his enthusiasm in finalizing the migration of Yugoslav Muslim populations. He was particularly eager about concluding a population transfer agreement with Turkey motivated by its interest in not only a small group of ethnic Turks in Yugoslavia, but also populations akin to

41 Jovanović, "Interministerijalna konferencija Kraljevine Jugoslavije", p. 115, n. 46.

42 Jelić, Milosav, "Iseljavanje Turaka" [Turkish emigration], *Politika* (21 August 1923), p. 1; Jelić, Milosav, "Opet o iseljavanju Turaka" [Again, on Turkish emigration], *Politika* (19 October 1923), p. 1; and Lančević, Dragiša, "Iseljavanje Muslimana" [Muslim emigration], *Politika* (23 August 1923), p. 1.

43 Jovanović, "Interministerijalna konferencija Kraljevine Jugoslavije", p. 120, n. 57.

Turks in their "mentality".[44] Native Muslims, a constant theme in almost all of Andrić's novels, were likewise described in his diplomatic correspondence as alien – "Turks leftover in the territories of our Kingdom".[45]

Migration

Muslim migration from the regions that became part of Yugoslavia was ongoing in the Balkan Wars and World War I and continued throughout the interwar period in the direction of Turkey and less so Albania. Yugoslav migration policy favored non-Slav and discouraged Slav migrations, which it controlled through selective issuance of regular and migrant passports. The 1928 Yugoslav citizenship law explicitly allowed former Ottoman, non-Slavic citizens to renounce Yugoslav citizenship by simply providing a statement to the local authorities, after which they needed to leave the country within a year. The government allowed them to take their moveable property and provided other relief in this process.[46] Non-Slavs were not allowed to return to Yugoslavia even when they held Yugoslav citizenship.

Yugoslav local authorities dealt arbitrarily with migrant matters which often led to abuse. Travel documents were issued in exchange for large sums and entire properties were given for safe passage, which then led to resourcefulness on the part of the migrants who sought other, often illegal, ways of travel. Migrants crossed into Albania, Bulgaria, and Greece and tried to reach their destinations by land and sea. At the time of the Greek-Turkish population exchange, a number of Yugoslav citizens went to Thessaloniki hoping to be resettled along with Greek Muslims. In one such case, 22 people from Yugoslavia and Albania were resettled to Konya and only then was it discovered that they were not actually from Greece.[47] In another case over 2,000

44 Martens, Michael, *U požaru svjetova: Ivo Andrić jedan evropski zivot* [In the Flames of Worlds. Ivo Andrić: a European Life], trans. Valerija Fröhlich (Sarajevo: Buybook, 2019), pp. 123–6. Also see Andrić, Ivo and Miladin Milosević, *Diplomatski Spisi* [Diplomatic Writings] (Beograd: Prosveta, 1992). For the image of Bosnian Muslims promoted in Andrić's work see Rizvić, Muhsin, *Bosanski muslimani u Andrićevu svijetu* [Bosnian Muslims in Andrić's World] (Sarajevo: Ljiljan, 1995).

45 Bandžović, *Iseljavanje Bošnjaka u Tursku*, p. 410.

46 "Zakon o državljanstvu Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca" [Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes Citizenship Law], Article 55, *Službene Novine Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* [Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes Official Gazette], no. 254/no. 84 – dodatak, 1 November 1928, available at http://digitalizovanaizdanja.sluzbenenovine.rs/showPdf2Visitor.php?filename=1928/084/219123of-54b1-4d73-9259-b9cd7f264e79.

47 Emgili, *Yeniden Kurulan Hayatlar*, p. 365.

Bosnians were settled in İzmir along with Greek Muslims.[48] Considering the wars in which territories changed hands several times over, the inhabitants of the region that was only until recently Ottoman Macedonia might not have taken the borders and even the new nation-states for granted. The oppositionist bands of various persuasions roaming postwar Macedonia certainly did not. The polyglot inhabitants could move across these new entities with familiarity and were able and sometimes forced to choose what worked best for them. It was not only the diverse groups of Muslims, but also Orthodox Christians who negotiated their Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek, and Albanian identities to participate in the national projects of the new states.[49]

Turkish refusal to allow entry to Albanian migrants and their return in 1923 – "even though they were Muslims" – was not well received in the Yugoslav press, predicting further conflict "between the Serbs and the muhajir [migrants]" over land.[50] Albanian migration was discussed at the Greek-Turkish negotiations in Lausanne when a mixed commission was created to this end,[51] as well as in the case of Yugoslav migration. The Albanian government repeatedly relayed demands to its Turkish counterpart not to accept Albanians in the population exchange with Greece, and not to issue migrant visas to Yugoslav Albanians. Turkish officials continued to express their readiness to accept Turkish populations, and the Greek and Yugoslav governments guaranteed that they were sending Turks only.[52] Responding to a Turkish consular report from Skopje that the inhabitants of Tikveš, Strumica, Köprülü (Veles), and Manastir (Bitola) were going to completely evacuate to Turkey, it was decided to approve visas only to those Yugoslavs who were able to vouch that they would not seek government aid, while allowing some leeway for ethnic Turks.[53] The authorities soon learned that many had accepted these conditions for the purpose of obtaining visas to enter Turkey, but that they in fact were not able to start a new life without government assistance. Four years later, it was again reported that the budgetary constraints did not allow for any wide-ranging migration, "not even for the Turks", let alone Albanians.[54] However, Albanians showed up

48 Emgili, *Yeniden Kurulan Hayatlar*, p. 365.

49 See Dragostinova, Theodora, *Between Two Motherlands: Nationality and Emigration Among the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1900–1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); and Karakasidou, Anastasia, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870–1990* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

50 "Sve zbog muhadzira" [All because of migrants], *Preporod*, 253, 3 November 1923.

51 BCA, 272.11.19.92.22, 31 August 1924.

52 BCA, 272.11.16.68.9, 10 October 1923.

53 BCA, 030.10.250.691.9, 28 May 1929.

54 BCA, 30.10.233.570.25, 2 February 1933.

among the exchanged Greek Muslims, Yugoslav migrants, and arriving from Albania and via Italy throughout the interwar period.

Despite continuing political and territorial anxieties among Balkan nation-states, establishing post-war economic and political existence required stability. Bilateral agreements between Balkan states and with Turkey were concluded, culminating in the 1934 Balkan Pact. They were an outcome of the states' need to legitimize their rule and their borders, stabilize political relationships, and stimulate regional and international economic activities. Normalization of relationships also included regulation of travel, visas, and migration. Many of these friendship agreements contained clauses regarding rights of minority populations and emigrant properties. Turkey and Yugoslavia established diplomatic relations in 1925 followed by a range of procedures on the ongoing travel and long-term visas for Turkish citizens returning to Yugoslavia to sell their properties.[55]

Turkey investigated ways in which it could finance the settlement of migrants arriving from Yugoslavia, but also Romania, Greece, and Bulgaria. Identical aims of these Balkan governments and the matching policies they employed to incite the undesirable Muslim populations to flee, prompted the Turkish officials to likewise enact similar policies with their immigrants' home states. Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, the Turkish ambassador to Romania, recommended negotiations to regulate migration and take into account the value of properties that the migrants were leaving behind. He warned that the Romanian oppressive policies toward its Muslim populations were intensifying and since the Romanian Turks[56] told him they were migrating come what may, the ambassador suggested that it would be practical to evaluate Muslim landed possessions before they were all simply abandoned when Muslims took flight or were forced to give all of their possessions as bribes to obtain a passport. Their appraisal would enable the Turkish government to charge the Romanian government the equivalent amount in cash or goods and somewhat offset the cost of migrant transportation and resettlement. Regulation of migration would help slow down the flow of migrants in groups larger than the Turkish government was able to financially sustain. He recalled that only 50 years earlier, the Muslims of this region fleeing Russian-Romanian occupation had to forsake millions of liras in possessions, and that the situation was on the brink of repeating itself.[57] The ambassador went on to conclude a

55 BCA, 030.10.250.691.18, 20 January 1930.

56 The Muslim populations in Romania were Turkish, Tatar, Gagauz, Laz, and Kurdish. Some of the Turkic groups, notably Gagauz, were Christian.

57 BCA, 30.10.116.809.3, 26 May 1932.

detailed population transfer agreement with the Romanian government which was used as a blueprint in planning the Yugoslav-Turkish Muslim resettlement.

In light of this and other reports from the Turkish ambassadors and consuls in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, the Turkish interior minister recommended that the respective ambassadors be given authority to negotiate, so that some compensation could be received and balance the expenses that the Turkish government was accruing. He reiterated the importance of timed arrivals which would allow appropriate resettlement and not leave the migrants "under worse circumstances in their true homeland [Turkey], than those in foreign lands".[58] Such discussions had already been ongoing between Yugoslavia and Turkey since 1926. The two countries considered how both could benefit from migration. The Turkish embassy in Belgrade reported in 1930 that it was examining over 4,000 reports on properties to estimate their value, which would allow for the start of negotiations.[59] Even before the negotiations scheduled for September 1930 started, inquiries were made on Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk)'s orders about what kind of compensation regarding land possessions and transportation Yugoslavia would extend for an immediate relocation of several thousand Yugoslav Turks to be settled in eastern Anatolia.[60] The negotiations seem to have been progressing slowly for various internal political reasons in both countries. The assessment of properties was also protracted. One year later, the ambassador was awaiting the implementation of the 1931 Yugoslav agrarian regulations to finalize the evaluation of Muslim properties.[61]

Ultimately, the Yugoslav-Turkish official negotiations started in 1935 and an agreement to transfer Muslim populations from Yugoslavia was reached in 1938. The agreement specifically listed counties in southern Yugoslavia from which a population of 200,000 was to be resettled to Turkey beginning in 1939 and continue over a six-year period. The Yugoslav government was to pay 20 million liras in compensation for the Muslim properties. Curiously, the Yugoslav-Turkish agreement exempted urban populations, who were predominantly Turkish. The negotiations and the final agreement between Yugoslavia and Turkey referred to Turks, however, the vague wording allowed for a possibility of "tossing in a larger number of Albanians" – in the words of Yugoslav Prime Minister Stojadinović.[62] Ivo Andrić's diplomatic correspondence confirmed

58 BCA, 30.10.116.809.3, to the Prime Ministry, 17 December 1932.

59 BCA, 030.10.250.691.22, 17 June 1930.

60 BCA, 30.10.250.691.23, 18 August 1930.

61 BCA, 30.10.251.692.6, 22 July 1931.

62 Pezo, Edvin, "Komparativna analiza jugoslovensko-turske konvencije iz 1938. i "džentlmenskog sporazuma" iz 1953: Pregovori oko iseljavanja Muslimana iz Jugoslavije u Tursku" [Comparative analysis of the Yugoslav-Turkish convention of 1938 and the 'gentlemen's

that the Yugoslav figures of roughly 150,000 Turks diverged from the Turkish estimate that reached 250,000.[63] Yugoslav statistics numbered about 168,000 Turks and 442,000 Albanians in southern Yugoslavia.[64] Albanian sources cited figures of over 800,000 Albanians and disputed Yugoslav censuses as being altered to reduce the Albanian and increase the size of the Turkish population, precisely for the purpose of their easier acceptance as potential migrants to Turkey.[65] These figures obscured the very diversity and overlap of Muslim identities in southern Yugoslavia where multilingualism and Ottoman culture were widespread especially among the educated populations who were not necessarily ethnically Turkish. Turkish willingness to receive migrant populations also played a role in accepting the higher figure, even though they were aware that the migrants were not all Turks.

While the negotiations were not public at first, the Albanian activists as well as other Yugoslav Muslims protested when the news of impeding resettlement spread. Former leader of the banned Cemiyet, Ferhat Draga, released from prison in the meantime, urged the Albanian and Turkish governments not to include Albanians in the planned resettlement. The population transfer never materialized, impeded by renegotiations over compensation and the onset of World War II. However, in anticipation of organized migration, Yugoslav authorities continued with repressive policies in its southern regions that would incite Muslims to flight. A petition was given to the Yugoslav Prime Minister Stojadinović during his visit to Skopje by the people who were critically affected by the agrarian reform policies in southern Yugoslavia and Montenegro, asking for equal treatment with the rest of the country and expressing commitment to their homeland and staying on their land.[66] Scholars have estimated that anywhere from 60,000 to 150,000 Muslims migrated from Yugoslavia to Turkey in the interwar period.[67]

When a prominent Turkish journalist, Ahmet Emin Yalman, the chief editorial writer of *Tan* and later founder of *Vatan*, traveled to Yugoslavia in 1936, he reported back to the Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü. Generally impressed

agreement' of 1953: negotiations of Muslim migrations from Yugoslavia to Turkey], *Tokovi Istorije*, 2 (2013), p. 104.

63 Bandžović, *Iseljavanje Bošnjaka u Tursku*, p. 435, n. 2.

64 Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, p. 58.

65 Kokalari, Hamit, *Kosova: Djepi i Shqiptarizmit* [Kosovo: The Cradle of Albanianism] (Tirana: Mesagjerit Shqiptare, 1943), pp. 33–5.

66 BCA, 30.10.253.704.7, 7 July 1938.

67 Pezo, "Komparativna analiza jugoslovensko-turske konvencije iz 1938", p. 114 (60,000–70,000); Kirişçi, Kemal, "Disaggregating Turkish citizenship and immigration practices", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 36/2 (2006), p. 8 (115,000); and Malcolm, Noel, *Kosovo: A Short History* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999), p. 286 (90,000–150,000).

with developments in Yugoslavia and meetings with the Yugoslav officials, he suggested strengthening ties between the two countries. He deemed Yugoslav administration just "by Balkan standards" as they "oppress the Turks less than the other Balkan states". Bosnian Muslims were on par with other Slavs, save their religion for which Yalman did not have much regard. Bosnians followed the developments in Turkey with interest and the educated "saw it as an inspiration", while the religious conservatives observed it with apprehension. Turkey was for Bosnians a "spare" homeland – in case the oppressive policies were to force them to migrate. However, he saw no future for the Turks living in dire conditions in southern Yugoslavia. Yalman likened their undignified status to that of colonized peoples. Considering that all the Yugoslav Turkish intellectuals and educated had already migrated to Turkey, he lamented that those remaining were left under the influence of local conservative religious leaders. Not being able to live on their land, they worked in the pettiest of occupations across Yugoslav cities, belonging to the lowest rungs of society. He concluded that the only way for them to recover from this "spiritual and material death" was to migrate to Turkey.[68] Yalman's account of the conditions in which southern Yugoslav Muslims lived are almost identical to Kemal Karpat's description of contemporary Muslim-inhabited Dobruja in Romania where he grew up and had also left for Turkey.[69]

Immigrants in Turkey

Anatolia and Thrace, regions that became the Republic of Turkey, were already demographically transformed due to a flow of migrants in the last Ottoman century. An estimated five to seven million Muslims immigrated to the Ottoman empire between 1783 and 1913, mostly from the lost territories in the Balkans, Russian-conquered Crimea and the Caucasus, and, less, from Central Asia, Crete, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya.[70] To handle such a large influx of refugees, the Ottoman government created *Muhacirin Komisyonu* (Migrants Commission) in 1860 – perhaps the first of its kind in the world, tasked with regulating transport, housing, feeding, and settlement of the immigrant

68 BCA, 30.10.53.702.8, 25 September 1936.

69 Karpat, Kemal, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 708–11.

70 İnalcık, Halil and Donald Quataert (eds.), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire: Vol. 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 793.

populations within the empire.[71] Working through the challenges and the practical experience of managing migration was beneficial when the Turkish Republic inherited the flow of migrants. Hundreds of thousands of refugees streaming into the Ottoman empire during the Balkan Wars and World War I, prompted a more comprehensive look at the ways in which refugee settlement could benefit war efforts. It also drove the CUP ruling clique to resettle and commit crimes against its own population during World War I, with the pretext of territorial security.

A decade of war – the Balkan Wars (1912–13), World War I (1914–18), and the Turkish War of Independence (1919–22) – resulted in substantial loss of life, survivors who had experienced multiple migrations, and a physically ravaged and depopulated land. The struggle against the European powers who had planned a division of the leftover Ottoman territories, mostly rallied Ottoman Muslims, Turks and Kurds as well as diverse refugees who shared the experience of being expelled from their homelands solely because they were Muslim.[72] The Turkish Republic was created in this landscape and Turkey was perceived as a safe haven for Muslim minorities fleeing various oppressive regimes. Waves of migrants from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, and the Soviet Union followed the compulsory Greek-Turkish population exchange.

Turkish authorities, just like the Ottomans in the previous hundred years, did not have much choice but to find ways to settle the incoming migrants and provide basic conditions for their self-sustainability. After a decade of devastating wars, depopulation, and economic ruin, Turkey understood that population growth was beneficial for economic development and national defense by populating its eastern and western borderlands.[73] The Turkish Republic was defined as a secular state with a civic understanding of citizenship, and a generous asylum policy focusing on naturalizing Turks and those broadly defined to be of "Turkish culture". In his address to the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1922, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) referred to the incoming migrants as "our coreligionists who sought refuge from the regions that remained

71 Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, p. 322. On Muhacirin Komisyonu see Taşbaş, Erdal, *Halifenin Gölgesine Sığınanlar: Göçler ve Muhacirin-i İslamiye Komisyonu* [Taking Refuge in the Shadow of the Caliph: Migrations and the Migrants Commission] (Ankara: Berikan, 2017).

72 Zürcher, Eric, "The vocabulary of Muslim nationalism", *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 137 (1999), 81–92.

73 Kirişçi, "Disaggregating Turkish citizenship and immigration practices", p. 15. The turn of the twentieth century Ottoman empire and Turkey into the 1940s were characterized by shortage of agricultural labor and uncultivated land; Boratav, Korkut, A. Gündüz Ökçün, and Şevket Pamuk, "Ottoman wages and the world-economy, 1839–1913", *Review* (*Fernand Braudel Center*), 8/3 (1985), p. 397.

beyond our national borders".[74] Specifically addressing Yugoslavia's substantial Muslim presence in the south and its government's aggressive approach, Atatürk warned that Turkey would not remain "an indifferent spectator to the condition of our coreligionists".[75] This view characterized the attitude toward immigrants and opened the way for formal incorporation of diverse populations into the national body.

Apart from those who had come as part of the compulsory Greek-Turkish population exchange – who received government assistance and designated housing and land – other immigrants were considered "free" with no guarantee of government support. However, incoming migrants in dire conditions frequently received basic assistance – sometimes even from the provisions meant for the exchangees.[76] The 1926 *İskan Kanunu* (Settlement Law) was approved in order to streamline the incoming migrants into designated regions with available land assessed by the ministry of interior.[77] The more comprehensive 1934 Settlement Law outlined the program of facilitated migrant intake, transportation, nature and regions of settlement, and state monetary and in-kind assistance. It defined acceptable migrants as Turks, as well as those "affiliated with Turkish culture" ("Türk kültürüne bağlı")[78] – broadly interpreted as loyalty, to encompass Slav, Caucasian, Albanian, Greek and other non-Turkish Muslims. The law stipulated that those who were not Turkish, even if not seeking assistance from the state, would have to settle in state designated areas, whereas Turkish immigrants were free to settle as they wished.

Considering that the 1934 law came on the back of continuous immigration and settlement in Turkey as well as the development of Turkish diplomatic relations with the Balkan states, it could be read as a corrective to and restructuring of ongoing migration processes and nation-building policies. In this manner, Article 11 barred those speaking languages other than Turkish from settling in villages and neighborhoods as groups; any organization based on their non-Turkish identity; and monopolizing locality and economic activity exclusive to one's own group. It further limited the "foreigners" (*ecnebi*)

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74 T.B.M.M. *Zabıt Ceridesi* [The Minutes of the Sessions of the Turkish Grand National Assembly], Devre 1, Cilt 18, 1 March 1922, accessible at https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d01/c018/tbmm01018001.pdf.

75 T.B.M.M. *Zabıt Ceridesi*, Devre 1, Cilt 18, 1 March 1922.

76 For example, BCA, 30.18.1.1.24.23.6, 13 April 1927.

77 İskan Kanunu [Settlement law], No. 885, 1 July 1926 available at https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc004/kanuntbmmc004/kanuntbmmc00400885.pdf.

78 İskan Kanunu, No. 2510 (14 June 1934), *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, 2733, 21 June 1934.

to comprising no more than ten percent of population in a municipality and illustrated the manner in which settlement was to be managed as "scattering" (*serpiştirme*). The law also outlined the government obligations toward the migrants including customs, tax, and military service exemptions, and specific assistance in tools, seeds, animals, and capital depending on the professions of the migrants in order to make them economically independent.[79]

However, the settlement did not always go as planned. Devastated after many wars, Turkey did not have much to offer to incoming migrants. Many were settled in temporary housing for much longer than planned and were allocated insufficient or barren land. The settlement designations took climate, agriculture, and urban and rural origins of the migrants into consideration, but the resources were rarely enough, causing impoverishment and pushing migrants to move to other regions. Migrants were frequently allowed to settle in regions where their families or compatriots lived, helping them adjust and require less assistance from the state, even though it contradicted the official stance for limiting larger non-Turkish settlements. In this manner, places like Polatlı, Adapazarı, and İnegöl came to have large concentrations of Bosnian populations dating back to the Ottoman period. Subsequently, the authorities were alarmed to learn that a clique of Bosnian migrants controlled the İnegöl Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party) and that the immigrants from Crete were responsible for the electoral success of the oppositional Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası (The Free Republican Party) in Antalya, continuing to view immigrant loyalties with reservation.[80]

The locals helped the newcomers start their new lives, adjust, and learn Turkish. They also resented the fact that immigrants were receiving assistance from the state and that they had to share public resources such as grazing lands and wells. The majority of Yugoslav immigrants, along with Greek Muslims, aroused additional criticism in the Turkish Republic for not speaking Turkish. Many remember being called *gavur* – a derogatory term for non-Muslims.[81] They were othered similarly to the Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians who ended up in Greece. Yet, locals also emphasized the development of their areas with the arrival of immigrants, as they not only provided manpower in regions depleted of working age population during the wars, but also introduced advanced methods in agriculture, artisanal skills, construction, and animal

79 İskan Kanunu, No. 2510 (14 June 1934), *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, 2733, 21 June 1934.

80 BCA, 490.100.631.80.1, 1 May 1936 and BCA, 490.100.724.478.1, 16 March 1931, cited in Gingeras, Ryan, *Eternal Dawn: Turkey in the Age of Atatürk* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 237–8.

81 Emgili, *Yeniden Kurulan Hayatlar*, p. 395.

husbandry. Balkan cuisine and music acquired a particular place in the Turkish national heritage. Furthermore, the arrival of migrants in remote traditional environments of Anatolia had a critical role in opening these communities up to new ideas and political views.[82]

The administration planed the resettlement of incoming migrants with the goals of achieving a culturally and linguistically unified nation. It allowed for inclusion of populations who could *become* Turkish and aimed to break down ethnic, tribal, linguistic, and regional affiliations that could interfere with the projected Turkish identity of the people and the land. As much as it defined Turkishness, the law gave broad latitude to officials deciding the suitability of potential immigrants. Throughout the interwar period the official rosters listed naturalized "Muslim" arrivals[83] and only after 1933 the arrivals began to be registered as "Turks", although not exclusively.[84] The paper *Cumhuriyet*, suggested settling the incoming migrants in Thrace (toward the Bulgarian border), so that they form a "wall in Europe" as a response to those who were "eying the Bosphorus".[85]

An important proportion of the bureaucratic, military, and legislative elite envisioning the new republic were refugees or children of refugees from the Balkans, including Atatürk, leading some scholars to explain the "bias" in favor of the Balkan Muslim migrants, as opposed to Turkish (but Christian) Gagauz, for instance.[86] Already in 1923, Atatürk suggested giving primacy to Thracian Turks and relocating them all to Turkey.[87] However, by 1954, out of 541 members of the parliament, only 22 were foreign-born, most over 60 years old.[88] Terms *göçmen* and *muhacir* (migrant) came to have a somewhat derisive meaning,[89]

82 Karpat, Kemal, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi: Sosyal, Ekonomik, Kültürel Temeller* [History of Turkish Democracy: Social, Economic, and Cultural Foundations] (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010), pp. 184–5.

83 For example, BCA, 30.18.1.1.21.72.10, 24 November 1926; 30.18.1.2.3.30.14, 15, 15 May 1929; 30.18.1.2.16.85.16, .17, .20, 31 December 1930; 30.18.1.2.12.45.3, .4, .5, .6, 21 June 1930; 30.18.1.2.22.51.7, .8, 12 June 1931; 30.18.1.2.38.53.15, 20 June 1933.

84 For example, BCA, 30.18.1.2.37.49.4, 27 June 1933; 30.18.1.2.37.41.9, 30 May 1933; 30.18.1.2.41.86.5, 4 December 1933; 30.18.1.2.41.85.19, 4 December 1933; 30.18.1.2.41.81.4, 12 November 1933; 30.18.1.2.36.36.8, 15 May 1933; 30.18.1.2.40.74.10, 23 October 1933; 30.18.1.2.40.72.9, 16 October 1933; 30.18.1.2.35.23.18, 12 April 1933.

85 *Cumhuriyet*, 3 December 1933, p. 1.

86 Kirişçi, "Disaggregating Turkish citizenship", p. 16.

87 Emgili, *Yeniden Kurulan Hayatlar*, p. 352.

88 Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*, p. 184, n. 38.

89 Karpat, *Türk Demokrasi Tarihi*, p. 184; also see Köker, Tolga, "Lessons in refugeehood: the experience of forced migrants in Turkey", in *Crossing the Aegean: an Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey*, ed. Renee Hirschon (New York: Berghan Books, 2004), p. 201.

and together with a general atmosphere dominated by distrust of foreigners motivated a new ideal of a unitary national identity. Balkan languages largely disappeared with the second-generation immigrants and the geographies of their origin were blended into a memory of Rumeli. Many Bosnians, Albanians, and others did not entirely shed their non-Turkish identities. For them, their Ottoman heritage warranted their Turkishness.[90] Migrants and the experience of migration partook in the material formation of Turkey and mediated the meaning of national identity.

Conclusion

Yugoslavia and Turkey both benefited from migration. Yugoslavia wanted to rid itself of majority Albanian Muslims living in the strategically relevant south; whereas Turkey saw a need for boosting population for economic, political, and security reasons. Muslim identity played a key role in categorizing populations, undesirable for Yugoslavia and preferred by Turkey. Belgrade *Politika* summed it up in the following words, "nowhere else do our [Yugoslav] and Turkish interests overlap as they do over this issue".[91]

Processes of assimilation and population transfers permeated both states' nation building projects. Both had somewhat ambiguous approaches to determining the exact national character. Rather than insisting on the idealized emblematic features of the national member (ethnicity, religion, or language), Yugoslavia and Turkey ultimately worked to make the best out of the circumstances on the ground. They preferred populations that did not have other alternative allegiances and could easily be assimilated to the extent they did not pose a threat to state interests. Yugoslav nationalists observed Muslims as "others" most of the time, but also as "our Turks" opening the possibility for their incorporation into the national body. Serbian rulers of Yugoslavia were content to reduce and assimilate the diverse populations of its south, whereas the Bosnian Slav Muslims were seen as already on that path of absorption. Turkey negotiated the acceptance of Yugoslav migrants on the premise they were Turks. However, it was not impossible to predict, nor were the Turkish authorities surprised that the resettled populations were quite diverse. What the multilingual and multiethnic immigrants to Turkey had in common was

90 Gingeras, *Eternal Dawn*, p. 239.

91 Jelić, "Iseljavanje Turaka", p. 1.

that they were almost all Muslim and that their home countries pressured them to migrate because they were Muslim.

The Ottoman legacy of a liberal asylum policy, the experience of immigrant management, and the large numbers of successfully naturalized and assimilated immigrants represented an important precedent in continuation of such practice in Turkey. The Turkish administration was following developments in the former Ottoman lands, sometimes having a better understanding of local Muslim conditions than the state authorities owing to migrant ties, activities of religious officials, and the commitment of Turkish diplomatic representatives. The trauma of various forms of discrimination and violence that prompted the Balkan Muslims to migrate was compounded by their dispossession, making their migration and settlement even more challenging. The Turkish government's involvement then focused on taking part in the passage of Muslims from Yugoslavia and other Balkan countries, concerned with the cost and the logistics of migrant transport and resettlement. Turkey's regional policy reflected these efforts by concluding agreements with migrant-producing countries in the Balkans soon after its establishment. The agreements endorsed citizen and property rights of Muslim minorities, who, if forced, would be able to sell their possessions and arrive in Turkey with some assets. Despite rejecting its Ottoman heritage, by way of these undertakings Turkey assumed the late imperial role of protecting Muslims who remained in southeastern Europe.

The willingness of the states to entertain and conduct large-scale transfers made the "unmixing" an inevitable result of their national programs and sanctioned state violence and individual misery that came with it. These processes on no occasion were complete and lingered on beyond the period under consideration here. Muslim minorities in the Balkans continued to see Turkey as a sanctuary from the repressive conditions of their nation-states as the waves of migration later in the twentieth century demonstrate. Migrants in Turkey (as in Greece, and Bulgaria) were often assigned passive roles because of the powerlessness of their predicament. Yet a closer look not only shows their resilience, but restores some of their agency in revealing the central roles migrants came to play in crafting the national character and directing state politics of their new homelands well into the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 12

From Marjayun to Oklahoma: Translocalizing the Periphery in Interwar Lebanon

Toufoul Abou-Hodeib

In the interwar period, two interconnected processes were taking place in the former Ottoman dominions. On the one hand, the postwar settlements and the introduction of new borders led to the formation of new states. On the other, both World War I itself as well as the insecurity following the defeat of the Ottoman empire led to unprecedented levels of mobility both within the borders of the Ottoman empire as well as beyond it. Among those waves of displacement and migration was overseas migration, primarily to the Americas in the years immediately following the war. Focusing on the sub-district of Marjayun in South Lebanon, this chapter investigates how the peripheralization that Marjayun experienced with the introduction of state borders together with the region's growing diaspora in the Americas, contributed to shaping a community that went over and beyond the state at the moment of the latter's inception. In order to understand how these processes came about, I look more precisely at how both emigrants and those who stayed behind mobilized translocal connections and made them visible in the public sphere.

Since the 1990s, transnationalism has become a central approach in understanding movement across national borders and the 'hybridity' and 'cosmopolitanism' that emerge with it.[1] At the same time, transnationalism has been critiqued for its focus on the nation-state and its borders, and thus on contributing to historiographies of globalization that are centered on the nation state at the same time that they try to transcend it.[2] More recently, the concept of 'translocality' has been used to overcome some of the shortcomings associated with transnationalism; challenge the hierarchy of scales inherent in conceptions of local, national, and global; and revealing their

1 For example, Bhabha, Homi, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Basch, Linda, Nina Glick Schiller and Christina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (London: Routledge, 2005).

2 Greiner, Clemens and Patrick Sakdapolrak, "Translocality: concepts, applications and emerging research perspectives", *Geography Compass*, 7 (2013), pp. 373–4.

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interconnectedness. Particularly in relation to area studies, using translocality deemphasizes national borders in parts of the world where borders played a different role in constituting states, identities, and global connections.[3] In the case of the Middle East, implicit assumptions until recently about the fixity and closure of territories and populations, has resulted in truncated histories that echo colonial and nationalist discourses. Indeed, as Andrew Arsan, John Karam, and Akram Khater point out, a diasporic perspective in itself is important to counteract notions of the Middle East as a "clear territorial package", in favor of "a set of networks holding together, and held together by, people and things, places and practices".[4]

As a research perspective, translocality assumes a multiplicity of boundaries, the political being only one of them, thereby recognizing "the inability even of modern states to assume, regulate, and control movement, and accounting for the agency of a multitude of different actors".[5] Studies on translocality emphasize the importance of localities in identity building without losing sight of the impact of globalization, thus rethinking "the local through a variety of spaces, places, and scales".[6] Arjun Appadurai noted several decades ago that "locality" itself is socially and, in certain cases globally produced.[7] More recent works illustrate how scale in general is not given, but produced, and translocal connections create a plurality of spaces and scales that can also change over time.[8]

Yet, the underlying assumption in many of the studies deploying translocality as a research perspective is that mobility and migration are in themselves sufficient for generating spaces and scales. Little attention is given to how actors themselves actively bring into relief certain scales of interconnectedness over others. Paying attention to how actions are emphasized on

3 Freitag, Ulrike and Achim van Oppen (eds.), *Translocality: the Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Oakes, Tim and Louisa Schein (eds.), *Translocal China: Linkages, Identities and the Reimagining of Space* (London: Routledge, 2006).

4 Arsan, Andrew, John Karam and Akram Khater, "On forgotten shores: migration in Middle East studies and the Middle East in migration studies", *Mashriq & Mahjar*, 1/1 (2013). https://lebanesestudies.ojs.chass.ncsu.edu/index.php/mashriq/article/view/1.

5 Freitag and van Oppen, *Translocality*, p. 12.

6 Brickell, Katherine and Ayona Datta, *Translocal Geographies: Spaces, Places, Connections* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 5.

7 Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, pp. 178–99.

8 For example, Brown, J. Christopher and Mark Purcell, "There's nothing inherent about scale: political ecology, the local trap, and the politics of development in the Brazilian Amazon", *Geoforum*, 36/5 (2005), 607–24; Scheele, Judith, "Regional attractions: world and village in Kabylia (Algeria)", in *Translocality*, ed. Freitag and van Oppen, pp. 159–78.

different scales at different points of time, this chapter shows how connections between Marjayun and its diaspora took on a translocal form during the interwar period. An important catalyst in this process is the emergence of the local press. Although before the French mandate period, persons, letters, remittances and objects flowed back and forth between different locales, the emergence of a cross-Atlantic public sphere was instrumental to articulating those movements at a collective level and endowing them with meaning on a specific scale: the translocal.

Works on Lebanon show how emigration elicited anxieties at the same time that it opened up new identities for those who remained behind or returned. Akram Khater and Ghenwa Hayek, for example, emphasize the social and racial anxieties as well as the new possibilities that emigration opened up for those who remained.[9] This dual aspect of emigration is also palpable in interwar Marjayun, where a sense of crisis is interwoven with the possibilities that the diaspora opened up for the towns and villages they emigrated from. In order to understand the context of those changes, this chapter unravels diasporic mobility's impact on Marjayun in light of migration, Arabism, the politics of the French mandate, regional politics of South Lebanon, and local rivalries. After looking at the conditions that led to a spike of emigration from Marjayun in the years following World War I, the chapter moves to the role of the press in mediating relationships between the region and its diaspora. Even as it became economically marginal to a newly founded Lebanon under the French mandate, the South became even more interconnected and vibrant as an intellectual space. This happened precisely because of the connections the region was able to forge with its diaspora. The rest of the chapter traces the formation of networks between Marjayun and its diaspora and the instances in which they were articulated as translocal connections.

The South in Lebanon's Political Economy

In the late Ottoman era, the socioeconomic network of what became known as South Lebanon was more directed towards the Hawran to the east and the Galilee to the south. Particularly towards the turn of the century, the regions

9 Khater, Akram Fouad, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Hayek, Ghenwa, "'Carrying Africa', becoming Lebanese: diasporic middleness in Lebanese fiction", in *Diasporas and Cultural Mobilities*, vol. 2 *Diaspora, Memory and Intimacy*, ed. Sarah Barbour, Thomas Lacroix, David Howards and Judith Misrahi-Barak (Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2015), pp. 99–114.

that formed the sub-provinces of the Ottoman province of Beirut became more strongly interlinked in response to the rise of Beirut as main port city on the eastern Mediterranean seaboard. Both the northern and southern parts of the province became more strongly integrated economically. To the south, the sub-provinces of Sidon and Acre, of which the region of Marjayun and Wadi al-Taym were part, became more economically integrated. The hinterland remained fairly removed from the process of economic centralization in Beirut and largely dependent on an internal network of souks that bound it together both economically and socially.[10] The post-World War I settlement divided this region in two, under French and British authority. Whereas France was granted mandate administration over Syria and Lebanon, Britain had the responsibility for the mandates of Palestine and Transjordan. The ensuing state borders that resulted from this division and gradually coalesced starting in 1923 cut across late Ottoman socioeconomic networks, transforming the relationship between the two sides of the border from a relationship between localities and regions into one subject to international agreements and treaties between two different states.[11]

The region of Marjayun more specifically suffered on several fronts. Politically, the gradual consolidation of the mandate state – from the institution of the mandate and the defeat of the Faysal government in Damascus to the decision to include Lake Hula in Palestine – raised the level of antagonism towards the French and British mandate authorities.[12] Apart from strong support for French rule amongst Maronite villages of the region, members of other Christian confessions, including Greek Orthodox, Melkite, and Protestant Christians, remained either ambivalent about or opposed to French rule. Among the mostly Christian inhabitants of the town of Judaydat Marjayun, capital of the sub-province, there was widespread opposition to French rule and support for an independent Arab state in Greater Syria. One of many local

10 Bazzi, Mustafa, *al-Takamul al-Iqtisadi bayna Jabal ʿAmil wa-Muhitihi al-ʿArabi, 1850–1950* [Economic Integration between Jabal ʿAmil and its Arab Surroundings, 1850–1950] (Beirut: Dar al-Mawasim, 2002), pp. 69–72.

11 See Abou-Hodeib, Toufoul, "Sanctity across the border: pilgrimage routes and state control in mandate Lebanon and Palestine", in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Middle East Mandates*, ed. Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 383–94.

12 Bazzi, Mustafa, *Jabal ʿAmil wa Tawabiʿuhu fi Shamal Filastin* (*Bahth fi Tatawwur al-Mulkiyya al-ʿIqariyya*) [Jabal ʿAmil and its Dependencies in North Palestine (An Investigation in the Development of Real Estate Ownership)] (Beirut: Dar al-Mawasim, 2002), pp. 319–22. See also Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes [hereafter CADN], Ministère des Affaires étrangères [hereafter MAE], Mandat, Syrie-Liban 1910, Conseiller administratif Liban-sud no. 388, "Bulletin d'information hebdomadaire", no. 36, 4–10 September 1936.

Arab governments in the region was formed in Marjayun in 1918 after the withdrawal of Ottoman forces, and in opposition to French designs on the region.[13]

The new political order also had economic ramifications. Souks in Marjayun towns, previously hubs of commercial activity between the Ottoman sub-provinces, were severed from their markets in Palestine. This was a long-drawn out and complicated process, given that the border ran through densely populated territory and, unlike the border between Syria and Lebanon, designated the border between French and British territory. First defined in broad terms by the Franco-British Agreement of December 1920, the border between Lebanon and Palestine was finally delineated in 1923 by what become known as the Paulet-Newcombe agreement.[14] Promulgated in 1926, the agreement had specific ramifications for Marjayun. The agreement placed the Hula Valley – known in the region as "the gold pit" (*jurat al-dhahab*) due to its fertility – on the British side of the border, resulting in complications over the years for the many owners who lived in Marjayun.[15] Although special provisions were made in the Paulet-Newcombe agreement for sowing and harvesting crops as well as grazing cattle, the border continued to be problematic, especially in periods of political unrest, and the act of separation itself raised protest among the inhabitants.[16]

Political tensions and economic peripheralization were compounded by the increase in the pace of emigration from the region. Lines of emigration from

13 Bassam, Muhammad, *Jabal ʿAmil: Bayna Surya al-Kubra wa-Lubnan al-Kabir* [Jabal ʿAmil: Between Greater Syria and Greater Lebanon] (Beirut: Dar al-Kawkab, 2011), pp. 63–8. See also al-Biqaʿi, Shafiq, "Ibl al-Saqi: qarya janubiyya ra'ida" [Ibl al-Saqi: a pioneering southern village], in *Min Daftar al-Dhikrayat al-Janubiyya* [From the Southern Memory Notebook], ed. The Cultural Council of South Lebanon (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani, 1984), pp. 166–72.

14 Maps and English and French texts of the agreement in Karam, Joseph, *al-Jinsiyya al-Lubnaniyya bayna al-Qanun wa-l-Waqiʿ* [Lebanese Nationality between Legislation and Reality] (Beirut: Matbaʿat Juzif al-Haj, 1993), pp. 186–204.

15 al-Rasi, Salam, *Li'alla tadiʿ* [So that it Doesn't Get Lost] (Beirut: Nawfal, 1987), pp. 99, 103–04. Although the Paulet-Newcombe agreement settled the status of the Hula Valley, the Lake and other areas of what would become north Palestine had been under the British Occupied Enemy Territorial Administration since Autumn 1918. Hof, Frederic C., *Galilee Divided: The Israel-Lebanon Frontier, 1916–1984* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 3–14. See also Biger, Gideon, *The Boundaries of Modern Palestine, 1840–1947* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 138–141.

16 See, for example, CADN, MAE, Mandat, Syrie-Liban 1910, Conseiller administratif Liban-sud no. 427, "Bulletin d'information hebdomadaire", no. 39, 25 September–1 October 1936.

Marjayun to the Americas had already been established since the 1890s.[17] But the dissolution of the Ottoman empire created a gap in authority in Marjayun that translated to a lack of security that persisted into the 1920s. Fueled by resistance to French rule, marauding armed gangs roaming the countryside also pillaged and looted civilian villages.[18] Compounded with the uncertain economic situation in the wake of the war, this led men and women to board ships on the first step towards their emigration to the Americas. The Great Depression hit Lebanon and Syria particularly hard in the region, until the economy started to recover in the mid-1930s.[19] New and old emigration established diasporic communities abroad and drew only more emigrants along the same path during the interwar years. By the end of the mandate period, there were well-established migrant communities originating from the Christian communities of Marjayun and settled primarily in the United States and Brazil, but also in Canada, Argentine, and Mexico.[20] Coming at a time of political and economic peripheralization, the flourishing of the diaspora in the Americas was at once a determining factor in shaping a public sphere that transcended the boundaries of home and the *mahjar* (diaspora).

Provincial Imagined Communities

The provincial press played a central role in articulating and making a cross-Atlantic public sphere visible. Geographic dislocations after World War I came at a time when the Arabic press was spreading beyond Beirut, Cairo, and other well-established centres of late Ottoman intellectual life. In the South, and thanks to the Irfan Press, the city of Sidon was emerging as a printing center, where the towns of South Lebanon could publish their periodicals.[21] The most significant of those, the modernist Shiʿa magazine

17 Khuri, Hanna Hardan, *al-Akhbar al-Shahiyya ʿan al-ʿIyal al-Marjayuniyya wa-l-Taymiyya* [The Delightful News of the Families of Marjayun and Wadi al-Taym] (Beirut: Zaman Publishers, n.d.), pp. 91, 96.

18 On the phenomenon of bandits in Southern Lebanon and Syria during the 1920s, see Chalabi, Tamara, *The Shiʾis of Jabal ʿAmil and the New Lebanon: Community and Nation-State, 1918–1943* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 71–2.

19 Schayegh, Cyrus, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 228.

20 Khuri's *al-Akhbar al-Shahiyya* traces the various family trees into the diaspora. This information is supported by various news pieces on the diaspora in *al-Qalam al-Sarih*.

21 Another major printing press in Sidon was *al-Makhlisiyya*, established by the Melkite order (Ruhbaniyya Makhlisiyya) and with more religious-oriented publications.

al-ʿIrfan (Cognition) (1909–96), started publishing in 1909, but smaller publications also started to appear after the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and into the interwar period.[22] This provincial press voiced a different set of concerns than the Beiruti press, many of them revolving around the two themes of emigration and the marginalization of the South.

In Marjayun, *al-Qalam al-Sarih* (The Frank Pen) was one of the leading periodicals, appearing from 1931 to 1975. Published and edited by Alfred Habib Abu Samra, *al-Qalam al-Sarih* was a bimonthly based in the town of Judaydat Marjayun. It was emblematic of the rise of the provincial press in the interwar period as well as the concomitant rise of provincial intellectual centers such as Judayda. Its proclaimed politics were Arabist – its masthead proudly stating its identity as an "Arab newspaper" – and for that it often fell into disfavor with the authorities resulting in censorship and, in one case, shutting down the newspaper for a year and a half.[23] For a period of eight months in 1934–35, *al-Qalam al-Sarih* joined forces with another major publication in Marjayun, *al-Marj* (The Meadow), owned by Adib Rahhal, publishing together under the name of *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni* (The Marjayuni Eagle).[24]

Al-Qalam al-Sarih's longevity turned it into an important platform for forming and articulating diasporic bonds with the region of Marjayun. From the beginning, the bimonthly exhibited a focused interest in the Marjayuni community in the Americas. Not only did the newspaper feature news of emigrants starting from its very first issue, but the masthead in its first year described it as: "A weekly forum for the diligent, regenerating youth at home and in the diaspora". In 1934, less than three years after it started appearing, the newspaper introduced the rubric "Diaspora Mail" (*Barid al-mahjar*). This, in addition to news from specific localities, contributed to forging a public sphere that, from its inception, tied the provinces to its overseas community. The introduction of a provincial public sphere in Lebanon coincided with the growth of the diasporic community more generally in Lebanon. But in the case of Marjayun, this also came at a time when tensions with French authorities and the political elite in Beirut were ripe. This manifested itself in criticisms of slow introduction of infrastructure in the provinces in the form of electricity, water, and

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22 For an overview of the periodicals published in South Lebanon during that period, see Fawwaz, Hikmat Kashli, *al-Shaykh Ahmad Rida wa-juhuduhu al-maʿjamiyya* [Shaykh Ahmad Rida and his Lexicographical Endeavors] (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1996), pp. 11–15.

23 See CADN, MAE, Mandat, Syrie-Liban 411, Cabinet Politique, 1926–1941, "Le Liban Sud et l'Unité syrienne: réunion de Taybé du 12 avril 1936", Sidon, 16 April 1936.

24 "Yadd *al-Marj* bi-yadd *al-Qalam*: ittihad al-jaridatayn al-Marjayuniyyatayn" [*al-Marj* and *al-Qalam* hand in hand: the union between the two Marjayuni newspapers], *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni*, 25 April 1934, pp. 1–2.

roads connecting the smaller villages to the main network. The peripheralization was expressed by several periodicals in the South and sometimes took on political form, explicitly describing the coming of French forces to Lebanon and Syria after World War I as an "occupation".[25]

The sense of general neglect of the South by the central government was compounded by the bleeding out of the young into the diaspora. *Al-Qalam al-Sarih* described this phenomenon as an "affliction" and a "disease" robbing the villages of their young.[26] Yet, at the same time, the diaspora fueled by the peripheralization of Marjayun also furthered the sense of alienation from the state. At the very moment that Marjayun found its role reduced by the introduction of borders, the formation of a diasporic community and the role the press played in making this community visible, meant that the peripheralization the region experienced was tied strongly to a cross-Atlantic sense of community. In other words, this confluence between the changing regional role Marjayun played and the growth of an overseas community led to the apparently paradoxical phenomenon of the globalization of the periphery.

Tracing the Community to the Americas

Early mentions of emigrants in *al-Qalam al-Sarih* already show the contours of the public sphere that starts taking shape in the early 1930s. For one thing, interest in emigrants translated into the emigrant community's interest in the region they left. On the occasion of the New Year, a correspondent in New York writes about the great gap *al-Qalam al-Sarih* fills in remedying ignorance of the homeland (*watan*) in the diaspora.[27] Here, the homeland is conflated with the region of Marjayun. The correspondent remained unnamed in this particular instance, but other letters from the diaspora echoed the sentiment.[28] For another thing, these mentions also begin to make clearer the extent to which the diaspora was spread not only in the United States, but also Brazil, Bolivia, and Jamaica, among other places. Inhabitants in these far-flung states

25 "Sayda" [Sidon], *Abu Dulama*, 26 April 1927, p. 1. See also "al-Hukuma wa-Lubnan al-Janubi" [The government and South Lebanon], *Abu Dulama*, [19] April 1927, p. 1.

26 See, for example, in *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni*, "Mushahadat musta'jala: al-Khirba" [Hurried observations: al-Khirba], 10 September 1934, p. 15; "Mushahadat musta'jala: fi Ibl al-Saqi" [Hurried observations: in Ibl al-Saqi], 10 October 1934, p. 24; "Mushahadat musta'jala: fi Hasbayya" [Hurried observations: in Hasbayya], 25 December 1934, p. 10.

27 "Munasiruna al-kiram" [Our honorable supporters], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 18 January 1933, p. 22.

28 For example, see in *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, "Nisr fi sama' al-Marj" [An eagle in the sky of Marj], 22 August 1931, p. 4; and "Munasiru *al-Qalam* kayfa yushajji'unahu" [How *al-Qalam's* supporters encourage it], 3 October 1932, p. 8.

subscribed to the newspaper, and some of them wrote short statements of support published regularly on its pages.[29]

In addition to reporting news of Marjayun to the diaspora, newspaper coverage also attempted to inform those who stayed about the diaspora's economic conditions, particular after the Great Depression. An article from March 1933 entitled "The Critical state of affairs in the American State of Michigan" discusses a financial crisis that led to the governor's decision to close down 530 banks in the state for eight days.[30] Although the report consisted of translations from the American press in New York, Detroit, and Washington, it also reflected a very local concern about the growing Marjayuni community in Dearborn, Michigan. Similarly, a report by an emigrant in Brazil under "Diaspora Mail" discussed measures taken by the Brazilian government to assuage the effects of economic depression on farmers.[31] Concern in the diaspora's economic wellbeing was particularly relevant given the central role emigrant remittances played not just in the economy of individuals and villages, but in the country's economy as a whole. Deficits during the French mandate period were generally compensated by foreign capital transfers and services as well as invisible exports, including remittances.[32]

At the same time that the interest in the economic conditions of the diaspora reflected a broader interest in how the community was faring abroad, it was also part of an anxiety over how the new state regime was impacting the region. Even more so, it was also part of the feeling that the government in Beirut was neglecting the South generally. From time to time, this even translated into an expression of doubt about whether in the new political order, the inhabitants of the South were considered as "Lebanese" as other regions of Lebanon. One editorial in *al-Qalam al-Sarih* cheekily proclaimed: "First

29 For example, "Munasiruna al-kiram" [Our honorable supporters], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 18 January 1933, pp. 22–3; "Barid al-mahjar: munasiru *al-Nisr* kayfa istaqbaluh?" [Diaspora Mail: how did *The Eagle's* supporters welcome it?], *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni*, 10 September 1934, pp. 17–19; "Barid al-mahjar: munasiru *al-Nisr* kayfa istaqbaluh?" [Diaspora Mail: how did *The Eagle's* supporters welcome it?], *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni*, 10 October 1934, pp. 8–9; "Barid al-mahjar: rasa'il al-muhajirin al-munasirin" [Diaspora Mail: letters from supportive emigrants], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 15 March 1938, pp. 9–10.

30 "Al-Hala al-khatira fi wilayat Michigan al-Amirkiyya" [The critical situation in the American State of Michigan], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 3 March 1933, p. 9.

31 "Barid al-mahjar: tala'i' infiraj al-azma al-Baraziliyya" [Diaspora Mail: The Brazilian crisis starts to ease off], *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni*, 5 June 1934, p. 9.

32 Gates, Carolyn, *Merchant Republic of Lebanon: Rise of an Open Economy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), p. 31.

convince us that we are one of you, then we will say 'Merci'".[33] Similarly, when a delegation from Marjayun visited the president of the Republic of Lebanon, Habib Basha al-Saʿd, to request keeping the provincial court in Marjayun, so that the inhabitants did not find themselves forced to resort to the courts in Syria, the president reportedly replied: "Go join Syria".[34]

Even if exaggerated and inflected by the newspaper's opposition to the French authorities, these anxieties were not unfounded. Into the late 1930s, the region still lacked a proper road network that reached the smaller villages.[35] There were no plans for supplying water and electricity to the area, nor was there any indication that the government planned to improve public education in a region where public secondary schools remained lacking.[36] Already in the 1930s, and in the absence of government investment in the South, certain aspects of the economy were bypassing the state a short time after its inception. Due to the economic peripheralization of Marjayun under the mandate, the region was becoming strongly interlinked with and dependent on its diaspora network not only as individuals, but, even more importantly for our purposes, as a community that was as much regional as it was global.

With the 1934 introduction of the "Diaspora Mail" section, the overseas network in the United States becomes even clearer. In addition to one of the oldest communities in New York, there were also first- and second-generation immigrants in Michigan, Illinois, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. The nature of those communities was multifaceted and non-hermetic. Different aspects of it came out in the press depending on the location and occasion of the news. In one instance, the financial interest in Michigan mentioned earlier transforms into an Arabist cause and demands for independence from France. Based on the press in Damascus, *al-Qalam al-Sarih* reports a letter sent by an emigrant from Marjayun, Najib Abu Samra, speaking for the Arab community in Michigan and advocating for Arab unity, more specifically with

33 "Hawla tijwalina fi Marjayun wa-Hasbayya" [Regarding our wanderings in Marjayun and Hasbayya], *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni*, 10 August 1934, pp. 1–2.

34 "Marjayun wa-Wadi al-Sar" [Marjayun and the Saar Valley], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 20 April 1935, p. 1.

35 A biweekly report in 1937 from the administration in South Lebanon states that with the exception of the Lebanon-Palestine route, all of South Lebanon's roads were in need of repairs. CADN, MAE, Mandat, Syrie-Liban 1933, Conseiller administratif Liban Sud, "Bulletin d'information hebdomadaire", no. 29, 15–21 July 1937.

36 CADN, MAE, Mandat, Syrie-Liban 1663, Services spéciaux de Tyre, "Bulletin d'information hebdomadaire", no. 25, 14–26 June 1933. Annex: "Compte-rendu d'une tournée de 10 jours dans le Djebel Amil".

Syria.[37] In the following issue, Abu Samra writes from Flint directly addressing *al-Qalam al-Sarih's* readership and urging its subscribers to pay their dues in order to maintain the newspaper's prominence as a forum for Arabist politics in Marjayun and its diaspora. Addressing the Marjayuni community in this instance only comes forth as a subset of it being Arab.[38]

On another occasion, the inauguration of the St Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn on 23 April 1939, the event highlights the Greek Orthodox component of the community, to which the newspaper's owner himself belonged. The event symbolized the coming of age of the Arabic-speaking Christian Orthodox community in New York and the founding of the first church in its native tongue, built in the Byzantine style. Here, the community comes forth as both Arab and Orthodox Christian.[39] But it also constitutes a demarcation of developments specific to the Syro-Lebanese immigrant community in New York, as it expanded beyond Canal Street and consolidated itself in Brooklyn's "Little Syria".[40]

On most occasions, however, the community emerged as specifically Marjayuni and only implicitly Christian. The latter aspect can be deduced from the names of members of the diaspora as well as the fact that many emigrant donations went to churches and Christian charitable organizations in Marjayun. Although non-Christian names often appeared in the newspaper, the focus remained mostly Christian, primarily the Greek Orthodox, Melkite, and Protestant confessions. At the same time that Christianity remained implicit, the community was explicitly anchored around specific villages and towns, hardly any of which was exclusively Christian. The pairing of names of individuals and places constituted the coordinates that delineated this geography. As this geography expanded and consolidated itself on the other side of the Atlantic in the interwar period, its relation to the home country articulated itself in two specific aspects: (1) the establishment of a cross-Atlantic sense of community and (2) its articulation in translocal terms in the late 1930s.

37 "Al-Jaliya al-ʿArabiyya fi Michigan tatlub al-wihda wa-l-siyada" [The Arab diaspora in Michigan demands unity and sovereignty], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 3 June 1933, pp. 8–9.

38 "Tahiyya wa-khitab min Abu Samra ila al-muhajirin" [A salute and an address from Abu Samra to the migrants], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 18 June 1933, p. 1.

39 "Barid al-mahjar: tadshin al-katidra'iyya al-urthudhuksiyya" [Diaspora Mail: the inauguration of the [Greek] Orthodox Cathedral], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 15 April 1939, p. 8. The first Arabic-speaking priest, Archimandrite Raphael Hawawini – a native of Damascus – had been appointed by the Russian Synod in 1895. "Minister for Syrians", *New York Times*, 15 September 1895. https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1895/09/15/102518492.pdf.

40 For a profile of the early Brooklyn community, see Miller, Lucius Hopkins, *A Study of the Syrian Population of Greater New York* ([New York?: n.p., 1904?]), pp. 12–18.

A Cross-Atlantic Geography

A cross-Atlantic geography spanning home and the diaspora underlined the creation of an imagined community where the Lebanese republic rarely appeared as an object of belonging. In the early years, both before and immediately after the start of the "Diaspora Mail" section in *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, the overseas geography of the diaspora remained ill-defined. One can see this in reports in the local news section on migrants returning for visits in Marjayun. While these reports underlined the links that emigrants continued to sustain with their home country through visits and return migrations, the specific places these migrants came from and returned to mattered less in these reports. Specific locales, towns, and villages were named in Marjayun, but the diaspora remained a large, opaque entity, inhabited by individual migrants, where the specific geography only occasionally went below the level of country.[41] This becomes especially interesting when contrasted with visits from closer places such as Palestine and Syria, where the geography was more specific, zooming in on specific cities and towns.[42] Although news of the diaspora was in reality supplemented with the circulation of word-of-mouth information, the representation of the diaspora as a community remained vague and inconsistent.

Similarly, in the early period of the "Diaspora Mail" section, the geography of the diaspora appeared inconsistently. Places where major events or events of well-known members of the community took place, mentioned the country and sometimes the state or county. But news of the Marjayuni community abroad often came grouped under categories of events, such as "betrothals" and "deaths", and often, no specific location was named. A recurrent exception to this were New York, Oklahoma, and Wichita (Kansas), which due to the presence of a considerable immigrant community from the town of Judaydat Marjayun often attracted specific attention. Otherwise, even the news provided in the "Diaspora Mail" section often lacked any mention of a specific location and was content with just providing names.[43]

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41 For example, "Ila Amirka" [To America], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 5 November 1937, p. 16; "Asʿad al-Kahhali" and "ʿAwd muhajirin" [Emigrants' return], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 18 October 1938, p. 15. Some exceptions in *al-Qalam al-Sarih* where the specific state in the United States is mentioned include "Nadhr maqbul" [May the vow be accepted] (Texas), 5 November 1937, p. 16; and "Arihiyyat muhajir" [An emigrant's munificence] (Oklahoma), 12 September 1938, p. 19.

42 For example, "Wa-min Haifa hadrat …" [And from Haifa the Honorable …] and "Wa-qadima min Bisan" [And coming from Bisan …], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 10 August 1935, p. 20; "Duyuf al-sayf" [The summer's guests], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 12 September 1938, p. 17.

43 For example, see the "Diaspora Mail" section in *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni*, 10 October 1934, p. 9, 10 December 1934, p. 17, and 25 January 1935, p. 7; and in *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 10 August 1935, p. 14, and 1 December 1935, p. 16.

A link between the diaspora and the hometown was articulated during this time by a twinning, whereby events in an ambiguous diaspora found their localization in specific towns and villages in Marjayun. Letters and telegrams played a visible and central role in mediating the experience in the diaspora to the region. News was first reported in brief, awaiting the actual letter from the diaspora for further details.[44] Similarly, letters from the diaspora were also used as a means of communication between members of the community who lived overseas and those who remained. The family of a deceased could, for example, send thanks on the pages of the newspaper to all those who sent telegrams or letters or attended the funeral.[45] These letters also help us form an idea of the reiteration of the diasporic community at home. When someone passed away or got married, local funerals or wedding masses were often arranged in the village of origin in addition to the diaspora.[46] This twinning of events underscored a transnational link that transcended the state. The connectedness between the two levels of community through death was exemplified more than anything in the recurrent use of variations on the phrase: condolences to his family at home and in the diaspora (*fi al-watan wa-l-mahjar*).[47] The formulaic phrase was deployed regardless of whether the deceased was abroad, in the region, or in the Lebanese capital.[48]

The twinning that appears in the commemoration of life events and in addressing the context of "home and the diaspora" as a repetitive, cohesive unit, overlaid the geographies of home and abroad for both those who remained in Marjayun as well as for those emigrants who read the newspaper. These overlapping geographies featured specific localities at home around which belonging was organized. But in their structure and their formulaic aspect, they also reiterated a community that spread out from those nodes. Although their everyday realities were radically different, an inhabitant of Marjayun and

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44 "Naʿa barid al-Wilayat al-Muttahida" [The United States mail announces a death], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 3 May 1933, p. 13.

45 See "Shukur al-Khuri" [The Khuris give thanks], *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni*, 15 May 1934, p. 16; "Afrah fi al-mahjar" [A wedding in the diaspora], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 18 October 1938, p. 15.

46 For example, "Akhbar al-jihhat: fi Ibl al-Saqi" [News of the regions: in Ibl al-Saqi], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 10 August 1935, p. 23; "Akhbar al-jiran: al-Khiyam" [News of the neighbors: al-Khiyam], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 12 September 1938, p. 19.

47 For example, "Shukur al-Khuri" [The Khuris give thanks] and "Akhbar al-jihhat: al-Khiyam" [News of the regions: al-Khiyam], *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni*, 15 May 1934, pp. 6, 16; "Akhbar al-jiran: al-Khiyam" [News of the neighbors: al-Khiyam] and "Akhbar al-jiran: al-Khirba" [News of the neighbors: al-Khirba], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 12 September 1938, pp. 19, 20; "Akhbar al-jiran: al-Khirba" [News of the neighbors: al-Khirba] and "Akhbar al-jiran: Ibl al-Saqi" [News of the neighbors: Ibl al-Saqi], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 18 October 1938, p. 17.

48 "Akhbar al-jiran: al-Kufayr" [News of the neighbors: al-Kufayr], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 18 October 1938, p. 17.

an inhabitant of the diaspora shared information about events that punctuated the lives of the individual members of the community. Significantly, those were events that marked entry into the community (birth and baptism), leaving the community (death), and connections within it (betrothals).

While these events constituted the reference points for keeping up with the constitution of the community regardless of which side of the Atlantic it was on, keeping track of mobility in and out of the hometowns concentrated primarily on visits from those who had settled outside of Lebanon, both regionally or overseas. Reported under the news of individual localities, this kind of mobility explicitly brought in a more religiously diverse aspect of emigration. Here, it wasn't only the Christian inhabitants who mattered, but also the Muslim (primarily Shiʿa) and Druze inhabitants of the region. This, in turn, highlighted the Marjayuni diaspora's extent outside the Americas, as a diasporic community in West Africa began to take form. This kind of mobility equally highlights regional migration, with reports on Christian and non-Christian inhabitants of the region going to work not only in the capital, Beirut, but also in Syria, Palestine, Transjordan, and Iraq.[49] Even more importantly, the geography spanning home and the disapora designated points of contact in Marjayun, and to some degree in the diaspora, that continued to constitute a community and bind it together at significant moments in individuals' lives.

Translocalizing Communities

Towards the end of the 1930s, a shift took place in the portrayal of the diaspora in the public sphere as the diaspora began to mobilize together with their hometowns and villages in Marjayun for the funding of infrastructural and educational projects. Through this process, the diaspora, previously at once enticing and terrifying, begins to take on a more distinct form. As individual donations start giving way to something at once more collective and more specific, the specificity of the diaspora also starts coming into relief – down to the town and city, in the case of the Americas. By that time, the Marjayuni diaspora had become large enough and networked enough to start organizing itself in the United States. The beginnings of the fundamental role the diaspora played for the development of the region in the 1940s and 1950s is here

49 See, for example, "al-Duktur Qutayt Bek" [Doctor Qutayt Bek], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 12 September 1938, p. 19 (Egypt); "Akhbar al-jiran" [News of the neighbors], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 18 October 1938, p. 17 (Sierra Leone, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan). For more on Lebanese emigration to West Africa see Arsan, Andrew, *Interlopers of Empire: the Lebanese Diaspora in Colonial French West Africa* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2014).

evident in skeletal form as donations begin to be collected abroad and sent to Marjayun for a specific goal. The press played an important role in mobilizing a trans-Atlantic community for the benefit of the hometown. *Al-Qalam al-Sarih* had been pointing to the poor state of road infrastructure and education in the South as a whole.[50] When little progress was achieved locally on those fronts, the newspaper contributed to reaching out to the diaspora for support and mirrored that support on its pages for its readers at home and abroad.

A major catalyst in the process of translocalization was the mobilization for electrifying Marjayun. An occurrence in 1933 had already attracted the attention of *al-Qalam al-Sarih* and its readers to the possibilities of harnessing the hydraulic power of the rivers running through the region. An emigrant returning from the United States to his hometown of Shibʿa had brought with him a hydroelectric generator, which he used to provide electric power to 60 homes. The newspaper alerted the governorate of South Lebanon to the importance of this event and the possibility it held for providing power to all homes in the region at low cost.[51] Following this occurrence, the idea of providing Marjayun with hydroelectric power from the Litani River gained traction, cost studies were carried out by an engineer, and the municipal council gave its approval to the project in principal and pending funding.[52] Two years later, and with no palpable signs of progress in the project, there were soon calls on emigrants to be involved. Emigrants' support for the infrastructure was seen as a natural extension of the help previously extended to the region on several occasions by individual members of the diaspora and as an expression of their readiness to serve the country (*al-balad*). Such appeals went directly from local officials, such as members of the municipal council or the provincial government, to notable members of the diaspora.[53]

The project had a false start in 1935, when an emigrant promised to lend the Municipality of Marjayun the amount needed on top of an aid package accumulated by the emigrant community in New York, only to withdraw when

50 Specifically when it came to education, there were 35 elementary state schools for the 360 villages of the South. According to the newspaper, in the sub-district of Marjayun specifically, the government supported its 48 villages and 22 farming communities with ten schools, five of which were religious, quranic schools. "Sittmayat alf lira sanawiyyan" [Six hundred thousand lira per year], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 3 February 1933, p. 1.

51 "Al-Kahraba' fi Shibʿa" [Electricity in Shibʿa], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 18 February 1933, p. 10.

52 "Al-Kahraba' fi Marjayun" [Electricity in Marjayun], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 18 April 1933, p. 17; "Mashruʿ al-kahraba' yatimm fi al-qarib" [The electricity project soon to be completed], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 3 October 1933, p. 11.

53 "Al-Mashariʿ al-ʿumraniyya fi Marjayun" [Development projects in Marjayun], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 6 May 1935, p. 9.

the central government refused to back up the loan.[54] A couple of years later, at the initiative of individuals in Marjayun and abroad, the idea of electrifying Marjayun picked up again, but this time with the focus on the widespread participation of the diaspora rather than the beneficence of one individual. Such an approach was seen as more inclusive, where "no one is deprived of the pride of serving their beloved homeland [*watan*]".[55] But it was also regarded as a way of providing initial capital for the project in a way that spared the region "the greed of colonialist foreign investment companies".[56] *Al-Qalam al-Sarih* mobilized vociferously for the project across geographies. In 1938–39, nearly every single issue of the newspaper dedicated place to news of electrification, often both under local news and "Diaspora Mail". The attempts bore no fruit before World War II, but in the various twists and turns in the story, one development is clear. As members of the diaspora started getting directly involved in the affairs of their towns back in Lebanon, the geography of the diaspora starts becoming clearer to those back home.

Both Alfred Abu Samra and Brooklyn-based Rizq Haddad, an emigrant from the town of Judayda, had been advocating for electrifying the town in a way that kept foreign capital out of the local infrastructure.[57] The collection of donations was based in New York and led by the Committee for Aiding Judayda, founded by Haddad and other immigrants from Marjayun.[58] Donations were initially limited to $1 to $5 in order to enable the largest number of immigrants to participate. Lists of contributors were published in newspapers in Marjayun

54 See in *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, "Mashruʿ al-kahrabaʾ wa-l-muhafiz" [The electricity project and the governor], 10 August 1935, p. 16; and "Ikhfaq mashruʿ jarr al-kahrabaʾ ila Marjayun" [The project of bringing electricity to Marjayun fails], 31 October 1935, pp. 1–2. According to *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, the government in Beirut would not loan or guarantee a loan to the municipal council of Judayda because it was already in debt.

55 "Barid al-mahjar: al-duktur Haddad yuhaddith *al-Qalam*" [Diaspora Mail: Doctor Haddad speaks to *al-Qalam*], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 14 February 1938, p. 9. See also, "Mashruʿ kahrabaʾ jadid li-Marjayun" [New electricity project for Marjayun], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 1 January 1938, pp. 12–13.

56 "Barid al-mahjar: tasharraf *al-Qalam al-Sarih*" [Diaspora Mail: *al-Qalam al-Sarih* is honored], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 31 March 1938, p. 13.

57 "Mashruʿ kahrabaʾ jadid li-Marjayun" [New electricity project for Marjayun], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 1 January 1938, pp. 12–13. Abu Samra expressed preference that the concession be granted to "a Lebanese Arab from Marjayun", and in the second instance to "a Lebanese Arab from outside of Marjayun". In case the two proved to be difficult, he suggested limiting foreign capital investment to 25 percent, with the remainder going to Marjayunis.

58 See "Barid al-mahjar: kitab wa-nida'" [Diaspora Mail: letter and call], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 28 April 1938, pp. 7–8. Also in the committee were Amin Samara (vice president), Fayyad Jubara (treasurer), ʿArif Jubara (secretary), and ʿArif Samara (clerk).

as well as in the United States.[59] Issue after issue of *al-Qalam al-Sarih* shows lists of emigrants, especially in the United States, who contributed to financing the project. The lists included proceeds from direct donations from various locations, as well as the proceeds from a bridge party and a lottery, both held in New York with the aim of raising funds for the electricity project.[60] In these lists, the diaspora in the United States takes on a much more defined form. Not only did the committee in New York take the lead in and oversee donations, the lists detail the extent of a Marjayuni community far-flung across the United States. Over 400 donations mapped out the extent of the geography, but also specified the relations between its family members. Although the majority of the donations were made in the name of the head of the family, some of them opted to make the family's individual members more visible by contributing donations in the names of each of its members. In one instance donations came from Kingston, Jamaica, and in another from the Detroit immigrants of Balat, a town close to Judaydat Marjayun. But otherwise, the picture is predominantly of the Christian, cross-confessional diaspora of the town of Judayda, strewn across the United States.[61]

Soon after, the diasporic community in Brazil followed suite, founding its own committee at a meeting at the Greek Orthodox cathedral at Sao Paolo, where donations were collected for the electricity project. These initial efforts did not bear any further fruit in the 1930s, despite prodding, sometimes bordering on castigation by the New York committee and *al-Qalam al-Sarih*. But the allure of one's name appearing in print as part of a diasporic community mobilizing for its hometown led the Sao Paolo committee to publish the names of individuals who promised to contribute once the collection process was initiated.[62] In addition, the Greek Orthodox Girls' Society in Judaydat

59 These are published under "Diaspora Mail" in the following issues of *al-Qalam al-Sarih*: 27 May 1938, pp. 11–12; 14 June 1938, pp. 8–10; 14 July 1938, pp. 6–7; 3 August 1938, p. 8; 13 August 1938, p. 10; 27 August 1938, p. 7; 26 September 1938, p. 10; 18 October 1938, pp. 7–8; 4 November 1938, pp. 8–9; 5 December 1938, p. 9; 2 February 1939, p. 10; and 16 June 1939, p. 9.

60 See in *al-Qalam al-Sarih* under "Diaspora Mail", "Hafla kubra fi New York li-mashruʿ kahrab'ina" [Big party in New York for our electricity project], 14 July 1938, pp. 9–10; "Al-Kahraba' fi New York" [Electricity in New York], 12 September 1938, p. 9; and "Yanasib al-kahraba'" [Electricity lottery], 16 June 1939, p. 10.

61 Donations from Jamaica and Balat under "Barid al-mahjar: al-tabarruʿat li-mashruʿ al-kahraba'" [Diaspora Mail: donations for the electricity project], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 16 June 1939, p. 9.

62 See in *al-Qalam al-Sarih* under "Diaspora Mail", "al-Mahjar al-barazili yatabarraʿ" [The Brazilian diaspora donates], 14 June 1938, pp. 9–10; "Kahraba'una fi al-Barazil" [Our electricity in Brazil], 12 September 1938, p. 9; "Kahraba'una fi New York" [Our electricity in

Marjayun also raised funds locally through a play and the sale of homemade handkerchiefs, sending the proceeds to the committee in New York. Further underscoring the centrality of the committee in New York to the process, *al-Qalam al-Sarih's* article on the turnout at the play is described as "support" for the emigrants.[63]

During that same period, the rubric "Diaspora Mail" also started taking on a different structure. Previously inconsistent in its portrayal of the geography of the diaspora, starting 1938, news of the diaspora was presented under specific towns and cities. Although news had occasionally appeared under specific localities earlier, the newspaper became more consistent in its presentation of diaspora news geographically. Whereas in Brazil, news came in the form of "letters" from Sao Paolo, Araçatuba, and Pirajuí, the diaspora in the United States dotted the map with Oklahoma City, Wichita (KS), Detroit and Flint (MI), San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston, Charleston (SC), Brooklyn, Beckley (WV), and Youngstown (OH), among others. If the specificity in the case of the United States ranged from the borough to the state, depending on the size of the diasporic community as well as the editor's private connections, the geography of diasporic existence was considerably more textured than just a few years earlier.

The diaspora acquired a face and a geography also through smaller endeavours that bound locality to locality. In January 1939, *al-Qalam al-Sarih* published a letter of thanks from the Greek Melkite bishopric for donations received from the diaspora for the renovation of St Peter Church in the town of Judaydat Marjayun. Here, the geography is quite specific: "We would like to thank [...] the members of the Marjayuni diasporic community in Oklahoma and its surroundings [...]".[64] The ecumenical nature of the community also comes forth in the letter, revealing that clergy and members of the St Elias Greek Orthodox Church in Oklahoma City were instrumental in collecting those donations. Going beyond confessional differences, the nature of the

New York] and "Kahraba'una fi al-Barazil" [Our electricity in Brazil], 29 April 1939, p. 9; "Hawl mashruʿ al-kahraba'" [About the electricity project], 14 July 1939, p. 9.

63 See in *al-Qalam al-Sarih* "Risala muhimma min New York bi-sadad mashruʿ al-kahraba'" [An important letter from New York regarding the electricity project], 13 August 1938, pp. 14–15; "al-Marjayuniyyun fi al-watan yatazaharun lil-mughtaribin" [Marjayunis at home support the emigrants], 3 August 1938, pp. 18–19; "Fi sabil al-kahraba'" [For the sake of electricity], 18 October 1938, p. 14; "Barid al-mahjar: al-iktitab li-mashruʿ al-kahraba'" [Diaspora Mail: contribution to the electricity project], 17 November 1938, p. 9; and "Barid al-mahjar: ila lajnat al-kahraba'" [Diaspora Mail: to the electricity committee], 5 December 1938, p. 9.

64 "Barid al-mahjar: al-tabarruʿat li kanisat al-qiddis Butrus" [Diaspora Mail: donations to the Church of St. Peter], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 15 January 1939, p. 11.

support acquires more of a translocal rather than confessional character, by linking Judaydat Marjayun with its diaspora in Oklahoma City.

Translocal ties were, nevertheless, also complicated by the spirit of competition that prevailed between the different confessions in the region of Marjayun. Around the same time as the diaspora successfully mobilized to renovate St Peter's Church, it also played a similar role in supporting the building of the Greek Orthodox school in al-Khirba. A small village about four kilometres from the Lebanese-Palestinian border, al-Khirba harboured three schools each catering to one of its three confessions: Greek Orthodox, Melkite, and Protestant. That the schools were attended by 40, 20, and 20 pupils respectively was indicative of the degree of competition and jealously guarded institutions amongst the village's Christians. Its size notwithstanding, al-Khirba had around 400 emigrants at the time – primarily in the United States, but also in Brazil, Argentina, and Bolivia.[65] The completion of the construction of a Greek Orthodox church and school was celebrated on the pages of *al-Qalam al-Sarih* in 1939 with a collage of photographs featuring the parish priest, the church, the school, and St George, the patron saint of the latter two.[66] The long caption also highlighted the village's Bolivian diaspora's contribution towards completing the construction of the school. A notable emigrant by the name of Khalil al-Humsi collected donations from the diaspora in that country and sent them to the priest parish, also of the Humsi family. Detailing the amount (in Bolivian pounds) donated by the 15 benefactors, the information presented a hierarchy of success in the diaspora, organizing the names in decreasing order of donations and starting with Khalil al-Humsi himself.

Through these collective endeavours, what started as a vaguely transnational public sphere became more clearly articulated in its translocal connections in the late 1930s. Initial attempts at introducing electric power in the 1930s eventually came to nothing. The funds were not secured before World War II, and with the outbreak of the war, communications between Marjayun and its diaspora became more difficult, with the "Diaspora Mail" section disappearing altogether from the newspaper during the war. But the possibility of emigrant involvement in the region was already sown, together with connections between individual localities. Before the outbreak of World War II, the geography of the diasporic community began to impose itself precisely when it acted as a community for the benefit of the hometown. As the diaspora began to establish itself as a community, its geography became more pronounced. In contrast to individual donations, which were often reduced to a

65 "Mushahadat mustaʿjala: al-Khirba" [Hurried observations: al-Khirba], *al-Nisr al-Marjayuni*, 10 September 1934, p. 15.

66 "Al-Rasm aʿlah ..." [The photograph above ...], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 15 April 1939, p. 9.

donation from an "emigrant", the diaspora was no longer a vague entity, but one populated with local places, names, and events. Further underlining the translocal form those connections took during that period, the effort to electrify Marjayun transformed during the process of collecting funds from being a regional project at its inception, drawing on the hydraulic power of the region's rivers, eventually narrowing down to a local diesel generator, supplying only the town of Judayda with electricity.[67]

The 1930s: A Prelude to Independence

The specificity that the diaspora took on at the end of the 1930s became even more pronounced in the 1940s. Despite their initial failures, translocal mobilizations for electricity eventually bore fruit after the end of World War II and the end of French mandate rule over Lebanon. Ironically, just at the time that Lebanon gained its independence, the diaspora began to play an even larger role in helping provide services that the state was unwilling or unable to provide. When the region was finally electrified in the 1950s, it was through the mobilization of the diaspora and its cooperation with local authorities, and not through the centralizing efforts of the state.[68] What James C. Scott says about the centralizing power of electricity is relevant here in that by bypassing the state, its centralizing power was precisely unsettled by regional identity and translocal connections.[69] Significantly, appeals for funds were not directed at the Lebaneseness of those emigrants and the service they would be doing their country. For example, the governor of Marjayun – also mayor of

67 "Muhandisu Sharikat al-Tapline yurakkibun muturat al-kahraba' majjanan" [Tapline Company engineers install electricity generators for free], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 23 March 1950, p. 2. The Litani River was eventually harnessed for hydroelectric power with the help of a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Led by the Office National du Litani, an autonomous agency formed by a government decree in 1954, the project started providing the grid with power in the early 1960s, but turned out to be costlier than originally conceived and took far longer than anticipated to complete. For more, see Kardahji, Nick Chafic, "A Deal with the Devil: The Political Economy of Lebanon, 1943–75", Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2015, pp. 65–97.

68 "Marjayun tuqaddim milyon lira lil-'umran" [Marjayun offers a million lira to development], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 25 October 1951, p. 1; "Kahraba' Ibl al-Saqi wa-l-Kufayr" [The electricity of Ibl al-Saqi and al-Kufayr], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 22 December 1951, p. 4.

69 See Scott, James C., *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 166–7.

Judayda – sought support from the Marjayun Council in New York, appealing to the "Arab chivalry" of emigrants.[70]

Similarly, the diaspora was closely involved in the establishment of a new school in Judayda in 1946, the year the last of the French forces left the country. Bringing together the Greek Orthodox and Protestant schools of the town, it was meant to serve Judayda and its surroundings, and, with the English language playing a central role in its curriculum, later became an important conduit to higher education at the American University of Beirut and elsewhere. Significantly, when Fadlo Hourani, a Marjayuni resident of Manchester, was honoured by the district of Marjayun for his service to the region and celebrated for receiving the Lebanese presidential medal, Metropolitan Theodosius, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Archbishop of Tyre and Sidon and later Patriarch of Antioch, lauded him during the ceremony not as a Lebanese patriot, but as "Marjayuni citizen" and an "Arab Ghassanid", the latter in reference to the family's alleged Christian Bedouin origin.[71]

The 1930s and the economic and political peripheralization of the South contributed to nourishing a communal identity that spanned the regional and the global. The interwar period was thus instrumental in laying the foundations of a translocal network, where the diaspora compensated for deficient state investment in a region peripheralized by the creation of Lebanon. The local press played an instrumental role in shaping a public sphere where this community found expression and its members on both sides of the migration divide found each other, not as individuals, but as a translocal community. A closer look at the 1930s is important to understand how the project of a nation was complicated by processes of peripheralization and emigration at its point of inception, and how those conditions engendered the active building of translocal connections. As we have seen, mobility and migration by themselves were not sufficient for generating these connections. It took rather specific actors across geographies to bring into relief interconnectedness across the translocal scale over other scales.

70 "Al-Jaliya al-Marjayuniyya fi Amirka tuhaqqiq mashruʿayn muhimmayn li-Marjayun" [The Marjayun diaspora in America achieves two important projects for Marjayun], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 15 August 1946, p. 1. See also "Mashruʿ tanwir Marjayun min al-Litani" [The project of electrifying Marjayun from the Litani [River]], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 21 August 1944, p. 2.

71 "Muthahara raʾiʿa li-mughtaribi Marjayun bi-shakhs al-Hourani" [Wonderful support to Marjayun's emigrants in the person of Hourani], *al-Qalam al-Sarih*, 11 November 1946, p. 1. Many families in Marjayun trace their origins back to Christian Bedouins originating from Yemen and settling in the Hawran region at some point, before emigrating to Marjayun in the early seventeenth century. See Khuri, *al-Akhbar al-Shahiyya*, pp. 45–8, 61–3.

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