# The First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean

edited by Olaf Farschid
Manfred Kropp
Stephan Dähne



Orient-Institut Beirut

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This conference, organised by the German Institute for Oriental Studies, Beirut, the German Institute for Historical Studies (DHI), Rome, and the Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes (IFEA), Istanbul, set out to examine the political, social and cultural effects of the First World War in terms of how it is remembered as an historical event. Panel sessions inquired into the cultural forms of memory found in Italy, Greece, modern Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. With respect to variations within and among these countries, it was assumed that different cultures of memory could be discussed as variable modes of understanding historical change. Conference presentations pursued an understanding of the effects these differences in memory have upon national identity and state formation.

The main discussion aimed at determining the significance of the First World War in national cultural memory. How was the war remembered? What was its influence upon the political identity and cultural conception of self in the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean in general and in the countries of the Near East in particular? Was it thought of as a 'World War' or rather as a distant war in which local actors were not directly involved? Or was it seen as a local conflict, with its confrontations constituting a preliminary stage of rebellion toward the realisation of national independence?

To examine the structural patterns of the collective memory of war, two panels were set up to compare and contrast how various national groups remembered the effects of the First World War.

The first, called "The political and social impact of the First World War" dealt with collective memories and changing forms of self-understanding under the impact of the war; national and social group discourses of the First World War; and the social effects.

The second, called "Symbolic processing of the First World War" dealt with images, histories and narratives of the war as reflected in war monuments, historiography, autobiographies and literature; war memories of Ottoman Army officers; ideological reasoning for war participation; and the creation of national myths.

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# Conference on "The First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean", Beirut, 27th April to 1st May, 2001

The conference, organised by the German Institute for Oriental Studies in Beirut (OIB) in cooperation with the German Historical Institute (DHI) in Rome and the French Institute of Anatolian Studies (IFEA) in Istanbul, was attended by 41 scholars from 11 countries. The scientific preparation and the organisation of the meeting generously sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG) was carried out by Olaf Farschid (OIB) who in the last weeks before the conference received the efficient support of a team of external collaborators: Judith Pies, Gudrun Schneider-Farschid, Gregor Maguth and Christian Meier.

The organisation and the arrangement of the conference, kindly supported by the German embassy and by the German Goethe Institute, met with a very positive response from those who participated and attended. In view of the large scale of this international meeting the structural ordering of panels along concrete questions proved to be successful while the topics enumerated were commended by the conference speakers as stimulating for their own research. In addition, the precise structuring of the topics ensured the very intense progression of the conference as well as lively participation in the discussions that followed the presentation of papers. Another positive aspect consisted in the selection of speakers, not only internationally well-known scholars but also younger colleagues – a composition which was of special advantage to the discussions.

The evening inauguration of the conference was attended by 200 guests, and represented a highlight of public impact for the Orient-Institut Beirut. During the whole period of the conference the audience amounted to 50 persons on average; together with the 41 panellists, this number of roughly 100 participants can be considered a very good result by the standards of scientific meetings in the region. The fact that the conference attracted great attention in the Lebanese capital was also mirrored by the response of the media: the major Lebanese newspapers (al-Nahar, al-Safir, L'Orient le Jour, the Daily Star) and the channel Future Television were regularly present at the meeting and reported in detail on its lectures and discussions. The conference did extend and improve the cooperation of the Orient-Institut with the participating Beirut universities (Saint Joseph University, Lebanese American University, Lebanese University, Haigazian University) and also with the institutes and embassies represented.

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With regard to the task of editing, special thanks are given to Anne Eberhard, Ruth Hartmann and Sara Binay. Without their continuous engagement, the long-term work of editing the proceedings would never have led to a successful publication of this anthology.

The editors

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# Welcome address

*Manfred Kropp (Orient-Institut Beirut)*

Great events have to do with truth and as such they themselves force the truth open, impose it upon us by their essence.

Thus, one could consider leaving aside any introductory ritual or statement and simply letting this conference get under way, declaring it open with a minimum of words.

Nevertheless, as the duty to perform this task is – according to well-established rules – incumbent on me, I may ask your pardon for an admittedly very personal opening statement. It could well be my first and last spoken contribution to the hopefully vivid scientific exchanges and discussions of the coming days. In fact those who know me would sooner expect lengthy but engaged expositions on the Aramaic substratum in pre-Islamic Arabian inscriptions than on the First World War.

Nevertheless, I may truthfully confirm that the topic of the meeting you have been drawn to in such impressive numbers is my child, was born in my mind. And for that I rightly owe you an explanation.

It certainly has to do with my coming to Beirut and to the German Institute for Oriental Studies in October 1999 – perhaps as surprising as my interest in the First World War. But it has to do with literature and mysticism – and, naturally, with the association of thoughts and sentiments, sometimes far-fetched as it may seem – in the sense that human thought is an "eternal, endless, but not always golden braid".

In those first days and weeks in Lebanon I had to define myself and my position in life afresh after a voluntary but nevertheless complicated change. This was done by looking into the treasures of human experience and its masterly expressions in poetry and mysticism.

It was finally one of the magnificent poems in the English language which nearest matched and expressed my state of mind and soul in those days: William Butler Yeats's "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death", written in 1919.

I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;

My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,

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No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave the happier than before.
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight.

Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.

(1919)

If one had to organize a conference on the memory of the First World War among the peoples of Europe, W. B. Yeats and his poem would not fail to have a prominent place.

The second link to the First World War came through mysticism – a further source of stabilization for a shaken soul; one could add Livy's statement that the study of history is the best medicine for a sick mind – perhaps in the coming days we will hear of some evidence for its healing power.

Studying again Dionysios Areopagita, I read the stimulating study by Hugo Ball on Byzantine mysticism in general and Areopagita in particular. Now, I do not cite Hugo Ball, one of the founders of Dadaism, because he comes from my region in Southern Germany and I am a bearer of some family *isnads* and very personal *hadits* about him. No, but in 1919 he wrote Critique of the German Intelligentsia – published in Switzerland after long vicissitudes – an outcry of a wounded soul against the material and intellectual atrocities of war and policy in his time. This work, too, would certainly figure as prominent testimony in a memorial conference on the Great War in Europe.

Don't be afraid: I would never dare to present poems or studies about mysticism from my own pen in public. The result of these endeavours was simply the idea for a conference, not surprising when the adept has to act as the director of a research institute at the same time.

To conclude briefly: already in the preconceived atmosphere, when thinking about a possible topic for a conference which had to do with a central theme for the region and should possibly combine historical and contemporary issues, it became evident that the same war redesigned the political map of the Eastern Mediterranean with effects which have lasted to the present day. From that it was only a single and logical step to ask what has been left of this great and decisive event in the collective and individual memory of the different nations and communities in this region.

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An eye-witness, scholars and hommes des lettres from an impressive number of nations have answered the appeal of three institutions: DHI, IFEA and OI in Beirut and Istanbul and have come to answer this question. Thanks to all of them and to all of you, honoured and distinguished audience and guests, and to the great honour and pleasure of all who have participated in the preparations for the Congress.

I declare the conference open.

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# The First World War as a Factor of Political and Social Transformation

*Olaf Farschid (Berlin)*

## *1. The First World War as an Event in International Politics*

It was George F. Kennan who characterised the First World War – known in England, France and Italy as 'the Great War' – as "the great seminal catastrophe of this century" (*Urkatastrophe*). Although Kennan was assessing the war's significance world-wide and not specifically in the Eastern Mediterranean, his words serve to remind us that the First World War represented a novel phenomenon. For the first time, a single conflict involved all the Great Powers, foreign nationals led the war effort – largely by proxy – in countries other than their own and, most importantly, the weapons employed were of deadly efficiency.[1]

Characteristic of this first global and industrial war were the mass murders resulting from the use of mechanical weapons, such as tanks, submarines, tactical aircraft and automatic guns, and the introduction of poison gas.[2] The inferno of Verdun, that battle of attrition on the Western Front, came to be the pre-eminent symbol of the war's massacres. The battles and martial action – in the words of Ernst Jünger, a "steel thunder-storm (*Stahlgewitter*)" – claimed 1.6 million lives in France, 800,000 in Great Britain and 1.8 million in Germany. Even the United States, which entered the war at a relatively late date, in 1917, still lost 115,000 soldiers. Moreover, blockades and starvation were political strategies often applied to civilian populations during the conflict.[3]

The duration and the intensity of the war – determinant features of its new deadliness – finally resulted in mutual demands for the 'total victory' or 'total defeat' of the powers involved, which, from a certain point onward, gained their own momentum. This policy not only resulted in the military defeats of Germany and Austria-Hungary, it was also indirectly responsible for the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the rise of the United States to Great Power status. Although on the side of the victors, Japan and Italy subsequently fell into serious political crises that laid the groundwork for military dictatorship in the

---

1 Eric Hobsbawm, *Das Zeitalter der Extreme. Weltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, München 1998, 39f.

2 Gunther Mai, „'Verteidigungskrieg' und 'Volksgemeinschaft'- Staatliche Selbstbehauptung, nationale Solidarität und soziale Befreiung in Deutschland in der Zeit des Ersten Weltkrieges (1900-1925)", in: *Der Erste Weltkrieg. Wirkung, Wahrnehmung, Analyse*, ed. Wolfgang Michalka, München 1994, 583-602, here 586; Jay Winter, Blaine Baggett, *14-18. La grande guerre*, Paris 1998, 118.

3 Hobsbawm, *Zeitalter der Extreme*, 42-6; Winter/Baggett, *La grande guerre*, 321ff.

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former and for the career of Benito Mussolini in the latter. And while France and Great Britain, also victorious, managed to keep their democratic structures intact, both nations found themselves economically decimated once the war was over.[4]

Furthermore, the First World War brought about a new partition of Europe into nation-states that were partly established on an ethnic and linguistic basis, a measure that was legitimised by the right of self-determination, as formulated by US President Woodrow Wilson.[5] In addition to this new states, such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, were created that had neither historical precedents nor a logical raison d'être. Such creations may be interpreted as the constructs of a nationalistic ideology that favours the power of common ethnicity (Southern Slavs and Western Slavs) and does not favour the existence of petty national states. Similar consequences may also be recalled elsewhere: the restoration of Poland, the independence of Finland, the foundation of the Baltic states and, last but not least, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.[6]

The Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East served as an arena for struggles over a new distribution of territories, for the conquest of spheres of influence and colonies. It was here that the expansionist interests of all of the Great Powers met and crossed paths. In this arena, the new distribution followed the conventional lines of imperialist policy; it turned out to be particularly inconsiderate of the demands and interests of local populations.[7]

By 1914, France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia had already come to terms on the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and its division into regions ruled by them. The Sykes-Picot Agreement of May 1916, which Russia joined the following year, established five zones in the territory of Greater Syria: a French protectorate, a British protectorate, a zone of direct rule for France (Lebanon and northern Syria), a zone of direct rule for Great Britain (lower Mesopotamia) and an internationalised zone (southern Palestine). Had this plan been realised in full, the Ottoman Empire would have become a 'mutilated Turkey' – namely, the inland areas of Anatolia divested of any links to the port cities of the coast. In addition, this plan would only have led to a loose Arab confederation – and not a Great Arab state – under European control, with no access to the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers or to the Mediterranean Sea.[8]

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4 Hobsbawm, *Zeitalter der Extreme*, 47-49; Eberhard Jäckel, *Das deutsche Jahrhundert: eine historische Bilanz*, Stuttgart 1996, 71f.

5 Hans-Jürgen Schröder, „Demokratie und Hegemonie. Woodrow Wilsons Konzept einer Neuen Weltordnung", in: *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 159-177, here 172-174; Hobsbawm, *Zeitalter der Extreme*, 49f.

6 Hobsbawm, *Zeitalter der Extreme*, 52.

7 Ibid., 50-53.

8 Jean Ducruet, *Les Capitaux européens au Proche-Orient*, Paris 1964, 225f.

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## 2. *The Importance of Wars as Factors in Political, Social and Cultural Transformation*

Time and again scholarship – history, sociology and political science – has underlined the importance of 'big events', such as wars. Wars constitute historical turning points, which necessarily raise the question of whether there had been possible alternatives or crucial moments that could have altered the course of history.[9] Without a doubt, wars function as instruments of change: they may either trigger social and cultural processes of transformation or accelerate processes already in existence. Hence, it is necessary to know what kinds of processes were in motion before the outbreak of war. For example, the First World War in Europe was embedded in rapid social, cultural and political changes that took place between 1900 and 1925. At the heart of these transformations was the development of an industrial urban mass society through processes encompassing urbanisation, interior migration and social dismemberment; social and psychological uncertainty or insecurity; and cultural critiques and the search for new meaning in life.[10]

While the significance of war for developments in economics, politics, ideologies, cultures and societies is the subject of general agreement, the relationship between war and modernisation poses a more complex question. According to some authors, this relationship may only be grasped by assuming and studying the numerous effects and repercussions of war – such as war and revolution, war and the emergence of fascism, war and the rise of modernity, and the internal character of modernisation through the experience of war and civil war.[11]

There is no question of the impact of war upon the self-understanding of states and upon their domestic and foreign policies. Moreover, the permanent involvement of states in warlike activities may become an important dimension for processes of rationalisation and cultural control. More often than not, they presented themselves as mere 'power states', i.e. states that engage in power politics.[12] The First World War, in particular, revealed the relationship between "the phenomenon of a war machinery that technologically becomes more and more independent, and the paradox of a state that inwardly becomes more dependent upon society and outwardly increases its behaviour as a power state."[13]

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9 Heinrich August Winkler, „Einleitung", in: *Wendepunkte deutscher Geschichte: 1848 - 1990*, eds. Carola Stern, Heinrich August Winkler, Frankfurt/M. 1994, 11.

10 Hans Joas, „Die Modernität des Krieges: Die Modernisierungstheorie und das Problem der Gewalt", in: *Leviathan* 24 (1996), 13-27, here 26; Mai, „'Verteidigungskrieg' und 'Volksgemeinschaft'", 583f.

11 Joas, „Die Modernität des Krieges", 16-25.

12 Hans Joas, „Kriegsideologien. Der Erste Weltkrieg im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Sozialwissenschaften", in: *Leviathan* 23 (1995), 336-350, here 339.

13 Ibid., 349.

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In the First World War, the close link between war and modern nationalism is even more clearly visible. It is manifest in features common to the warring parties – in the growing independence of the organising forms from the cultures of individual countries and in the structural homogeneity of the contesting ideologies. Two consequences resulted from this: first, a far-reaching egalitarianism of the peoples' cultural peculiarities and, second, a *rapprochement* between states due to their competition in military affairs. This had the effect of making specific state nationalisms degenerate into a sheer ideology of the power state.[14]

Another characteristic of war is its impact upon definitions of nation and community. This is quite evident, for example, in the different explanations of the term 'people's community' (*Volksgemeinschaft*) used in Germany during the First World War. Because all warring parties applied various friend-and-foe patterns, scholarly literature agrees with the assertion that national identities were strengthened through the utilisation of national values and through solidarity against the enemy. In other words, identity was discovered by means of segregation from the 'other'.[15]

Any assessment of war as struggle depends heavily on the theory and interpretation used, the concepts behind such analytical frameworks being extremely heterogeneous. I will mention three such concepts here. One defines international relations as a struggle for survival carried out by ethnic individualities striving for development. In this case, any victory falls to 'the people'. Another concept assumes that war has a revitalising effect and is related to the idea that violence is always regenerative, under both wartime and peacetime conditions. Examples of this approach can be found in the growing self-awareness, by means of violence, of oppressed people or the American topos of 'the fight against wilderness and savage people'. Finally, many American philosophers and social scientists have interpreted the First World War as a battle between democracy and autocracy, and have consequently called for the democratisation of autocratic states.[16]

The social effects of war are no less important – as evinced by the relationship between war and famine, for example. This relationship, closely related to the slogan of 'peace and bread', demands answers to the following questions. What is the ultimate effect of the suffering and misery experienced during starvation blockades used as a tool of warfare? Does this mechanism strengthen the national will to hold out?[17]

Many studies also deal with the cultural effects of the First World War. In this context, war is considered to represent a rupture with – or an opportunity to break away from – the negative tendencies of modern culture. Such a view is

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14 Ibid., 348-50.
15 Mai, „'Verteidigungskrieg' und 'Volksgemeinschaft'", 590-594.
16 Joas, „Kriegsideologien", 340; 344-348.
17 Mai, „'Verteidigungskrieg' und 'Volksgemeinschaft'", 589.

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based upon the assumption that wartime behaviour might provide perspectives upon the future and that 'a full consciousness of time' (*echte Zeitlichkeit*) might be regained. Given crises concerning the meaning of life in most of the warring states, the First World War offered an opportunity to escape from cultural malaise. In Germany, for example, people looked for system security, self-assurance and self-confidence.[18]

## 3. *The Impact of the First World War upon the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean*

The 'event' of the First World War was not merely a crucial factor for social transformation in the Eastern Mediterranean, encouraging the dissolution of traditional communal ties and the development of new forms of attachment. Rather, the war had multiple effects upon the countries of the region. Politically, it accelerated the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of processes of nation-building in Turkey and the Arab East. Geographically, new borders came into being, drawn along the lines of imperialist ambitions and schemes. Finally, in most of the region, the war caused changes in 'old' identities and the development of 'new' ones.

In order to evaluate the war's impact upon the countries of the Levant, consideration must be given to the interplay among a variety of factors, particularly the following:

(i) the imperial interests and actions of the colonial Powers or their wartime enemies
(ii) the interests and actions of the weakened Ottoman Empire
(iii) the interests and reactions of the young Arab national movements
(iv) the events and course of the war, as well as its duration and intensity
(v) the events that occurred behind the scenes, such as the exodus of Serbs from the Balkans in 1915 or the persecutions, expulsions and systematic efforts to exterminate the Armenians in Anatolia in 1915.

What were the colonial ambitions of the Great Powers at the time? British interests focused upon the Sudan and Egypt, where the outbreak of the First World War offered Britain the opportunity to sanction her *de facto* rule through legal means (*de jure*). Thus, Egypt was forced to terminate all relations with the Central Powers (i.e. the Dual Alliance of Germany and Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria) immediately after war began and to concede to Britain all of the rights of a warring power on Egyptian territory. France was eager to consolidate her colonial position in the Maghreb, in Syria and Lebanon, and in the

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[18] Joas, „Kriegsideologien", 340; Mai, „'Verteidigungskrieg' und 'Volksgemeinschaft'", 583.

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Fertile Crescent, while Italy aimed to occupy Libya and to establish military bases near the Red Sea and in Asia Minor. Germany's excessive war ambitions were directed toward the conquest of southern and south-eastern Europe, as well as Iran, South Asia and the Ottoman Empire, with Constantinople serving as a way station for the realisation of the Berlin-Baghdad Plan. Germany intended to effect this project through the gradual occupation of all Turkish territory, either as a protectorate or by political treaty. Moreover, Germany aimed at taking possession of Egypt as colony.[19]

Germany's policy in the Orient was further distinguished by several attempts to provoke local uprisings against the British and the French. In the Sudan, for example, Germany tried to incite anti-British revolts by using religion to create a negative image of the enemy and by preparing *fatwa*s calling for *jihad* against foreign occupation. However, the only objective of this policy was to weaken British and French rule; it was not meant to help their colonies achieve independence.[20] This same aim is evident when we look at Germany's strict policy against movements in favour of Arab nationalism and decentralisation (*lamarkaziyya*) that arose in Syria and in the Arabian Peninsula. As early as in 1915 and later, all German plans to provoke colonial rebellions failed because of the enemy's superiority and their own military inadequacy and deficient organisation. For the same reasons, German endeavours to conquer the Suez Canal were also unsuccessful.[21]

Other characteristics of German policy were the obligatory discretion concerning the Armenian genocide and, more generally, political double standards. Thus, while Germany promoted rebellious agitation under the banner of Pan-Islamism in areas occupied by the British, Turkish arbitrary rule in the name of the same ideology was ignored or even tolerated.[22]

### *The Course of the War and Its Political Effects*

Military conflicts between the Entente powers (England, France, Russia and, later, the US) and the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary, and later Bulgaria) started in 1914 after the Ottoman Empire entered the war on the side of the latter. Immediately afterwards, fighting erupted upon different fronts: the Suez Canal, Mesopotamia, Iran, the Caucasus and the Dardanelles.

Before the year was over, martial law was imposed in Syria and Lebanon as the Ottoman naval minister, Jamal Pasha, took over supreme command of the

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19 Lothar Rathmann, ed., *Geschichte der Araber*, vol. II, Berlin 1975, 482f.

20 Martin Kröger, „Revolution als Programm. Ziele und Realität deutscher Orientpolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg", in: *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 368; 386.

21 Ibid., 368; 372; 385.

22 Rathmann, *Geschichte der Araber*, 489.

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Ottoman Fourth Army and the German units attached to it. The Turkish occupation was characterised by harsh treatment of the civilian population. Draconian measures included deportations, imprisonment, executions, punitive expeditions and a strict policy of Turkification. The German military staff remained neutral vis-à-vis these policies. Beyond this, far-reaching and coercive economic measures led to famine and typhus epidemics that caused the death of 10 percent of Syria's population in 1917.[23]

For her part, Great Britain tried to mobilise the Syrian and Lebanese people against the Ottomans and their German allies by means of secret negotiations with members of the Decentralist Movement and by supporting Arab nationalist claims that included independence, the abolition of the Capitulations and a defence agreement safeguarding a future Arab state. The Arab nationalists, for their part, tried to exploit the political antagonism between the Entente and the Central Powers to win liberation from Turkish foreign rule and to escape colonisation by the victorious imperialist bloc.[24]

In 1915-16, the British called upon the Arabs to turn against Turkish and German occupying forces. At the same time, they gave their word to help establish a unified Arab state situated south of the 37th parallel; this was not a legal agreement under international law, but it was a definite promise on the part of Great Britain. In 1916, an Arab revolt against Ottoman rule began in the Hijaz; it failed, however, due to 'feudal Arab reactions' and the opposition of Britain's supreme command to the formation of an Arab army. Nevertheless, the revolt managed to speed up the political and military collapse of Ottoman autocratic rule and to strengthen the self-consciousness of the Arab population. In the next few years, revolts also took place in Iraq, in the Hauran Mountains and throughout Syria, where the anti-colonial forces of liberation became a popular mass movement.[25]

Because Great Britain was at no point during this period of 'cooperation' serious about keeping her word – as is evident from the colonial interests behind the Sykes-Picot Agreement – Arab hopes for complete independence and a sovereign state went unfulfilled.[26]

In Egypt, the situation was different. Because Turkey had sided with the Central Powers, Britain was presented with an opportunity to bring Ottoman rule to a formal end there and (on 18 December, 1914) declared Egypt a British protectorate. Much as in Syria, Egypt fell victim to ruthless economic exploitation by the colonial power: compulsory taxes and high duties were levied, and livestock and gold were confiscated. Here, again, the war exhausted the country and

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23 Ibid., 488f.
24 Ibid., 491.
25 Ibid., 492-494.
26 Ibid., 494.

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brought it to the brink of economic ruin. It was not least this kind of a policy of occupation that strengthened Egyptian independence movements and led to anti-British demonstrations from 1915 onwards. Demands for autonomy, raised more seriously after 1918, first relied explicitly upon the right to self-determination, as formulated by US President Wilson, and upon the Franco-British declaration of 7 November 1918 promising independence and constitutional government to the peoples of the Ottoman Empire. The nationalist campaigns undertaken in Egypt in the following years led to limited Egyptian sovereignty in 1922; this status was extended in 1936 to almost complete sovereignty according to international norms.[27]

Therefore, one of the main political effects of the First World War was the increasing participation of Arab nationalist movements in the political game of the Great Powers, both in regions under Entente influence and in those controlled by the Ottomans and their allies.

At the same time, it is equally important to consider the impact of the political decisions and actions of the warring powers. These included Britain's promise of a Great Arab state, the Sykes-Picot Agreement defining French and British spheres of influence and, of course, the Balfour Declaration (2 November 1917), guaranteeing the World Zionist Organisation that the Jewish people would be able to establish a legally-recognized homeland in Palestine.

Finally, further mention must be made of the war's 'backstage events', already alluded to above. First among these was the Armenian massacre of 1915, triggered by an uncompromising Turkish nationalism eager to create an ethnically homogeneous centre within the Ottoman's multi-ethnic empire. Neither fear of a general Armenian uprising nor significant calls for Armenian autonomy caused the genocide of this people. As in other cases, Germany adopted a wait-and-see policy: in order to avoid a break with Istanbul, obligatory discretion in face of Turkish atrocities was imposed upon the German military staff.[28]

During the course of subsequent military operations, the British finally succeeded in the conquest of Baghdad and Sinai, and German and Turkish troops were expelled from Palestinian and Syrian cities: Jaffa, Jerusalem, Tripoli, Homs, Aleppo and Damascus. On 30 November 1918, the Turkish supreme command surrendered, initiating the final end of the Ottoman Empire.

### *Geographical and Economic Effects of the First World War*

In the Near East, the First World War led to the creation of new states with borders drawn to favour imperialistic interests. These reflected the financial con-

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27 Wolfgang Mommsen, *Imperialismus in Ägypten. Der Aufsteig der ägyptischen nationalen Bewegung 1805-1956*, München 1961, 90-95. Rathmann, *Geschichte der Araber*, 484-488.

28 Kröger, „Revolution als Programm", 384f.; Winter/Baggett, *La grande guerre* , 144-153.

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cerns of the European Powers and disregarded the ethnic composition of local populations. In many cases, demarcations between the different spheres of influence were determined through previously constructed railway lines; instead of serving as links to connect separate regions, these lines constituted the skeletons for the mandatory territories established after the war. Thus, railway networks set the frontiers between Palestine, Syria and Lebanon to secure communication links inside the territories under British control. The same held true for the border between northern Syria and Turkey, which corresponded to the Baghdad Railway line.

Based upon European capital interests, this railway system, as well as the construction of ports, led to the economic dismemberment of the whole Arab East. Intra-regional business largely shifted, or even fell off, not for internal reasons, but primarily due to the pressure of foreign capital.[29]

When looking at Iraq, however, it is apparent that the oil interests of powerful foreign companies dominated all links – ethnic, linguistic, cultural and economic – between members of the local population. The result was an economic rule of finance capital (in Iraq and also in the Peninsula) that focused upon oil as the most lucrative asset. This had considerable repercussions upon both the forms of political rule and the socio-economic structures, resulting in persistent imbalances within and beyond the regions concerned.[30]

### *Social Effects of the First World War*

The First World War also had drastic social consequences in the region. One result of the Turkish-German military rule and the coercive economic measures that accompanied it was the outbreak of famine and of typhus epidemics in Syria between 1915 and 1917. These catastrophes led to the deaths of thousands of people. Just as disastrous was an epidemic of influenza that struck Syria and other regions in 1918-19 and served as one of the causes for subsequent socio-economic, ecological and political crises in Syrian and central Arabian areas.

## *4. The Relationship between Wars and Memory Culture*

As sociology emphasises, the phenomenon of war has to be viewed in the context of economic, political, ideological and cultural developments. Just as apparent is the importance of war for social change where international constellations have an effect upon processes of modernisation. It is more difficult, however, to contextualise modern-era wars and their intellectual assimilation because this as-

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29 Ducruet, *Les Capitaux européens*, 262-264.

30 Helmut Mejcher, *Imperial Quest for Oil. Iraq 1919-1928*, London 1976, 38-42; 67-68; 149-153; 165-168.

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similation reveals a conflict immanent in modern culture. Problems of terminology, such as 'rationality' and 'irrationality', emerge. If one wants to elaborate an appropriate view of the present and its past, a link has to be made between 'expertise (or subject intimacy) in historiography', on the one hand, and 'high sensitivity to current culture streams', on the other.[31]

One promising approach to be applied was 'memory research', which clearly shows the contrast between a historiography focused upon facts and data, and the impact (that is, the experience, the 'lived tradition') of an event – such as a war. Remembrance, especially 'cultural memory', plays an important part in the formation of cultural and political identity. However, wars and crisis situations may shape the collective memory still more, since it is at such times that human perception becomes extremely keen and sensitive. Even though individuals alone have memories, these memories are collectively moulded. Collectivities determine the memory of their members because each kind of remembrance, even the most intimate one, only arises through communication and interaction within social groups. As war also represents a medium of contact and exchange, it is an important parameter for the critical evaluation of the past.[32]

Therefore, the conference's issue was not to investigate an 'objective' reality of war (as has been tried in numerous military and diplomatic studies of the First World War), nor to look solely at its repercussions. It was just as legitimate and demanding to ask for the 'interpreted' reality of war – its perception and political assimilation, and the values and collective patterns that accompany and follow it.[33] Such an approach would include a study of the effects of war upon individual states and their inhabitants, while simultaneously taking into consideration interdisciplinary methods based upon material from comparative literature, sociology, psychology and the social sciences.

## *5. Aims of the conference*

This conference, organised by Beirut's German Institute for Oriental Studies, the German Institute for Historical Studies (DHI), Rome, and the Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes (IFEA), Istanbul, set out to examine the political, social and cultural effects of the First World War, in terms of how it is remembered as an historical event. Panel sessions inquired into the cultural forms of memory found in Italy, Greece, modern Turkey, Syria and Lebanon, as well as Egypt. With respect to variations across and among these countries, it was assumed that different cultures of memory could be discussed as variable modes of under-

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31 Joas, „Die Modernität des Krieges", 13; 26f.

32 Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, München 1999, 35-48.

33 Mai, „'Verteidigungskrieg' und 'Volksgemeinschaft'", 583.

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standing historical change. Conference presentations pursued an understanding of the effects these differences in memory have upon national identity and state formation.

The main question aimed at determining the significance of the First World War in national cultural memory. How was the war remembered? What was its influence upon the political identity and cultural conception of self in the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean in general, and in the countries of the Near East in particular? Considering the difference between states that played an active part in this war and those that simply served as settings for confrontations between the warring parties, a common question arose concerning their different perspectives of the First World War. Was it thought of as a 'World War' or rather as a distant war in which local actors were not directly involved? Or was it seen as a local conflict, with its confrontations constituting a preliminary stage of rebellion toward the realisation of national independence?

## *6. Author contributions*

To examine the structural patterns of the collective memory of war, two groups of three panels were set up to compare and contrast how various national groups remembered the effects of the First World War.

The first group was called "***The political and social impact of the First World War***". One panel dealt with each of the following: **collective memories and changing forms of self-understanding under the impact of war; national and social group discourses of the First World War; the social effects of the First World War.**

The second group was called "***Symbolic processing of the First World War***". The three panels in this group dealt with the following topics: **images, histories and narratives of the war as reflected in war monuments, historiography, autobiographies and literature; war memories of Ottoman Army officers from different ethnic backgrounds; ideological reasoning of war participation and the creation of national myths and legends about the war.**

In the first panel, on the war's ***political and social impact***, which dealt with the collective memories of societies participating in war and the war's impact in changing collective ideas, four papers were presented from a state or ethnic perspective.

**Richard Hovannisian** (University of California, Los Angeles) focuses on the changing forms of Armenian identity. He argues that the common denominator of this identity is the 'negative' sense of community formed by the genocide of 1915. For the Armenian diaspora, 'being' Armenian has been replaced by 'feeling' Armenian. Nevertheless, the preservation of the collective memory proves crucial since in their daily lives Armenians are subject to different processes of

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acculturation and assimilation. A generation of orphans has thus reconstructed the memories of survivors in works of literature and history. Memory as shaped by the 'negative heritage' and the mental trauma of the genocide has motivated a new generation to political action, to gain world-wide recognition of Armenian victimisation.

**Paul Corner** (University of Siena) argues that in Italy, many people considered the First World War to be a chance to overcome the deep divisions within society. Such hopes, however, failed to come to fruition, as the war did not create a new and common national spirit. The following disillusionment, together with the outcome of the war and a spirit of heightened nationalism, laid the groundwork for the Fascist seizure of power in 1922.

**Ioannis K. Hassiotis** (University of Thessaloniki) focuses on Greece. In discussing the consequences of the extensive population exchanges between Greece and the adjacent countries, both during and after the war, the author demonstrates the political function that the expelled Greeks, (about 1.5 million), still exert in Greek domestic affairs. His paper discusses the extent to which this function is currently operative – whether through political activities based on particular interests, or through the issue of refugees (in the form of memorial days, for example) as dealt with by all political parties.

A different perspective on the Armenians is put forward by **Hilmar Kaiser**. He points out that the question of the disposition of Armenian property during the Armenian Genocide has so far remained little researched. For the first time, then, he elucidates the strategies of the Ottoman government, local interests and the Armenian victims in trying to secure property rights. The expropriation policy provided the economic backbone for far-reaching state policies and provides further insights into the premeditated nature of the crime.

The four contributions from the ***national and social group discourses*** panel investigated the extent to which the war shaped the views of women and various religious communities.

In her article, **Marilyn Booth** (University of Illinois) investigates constructions of the First World War by looking at representations of women in six Egyptian female magazines. To evaluate the effect of these constructions upon local memory, the author researches the ideology of feminine roles that served nationalism, as well as the influence of class and gender on the construction of the war and the creation of female heroes.

Looking at clericist Catholic authors in Lebanon, **Dennis Walker** (Monash University, Melbourne) argues that both the Ottoman policy of arresting and executing Arab nationalists and the regime's First World War starvation strategy were responsible for accelerating the processes of community-building in Lebanon and Syria. It is further stated that the genocide committed against the Armenians stirred the fears of Maronite historians of becoming subject to a politi-

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cal system under Muslim supremacy. Subsequently, and in the long run, the war resulted in an aggravation of the divisions among Lebanese Christians.

**Helmut Mejcher** (University of Hamburg) discusses the collective memory of the German Templar Order, founded as a community of colonial settlement. Resident in Palestine from 1868 to 1945, the Templars aimed to establish a Christian and German-Ottoman Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital. These activities were run under the slogan 'the solution of the Oriental question'.

**Martin Tamcke** (University of Göttingen) investigates the 'learning process' of the 'Assyrians' – the Eastern Syrian members of the Apostolic Church of the East – which preceded the process of becoming self-confident. The political helplessness experienced by the 'Lutheran Nestorians' during the First World War is exemplified by the case of Luther Pera, who was forced to emigrate and who described his religious affiliation as 'Nestorian,' but his ethnic membership as 'Syrian'.

The panel considering discourses on the ***social effects*** of the First World War – which dealt with the suffering during and after the war, and looked at the experience of digesting the war – took two different perspectives. They refer to the raging of the 'Spanish flu' in the Near East and the psychological effects of the war on soldiers.

Looking at the impact of epidemics on collective and individual memory, **Guido Steinberg** (German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin) argues that the 'Spanish flu' of 1918/19 was as easily forgotten in Syria, Egypt and Central Arabia as it was in the rest of the world. However, in the regions concerned there existed quite important differences in the way this plague was remembered, as the intensity of memorising of it was mainly dependent on the extent to which the war was felt in one region/state or another.

The contribution of **Yücel Yanıkdağ** (Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond ) analyses soldiers' suffering during the First World War, with a focus on members of the Ottoman Army, many of whom experienced traumatic neurosis ('shell-shock'). It is demonstrated that these psychological disorders were not attributed to traumatic war experiences such as bomb explosions – an attitude quite typical of contemporary medical opinion.

The conference's second section, ***Symbolic processing of the First World War***, was concerned with images, histories and narratives as reflected in war monuments, historiography, autobiographies and literature. Here the central question related to the mode of expressing collective ideas and interpretations through symbols, and to the ways these ideas and interpretations were handed on to later, post-war generations. Special emphasis was put on the experiences of suffering and group self-perception in the war. The questions of whether collective perceptions may be found in individual interpretations and if individual accounts are distinct from predominant collective perceptions were also considered.

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A total of eleven contributions tackle these problems from different perspectives: two of them focus on the cult of the fallen soldier in Turkey and Italy; five discuss the processing of the First World War from a Turkish viewpoint; another four discuss it with regard to Arab experiences.

The cult of the fallen soldier in Turkey is treated by **Klaus Kreiser** (University of Bamberg) in his paper on war memorials and cemeteries in Turkey. He tests Reinhart Koselleck's thesis on 'the internationality of signatures of monuments for the dead in its respective to national particularities of political identity'.

**Oliver Janz** (Free University of Berlin) discusses Italy's collective memory of the First World War after 1918 by looking at the Italian cult of the fallen soldier. He discusses to what extent and by what means this patriotic cult of the dead was reshaped, modified and instrumentalised in the post-war years by the Fascist regime to serve its purposes.

History as (collective) memory in First World War Lebanon is the subject of **Axel Havemann** (Free University of Berlin). On the basis of the autobiography written by the Druze Shakīb Arslān (1869-1946), it is argued that his memoirs are not professional history-writing, but rather a literary mirror of his political views. Havemann demonstrates how Arslan's position and his relations with military governor Jamāl Pasha made him a controversial public figure throughout his life and after. This negative view of Arslan is still evident in contemporary Lebanese historiography, which is largely shaped by ideological and confessional bias.

**Erol Köroğlu** (Sabancı University, Istanbul ) enters the debate about control over writing history in Turkey, a controversial issue from the First World War until the present. By drawing examples from Turkish popular fiction, the author shows how the post-war period was initially characterised by single attempts to reconstruct events, data and symbols of the First World War but was soon monopolised by narratives about the 1922 War of Independence. Köroğlu argues that these literary ventures have the function of re-writing – or newly writing – history according to the dictates of the regime's cultural hegemony – a history that imagines and creates a uniform national identity for the Turks in their struggle against foreign imperialist enemies, non-Turkish minorities and pro-Ottoman agents.

**Hans-Lukas Kieser** (University of Zurich) presents another Turkish perspective, focussing on the Turks' Swiss diaspora. Based on relevant Turkish publications from Geneva and Lausanne – centres of Young Turk opposition to the Sultan, which later became mouthpieces for the Turkish national movement – Kieser analyses how the Turks dealt with the memory of the First World War. Using narratives that reflect the experience and visualisation of wartime events, he explains how the specific war memory within leading militant circles agreed with short-term and long-term political aims. In addition, it is shown how this memory served to justify individual and collective behaviour during the war and to repudiate the accusations of crimes against humanity.

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In his article on individual and collective memories of the First World War **Christoph Schumann** (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg) underlines the dialectical relationship between these two forms of memory; this approach is considered necessary for appropriately evaluating the war's regional significance. The author admits the existence of images of a collective memory shaped by common experiences of suffering (in Syria, the *safar barlik*: the enforced conscriptions, the famine, the executions, the cruel measures of Jamāl Pasha). On the other hand, he calls – *cum grano salis* – for a stronger consideration of individual memories, as can be discerned in autobiographies, so that collective memories (such as the myth of starvation fabricated by Syrian and Lebanese historians) do not completely supersede the individual ones. Both forms of memory have to be related to each other.

**Nicola Ziadeh** (American University of Beirut) provides a rare personal, eyewitness account of the First World War in Syria and Palestine. He describes his experiences from the outbreak of the war, when he was seven years old, to the immediate post-war period. Food shortages, war hospitals and the impossibility of attending school strongly influenced Ziyadeh's childhood in Damascus. Later he witnessed the withdrawal of German and Ottoman troops from northern Palestine and, in 1918, the arrival of Australian and British regiments. He reports that in the beginning the foreign troops were faced with mistrust that, however, soon disappeared. On the other hand, the peasantry proved to be particularly loyal to the Ottoman Empire, seen as the guardian of Islam.

Memoirs and autobiographies of Damascus inhabitants, who also personally witnessed the war, are discussed by **Khairia Kasmieh** (Damascus University). She emphasises that although these reports cannot be considered methodical history-writing, they are nevertheless historical sources with revealing insights into different perspectives. In Kasmieh's view, contemporary witnesses were above all torn between religious and nationalist loyalties. While Western policies met with a general mistrust in the region, the loyalty to the Ottoman state as representative of Islam was quite strong. This situation changed in 1916, in part due to the increased repression by Jamāl Pasha. Thus, in the following years many Damascenes joined the Arab revolt.

**Börte Sagaster** (University of Cyprus, Nicosia ) presents two Ottoman travel accounts, which document immediate memories of the First World War. The accounts of the two men of letters, Aḥmed Rāsim (1865-1932) and Cenāb Şehābeddīn (1872-1934), deal with the time of the war from a close, almost contemporaneous, perspective. Both illustrate a self-image grounded in an imperial and multi-ethnic Ottoman past, although this self-image is already broken.

**Martin Strohmeier** (University of Cyprus, Nicosia) is interested in perceptions of the First World War in Turkish literature and here he focuses on an autobiography with apparently strong fictional traits. This work, part of a series of memoirs written by high-ranking soldiers and politicians after the war, can be

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considered representative of the 'official' perspective of collective memory in Turkey. The book describes the learning process the author went through during his stay as reserve officer at the front in 1916: from fear to salvation, and then to a new identity as soldier. Witnessing the war and actively participating in it is pictured as a great experience creating identity and community feeling.

**Christoph Neumann** (Bilgi-University, Istanbul) points out that Turkish literary works concerned with the First World War are quite rare because in Turkish historical consciousness this war ranks far behind the 1922 War of Independence. Neumann's paper concentrates on the single novel 'Three Istanbuls' (*Üç Istanbul*) by Mithat Cemal Kuntay, written in 1938. In this book the First World War is depicted as a time of moral decadence and corruption, when the ideals of the Young Turkish Revolution (1908) were betrayed for the sake of power, money and vanity.

Four papers are related to the discourses on ***war memoirs of Ottoman Army officers from different ethnic backgrounds***, focusing on the influence of origin, military education and common war experiences.

**Isa Blumi** (Trinity College, Hartford CT ) analyses the self-portraits of three Ottoman Army officers of Albanian origin, which are very differently anchored in the collective memory of Albanians. It is elaborated that for Albanians' attachment to family, community and state, and identification through language, loom large in the process of building the Albanian nation. This may be attributed to the 'trauma of ethnic cleansing' and the 'permanent diasporisation' that the minority Albanians had to live through in the years of the First World War. The author further demonstrates the varying perceptions of the Albanian officers in historiography, and how these perceptions have been manipulated politically.

**Mahmoud Haddad** (University of Balamand, Lebanon) discusses the career of an Arab officer in the Ottoman Army, Muḥammad Sharīf al-Farūqī, and his political views as recorded in 1919. Al-Farūqī served in the Ottoman Army until 1915, when he defected to the British side – hoping for the UK's support in freeing the Arabs from oppressive Ottoman Turkish rule. He later became an Arab nationalist, vehemently attacking European power politics and its deleterious impact on the Arabs. In his memoir, a sort of catalyst for the Arab world's politicisation, al-Farūqī criticises the division of the world into civilised and non-civilised parts; he also describes the prevailing decadence in the Orient, as well as the conditions of life in the Hijaz region.

The paper by **Nilüfer Hatemi** (Yeditepe University, Istanbul ) focuses on the Turkish Marshal Fevzi Çakmak (1876-1950). His diary, largely an eyewitness account of the war, reveals a successful and committed Ottoman military man in command at different fronts. The consistent daily entries throughout the years 1914 to 1918, which were immediately recorded after the actual happenings, offer information on military plans, individual wartime events, executions of death sentences, the social situation on-site, and other aspects of the First World War.

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**Peter Wien** (Al-Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco) looks at the influence of the German-Turkish military partnership on Arab nationalism. He argues that in inter-war Iraq the former Ottoman officers upheld and campaigned for 'Germanophilia' within the scope of nationalistic discourse: a phenomenon that may partly be attributed to experiences of military co-operation between Germans and Ottomans before and during the First World War.

The panel discussing discourses on First World War ***myths and legends*** considers the ideology of war participation, including the legitimisation of specific forms of propaganda as well as the concomitant creation of national myths, legends and heroic figures.

**Abdel-Raouf Sinno** (Lebanese University, Beirut) focuses on the aims and means of German war propaganda and eastern Mediterranean reactions to it. He underlines that German propaganda used the Ottoman *jihād* and the ideology of Pan-Islamism as instruments for Germany's war aims. This propaganda failed, mainly because of the lack of a coherent German policy toward the Arabs, and the German concern for the interests of the Ottoman Empire in the Arab world.

**Hans-Peter Laqueur** (Bremerhaven, Germany) dismantles the traditionally invoked friendship between Germany and Turkey as a myth with its origin in the First World War German-Ottoman military alliance. Laqueur shows that the German side generally despised pro-Ottoman German officers, labelling them as 'Turkicised', as well as the officers of the Ottoman Army. In addition, some eyewitness accounts by German officers report violent conflicts between Turkish and German military crews.

In the concluding article **Youssef Mouawad** (Lebanese American University of Beirut) looks at the instrumentalisation of the hostile picture of Jamāl Pasha, military governor in Syria from 1914 to 1917. The author points out that the Lebanese Republic started using this hostile picture in 1946, and has since then recalled Jamāl Pasha's deeds every 'Martyrs' Day'. Both the Christian and Muslim communities of Lebanon agreed on this view of their common enemy, whom they labelled 'the Butcher' (*al-Jazzār*) and 'the Murderer' (*al-Saffāḥ*). Investigating why the Lebanese state places more emphasis on the memory of some 20 persons executed than on the remembrance of the 200,000 who died of starvation, Mouawad attributes this fact to hostile pictures and their inherent function in strengthening national cohesion.

## *7. Main features of the conference discussions*

The basic question at issue during this conference was: What is remembered in the countries of the eastern Mediterranean concerning the events of the First World War, and who exercises control over these remembrances? Consequently, the term *'memory'* was present in all discussions looking at different points of reference. These points of reference included the relationship between memory,

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change and continuity; the relationship between individual and collective memory; and the difficulty of evaluating the past in an appropriate manner – as past events were heavily influenced by contemporary views and expectations. Other points of contention concerned memory and modernity, war and processes of nation-state-building, and the relationship between what is remembered and what is not. In addition, the specific role of memory for war refugees and the victims of systematic persecutions was discussed in great detail.

All conference participants agreed that different memories of the war and of resulting processes of politicisation and transformation prevail in the countries studied – there was considerable talk about 'divided memory'. This especially holds true for the Arab and Turkish 'public' memories, which compete with each other and rarely exert any mutual influences. Thus, the negative image of the 'Turks' in the Arab world is seen to have persisted tenaciously for 400 years and changed only in recent times. In this regard, it was hoped that these different historical discourses be integrated – as was witnessed amongst the conference participants.

Moreover, the question was raised as to whether selective memory can be linked to the existence of institutions, and whether institutions were needed for the creation of something called 'collective memory'. Some considered this term to be problematic, however, and suggested other terms, such as 'common memory', 'public memory', 'collective images', or simply, 'information'. There was general agreement on the creation and invention of memory, often for specific purposes – a phenomenon even more relevant for collective memory.

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On the other hand, certain events in the context of wars – such as the common suffering of starvation – remained lodged in people's minds; in these cases, national collective memory is an indisputable matter of fact. Concerning the relationship between individual and collective memory, it was maintained that individual remembrances as, for example, clearly expressed in interviews evolve into (or become part of) collective memory only through later interpretation. Conversely, those intent on understanding something specific fall back on collective patterns of explanation.

As stated, the matter was not to investigate the allegedly true events of the First World War, but to determine how something has been remembered by different communities. As memories are mental constructions, they cannot simply be believed; however, one must know and understand them to grasp the behaviour and the actions of social groups, as well as their myths and self-images. Thus, some speakers distinguished between history as memory, history as recovery and history as invention, while arguing for a fair balance of written history (historiography), oral history and 'literary' sources such as autobiographies. With

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regard to Turkey and Lebanon, it was pointed out that history-writing in these countries is still largely shaped by ideological and confessional concerns.

Another topic under discussion was the Armenian genocide, as a watershed in the creation of this people's identity. Panellists discussed Turkey's continuing denial of the genocide, Germany's failure to help the victims and the role of German military censorship in silencing information about this genocide. Looking at the destiny of other peoples during the First World War, such as the Assyrians, as well as the Jewish holocaust, raised the question of whether a hierarchy of victimisation should be erected when considering the fates of these peoples.

A comparison of national memories demonstrated that eastern Mediterranean countries did not perceive the First World War as apocalypse but, with some exceptions, rather as a matter of disillusionment with the policies of European colonial powers. Nevertheless, the role of the First World War in triggering very complex processes of politicisation and transformation became all too clear, in particular with regard to the processes of nation-state-building in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. These states' changing self-perceptions were viewed as long-term processes. In the cases of Greece and Italy, however, the impact of the First World War on different forms of modernity and nationalism was given special emphasis. It was stressed that modernity may have different meanings: in Greece, for example, modernity is almost synonymous with nationalism, while in other countries it has a connotation of ideological discourse or class struggle.

Altogether, different forms of nationalism competed with each other in the Mediterranean area; however, similarities amongst individual countries can be perceived: between Italy and Greece, or between Italy and Turkey. The experiences of the latter two countries deserve further comparative study, with a focus on forms of symbolic processing of the First World War in war monuments and biographies.

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# Panel I:
# The Political and Social Impact of the First World War

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# A:
# Collective Memories of Societies Participating in the First World War, and Changing Forms of Self-Understanding under the Impact of the War

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# The First World War as the Defining Moment in Modern Armenian History

*Richard G. Hovannisian (University of California, Los Angeles)*

No people in the Eastern Mediterranean – or in the entire world – were so dramatically and drastically affected by the First World War as the Armenians. In 1914, they were an ethno-religious element living in cities, towns and villages from Adrianople and Constantinople (Istanbul) in Europe, to the plains of Asia Minor and the great Armenian Plateau east of the Euphrates River (now called Eastern Anatolia), all the way to Baku on the Caspian Sea. By the end of the First World War, the Armenians had been eliminated from virtually all of the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and during the next several years the remnants would be forced to leave the bounds of the emergent Republic of Turkey. A people were violently and irreversibly separated from their lands and cultural-religious foundations of centuries. Their social, political, economic, cultural and religious infrastructures were completely demolished, leaving the bewildered survivors scattered around the world in alien surroundings, without means of rapid recovery.[1]

The trauma of the horrendous deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, compounded by the loss of the traditional homelands of more than three millennia, left deep, raw wounds on the Armenian psyche. The on-going process of evolution into a national-political collectivity was abruptly halted, and the Armenians as a geographically based people were extruded from the Middle East. They remained at most a non-territorial minority in certain hospitable host countries.

Prior to the First World War there had been in the Ottoman Empire an Armenian Question, primarily one of implementing reforms that would ensure the security of Armenian life and property and the attainment of equal civil rights. It was beyond the comprehension of the Armenians in 1914 that they could be swept away from this land completely. After all, they had withstood the most devastating of invasions and long centuries of foreign domination. Many had died, been forcibly converted, or carried away into captivity, but there had always been enough remaining to rebuild their homes and churches and to begin

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1 Studies, memoirs, and collections of documents on the Armenian Genocide are voluminous. For useful annotated bibliographies relating to various aspects of the Armenian Genocide, see Israel W. Charny, ed., *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review*, 2 vols., London: Mansell Publishing Ltd./New York: Facts on File, 1988-1991. See also Vahakn N. Dadrian, "Genocide as a Problem of National and International Law: The World War I Armenian Case and Its Contemporary Legal Ramifications", *Yale Journal of International Law* 14/2 (1989), 221-334.

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life anew. The totality of ideologically driven modern genocide had not yet been demonstrated. It was the technological advances of the modern age that placed in the hands of the perpetrators the weapons of mass destruction. Even in the backward Ottoman Empire, the telegraph, for instance, could provide unprecedented means of coordination, control and thoroughness. It was, perhaps, this stunning totality that made the victims and the survivors incapable of ever comprehending fully what had occurred and why.[2]

Whereas the First World War and its aftermath ultimately brought statehood and independence to the Arab peoples, the acquisition of certain additional territories by Greece, and the creation of a Turkish Republic, the conflagration resulted in the expulsion of the Armenians. This development gives rise to the question of whether Armenia and Armenians still belong to the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. Even in a conference such as the one that occasioned this paper, the Armenian presence may be regarded as an anomaly, or perhaps as tokenism. There was a brief postwar period of optimism that the Armenians would emerge as a regional nation-state through the unification of the small Caucasian Armenian republic, formed during the final months of the war, with the contiguous Turkish Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The Allied victors, who pledged to punish the perpetrators of the genocide and to restore the Armenian survivors, created such a state on paper (Treaty of Sèvres, August 10, 1920).

They did not, however, provide the means to implement that decision. Theirs was a cynical, face-saving calculation to discharge their wartime promises and to satisfy international public opinion.[3] The Western powers' self-serving manoeuvres continue to affect the way Armenians view the outside world and prospects of external intercession to resolve current regional problems. The sense of being wronged, of being a pawn in great power politics, of awaiting the elusive stroke of justice, all weigh heavily upon the collective Armenian mind-set.

With the Turkish invasion and collapse of the fledgling Armenian republic at the end of 1920, the little bit of Armenia that survived was caught up in the Soviet orbit, and its orientation turned northward rather than westward. Armenians received something of a new identity, as a people belonging not so much to the Middle East as to the Slavic-Russian world and the Caucasus, where as a nation they now continue to exist – but only as a landlocked, vulnerable state.[4]

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2 See Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation*, London: Croon/New York: St. Martin's Press 1980; Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 2, New York: St. Martin's Press 1996, chaps. 6-8.

3 On the history of the first Armenian republic, see Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*, 4 vols., Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press 1971-1996.

4 For a survey history of Soviet Armenia, see Mary Kilbourne Matossian, *The Impact of Soviet Policies in Armenia*, Leiden: Brill 1962; Ronald G. Suny, "Soviet Armenia," in: Hovannisian, *The Armenian People*, vol. 2, chap. 11; Claire Mouradian, *De Staline à Gorbatchev: Histoire d'une république soviétique: l'Arménie*, Paris: Éditions Ramsay 1990.

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Soviet policymakers attempted to suppress or manage Armenian memory to conform to their foreign policy objectives. The genocide was excised from textbooks, and the whole of Armenian history was recast in Marxist terminology. The First World War was portrayed as an imperialistic conflict, from which the long-suffering Armenians were ultimately saved by the victorious Red Army, and by their entry into the great family of Soviet peoples. Much of the population of Soviet Armenia, however, was made up of the refugee generation from the eastern Ottoman regions – Van, Mush, Sasun, Erzerum, Alashkert, Bayazit – who maintained an underground subculture based on the oral transmission of memory.

It was a counter-culture that burst into the open in 1965, the 50th anniversary of the genocide, through unauthorized and unprecedented public demonstrations in the capital city of Erevan and similar demonstrations throughout the Armenian world. The inability of Soviet authorities to suppress the memory forced them to channel it, to accommodate it, by trying to bring national sentiment under state sponsorship through the erection of memorial monuments and cautious, measured discussions of the fate of the "Western Armenians" during the First World War. But the narrow limits that the Soviet authorities sought to maintain were stretched by Armenian writers and poets such as Hovhannes Shiraz and Paruyr Sevak, who set aside fear and self-constraint to liberate memory in the drive to teach and inspire new generations.

While half of the Armenian world population experienced the good and the bad of the Soviet system, the other half gradually recuperated in widely dispersed diaspora communities. Armenians in the Middle East concentrated on attempting to preserve the foundations of their culture. Community resources were poured into the building of schools and churches. Thankful for the haven afforded by the tolerant Arab peoples, the Armenian newcomers nonetheless felt themselves apart and focused on the preservation and transmission of their language and their traditions in the idealistic belief that someday they would be able to return to their lost homeland. When political circumstances in the host country allowed, they voiced their claims and demonstrated their resentment against the Turkish government. An abiding sense of injustice was passed on to the succeeding generation. Internal political and religious differences gave way to a solid, common historical memory of the First World War and unpunished genocide.

By the latter part of the twentieth century, when this idealism had waned and – except for the devoted few prepared to move to the newly-independent, beleaguered post-Soviet Armenia – the Middle East communities came to the harsh reality that they must regard themselves as a long-term diaspora. In order to survive, they would have to integrate more closely with their host societies. This process took place independently of any conscious plan, as new generations were born outside the historic homelands and the numerical, cultural and political strength of the communities diminished in the turmoil in the Middle East. Still,

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the memory of the violent displacement during the First World War is powerful and omnipresent in every aspect of community life, whether joyful or mournful.[5]

The communities of Western Europe and North America developed along a different course. Arriving as refugees in long-established nation states with strong cultural traditions, the survivors faced prejudice and intense pressure to join the mainstream. Multiculturalism was neither encouraged, nor tolerated. While the Armenians managed to maintain a degree of identity through their churches, political clubs and after-school Armenian classes, the children of the survivors, with rare exception, did not perpetuate the native language or the culture, and often refused to identify with the memories of war and massacre. Thus, the opportunities for social and economic upward mobility in the Western world were counterbalanced by the rapid process of acculturation and assimilation.[6]

Even among young Armenian intellectuals, the children of the genocide who still spoke and wrote in Armenian, there emerged a school of rejectionism – rejection of traditional values and morés, which perhaps had been contributing elements to the national calamity. That catastrophe was too horrendous to face, and the Parisian intellectuals of the "Menk" group, for example, picked for their themes the painted women of Pigalle and a denationalized society. The sense of despair for Armenian survival permeated Shahan Shahnur's "Retreat without a Song," the product of the negativism and pessimism born of the genocide. While some sought to escape memory by losing themselves in Parisian backdrops, even those writers who were driven to confront the cataclysm, to capture the inferno in its entirely, failed. Hagop Oshagan found it impossible to select from a rich and expressive vocabulary the words to create a literary reflection of the hell that he had seen and experienced. Dante's Inferno was too neat, too placid, perhaps too comprehensible, to serve as a model. At best, glimpses of the holocaust were captured in short stories and vignettes.

The representation of collective cultural memory of the First World War was thus left primarily to the generation of orphans, "Children without Childhood" – writers such as Antranig Dzarougian and Moushegh Ishkhan, who rose up out of the streets of Aleppo, Damascus and Beirut to approach the calamity through stories about life from the desert to the orphanage. These works were supplemented by survivor memoirs, written in Armenian, English, French and other languages but rarely well constructed as literature or as history. That challenge was left for

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5 See R. Hrair Dekmejian, "The Armenian Diaspora," in: Hovannisian, *The Armenian People*, vol. 2, chap. 13; Richard G. Hovannisian, "The Ebb and Flow of the Armenian Minority in the Arab Middle East", *Middle East Journal* 28/1 (1974).

6 See Robert Mirak, "The Armenians in America", in: Hovannisian, *The Armenian People*, vol. 2, chap. 12. For the period before 1915, see also by Robert Mirak, *Torn Between Two Lands, Armenians in America, 1890 to World War I*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1983.

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the second and third-generation of the diaspora community, albeit in a different genre – one of self-discovery and reconnection with Armenian memory.[7]

The trauma associated with the First World War produced something of a fortress mentality. The burden of historical memory makes the Armenian collectivity extremely concerned about intermarriage, loss of cultural attributes and assimilation – "White Massacre" – giving rise to a pronounced sense of "us" beset by the powerful and dangerous forces of "them", "the other", "the foreign". Self-imposed community boundaries were laid down and the effectiveness of policing those limits is correlated with the vitality and continuance of the collectivity. In place of a physical ghetto, the Armenian Diaspora felt the need to create intellectual and cultural defence parameters through the operation of schools and churches, political, social and cultural organizations, and scouting and athletic youth groups – all of them linked to the collective memory of 1915. The individual is regarded as integral to the group, so that the loss or waywardness of the one detracts from the viability of the whole.

The negative impact of the genocide of the First World War is the strongest common denominator linking Armenian communities around the world and these communities, in turn, with the new Armenian republic. Now speaking different languages, cut off from much of their national literature and culture, diaspora Armenians are bound together by the collective memory of victimization. This sentiment is reinforced by Turkish state's denial of the genocide and efforts to cast this aspect of the First World War into an Orwellian "Memory Hole".[8]

In his studies, Ervin Staub has shown that genocide shapes not only the outlook of the immediate victims, but also of subsequent generations. Rather than viewing the world as a good and well-ordered place, victim groups are filled with mistrust, fear and a sense of danger of what may come. It is essential, therefore, for victims to understand that horrible events are not normal, but rather are aberrations of a generally benevolent world order. Continued denial makes this impossible and reinforces feelings of insecurity, abandonment and betrayal. To overcome these apprehensions, the victims need to share their sentiments of pain and sorrow, to voice their outrage, to have the world recognize their suffering, and especially to receive expressions of regret and apology from the perpetrator. Until such time, the wound and the rage fester and the healing process is impeded.

For the descendants of the perpetrators, Staub says it is imperative to engage in introspection, to face and learn from their history, to consider how such violations could have occurred, to examine what there was – and may still even be –

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7 See Rubina Peroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe: A Comparison of the Armenian and the Jewish Experience*, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press 1993.

8 See Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*, New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 1982; and Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1997.

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in their society that led them down the road to genocide. Redemption can be found through appropriate acts of contrition, beginning with a knowledge and acceptance of the truth. If they are unable or unwilling to do this, then they may again be placed on a path toward the victimization of other groups.[9]

The burden of memory has, in simple terms, brought about a two-track Armenian response. On the one hand, activists are obsessed with the past. They cannot rest until the Turkish state, which has expropriated the lands and collective assets of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, offers an apology and initiates redemptive measures. Activists use the political processes in their host countries – now their native countries – to win reaffirmation of the Armenian Genocide, just as these countries had recognized and condemned the crime when it began in 1915. Armenians are unable to face the future openly and freely unless, and until, they can deal with the past. On the other hand, for those for whom the burden is too heavy to bear – and there are many such individuals – the alternative is repression of historical memory and often separation from the collective community through the assumption of a new identity. A strong undercurrent of victimization lies at the core of both responses.[10]

Following the genocide that took place under the cover of the First World War, Armenians suffered mental and emotional trauma caused by the calamity, world indifference, and attempts by successive Turkish governments to deny or rationalize the crime. Yet the actual physical persecution had passed, and there did not seem to be any real danger of renewed massacres, except in the minds of people so severely affected as to suffer from extreme anxiety disorders. Soviet Armenia seemed safe as a part of the powerful Soviet Union, even if this required giving up much of its freedom, including the right to seek world recognition and redress for the genocide.

But the trade-off was upset abruptly in 1988, and the spectre of genocide loomed over the Armenians, not as a haunting, terrible memory, but rather a living reality. The outbreak of anti-Armenian violence in the Azerbaijani industrial city of Sumgait, with mayhem, mutilation and dehumanization, sent shock waves into Armenian communities far and near. The terms "pogrom," "massacre," and even "genocide" sounded and reverberated, and immediate spontaneous associations were made with 1915. The Azeris, related by race, language and culture to the Turks, became in Armenian minds the same brutal murderers who had perpetrated the First World War genocide, and the victims of Sumgait were

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9 Ervin Staub, "Breaking the Cycle of Genocide Violence: Healing and Reconciliation", in: J. Harvey, ed., *Perspective on Loss: A Source Book*, Washington DC: Taylor and Francis 1998; Ervin Staub and Laurie Anne Pearlman, "Healing, Forgiveness and Reconciliation after Genocide and Other Collective Violence", in: *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religious Contributions to Conflict Resolution*, Radnor, PA: Templeton Foundation Press 2001.

10 On Armenian survivor responses to victimization, see Donald E. Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller, *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press 1993.

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seen simply as the most recent martyrs in centuries of Turkic domination. Seventy years of Soviet mythology about resolving the nationality problem and about the friendship and brotherhood of the Soviet peoples dissolved in an instant, bringing the Armenians face to face with the ghost of the past. The ensuing economic blockade of Armenia by both Azerbaijan and Turkey again conjured up images of the starvation of hundreds of thousands of Armenians in 1915.[11] Even the forces of nature seemed to conspire against the Armenians, as the massive earthquake in December 1988 devastated the northern third of the country and claimed as many as 50,000 lives.[12]

A team of oral historians, led by Joanna Bornat and Pam Shakespeare of the Open University of the United Kingdom, undertook an interview program with the aged inhabitants of Leninakan/Gumri after the earthquake and was struck by the repeated traumatic linkages made between that disaster and the genocide of the First World War.[13] Another oral history program by Donald and Lorna Miller in the earthquake zone and in mountainous Karabagh confirmed the persistence of traumatic memory among the Armenians, even in districts that had not been a part of the Ottoman Empire. Time had collapsed, and the Azeri of the 1990s became one and the same as the Turk of 1915.[14]

What has been demonstrated in these interviews is the trans-generational impact of genocide. In the best of circumstances, the trauma persists for decades, but it is compounded when there are no acts of contrition or redemption on the part of the perpetrators. Historical memory forcefully shapes contemporary views of self and other, and puts heavy constraints on current leaders. The failure to lighten the burden of history interferes with the re-establishment of normal behaviour and normal relations. It remains to be seen whether the negative heritage of the First World War can yield to a merger of Armenian and Turkish memories, following the model of truth and reconciliation. Such a merger would

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11 Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia and Karabagh*, London: Minority Rights Publications 1991; Samvel Shahmuratian, ed., *The Karabagh Tragedy: Pogroms against Armenians in Soviet Azerbaijan*, New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas 1990. On Armenian reactions to the blockade, see H.Ts. Liloyan et al., *Blokada: Khorinka*, 2 vols., Erevan: Luis 1990. For Azerbaijani perspectives, see Igrar Aliev, *Nagoryni Karabakh*, Baku: Elm 1989; Fatma Abdullazadeh, Arif Abbasov et al., *Karabakh*, Baku: XXI YNE 1999. See also Patricia Corley, *Nagorno-Karabagh: Search for a Solution*, Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace 1998; Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*, Westport, CT: Praeger 1998; Shireen Hunter, *The Transcaucasus in Transition: Nation-Building and Conflict*, Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies 1994.

12 On the earthquake, see, for example, Yuri Rost, *Armenian Tragedy*, New York: St. Martins' Press 1990.

13 Joanna Bornat, Pam Shakespeare and Mariam Haroutunian, "Learning from Memories: Some Issues for Workers and Older People in a Troubled City", paper presented at the XIth International Oral History Association Conference, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul June 15-19, 2000.

14 Donald Miller, *Armenia: Portraits of Survival and Hope*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2003.

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allow the Armenians to return, if only symbolically, to the Mediterranean world from which they were unwillingly and painfully extruded. Until then, past remains present.[15]

15 In the summer of 2001, the creation of a Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC) was announced, with the goals of improving relations between the two peoples and two states but without directly addressing the genocide issue. The commission has drawn much attention, with some support and much more sustained criticism. For information about TARC and its activities, see its web site at www.tarc.info and the web sites of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, RFE/RL, the Turkish Forum, Armenian Assembly of America, and Armenian National Committee of America. The commission suspended its activities for a time in 2002 because of lack of agreement on procedures by the two sides, especially relative to submission of the question of the applicability of the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide to the Armenian case. The issue was ultimately submitted to the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), which rendered the opinion that the events of 1915 would indeed qualify as genocide under the UN Convention but that the Convention has no provision relating to retroactivity. It was suggested that other domestic and international laws might be considered as a means of attaining relief or compensation. In February, 2003, TARC released the study and then prepared joint recommendations for submission to the concerned governments. Two of the Turkish members of the commission, both former ambassadors, resigned during the process. TARC delivered its recommendations to the Turkish and Armenian governments in the spring of 2004 and then announced that it had concluded its work. The recommendations reportedly included opening of the border, establishment of diplomatic relations, and consideration of the ICTJ study as a possible basis for subsequent government-to-government discussions.

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# Memory and Distorted Memory: the First World War in Italy

*Paul Corner (University of Siena)*

As a starting point to the consideration of the question of remembrance and the First World War in relation to Italy, it is worth noting that it is only in recent years that it has become evident the degree to which the 'official' memory of the war differed from the reality of the experience of war for the majority of those who fought it. For more than half a century the Great War was seen as one of the key moments of national formation – a moment of national glory, when Italy, after the heroic period of the Risorgimento, finally took up her rightful place among the great powers of Europe. This was, very obviously, the Fascist view of the war; Fascism looked back to the war in order to find the justification and legitimisation of its hold on power. But, rather paradoxically, it was also an interpretation current for many years after World War II, when historians tended to compare the disastrous Fascist war fought alongside Hitler with the supposedly 'patriotic' war of 1915-18.

Only relatively recently has it been suggested that the 'national-patriotic' narrative of the war is, in fact, a severe distortion of what took place.[1] In this paper I shall attempt to address four points which would seem to be central to the way we are trying to look at the experience of the First World War. Very briefly these four points, always related to Italy, are:

1) The relationship between the war and division within Italian society. Here we have, first, the war as an attempt to overcome profound divisions within Italian society, (the objective of participation in the war) and, second (the consequence of participation), the war as the creator of new and very deep divisions within that society.
2) The changing role of the state and of the perceptions of the role of the state as a consequence of the war. Here the issue is in part the question of the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of popular opinion, but also in part the way in which people began to consider that the state had obligations towards them and that they had the right to make demands of the state.
3) How the war is lived. Here the experiences are very different – peasants, workers, bourgeoisie, officers – and have very different consequences, not only for immediate political developments, but also for wider questions such as those relating to national identity and national consciousness.

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1 See M. Isnenghi, *Il mito della grande guerra*, Bologna 1997.

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4) The different conclusions drawn by different social groups about the way forward after the war. Here very obviously the development of Italian Fascism is an issue, in particular the ways in which Fascism developed from the experience of the war and also the ways in which Fascism utilised the memory of the war to further its cause.

To return to the first point. As so often happens, the point of arrival depends on the point of departure. It is essential, for an understanding of the impact of the First War on Italy, and therefore of its subsequent effect through remembrance, to appreciate the degree to which Italy was already a fragile and divided society before the conflict. The divisions were social (between rich and poor), ideological (between liberals, Catholics, socialists and nationalists), and territorial/geographic (between North and South). The years immediately preceding the war had seen attempts to reconcile these conflicts, but certain had become more rather than less severe. Most serious for Italian liberalism was the fact that by 1914 opposition to government, on both the right and the left, took the form of opposition to the state and to the institutions of the state. Socialism, Catholicism, nationalism – all looked to supersede the liberal state and create a new state. The strength of anti-state sentiment in the population is perhaps the characterising feature of Italian politics prior to 1914 and cannot be too much stressed.[2]

The war was a desperate effort on the part of a threatened political *élite* to solve two problems at the same time. The first was to solve questions relating to Italy's role as a great power on the international scene, but the second – possibly more important – was to restore the failing authority of the liberal state and to give a new legitimacy to the Italian state through victory and ensuing international prestige. The war, which all ministers expected – against all the evidence, by May 1915, when Italian intervention was finally decided – to be short and glorious, would permit special legislation to repress social disorder and permit the outflanking of socialism and the defeat of moderate liberalism. The hope was for a reconciliation of division within Italian society through a restoration of authority justified by final victory.

Consequently there was no attempt at a *union sacrée* or *Burgfrieden*; in many ways, a national political truce was the opposite of what was intended by those who decided intervention. From the outset, heavy repression of dissent was the policy adopted, both in the trenches and on the home front. The expectation seems to have been that nationalist and patriotic rhetoric would be sufficient to carry the country forward, and that a new Italian would emerge, forged by the conflict, expressing a patriotism and sense of national identity previously almost totally lacking among the popular classes. This was an attempt at nation forming

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2 For a more extended treatment of the divisions afflicting Italian society see my "State and Society 1900-1922", in: Adrian Lyttelton, ed., *Liberal and Facist Italy: 1900-1945*, (The Short Oxford History of Italy), Oxford 2002.

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or nation building, but it was clearly meant to be a nation based on monarchy, social hierarchy and social discipline.

In the event, almost none of this was realised. From the outset the country was divided about the wisdom of participating in the war, with the majority in favour of continued neutrality. The conduct of the war was such that the ordinary soldiers quickly came to hate the useless slaughter to which their officers subjected them. Army strategy was inflexible and seemed pointless and unjust, provoking mutinies by late 1916, which in turn provoked the decimation of rebellious units and a large number of summary field executions. One soldier in every thirteen was tried for some offence relating to discipline during the course of the war – a far higher proportion than in other European armies. The disastrous rout at Caporetto in October 1917 was blamed on defeatist propaganda at home and a hysterical witch-hunt began against socialists (termed 'the internal enemy'), accused of being anti-national and traitors. Where other belligerent countries attempted to gain some popular consensus for the war and to arrive at an equal division of sacrifices, in Italy harsh repression of protest was the order of the day. On the home front all dissent was punished severely. In Turin in August 1917 the government was forced to use troops to quell popular demonstrations against the war.[3]

If we pause for a moment at Caporetto, we can see many significant indications of what was going on within Italy. When the Germans and Austrians broke through the Italian line and took more than 300,000 prisoners, it looked as though the war was lost. Yet within Italy popular reaction was mixed, to say the least. While the patriotic bourgeoisie attempted to rally the nation to the flag, prefects reported that peasants and workers had rejoiced at the news of defeat and even awaited the arrival of the Austrians with pleasure. In the zones occupied by the Austrians after the battle (zones which in many cases remained occupied for almost a year), while more than 300,000 fled, including the public authorities, farmers and agricultural labourers who remained were left to reflect on the fact that those who had been the first to shout 'Viva la Guerra, viva il re d'Italia' in 1915 had been the first to run when the enemy appeared on the horizon.

Italy ended the war bitterly divided. For most ordinary Italians the war had seemed a pointless waste of life and energy imposed on them by what was perceived of as a cruel and heartless state. Class and ideological divisions were consolidated rather than weakened and politics became totally polarised. Above all, that anti-state sentiment which had been present before the war was further accentuated because the state was considered responsible for the sufferings of the war. It remains extremely doubtful, therefore, that there any kind of generalised reinforcement of national spirit or national identity as a result of the conflict, as

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3 In general, on the home front and repression of dissent, see Giovanna Procacci, *Dalla rassegnazione alla rivolta. Mentalità e comportamenti popolari nella grande guerra*, Roma 2001.

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a traditional historiography, both fascist and post-fascist, has maintained. This was so only for the officer class (although many of these were deeply disgusted with the conduct of the war by the state) and certain elements of the middle classes. For the rest it seems likely that, far from the state achieving any kind of new legitimacy or there being formed a sense of national identity, what was formed was a sense of solidarity against the state – something reflected in the victories of revolutionary socialism in 1919.

This brings us to the second point. As everywhere, during the First War, the role of the state developed enormously, involving every aspect of life through the process of total mobilisation. People could see this process in action very clearly. Moreover the war made people aware of the fact that their sacrifices had created obligations which the state should fulfil. And if the state failed to do so, the state had to be changed. Rather paradoxically in Italy, while anti-state sentiment remained very high, people saw that in order to change things they had to achieve control of the state. This was true both on the left (revolutionary socialism) and on the right (nationalism and, a little later, Fascism). The battle became a battle for the control of the state, not simply for a change of government. It is possible to say, therefore, that there was some kind of new awareness created as a consequence of the war, but it was not one which serves in any way to consolidate the existing national state. The experience of the war was in fact profoundly subversive of existing institutions and, indeed, of liberal ideology as such. It should be noted, in this context, that social fragmentation consequent on the experience of the war was accompanied by institutional fragmentation as the state increasingly entrusted its powers to private organisations or individuals in order to meet the challenge of the war. The logic was that, in a war of economic attrition, those most directly involved with the economy – the industrialists – were best fitted to decide what should be done. But the state effectively delegated its power to people not controlled by the executive. As a consequence, if, in theory, the state assumed a whole series of new powers, in practice it renounced the means of controlling those powers.[4]

The third and fourth points on my scheme are of course intimately linked. Italy emerged from the war as a victor, but psychologically much nearer to defeated Germany than to Britain or France. The majority in the country – peasants and workers – thought the war had been a great waste of time, life and effort. The remembrance was of anything but a glorious national apotheosis. In the immediate post-war, Italian socialism, which achieved enormous success, explicitly rejected national and patriotic values and openly questioned the legitimacy of the ruling elite. The popular perception of the war was not that of the achievement of common objectives shared by the whole community (as it was in

4 See Giuliano Procacci, "Appunti in tema di crisi dello Stato liberale e origini del fascismo", *Studi storici* 2 (1965), 221-237.

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other victorious countries) but rather that of the achievement of the objectives of one class through the sacrifices of another. This was not a perception which was to be allowed to survive. Precisely because of its subversive and apparently anti-patriotic position (in the sense of nationalist patriotism), socialism was viewed as the betrayer of national values by a bourgeoisie frustrated at the less than satisfactory outcome of the Paris Peace Conference.

In many ways Italian Fascism can be viewed as an attempt to create the national unity and the sense of common purpose which participation in the conflict had been meant to create but had not done so. The young men of the murderous Fascist action squads – often young men from the officer class or from the elite shock troops – were reacting to the *failure* of government to use the war as a vehicle for national consolidation. They took their values from the war ("believe, obey, fight") and tried to maintain them, and to impose them on the less convinced, in time of peace. In this operation, all those elements of popular disgust at the war had to be eradicated and replaced by the 'myth of the Great War' as a moment of national realisation. The totalitarian experience took its inspiration from the experience of 'total' war. The war had seemed to show that nationalist and patriotic objectives could provide the justification for repressive social policies and authoritarian government. The violence of Fascism was legitimised in the same way – by the same appeal to extreme nationalism which had developed during the war. The war had been a kind of unsuccessful preview of the new totalitarian concept; for the Fascists, what should have happened in time of war was now going to happen in time of peace. But this required that the reality of the experience for the majority be suppressed and replaced by the 'national patriotic' myth – the myth that has been so slow to disappear.[5]

The Italian example suggests very strongly that the experience of war and suffering can be very much a two-edged sword for states which are uncertain of their hold on the population, even in the event of ultimate victory. While certain social groups may rally to the flag, others – possibly the majority – may see the sacrifices as pointless and unjust. At this point other factors of division – class, territory, religion – may intervene to increase national instability. Indeed, the political dividends of the struggle against the enemy are likely to be in direct proportion to the perception of the war as justified on the part of those who have to suffer its immediate consequences. In Italy, the wars of the Risorgimento could be justified as part of a struggle for liberation from foreign oppression, and no doubt they were perceived by an influential middle class minority as such. But what is instructive about the Italian experience is the enormous difficulty which governments had after liberation in forming any kind of national sentiment. For several decades after 1860 governments clearly lived in fear of the assertion of

5 For a more detailed treatment of these themes see Paul Corner and Giovanna Procacci, "The Italian experience of 'total' mobilization 1915-1920", in: J. Horne, ed., *State, society and mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, Cambridge 1997, 223-240.

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centrifugal forces which had been released by the wars of liberation. The repressive character of the Italian state, apparent in the entire period before the First War and during the conflict, derived from this fear of disintegration of the new Italian state. The First War did nothing to change this condition; rather it appears to have accentuated previous trends. In some senses Fascism was a consequence of this accentuation. But to have any chance of real success Fascism had to distort the real memory of the First World War – to create a secular religion around the memory of the conflict[6] – which proved ultimately fragile and unconvincing. The disastrous Second World War – even less justified from the Italian point of view than the First – demonstrated the fragility of the Fascist hold on the nation. At the same time the transformation of the war into a battle of liberation against the Nazis did produce a memory of resistance to oppression which has formed the foundation of the Italian Republic until recent years – until, that is, it too has been brought into question.

6 See E. Gentile, *Il culto del littorio*, Roma 1993.

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# Politicizing the Past: World War I in Modern Greek Ideology

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The events that took place during World War I and especially during its last phase are regarded by the Greeks as possibly the most significant turning point in their modern history – with the exception, of course, of the emergence of the Hellenic state in 1830. This view is generally founded on the following indisputable facts: first, the end of the War irrevocably ended Greece's process of national integration, which had kept the Greeks at loggerheads with the Turks for over a hundred years, and with the Bulgarians for some fifty years. The end of this process was not only evident from the consolidation of borders but also ensured by the virtual eradication of the factors that caused the continuous denial of the *status quo* in the wider region.

The strongest of these factors were the overlapping irredentist claims, which were frequently inflamed by 'encircled' national minorities living in the territories of all the three Balkan states, neighbours that were themselves long-time rivals. This factor faded after what was (until then) the area's largest ethnic cleansing process, starting with the Balkan Wars in 1912-13, continuing with the Greek-Turkish crises of 1913-14, and largely culminating with World War I. This exchange of populations was sealed by the Treaty of Neuilly of 1919 (which governed the voluntary exchange of Greeks and Bulgarians, on the basis of national consciousness), and the Treaty of Lausanne, of 1923 (which imposed an obligatory exchange of Greek-Orthodox and Muslim populations between Greece and Turkey). When the exchange was complete, ethnic homogeneity had been imposed, at least in the most sensitive border areas. This drastically curbed the main factor that perpetuated disputes over the political map of the Southern Balkans, one that particularly affected Greece's border relations with its eastern and northern neighbours.[1]

In the aftermath of World War I, then, Greece entered a new reality, one whose basic territorial, demographic, economic, and social parameters had been

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1 St. P. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*, New York 1932; D. Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact upon Greece*, Paris 1962; Cf. Y. G. Mourelos, "The 1914 Persecutions and the First Attempt at an Exchange of Minorities between Greece and Turkey", *Balkan Studies* 26/2 (1985), 389-413; J. A. Petropoulos, "The Compulsory Exchange of Populations: Greek-Turkish Peacemaking, 1922-1930," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 2 (1976) 135-160. On Greece's attitude towards her minorities in the the inter-war period cf. L. Divani, *Ellada kai meionotites. To systima diethnous prostasias tis Koinonias ton Ethnon* [Greece and Minorities: The system of international protection by the League of Nations], Athens 1995, 72 ff.

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formed by the dramatic events of the previous decade. It was a logical consequence that the main expressions of modern Greek ideology depended to an enormous extent on the events of the Great War. This is true of the other nations of the area as well, of course, but what is noticeable is how much, and for how long, the Greeks remained ideologically dependent on the war. It maintained itself throughout the inter-war and post-war periods, and (at least in some cases and in various forms) it still affects the ideological climate in the "national centre" and in the Greek Diaspora.

The best-known facet of this ideological heritage was the so-called "National Schism" (*Ethnikos Dichasmos*). It began in 1915-16 over the issue of Greek participation in the war. King Constantine I (1868-1923/1913-22) favoured neutrality, an option that rather benefited the Central Powers. Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos (1864-1936), on the other hand, supported Greece's entry to the war on the side of the Entente. The king's refusal to accept his prime minister's policy led to an unbridgeable constitutional conflict, which was further embittered by foreign intervention, a temporary split between the Venizelist "State of Thessaloniki," in the north, and the royalist "State of Athens" in the south, and an implacable political war that lasted for decades.[2] All the constitutional upheavals of the inter-war period – which peaked with the repeated military coups of the 1924-36 period and the dictatorship (in 1936-40) of Ioannis Metaxas (1871-1941) – mainly revolved around the confrontation of Venizelism and anti-Venizelism.[3] Furthermore, this sharp ideological polarization was largely responsible for the political, constitutional and civil convulsions that seized Greece after World War II, the most dramatic being the 1944-49 Civil War and the 1967-74 Colonels' dictatorship.[4]

In this paper, I do not intend to discuss the "National Schism" – this issue has attracted sufficient attention from Greek and foreign historiography, though the results have been of uneven quality. I will focus on less-noted facets of contemporary Greek ideological history, whose point of reference was (and continue to be) the events of World War I. As might be expected, a leading role in this field was played by the social groups that had the most direct experience of the War: the refugees.

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2 For a detailed testimony of the period, see G. Ventiris, *I Hellas tou 1910-1920* [Greece in 1910-1920], vols. 1-2, Athens 1931 (reprinted in 1970); Cf. G. B. Leon, "Greece and the Central Powers, 1913-1914: The Origins of the National Schism", *Südostforschungen* 39 (1980), 116-167.

3 For a political analysis on the Venizelist phenomenon, cf. Th. Diamantopoulos, *O venizelismos* [Venizelism], Athens 1985. George Th. Mavrogordatos, *Ethikos dichasmos kai maziki organosi I* [National Schism and Mass Organization, I], Athens 1996, focuses on the dynamic reaction of the anti-Venizelist side.

4 A concise guide to this chapter of contemporary Greek history is to be found in Const. Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy*, Baltimore 1969 (a Greek version was published in Athens in 1981).

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The role of the refugee factor cannot be understood if the magnitude of the problem is not taken into account. Until the collapse of the Greek front in Asia Minor, in September of 1922, a total of 151,892 people had sought refuge in Greece (86,422 from Turkey, 37,635 from the Caucasus and Russia, 20,977 from Bulgaria, and 6,858 from other countries in the region). If we add to this number the additional tens of thousands (certainly over 50,000) who left the territory of Southern Albania, Southern Serbia, and Bulgaria – *en masse* or incrementally – in the wake of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and until the fall of 1918, then we have a total of at least 200,000 souls. However, this number pales before the masses of refugees who arrived in Greece after 1922, mainly from the same places, and especially from Eastern Thrace, Western Asia Minor, and the Pontic region, whose numbers exceeded one million (1,069,957).

According to the data of the Special Commission of the League of Nations, the total number of refugees in Greece in 1923 was 1,360,000 (70,000 from the Caucasus and Southern Russia, 30,000 from Bulgaria and 1,260,000 from various areas of Turkey). In the first official census, in 1928, the total number of Greeks who declared they were refugees seems somewhat less (1,221,849), since in the meantime a number of them had emigrated to other countries (Egypt, Australia, Western Europe, and especially the Americas). In any case, the significant size of the refugee population of Greece becomes evident if it is compared to the native Greek population in 1928, which was 4,982,835 people. In other words, in 1928 one-fourth of the 6,204,684 inhabitants of the country were refugees, originating mainly from Turkey.[5]

Initially, the ideological contribution of the refugees was felt in party politics. They were accustomed to receiving advantages from special political mechanisms set up through the multiple refugee associations and organizations, often under the leadership of maximalist demagogues. Over the long term, the majority of the refugees were supporters of Venizelos.[6] Their almost passionate attachment to the charismatic Liberal leader was due to various historical and social factors: Venizelos' heritage of irredentist policy from the aftermath of the Young Turk coup of 1908 to 1920, and the conditions of social integration and rehabilitation of the refugees (the local bureaucracy and "native" or "indigenous" mentality being almost inimical to them, while the Venizelist attitude seemed more favourable). On the other hand, the behaviour of the refugees as a compact voting bloc

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5 National Statistical Service, *Annual Statistics of Greece*, Athens 1930, 41, 130; Cf. Petropoulos, "The Compulsory Exchange", 433; P. Kitromilides and Al. Alexandris, "Ethnic Survival, Nationalism and Forced Migration", *Deltion Kentrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon* [hereafter: *DKMS* ] 5 (1984-85), 33-34.

6 For a remarkable exeption cf. Loukianos Hassiotis, "Prosfygikes omades kai exoteriki politiki: I periptosi ton Voreiomakedonon, 1913-1920, 1941-1050" [Refugee groups and foreign policy: The case of North-Macedonians, 1913-1920, 1941-1950], in: *Prosfyges sta Balkania: Mnimi kai ensomatosi,* Bas. K. Gounaris - Iak. D. Michailidis, eds., Athens, 2004, 213-252.

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(which led to their becoming a virtual arbiter of electoral competition) in turn provoked an anti-Venizelist response that concluded in the occasional appearance of anti-refugee sentiment. These instances of polarization were exacerbated by additional factors, mainly economic, but also ideological: the compulsory expropriation and redistribution of small agricultural landholdings between both natives and refugees, for instance, or the traditional liberal, even republican, tendencies of the refugees, compared to the conservatism or monarchism of anti-Venizelists. The final result was the occasional sharp political and electoral divergence between natives and refugees that ensued, with sections of society rallying to one side or the other.[7]

This situation seemed to be overturned in 1930 with the Ankara Convention, when Venizelos accepted the principle that populations exchanged between Greece and Turkey would receive mutual property compensation. The Greek refugees, who had abandoned mainly urban property, expected that this would be liquidated to provide for their own housing and rehabilitation in Greece. Venizelos was accused of selling out the refugees in return for a Greek-Turkish *rapprochement,* and the conservatives – including some leaders of his own party – the left, and the communists (who were not yet represented in the Parliament) entrench themselves against him, always in the name of refugee rights. This development, combined with several other factors of an economic, social, and purely political nature, favoured the shift of the radical, heretofore consistently Venizelist refugee groups to the left. In 1935 half the leadership of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) consisted of refugees, with Nikos Zachariadis (1905-1973), a native of Eastern Thrace, prominently at its head.[8]

It is notable that there was no longer any room for revanchist nationalist ideologies among the greater part of the refugees (though this is less so for non-refugees). This can be explained by the need arising among the greater part of the population to address the large internal problems caused by the upheavals of the Great War. From this point of view, we may say that during the inter-war period the historical memory of the World War I was set aside in favour of more immediate social and political priorities. With few exceptions, the refugee associations that were founded in large numbers from 1923 onwards had philanthropic and social objectives – support for indigent refugees, promotion of loans, agricultural expropriations, housing programs.[9]

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7 G. Th. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922-1936*, Univ. California Press 1983, 207 ff.

8 Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic*, 210ff, 214ff, 221ff. For the diplomatic framework of the Ankara Convention, see I. Anastassiadou, "O Venizelos kai to ellinotourkiko Symphono Philias" [Venizelos and Greek-Turkish Agreement of Friendship], in: Th. Veremis and Od. Dimitrakopoulos, eds., *Meletimata gyro apo to Venizelo kai tin epochi tou*, Athens 1980, 309-426.

9 A systematic registration of these associations was prepared by M. Kouroupou, "Bibliografia entypon ton mikrasiatikon idrymaton kai syllogon" [A bibliography of the publica-

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In addition, the early programs of the academic institutions relating to refugees tended to be orientated toward literature and ethnography, rather than history.[10] It may not be coincidental that in questionnaires used in interviews with refugees – prepared by the "Centre for Asia Minor Studies" (founded in 1930 as a "Music and Folklore Archive") – what few references there were to wartime events were politically "painless".[11] The "Committee for Pontic Studies" (founded in 1929) only started to show an interest in the study of the modern and contemporary Pontic history in the 1950s. It has yet to present any noteworthy historical work on the 1908-1923 period.[12]

One can suppose that the reasons for this want of historiographical reflection are more epistemological and academic than political. For instance, those working in these institutions tended to be exponents of a literary tradition that was strong in pre-war Greece. For this reason, the basic criterion of their activity was not the recording of historical testimonies (particularly for recent history) but the preservation of the cultural traditions of the refugees – linguistic, musical, folkloric – in a way that would promote concord and tolerance and not contrast with the Muslim populations living in the same area at that time.[13] However, the spectre of the "National Schism" was still ambient in the political climate of the country, a fact that did not favour concern with the period of its genesis and dominance. Along with historiographical and political causes for such neglect, we must also factor in purely psychological ones. The informants themselves avoided mentioning events connected to their dramatic experiences; as happens in such cases, they now wished to recover from their traumas by forgetting.

However, the activities of the plethora of refugee associations (numbering more than 160 as late as 1971), especially those of a non-academic, social welfare

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tions of the Asia Minor institutions and associations], *DKMS* 3 (1982), 149-183; 10 (1993-94) 225-288. Research on their pre-war activities has been carried out by K. Mamoni; cf. K. Mamoni, "Les associations pour la propagande de l'instruction grecque à Constantinople, 1861-1922," *Balkan Studies* 16 (1976), 103-112; "Somateiaki organosi tou Ellinismou sti M. Asia" [The organisation of the Greek associations in Asia Minor], *DKMS* 6 (1986-87), 155-225; and *Syllogoi Thrakis kai Anatolikis Romylias, 1861-1922* [Associations of Thrace and Eastern Rumelia, 1861-1922], Thessaloniki 1995.

10 Kentro Mikrasiatikon Spoudon [hereafter: KMS], *Exintapente chronia epistimonikis prosforas* [Centre for Asia Minor Studies. Sixty-five Years of Scientific Contribution], Athens 1996, 59ff, 105-108.

11 KMS, *O teleftaios Ellinismos tis Mikras Asias. Ekthesi tou ergou tou Kentrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon* [The Last Hellenism of Asia Minor. A Report on the Work carried out by the Centre for Asia Minor Studies], Athens 1974, 24ff, 30 ff.

12 Cf. Od. Lampsidis, "I Epitropi Pontiakon Meleton kai i symvoli aftis eis tin epistimonikin erevnan tou ellinikou Pontou" [The Committee for Pontic Studies and its contribution to the scientific research of the Greek Pontus], *Pontiaki Stoa* 1 (1971), 9-32. Cf. the Committee's Articles, published in: *Archeion Pontou* 2 (1929), 233-236.

13 KMS, *O teleftaios Ellinismos*, 42ff; Cf. N. Milioris, "Oi mikrasiatikes spoudes" [The Asia Minor Studies], *Mikrasiatika Chronika* 16 (1975), 185-317, and G. Tenekidis's Preface in KMS, *I Exodos* [The Exodus], vol. 1, Athens 1980, xxvii ff.

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character, were not free of ideological baggage. Firstly, their activities (religious events, anniversaries, newspapers, occasional publications, etc.) promoted the existing or even imagined particularities of each refugee group. These particularities supported the cultivation of a distinct cultural physiognomy – based on area of origin – and, at a second stage, of a common "refugee identity".[14] This process of "identity-formation" was completed in three stages. in the first stage, the struggle was concerned with the refugees' survival and their inclusion within greater Greek society. The most important initiatives of the first period aimed at this twofold objective.[15] This is true of those cases in which the refugee element became involved in political disputes, mentioned above, but also in some marginal nationalist movements. The "National Union of Greece" (*Ethniki Enosis Ellados,* known as 3E), for instance, which was mainly composed of refugees, used protofascist and anti-Semitic tactics to support the financial interests of the refugee merchants of Thessaloniki against their Jewish competitors.[16]

During the second phase of the history of refugee associations – which brings us from the inter-war period to the first post-war decade – the question of social integration is no longer as acute. For this reason, refugee associations in Greece, although their number and activities remain unreduced, did not show a perceptible ideological role – they did not, in any case, decisively affect the political balance. In spite of this, the second generation of some refugee groups (especially the Pontic ones) did not cease to express, at least at the local level, a feeling of pride in their origin and of solidarity towards the members of their particular group, namely those with common roots.[17]

The situation began to change perceptibly when, in the third phase, the spectre of complete assimilation arose. From the beginning of the 50s, then, efforts to promote "refugee identity" already constituted a response to the complete loss of those experiences that the refugees had brought to Greece from their ancestral homelands. However descent, family traditions, and cultural and social initiatives of social welfare associations alone were insufficient to ensure that these

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14 For a sociological approach to this "identity" among the Pontic Greeks see M. K. Vergeti, *Apo ton Ponto stin Ellada. Diadikasies diamorfosis mias ethnotopikis taftotitas* [From Pontus to Greece. The Process of the Formation of an Ethno-regional Identity], Thessaloniki 1994, 59ff, 215ff, 289ff; Cf. P. Fann, "The Pontic Myth of Homeland: Cultural Expressions of Nationalism and Ethnicism in Pontos and Greece, 1870-1990", *Journal of Refugee Studies* [hereafter: *JRS*], 4/4 (1991), 340-356, and A. Ismyrliadou, "Oi prosfygikoi syllogoi os phoreis diatirisis prosfygikis taftotitas. I periptosi tou Syllogou Madytion sti Thessaloniki" [The refugee associations as vehicle of the conservation of the refugee identity. The case of the Madytians in Thessaloniki], in: *Opseis tou Mikrasiatikou Zitimatos. Istoriki theorisi kai proektaseis,* Thessaloniki 1994, 175-184.

15 Cf. the observations expressed in the *Pepragmena* [Proceedings] of the "Committee for Pontic Studies," *Archeion Pontou,* 41 (1987), 448-450.

16 Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn,* 209, 255, 258-259; cf. G. Moutafis, "I oikonomiki kai koinoniki domi tis Thessalonikis, 1929-1933" [The economic and social structure of Thessaloniki, 1929-1933], *Thessaloniki* 2 (1990), 399-401.

17 Vergeti, *Apo ton Ponto,* 231ff.

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experiences – always connected to the events of World War I – could substantially influence the younger generations.

Additional interconnected factors, external and internal, appeared in succession from the mid-1950s – and the return of the Cyprus issue to the political scene – to the fall of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s. Refugee identity was reinforced by the events of September 1955 in Istanbul and the subsequent resurrection, albeit on a smaller scale, of the refugee problem with the forcible relocation of the Greeks of Constantinople, and later (after 1964), those of the islands of Imbros and Tenedos.[18] In 1974, a significant part of the Greek Cypriot population (180,000 souls) also became refugees, both inside and outside the island.[19] The response to these challenges took place on a Greek-wide scale, of course. But its most direct advocates were social groups of refugee descent, both in Greece and in the Diaspora.[20] Their basic point of reference was the correspondence between the new tragedies and those of World War I.

The upward social mobility of the third generation of refugees provided different conditions for the renewal of the idea of refugee particularism and its prospective utility in the political arena. Since the end of the 1960s, almost all Greek political parties considered themselves obliged to participate in the memorial events of refugee associations, and to promote positions that conformed not only to their established celebratory and ceremonial obligations, but to a selectively chosen ideological use for World War I. In the same period Greek historiography, evidently freed from the phobias of the "National Schism," turned with unprecedented enthusiasm to the study of the Great War. Alongside the strictly academic studies (which for the first time combined material from Greek archives with testimony from the main European and American sources), some ideologically-driven work was also produced; at least part of this production is again due to the encouragement of refugee circles. In the mid-1980s, in fact, efforts were made to surpass some of the academic research centres that persisted

18 Cf. A. Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations, 1918-1974*, Athens 1983, 270ff., and the same author's "Imbros and Tenedos: A Study in Turkish Attitudes Toward Two Ethnic Greek Island Communities Since 1923", *Journal of Hellenic Diaspora*, 7/1 (1980), 5-31.

19 For a general view: St. T. Constantinou, "Economic Factors and Political Upheavals as Determinants of International Migration; the Case of Cyprus", *Praktika tou A. Diethnous Symposiou Kypriakis Metanastevsis*, Nicosia 1990, 146, table 1, 157. On the ideological identity of the Cypriot refugees, as both insiders and outsiders, in connection to the protracted political uncertainty of their status, cf. Roger Zetter, "The Greek-Cypriot Refugees: Perceptions of Return under Conditions of Protracted Exile", *International Migration Review* 2 (Summer 1994), 307-322, and the same author's "Reconceptualising the Myth of Return: Continuity and Transition amongst the Greek-Cypriot Refugees of 1974", *JRS* 12/1 (1999), 1-22.

20 On the role of the Greek Diaspora communities, particularly the Greek-American ones, see Van Coufoudakis, "The Reverse Influence Phenomenon: The Impact of the Greek-American Lobby on the Foreign Policy of Greece," in: V. Coufoudakis, D. Constas, and D. Platias, eds., *Diasporas in World Politics*, New York 1993, 51-75.

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in avoiding contemporary history (as happened, for example, with the Commission of Pontic Studies) with newer and rather more ideologically oriented academic associations, such as the "Centre for Pontic Studies."[21]

Ideological and political interventions by the refugees over the last thirty years were also affected, to some extent, by a widely discussed historical chapter of the same period, the Armenian genocide. It is no coincidence that the refugee element, especially the Pontic one, responded most directly to the Greek-Armenian movement for the recognition of the genocide, which began to take hold in Greece from the late 1960s.[22] The Armenian efforts provided a model for how to lobby on behalf of a similar issue, which had until then been marginalized: the persecution of Greeks in the Pontus in 1916-22. The group's first achievement was the Hellenic Parliament's unanimous adoption, in February 1994, of a special law that established May 19 as the day of remembrance for the Pontic Greek victims of genocide. Functioning on a reciprocal basis, this law opened the way for the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the Greek Parliament in April 1996.[23] Finally in October 1998, after intervention by associations and deputies representing refugees from Eastern Thrace and the rest of Asia Minor (especially Ionia), Parliament adopted one further resolution, which declared September 14 (the day of Smyrna's destruction) the annual Memorial Day for the victims of the genocide of all Greeks of Asia Minor, "perpetrated by the Turkish state".

The government later suspended the ratification of this last resolution, however, on historical grounds – namely, whether the disaster befalling the Greeks of Asia Minor at the end of the World War I constituted a genocide. This resulted in uproar from almost all refugee organizations, both in Greece and in the Diaspora, which attributed the decision to suspend the law to evident political choices on the part of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or even to Athens' compliance to pressures from Ankara.[24]

The last stage in the process of politicizing World War I was affected by the collapse of the Soviet Union and, afterwards, of the Balkan communist regimes. Beginning in the early 1990s there was a massive wave of immigration involving thousands of Greeks who had lived in the former Soviet Republics of Central

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21 M. Charalambidis and K. Photiadis's Preface in the first publication of the "Centre," *Pontioi. Dikaioma sti mnimi* [Pontians: Right of Memory], Athens 1987, 9-11, speaks volumes for this orientation.

22 On this tendency cf. I. K. Hassiotis, "The Armenians", *Minorities in Greece. Aspects of a Plural Society,* R. Clogg, ed., London 2002, 107 ff.

23 The bill "For the establishment of the 24th of April as the Day of commemoration of the genocide of Armenians by Turkey" was unanimously accepted in principle, in article and in its entirety in one discussion in the Hellenic Parliament Resolution no. 2397/1996 (April 25, 1996), ratificated in a Presidential Decree (no. 162), which was published later in the *Ephimeris tis Kyverniseos* [Official Gazette of the Government], no. 144 (July 7, 1997).

24 Nonetheless, the decision was included in a Presidential Decree (no. 2645) published in the *Ephimeris tis Kyverniseos,* no. 234/1 (October 13, 1998).

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Asia and Transcaucasia and Southern Albania (Northern Epirus).[25] The new "palinostisis" (repatriation) saw the question of settling and integrating decades-old Diaspora populations return to the limelight. Initially these problems were confronted by the associations that had been founded by refugees from the same countries and – in the case of Soviet refugees, especially those from Southern Russia, Georgia and Armenia – Pontic organizations.[26]

What is of interest here is that this solidarity was combined with the new promotion of Greece's World War I adventures. Of special concern was the chapter that saw the near-forced emigration of Greeks from Pontus to Transcaucasia and Southern Russia in early twentieth century, particularly from 1915 to 21.[27] At the same time, the sufferings of Greeks during the Stalinist persecutions of 1936-38 and the deportations of 1944-47 were, for the first time, emphatically presented in Greece.[28] A similar solidarity with the Greeks of Albania and Bulgaria began to be exhibited by similar associations that had operated in Greece since the first decades of the twentieth century, and which until lately had not shown the dynamism of associations from Turkey.

The question remains as to why the events of World War I concerned – indeed still concern – Greeks more directly than other significant periods of Greek history, such as World War II or even the Greek Civil War of 1946-49. It is worth asking whether the continuous rekindling of the historical memory for this particular period of Eastern Mediterranean history has been a by-product of political circumstances and the successive crises in the Greek-Turkish relations in particular. Undeniably, the political and historical juncture favoured the promotion of this phenomenon but it did not create it. It is evident that the appeal to respect the memory of the ancestors' "chamenes" (lost) or "alismonites" (unforgettable) "patrides" (homelands) is derived from an ideological, even moral, ap-

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25 For the first case cf. I. K. Hassiotis, ed., *Oi Ellines tis Rosias kai tis Sovietikis Enosis. Metoikesies kai ektopismoi, organosi kai ideologia* [The Greeks of Russia and the Soviet Union: Migrations and desplacements, organization and ideology], Thessaloniki 1997 (contributions by I. K. Hassiotis, A. Xanthopoulou-Kyriakou and Vl. Agtzidis).

26 K. Kasimati, ed., *Pontioi metanastes apo tin proin Sovietiki Enosi: Koinoniki kai oikonomiki tous entaxi* [Pontic emigrants from the former Soviet Union: Their social and economical integration], Athens 1992. Regarding the Hellenic policy towards the new wave of Greek immigrants from the ex-USSR, cf. D. Kokkinos, "The Greek State's Overview of the Pontian Issue", *JRS,* 4/4 (1991) 312-314, and the same author's "The Reception of Pontians from the Soviet Union in Greece", *ibid.*, 395-399. For the acculturation difficulties of both the Pontic Greeks and those coming from Southern Albania cf. K. Mavreas, "Diastaseis tou koinonikou apokleismou: Pontioi kai Voreioepirotes prosfyges stin Ellada" [Dimensions of social exclusion: Pontic and North-Epirotan Greeks in Greece], *Epitheorisi Koinonikon Erevnon*, 96-97 (1998), 185-218.

27 Hassiotis, *Oi Ellines,* 85ff, 127ff, 268ff. Cf. A. Xanthopoulou-Kyriakou, "The Diaspora of the Greeks of the Pontos", *JRS* 4/4 (1991), 357-363.

28 Vl. Agtzidis, "The Persecutions of the Pontic Greeks in the Soviet Union", *JRS* 4/4 (1991), 372-381; cf. the same author's more comprehensive analysis in Hassiotis, *Oi Ellines tis Rosias,* 417ff, 431ff.

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proach to history. Notwithstanding the impulses that this approach may awaken in our academic sensibilities, it should not be facilely attributed to political opportunism, but to rather more significant factors.

The need of ethno-regional or cultural groups to demonstrate their own particular "identity" through collective memory is especially pronounced in periods in which they experience integration into a homogeneous social environment. Groups of refugee origin persistently claimed this particularism during the precise years when their assimilation within Hellenic society had begun to be felt. In the end, sensitivity to this development did not limit itself to a part (albeit a large and dynamic one) of the Greek people. Rather it spread, ideologically and socially, to permeate the majority of Greeks within Greece, but especially in the Diaspora. Consequently, the awareness of particular cultural "identity" is treated as a persistent factor in strengthening modern Greek national identity. Although ideological criteria and practice have been adjusted when appealing to particularism, the development of particularism during the last eighty years nevertheless had a nationwide dimension and a lasting character.

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# Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies during the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1916

*Hilmar Kaiser (Solingen)*

More than eight decades after the Armenian Genocide, historians still struggle to document and better comprehend the crime. The existing literature on the topic varies in range from memoirs and scholarly analyses[1] to outright denial.[2] The key denial argument maintains that the deportations of Armenians constituted an administrative measure within the limits of Ottoman law. Moreover, it claims that the Ottoman government took precautions to avoid losses of human life and property. In support of this thesis, some authors quote a series of provisional laws, regulations and government orders.[3]

The second principal denial argument is the so-called 'provocation thesis.'[4] German diplomats developed this thesis in May 1915. They asserted that the Ottoman government was acting in justified self-defence against an Armenian revolutionary movement that threatened the Ottoman war effort. Downplaying the known atrocities, the German draft alleged that while outrages against innocent Armenians had taken place, these had been rare occurrences and the

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1 For an account of personal experiences see: John Minassian, *Many Hills Yet to Climb. Memoirs of an Armenian Deportee*, Santa Barbara: Jim Cook Publisher, 1986. An analysis based on interviews with survivors has been published by Donald E. Miller / Lorna Toryan Miller, *An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*, Berkeley: California University Press, 1993.

2 The origins of Ottoman denial are discussed in Hilmar Kaiser, "Dall'impero alla repubblicca: le continuità del negazionismo turco," in: *Storia, verità, guistizia. I crimini del XX secolo*, edited by Marcello Flores, Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2001, pp. 89-113.

3 See, for instance, the statement of the general director of the Turkish state archives: "The Armenians, who founded some intriguous [sic!] associations and parties and massacred Turkish population by causing events for various reasons due to their dream to establish an Armenian state in East Anatolia, colloborated [sic!] with the enemy during World War I when the soldiers were at the front, they betrayed the state and attacked the unweaponed [sic!] Turks. Consequently, they forced the Ottoman State to take decision for deportation. It should be known that the deported Armenians are those who acted against the state. The Armenians keeping faithful to the state have never been deported. All the needs, the security and the accomodation [sic!] of the deported Armenians were provided." Ismet Binark, "Foreword," in: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanli Arşivi Daire Bakanlığı, Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915 - 1920)*, Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1994, p. xxi. In a recent publication, an author estimated the Armenian losses due to massacres at about 9-10,000 while 25-30,000 had died of diseases. See Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918)*, Ankara Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2001, p. 77.

4 For a discussion of the provocation thesis see: Robert F. Melson, *Revolution and Genocide. On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust*. Foreword by Leo Kuper, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992, pp. 49, 51, 64, 154, 169-170.

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Ottoman authorities had punished the perpetrators. Moreover, such incidents were understandable and not surprising. In sum, the German diplomats blamed the victims, although they had abundant evidence to the contrary at hand. With only slight alterations, this rationale forms the basis for current denial publications.[5]

After the end of the killings, the properties of genocide victims formed a strategic asset in the hands of the Ottoman government and its successor the Turkish Republic. Soon, however, survivors and descendants of the victims insisted on their rights to their property and began pursuing this issue.[6] Some of them even obtained official Ottoman documents pertaining to the confiscation of these properties.[7] Despite the paramount importance of the property issue in the execution of the Armenian Genocide and its aftermath, relatively few studies have addressed the issue so far.[8]

This paper discusses the legal framework and practice of the deportations and the accompanying plunder of Armenian properties. It will demonstrate that orders issued by Talaat Bey, the Ottoman Interior Minister, and his assistants carried greater weight than published provisional laws. In other words, these laws – and, accordingly, the legality of Ottoman government policies – were merely a fiction. In contradistinction to the 'provocation thesis,' it is argued that the Armenian Genocide formed part of a government policy to destroy the empire's non-Turkish communities. Significantly, the Ottoman government had adopted this policy well before the beginning of the First World War and the Armenian Genocide.[9] The new confiscation policy enforced during the genocide provides further insights, however, into the Ottoman government's motivates and strategies.

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5 Hilmar Kaiser, "Le génocide arménien: négation 'à l'allemande'," in: *L'actualité du Génocide des Arméniens. Actes du colloque organisé par le Comité de Défense de la Cause Arménienne*, Paris: Edipol, 1999, pp. 75-91.

6 *Confiscation des biens des réfugiés arméniens par le gouvernement turc.* Consultation de M. M. Gilbert Gidel, Albert de Lapradelle, Louis Le Fur et André Mandelstam, Paris: Imprimerie Masis, 1929.

7 Aris Kalfaian, *Chomaklou. The History of an Armenian Village.* Translated by Krikor Asadourian, edited and revised with a preface and afterword by Michael Ekizian, New York, NY: Chomaklou Compatriotic Society, 1982 pp. 148-175.

8 See for instance: Kévork K. Baghdjian, *La confiscation, par le gouvernement turc, des biens arméniens dit 'abandonnés.'*, Préface d'Yves Ternon, Montreal, n. p., 1987; Dickran Kouymjian, "La confiscation des biens et la destruction des monuments historiques comme manifestations du processus génocidaire," in: *L'actualité du génocide*, pp. 219-230; Stepan Astourian, "Genocidal Process, Reflections on the Armeno-Turkish Polarization," in: Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide. History, Politics, Ethics.* Foreword Governor George Deukmejian, New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1992 pp. 71-72.

9 Fikret Adanır / Hilmar Kaiser, "Migration, Deportation, and Nation-Building: the Case of the Ottoman Empire," in: René Leboutte, ed., *Migrations and Migrants in Historical Perspective. Permanencies and Innovations*, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2000 pp. 273-292.

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## 1. *Under-cover Ottoman government operations against non-Muslim communities in 1914*

The Balkan Wars of 1912/13 resulted in the loss of nearly all the Ottoman Empire's European territories. Only a relatively small area on the advances of the Straits remained under Ottoman sovereignty. Despite the peace settlement, the future of the Ottoman state was not at all secure in the eyes of the ruling "Committee of Union and Progress" (hereafter: CUP). The committee regarded the presence of non-Turkish and non-Muslim communities in areas close to the empire's borders to be dangerous, as these communities might provide a pretext for a further splitting up of Ottoman territory. Hence, to frustrate future encroachments by foreign states and to undermine the social basis for non-Turkish groups' independence movements, the CUP embarked on a clandestine campaign to weaken and destroy those communities it distrusted.

During the Balkan wars, in 1913, the Ottoman army had already destroyed several non-Muslim Ottoman villages in Eastern Thrace, thereby weakening the non-Muslim communities in this strategic region.[10] In the summer of 1914 the displacement campaign gained new momentum – this time along the Aegean littoral. The principal targets were Greek villages and farms. Under the guise of a popular boycott against Greek imports and businesses, local CUP-leaders and Ottoman officials organised bands and burned down houses and killed Greek villagers and landowners. The CUP organised these attacks in secrecy, trying to maintain a semblance of legality on the part of the government. This was an important consideration needed to avoid negative diplomatic repercussions. When Ottoman authorities left known perpetrators unpunished and free to continue with their activities, many Ottoman citizens of Greek descent left their homes and took refuge on the Greek islands. In sum, the CUP succeeded in decisively weakening the Greek communities in the region.[11]

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10 Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars, Washington, D.C.: "Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 1914," pp. 129-130, 437-349, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Division of Intercourse and Education,* Publication No. 4.

11 Wangenheim to Bethmann Hollweg, Therapia, June 25, 1914 A 12811 (hereafter: *AA-PA*), Türkei 168/11 No. 175; Humbert to Wangenheim, Smyrna, June 25, 1914 J. No. 2795 copy enclosure in Wangenheim to Bethmann Hollweg, Therapia, June 6, 1914 A 13109 *AA-PA* Türkei 168/11 No. 179; Schönberg to Mutius, Therapia, July 9, 1914 enclosure in Mutius to Bethmann Hollweg, Therapia, July, 1914 A 13846 *AA-PA* Türkei 168/11 No. 187. One of the organizers of the outrages was Celal [Bayar], the responsible CUP secretary for Smyrna. He had been personally selected by the party's general secretary Midhat Şükrü [Bleda] for the task. After the CUP's central committee had endorsed Celal Bey's nomination, the latter was sent immediately from Constantinople to Smyrna. Decades later, Bayar estimated that about 130,000 Greeks were displaced during the persecutions. Sarcastically he added that his work was later completed and internationally sanctioned by the so-called exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey after 1923. Celal Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım*, vol. 5, Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1967, pp. 1568-1569; Midhat Şükrü Bleda,

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In fall of 1914, the CUP's policy changed from clandestine operation to open repression. The beginning of the First World War and the conclusion of a German-Ottoman alliance had created a new situation. Now the Ottoman government felt secure enough to unilaterally renounce those international treaties that limited its authority over foreign citizens residing within its territory. Soon the CUP targeted the Zionist colonies and Russian Jewish immigrants in Palestine. The government's principal operative was a high-ranking police official and intelligence officer Manastırlı Behaeddin Bey.[12] On December 17, 1914, the campaign culminated in a roundup and deportation of Jews from Jaffa. However the German ambassador, Hans Von Wangenheim, and his US colleague, Henry Morgenthau, intervened with the Ottoman government. The German government feared the negative impact its ally's action might have on international public opinion. The diplomatic pressure achieved its goal and further deportations did not occur. The harassment, however, continued.[13]

*The Destruction of the Ottoman Armenian Communities*

Late in 1914 the Ottoman Third Army, under the command of Enver Pasha, the Ottoman Minister of War, attacked the Russian army on its eastern front. Low temperatures and deep snow killed many Ottoman troops and possibly as few as 10% of the soldiers survived the campaign. Following this crushing defeat, the Ottoman general staff anticipated a Russian counterattack in spring. The Third army had only limited troops to counter this threat.[14]

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*İmparatorluğun Çöküşü*, Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1979, 55. Another principal organizer of the anti-Greek campaign was a founding-member of the CUP. Mehmed Reshid Bey, the governor of the sub-province of Karesi. In his memoirs, Reshid Bey praised himself for having accomplished his task without allowing outrages to take place like in the Smyrna region. Mehmed Reşid Şahingiray, *Hayatı ve Hatıraları*, edited by Nejdet Bilgi, Izmir: Akademi Kitabevi, 1997, 112-113. Later, Reshid became infamous for organizing the extermination of the Armenians in the province of Diarbekir, receiving the nickname "kasap" (the butcher); Waldburg to Hertling, Pera, Aug. 5, 1918 A 38036 *AA-PA* Rußland 97a/24a No. 223.

12 Hilmar Kaiser, "The Committee of Union and Progress, the Zionists and the Armenian Genocide." Paper presented at the conference *Genocide in the 20th Century. Ninety Years since the Armenian Genocide*, Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Jerusalem, Apr. 7, 2005.

13 Isaiah Friedman, *Germany, Turkey, and Zionism 1897-1918*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 197-199, 213, 242. Ruppin to Lichtheim, Jaffa, March 28, 1915 (copy) enclosed in Actions-Comité to Members, Berlin, April 30, 1915, *Central Zionist Archives*, Jerusalem, L 5, 52.

14 For a discussion of the battle at Sarikamish see: W. E. D. Allen / Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields. A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1953, pp. 240-292. The eyewitness report by a participant of the campaign is found in Wangenheim to Bethmann Hollweg, Pera, April 17, 1915 A 13937 *AA-PA* Weltkrieg 11d secr./5 No. 241 enclosure 2 reports by Paul Schwarz, Constantinople, April 15, 1915.

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The CUP's fear of a Russian occupation of Ottoman territory became a determining factor in the timing and execution of the Armenian Genocide.[15] The destruction began in the districts along the Russian lines. Here deportations were not initiated. The Ottoman army and units of the so-called 'Special Organisation' massacred Armenians in, or within a short distance of, their villages. In the process, the movable and immovable properties of the victims were either stolen or destroyed.[16] The Ottoman government was thus unable to profit from the plunder of the victims.

Deportation of Armenians provided a solution to this problem. Beginning in May 1915, Armenians were rounded up and sent from their places of residence. The authorities subjected deportees to a series of outrages. Women and children deemed suitable became the target of a systematic assimilation program and were forced into Muslim households.[17] Others were sent on to their final destination, the desert districts around Deir al-Zor (today in Syria). En route, army and 'Special Organisation' units massacred most of those men that had escaped slaughter near their homes, as well as numerous women and children. Others fell victim to Kurdish tribesmen, who perpetrated their crimes in close co-operation with local authorities. Many women and children were raped before being slaughtered.[18] During the death march others died of exhaustion and disease. Those who reached the concentration camps along the Euphrates and survived until the summer of 1916 were almost entirely annihilated in a wave of large-scale massacres under the direction of Zeki Bey, the Mutessarif of Deir al-Zor.[19]

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15 On the initial phase of the genocide see: Hilmar Kaiser, "The Armenian Genocide: Governing Myths Revisited," (forthcoming). For a different interpretation see: Taner Akçam, "The Decision for a Genocide in the Light of Ottoman-Turkish Documents," in: Idem, *Dialogue Across an International Divide: Essays Towards a Turkish-Armenian Dialogue*, Toronto: Zoryan Institute, 2001, pp. 43-73.

16 On the so-called 'special organization' see Arif Cemil, *I. Dünya Savaşında Teşkilat-I Mahsusa*, Istanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1997. On the massacres in the area of Mush see: Anahide Ter Minassian, "Un exemple, Mouch 1915," in: *L'actualité du génocide*, pp. 231-252. For the area of Van see, Rafael De Nogales, *Four Years Beneath the Crescent*, New York, NY: Scribner's Sons, 1926, pp. 59-137.

17 Ara Sarafian, "The Absorption of Armenian Women and Children into Muslim Households As a Structural Component of the Armenian Genocide," in: Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack, eds., *In God's Name. Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001, pp. 209-221.

18 For a case study on the experiences of the Armenian deportees from Erzerum, see: Hilmar Kaiser, "'A Scene from the Inferno.' The Armenians of Erzerum and the Genocide, 1915-1916," in: *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah / The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah*, edited by Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik Schaller, Zürich: Chronos, 2002, pp. 129-186.

19 On concentration and massacres camps in the Syrian Desert, see: Raymond Kévorkian, "Le sort des déportés dans les camps de concentration de Syrie et de Mésopotamie," in: *Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine* 2 (1998) pp. 7-61; Idem, "Témoignages sur les camps de concentration de Syrie et de Mésopotamie," Ibid., pp. 62-215; Idem, "Autres témoignages sur les déportations et les camps de concentration de Syrie et de Mésopotamie (1915-1916)," Ibid., pp. 219-244. See also Hilmar Kaiser (in collaboration with Luther and

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The deportations followed a pattern. The first communities to be deported were those most remote from the so-called official 'settlement area' in the Syrian desert. The Armenian villages and town quarters in the north of Asia Minor came first, while a community like Urfa, located nearer the desert, was deported relatively late in August and September 1915. Two important exceptions were Adana province and adjacent districts, and those aforementioned areas close to the Russian front. The deportations in Adana region started early because the Ottoman authorities regarded the local Armenian communities to be a threat to important supply lines. Another reason might have been that the Ottoman general staff feared enemy troop landings on the Adana coast.[20] By the beginning of September 1915 nearly all of empire's Armenian communities had ceased to exist. Responding to an inquiry by Talaat Bey, various provincial authorities reported on their progress in deporting Armenians. Very few Armenians had been left behind at that time.[21]

*The Deportation Law*

Although the Ottoman government tried to keep its extermination program secret, detailed information on the deportations and massacres soon became available to the public. On May 24, 1915, the Entente powers notified the Ottoman government that those Ottoman citizens and officials implicated in the persecution of Armenians would be held personally responsible for their deeds.[22] The declaration had a direct impact on the Ottoman government.[23] Talaat Bey – who

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Nancy Eskijian), *At the Crossroads of Der Zor. Death, Survival, and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915 – 1917*, Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2001.

20 The first deportations from Zeitun and Dortyol predated the general deportation decision and the execution of the genocidal scheme. Eberhard von Wolffskeel to Sofie-Henriette von Wolffskeel, Bagtsche, April 17, 1915 in, Eberhard Wolffskeel von Reichenberg, *Zeitoun, Mousa Dagh, Ourfa. Letters on the Armenian Genocide*, edited and introduced by Hilmar Kaiser, 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ / London: Gomidas Institute, 2004, pp. 37-41. A deportation order for the area of Adana has been published in: Şinasi Orel / Süreyya Yuca, *Ermenilerce Talat Paşa'ya Atfedilen Telgrafların Gerçek Yüzü*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983, pp. 106.

21 *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler*, pp. 92-99.

22 Arthur Beylerian, *Les grandes puissances, l'Empire ottoman et les Arméniens dans les archives françaises (1914-1918)*. Recueil de documents, Paris 1983, p. 29 (*Publications de la Sorbonne*, Série Documents, 34).

23 Morgenthau recalled Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha's reaction: "I had the disagreeable task of sending him, on behalf of the British, French, and Russian governments, a notification that these Powers would hold personally responsible for the Armenian atrocities the men who were then directing Ottoman affairs. This meant, of course, that in the event of Allied success, they would treat the Grand Vizier, Talaat, Enver, Djemal and their companions as ordinary murderers. As I came into the room to discuss this somewhat embarrassing message with this member of the royal house of Egypt, he sat there, as usual, nervously fingering his beads, and not in a particularly genial frame of mind. He at once spoke of this telegram; his face flushed with anger, and he began a long diatribe against the whole

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had just signed a series of deportation orders on May 18 and 23, 1915 – must have found it advisable to put his actions on a broader legal basis.[24] On May 26, 1915, only two days after the Entente declaration, Talaat submitted a memorandum to the Ottoman cabinet. The memorandum summed up his previous deportation orders: Armenian communities close to the front lines in the area of the Ottoman Third Army and communities in the province of Adana and district of Marash were to be deported.[25]

CUP leaders did not require a cabinet decision before acting upon the law, however. The government had already published a provisional law concerning the deportations on May 27, 1915. Its four articles stipulated that, during wartime, commanders of armies, independent army corps and independent divisions had the right and obligation to immediately suppress, with force of arms, any attack upon or opposition to the government or its orders. Moreover, the commanders had the right to deport the population of any village or town that was suspected of espionage. Although the law made no mention of Armenians, it was clear that this law had been drafted for the use against them.[26]

### *The Ottoman Cabinet's Decision of May 30, 1915*

On May 30, 1915, the Ottoman cabinet passed its decision on Talaat's memorandum and sanctioned his earlier orders, as well as the new deportation law. The decision also specified that the Ottoman Interior Ministry's 'Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants' (İskân-ı Aşâyir ve Muhâcirîn Müdîriyeti, hereafter: IAMM) would organise the deportations and safeguard the property of deportees. Moreover, the cabinet authorised the use of Armenian properties for the settlement of Muslim immigrants.[27] By ordering the liquidation of Armenian

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Armenian race." Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Comp., 1918, p. 359.

24 These orders have been published by Yuca / Orel, *Telegrams*, pp. 117-119 and in: *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler*, pp. 32-34.The connection between the declaration of the Entente and the Ottoman provisional deportation law had been first pointed out by Bayur. Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türk Inkilâbı Tarihi*, vol. 3, part 3, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1957; 3rd printing 1991, pp. 38-40.

25 Bayur, *Türk Inkilâbı Tarihi*, pp. 37-38.

26 For the text see Yuca / Orel, *Telegrams*, pp. 116-117 and Idem, *Ermenilerce*, p. 104.

27 For the text of the decision see: *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler*, pp. 30-32. On May 31, 1915, the decision was officially forwarded to the ministries of the Interior, War, and Finances, Azmi Süslü, *Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı*, Ankara: Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü, 1990, pp. 115-117. After the Ottoman defeat of 1918 and during the allied occupation of Constantinople the Armenian author Haigazn Kazarian worked for the British authorities. He was able to copy official Ottoman documents concerning the Armenian Genocide. In later years, some of the material was published in Western languages. One of the documents detected by Kazarian was evidently a copy of the cabinet's decision. This document was forwarded to the Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha for approval. See: Haigazn K. Kazarian, "Unpublished Turkish Document No. 289 on the Deportations," in: *Armenian Re-*

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property, the Ottoman government made it absolutely clear that the deportations were not a temporary measure. The settlement of Muslim immigrants in the emptied villages, towns and quarters demonstrated that the Ottoman government was determined to irreparably change the empire's ethnic map.[28]

On the day of the cabinet decision, the IAMM issued the first regulations concerning the execution of deportations. The directive outlined the particulars of the deportees' supposed settlement in designated areas. Article 2 of the manual stipulated that deported Armenians were allowed to take all moveable properties and livestock with them.[29]

*The Regulations of June 10, 1915*

As the IAMM's directives of May 30, 1915 did not cover the full scope of the cabinet decision, more precise regulations were needed. On June 6, 1915, the provincial authorities at Erzerum requested further instructions. Since the start of the deportations, a local committee had managed Armenian movable properties with the consent of Erzerum's governor, Tahsin Bey.[30] In reply, the Interior Ministry informed the governor that further instructions had been mailed.[31] On

*view* 34, 2 (1981) pp. 195-198. The actual number of the document was, however, No. 270 not 289. Kazarian's version differs from the decision of the cabinet. In its English version, it contains two additional introductory paragraphs. In these passages the political significance of the deportation decision is further elaborated. Moreover, it is stressed that the deportation would radically solve and eliminate the problem. In his discussion of Kazarian's version, Dadrian based himself on the Armenian version published in 1964 in the Armenian newspaper 'Hairenik.' He arrived at the conclusion that the memorandum was a 'highly secret' document that expressed the decision for genocide in the words 'radical solution.' Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide. Key Elements of Turko-Armenian Conflict*, New Brunswick, NJ / London: Transaction Publishers, 1999 pp. 123-124, 130.

28 Adanır / Kaiser, *Migration*. See also Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanlaı İskan Politikası (1913-1918)*, Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001. Dündar cites abundant material on the settlement program but does not elaborate the program's connection with the Armenian Genocide.

29 The text is reproduced in Süslü, *Ermeniler*, pp. 113-115. For a facsimile reproduction and a French translation of the document see: *Documents sur les Arméniens-ottomans*, n. p., Présidence du conseil, Direction générale de la presse et de l'information, n.d. document No.1916 (112) pp. 90-93. This publication is a French translation of *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi* 83 (1983). For further information on the IAMM see: Ahmet Halaçoğlu, *Balkan Harbi Sırasında Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri (1912-1913)*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994 pp. 108-121; Nedim Ipek, "Birinci Dünya Savaş Esnasında Karadeniz ve Doğu Anadolu'da Cereyan Eden Göçler," in: *19 Mayıs ve Milli Mücadele Samsun Sempozyumu*. Bildiriler. 16 – 20 Mayıs 1994, Samsun: Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, n. d., pp. 70-81; See also: H. Yıldırım Ağanoğlu, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Balkanlar'ın Makûs Talihi Göç*, Istanbul: Kum Saati, 2001.

30 For details see: Kaiser, *A Scene from the Inferno*, pp. 152-156.

31 Ministry to Erzerum province, June 9, 1915 IAMM 200 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, *Dahiliye Nezareti Evrakı, Dahiliye Şifre Kalemi* (hereafter: *DH.ŞFR*) 53/303, Yuca / Orel, *Telegrams*, p. 119; Idem, *Ermenilerce*, p. 250. See also Kaiser, *A Scene from the Inferno*.

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June 10, 1915, the Ottoman government circulated further regulations to provincial authorities addressing the issue of Armenian property in detail.[32] The regulations stipulated the formation of special commissions for the management of Armenian properties. In places where no commission was established, the civil administration would enforce the regulations. The Interior Ministry would closely supervise the commissions' activities. Members of the commissions, among these financial and other administrative personnel, needed ministry approval and would receive a salary from the IAMM. The commissions' members were personally responsible for the finances and properties under their care. The commissions' chairmen served as liaisons between central and local authorities and had to report on their activities at least every 15 days. Not surprisingly, the commissions had to facilitate the settlement of immigrants that took over Armenian properties as well.

The Ottoman government insisted on a careful registration of all Armenian properties. Each commission had to appoint one or more official for sealing and safeguarding Armenian buildings, including their contents. Then the confiscated moveable property had to be itemised and recorded, indicating type, amount and value. All was to be registered in the name of the former owner. In cases where the owner was unknown, the property was registered in the name of the village where it was located. The registered goods had to be kept in central storage areas like large houses, churches and schools. Perishable goods like vegetables and livestock were to be auctioned off immediately. After the action, the proceeds were recorded in the name of the former proprietor or the village. Both the Commissions for Abandoned Property and the local authorities had to keep a copy of these registers. Religious objects found in church buildings were except from sale and auctioning and were to be sent to the deportees' new settlement.

The crops on the field were also publicly auctioned off. The proceeds had to be registered in the name of the former owner and were transferred to the financial office. In the event the auction did not succeed, the sale of the crop against payment in cash was allowed. Again two copies of the auction's record had to be kept with the local authorities and the administrative commission.

Immovable property, like fields and houses, had to be recorded by village and district. Then the results of the count had to be forwarded to an administrative commission. The government did not accept any power of attorney issued by deportees after the deportations began. These properties, however, were not auctioned off immediately but were distributed to immigrants according to their needs and professional abilities. The new owners were responsible for the upkeep

32 The text is reproduced together with an English translation in: *Documents*, n. p., Prime Ministry, Directorate General of Press and Information, n. d., pp. 74-80.The publication is an English translation of *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi* 81 (1982). A Turkish transliteration has been published in Süslü, *Ermeniler*, pp. 117-121.

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of houses, fruit and other planted trees.[33] New owners had to pay for vineyards, orchards, olive groves and similar real estate that produced cash crops. Moreover, only qualified candidates were allowed to obtain such properties. The immigrants also had to prove that they had come to their new place of residence on government orders. Finally all properties acquired by the immigrants were recorded in detail, together with the date and place of settlement and the immigrants' place of origin.

In those emptied villages that were not taken over by immigrants, nomads had to be settled along the same lines. Immigrants of urban backgrounds were sent to Armenian town quarters so that they could continue their trade. They also received agricultural land according to its availability.

Buildings, enterprises, plantations and gardens not used for the settlement of immigrants could be publicly auctioned to interested buyers. Again, all sales and acquisitions had to be carefully recorded. Real estate and agricultural lands that could not be sold became available for leases of up to two years. These sold and leased properties had to be registered in the name of the new tenant or owner. The income from these transactions was transferred to the financial offices, later to be forwarded to the original owner.

While the regulations contained detailed provisions for the settlement of immigrants, the interests of creditors were not clearly mentioned. In the following months, numerous foreign companies and banks discovered that their debtors had disappeared and their investments were practically lost. In view of increasing losses, German companies filed protests with the German Embassy at Constantinople. On August 8, 1915, after initial informal inquiries had proven fruitless, the embassy's legal councillor, Dr. Theodor Weber, approached Talaat Bey. The diplomat urged Talaat to take precautions against German losses. Talaat did not dispute the losses. He argued, however, that in the interest of achieving the great goal of strengthening the 'Turkish element' such losses had to be tolerated. In this confidential meeting Talaat made no reference to any illegal Armenian activities or other imminent danger. The minister added that the liquidation commissions would take the creditors' interests into account. Moreover, the Ottoman government would try to offer compensation for eventual losses. Weber responded that the experiences made so far with the liquidation were not at all encouraging and added that the German Embassy would hold the Ottoman government responsible for all losses.[34]

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33 In Ottoman law, planted trees constituted private property and a claim to the land the trees had been planted on. Colin Imber, "The Status of Orchards and Fruit Trees in Ottoman Law," in: *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12 (1981-1982) pp. 763-774. See also Stanley Fisher, *Ottoman Land Laws. Containing the Ottoman Land Code and Other Legislation Affecting Land with Notes and an Appendix of Cyprus Laws and Rules Relating to Land*, London: Oxford UP, 1919.

34 Weber, Constantinople, Aug. 9, 1915, J. No. zu 6062 *AA-PA* Konstantinopel 96.

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The Ottoman government's statement did not satisfy the embassy, much less the private companies. Consequently, the entrepreneurs continued requesting assistance from the embassy. On September 13, 1915, acting ambassador, Ernst von Hohenlohe-Langenburg, indignant at the Ottoman government's disregard for German interests, communicated an official memorandum to the Sublime Porte.[35] The memorandum gave detailed information on the liquidation commissions' activities in the provinces of Adana, Brussa and Trebizond. These commissions had liquidated Armenian property for a fraction of its real value and favoured immigrants and certain local citizens. The proceeds of the auctions and sales were thus inadequate to satisfy the claims of creditors whom, accordingly, had lost considerable sums. Evidently German diplomats had been unable to secure copies of the confidential government regulations that had set the whole confiscation campaign in motion.

In view of this situation, the German Embassy demanded government intervention to protect German commercial interests. Reiterating Dr. Weber's announcement, the embassy warned the Ottoman government once more that it would be held responsible for all German losses. The embassy enclosed two extracts from petitions of Deutsche Bank and Deutsche Orient Bank. For Ottoman officials the Orient Bank's petition must have been especially alarming. The document stated that the liquidation commissions' activities were illegal as no law existed that legitimated the forcible sale of property owned by deported persons. The bank's statement came at a most inopportune moment, as most Armenian communities had already been destroyed and the property confiscated.[36]

## *2. The Law on so-called "Abandoned Properties."*

In response to the German memorandum, Ottoman authorities acted according to the established pattern. On September 26, 1915, the government passed a provisional law concerning the property, debts, credit and balances of deported persons. Thus, the law was enacted retroactively – like the deportation law of May 27, 1915. The Ministries of Religious Foundations, Interior, Justice and Finance were entrusted with the law's implementation.[37] Special commissions would liquidate assets, debts and credits of persons and their companies de-

35 Hohenlohe to Bethmann Hollweg, Constantinople, Sept. 16, 1915, J. No. 6358 *AA-PA* Konstantinopel 96.

36 German policies in regard to Armenian property are more fully discussed in: Hilmar Kaiser, "Die deutsche Diplomatie und der armenische Völkermord", in: *Osmanismus, Nationalismus und der Kaukasus: Muslime und Christen, Türken und Armenier im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Fikret Adanır und Bernd Bonwetsch, Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2005 pp. 203-235.

37 For a copy of the law see: Daehnhardt to Bethmann Hollweg, Constantinople, Oct. 2, 1915 J. No. 2280 *AA-PA* Konstantinopel 99 copy.

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ported according to the law of May 27, 1915. In other words, the existence of the liquidation commissions was now officially announced. The law stipulated that the Finance Ministry would keep a record of all properties with the exception of religious foundations. In this case, the Ministry for Religious Foundations would keep the records. All proceeds from sales had to be transferred to the Finance Ministry, which would safeguard the funds in the name of the sold property's original owner. Owners could, however, only claim their money after the end of the 'present situation.' Thus, the payment was postponed indefinitely. In cases where property rights were contested, the owner had no right to intervene but had to leave the matter to state officials, who would represent him. As in the confidential regulation, religious items had to be sent to their owners. Property transfers up to 15 days before the deportation were illegal.

The law also officially cleared the way for the confiscation of buildings and land classified as pious foundations that had already been registered with the Ministry of Pious Foundations and the Finance Ministry. These properties were distributed to immigrants.

The German intervention seems to have had an immediate impact on the drafting of the law. Now attention was given to the rights of creditors. The latter were to present their claims in person at the seat of the liquidation commissions within two months. Those living abroad had four months' time. Moreover, claimants had to take up residence at the commission's seat. The commissions would control the validity of claims, balance the debtor's assets and liabilities, make them available to the creditors and forward them to the attorney-general's office. Most importantly, claimants who had won their process could not claim property that had been liquidated in conformity with this law. Given the retroactive character of the law, this stipulation effectively frustrated almost any claims the government did not approve of. Claimants that had lost their case could protest the decision within 15 days. After 15 days the court would decide the case. The decision would be final. The law further stipulated that privileged debts would be paid first in case not enough money was available. The new law also annulled previous court orders concerning deportees' properties. The commissions would settle all pending litigation.

The new law did not bring about any major change in the activities of the liquidation commissions. The new stipulations concerning the procedures creditors had to follow were of little practical importance, as the commissions could reject any claim at their own discretion. Again, little mention was made of the extensive provisions concerning the settlement of immigrants. In sum, the law did not account for the commissions' actual policies. It was an attempt to disguise illegal Ottoman government policy and pre-empt claims by legal owners and their creditors.

Not surprisingly, the German reaction to the new provisional law was negative. At the German Consulate-General in Constantinople legal experts prepared

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an analysis for the German Embassy and the German Auswärtiges Amt (Foreign Office). The report pointed out that businessmen in Constantinople characterised the law – drastically but not incorrectly – as the 'legalisation of pillage.' Moreover, most of the property had already been wasted or otherwise removed from seizure by creditors. Since most Armenian real estate had been distributed to Turkish immigrants or other Turks, the liquidations' proceeds would be ridiculously small and insufficient to cover the deportees' liabilities. Quite correctly, the report stated that the procedures for the liquidation of Armenian property were sheer formalities that only outwardly appeared in common with the law. The new law was evidently not intended to safeguard the interests of the foreign creditors, but to free the Ottoman government of any responsibility for the damages incurred by the "reckless persecution" of the Armenians. [38]

The Austro-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce came to similar conclusions. It stated that the law had practically abolished the rights of debtors and creditors. Creditors or their heirs had no right to nominate a representative to safeguard their interests. Consequently, they had lost all control over their property. Debtors had no right to protest decisions and the balances drawn up by the commissions. The auctioning of assets by the commission was in the interests of neither debtors nor creditors, as it would be impossible to obtain the real value of the assets. In sum, the provisions of Ottoman law regulating commerce were no longer applicable to Armenians.[39]

*The Regulations of November 8, 1915*

On November 8, 1915, the Ottoman government published regulations concerning the execution of the law of September 26, 1915.[40] Clearly the Ottoman authorities preferred to remain silent about the regulations already in place. The Interior, Finance and Justice Ministries were entrusted with enforcing the new regulations. While these regulations simply reiterated most of the liquidation commissions' rules of operation, the new text addressed specifically immovable Armenian property. The regulations provided more detailed instructions for the recording of Armenian properties. This change most likely reflected the experience gained during the past months' confiscations. Thus, the commissions had to choose a favourable moment for the auctioning of movable properties in order to obtain as

38 Konstantin Freiherr von Neurath to Bethmann Hollweg, Pera, Oct. 5, 1915, J. No. 8102 *AA-PA* Konstantinopel 99.

39 Austro-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce to Austro Hungarian Embassy, n. p., Oct. 8, 1915 copy encl. to Neurath to Bethmann Hollweg, Pera, Feb. 28, 1916 J. No. 2280 *AA-PA* Konstantinopel 99.

40 Consulate General to Kurt Ziemke, Constantinople, Nov. 13, 1915 *AA-PA*, General-Konsulat Konstantinopel (hereafter: GK-K), Regelung der Vermögensverhältnisse verschickter Personen.

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far as possible their true value. Paintings and religious items were to be registered and safely stored. The Ottoman government no longer kept up the pretence of forwarding these items to their owners. The Department of Education obtained a share of the Armenian booty. Now, educational authorities had the right to use schools, monasteries, and any kind of confiscated school equipment.

On December 3, 1915, the Ministry of the Interior finally published a list of the commissions and their locations.[41] The announcement was intended for those who had claims against deported persons. Moreover, now the Ottoman authorities insisted that the claimants had to present separate petitions for claims against each debtor, even in cases where several debtors had resided at the same place. Moreover, introducing a further obstacle, the Ottoman authorities had to certify each petition before it would be accepted.

The Ottoman authorities themselves implicitly admitted that the new law and regulations had no practical significance. The authorities had effectively refused to follow their own rules when they failed to officially establish the liquidation commissions. By March 1916, the German Consulate-General had no information when these commissions would take up their duties.[42]

## *3. The execution of confiscation*

### *Creation of Muslim Companies*

The new law and the regulations in no way revealed the full scope of the Ottoman government's real intentions. These formed the substance of other, secret communications. In sending detailed orders, the Interior Ministry explained its intentions to the provincial authorities. Among the confiscations' main objects was the establishment of Muslim companies. Thus, the various administrative bodies involved in the confiscations were expected to exercise some flexibility in their proceedings. Confiscated immovable Armenian property had to be sold at

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41 Josef Mertens to Bethmann Hollweg, Konstantinopel, Dec. 10, 1915 J. No. 11331 *AA-PA*, GK-K, Regelung der Vermögensverhältnisse verschickter Personen No. 461 copy.

42 33 commissions were established in provincial capitals and district towns: Adana (for Adana and Mersina); Djebel-i Bereket; Kozan; Mudania (for Mudania, Karadsha Bey and Kernasti); Gemlik (for Gemlik and Orhan Gazi); Biledjik (for the district of Ertogrul and dependencies); Josgad (for Josgad, Kirshehir, and Boghaslian); Angora (for Angora, Keskin, and Tchorum); Samsun (for Samsun, Bafra, Tsharchamba, Trene); Ourdu (for Ounie, Fatza and Tirebolu); Trebizond; Sivas (for Sivas, Amasia, Hadji Keuy, and Gumushhane); Marsovan (Marsovan and Hanza); Tokad; Izmid (for Izmid, Yalova, and Karamursal); Adabazar (for Adabazar, Kandre, and Gejve); Eskishehir; Sivrihisar (for Sivihisar and Mihaildjik); Cesarea; Develi; Aleppo; Marash; Antiochia; Konia; Erzerum; Bitlis, Mamuret-ul-Aziz; Diarbekir; Nighde; Afion. Later Rodosto (for the province of Adrianopel), Constantinople, and Urfa were added. Mertens to Bethmann Hollweg, Constantinople, Dec. 18, 1915 J. No. 11331 *AA-PA* Konstantinopel 98 No. 401 Weber, Constantinople, Mar. 25, 1916 *AA-PA*, GK-K, Regelung der Vermögensverhältnisse verschickter Personen.

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fair value, however, acceptable potential buyers could hope for government assistance. In such cases the government would postpone payments and settle the accounts later.[43] Acceptable buyers were those who were capable to continue the trades of the deportees. Young Muslims were especially encouraged to take over Armenian properties. They could hope for favourable prices and conditions if they could provide security.[44] At times, the cheap and assisted transfer of Armenian mills and warehouses to Muslim companies was deemed as the best way to continue production.[45]

On August 11, 1915, Talaat Bey addressed the issue of foreign companies. In a telegram to provincial authorities, he complained that Armenian property had been wasted. Moreover, profiteers were damaging the interests of other more suitable buyers. Thus, under no circumstance were foreigners or unknown persons to be admitted to the deportation areas. In the event such persons were present, they had to be immediately sent away. Any purchases of property by unwanted persons had to be cancelled. Talaat emphasised that foreigners must not profit from the liquidation of Armenian property.[46] The purchase ban also ap-

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43 Nazir to Adana, Erzerum, Angora, Bitlis, Aleppo, Diarbekir, Broussa, Sivas, Trebizond, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Konia provinces, Izmid, Eskishehir, Ourfa, Djanik, Karesi, Cesarea, Afion, Nighde, Marash districts, Adana, Aleppo, Sivas, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Diarbekir, Djanik, Izmid, Karesi liquidation commissions, Aug. 24, 1915 IAMM, Statistical Dept. *DH.ŞFR* 55/184.

44 Savfet to Ordu Liquidation Commission, Feb. 7, 1916 IAMM 89 *DH.ŞFR* 60/277.

45 Talaat to Adrianopel, Adana, Angora, Erzerum, Bitlis, Aleppo, Brussa, Diarbekir, Sivas, Trebizond, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Konia provinces, Izmid, Eskishehir, Nighde, Afion, Urfa, Marash, Karesi, Djanik districts and liquidation commissions, May 16, 1916 IAMM, Settlement Depart. 209 *DH.ŞFR* 64/39.

46 Talaat to Erzerum, Adana, Angora, Aidin, Bitlis, Aleppo, Brussa, Diarbekir, Syria, Sivas, Trebizond, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Mosul, Van provinces, Urfa, Izmid, Djanik, Zor, Karesi, Cesarea, Afion, Marash, Eskishehir, Nighde districts, Adana, Aleppo, Marash, Diarbekir, Sivas, Trebizond, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Erzerum, Izmid liquidation commissions, Aug. 11, 1915 IAMM *DH.ŞFR* 54-a/388. The Austro-Hungarian representative in Brussa reported on Aug. 16, 1915 on the deportations of the local Armenian population. He anticipated losses for foreign companies due to the disappearance of their debtors. Poor Armenians were trying to sell their household items while the richer classes were intending to rent their houses furnished. The prices paid for household items by the local Muslim population were, however, ridiculously low. Goods confiscated in Armenian stores and sold or auctioned off by the commissions fetched hardly 25% of their value; [Ludwig Trano] to Embassy, Brussa, Aug. 16, 1915 No. 441/P copy, encl. to [Pallavicini to Burián], Jeniköj, Aug. 24, 1915 No. 69/P *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna (hereafter: *HHStA*), PA XII 209; Trano to Embassy, Brussa, Aug. 19, 1915 No. 453/P copy encl. to Pallavicini to Burián, Jeniköj, Aug. 27, 1915 No. 70/P.B *HHStA* PA XII 209. The Austro-Hungarian documents utilized in this study were edited by Artem Ohandjanian and published. See: *The Armenian Genocide. Documentation,* vol. 2, München: Institut für armenische Fragen, 1988. The U.S. consul at Mersina summed the situation up as follows: 'In anticipation of their deportation the Armenians are selling all their non-portable goods for a song.' Nathan to Morgenthau, Mersina, Aug. 7, 1915 No. 467 copy encl. to Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, Aug. 15, 1915 *United States – National Archives, Record Group 59* (hereafter: *USNA, RG 59*), 867.4016/124. The documents from U.S. National Archives and the Library

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plied to non-Muslim Ottomans. On January 6, 1916, Talaat categorically stated that the Ottoman economy had to be become an exclusively Muslim one. He decreed that Armenian property must fall into Muslim hands. In order to achieve this goal, the government intended to increase Muslim companies. Given the limited number of potential Muslim capitalists and large-scale entrepreneurs, the government encouraged the formation of Muslim joint-stock companies. The new companies, however, had to be protected from falling under the control of foreign capital. Thus the government would exercise some supervision. Moreover, only respected persons were to take over the new companies, thereby providing for their future success.

In view of these goals, the Armenian property had to be transferred cheaply to the individual buyers and companies. The joint stock companies were asked to issue small shares in order to enable craftsmen and peasants to join as well. The names of the shareholders had to be registered to prevent their acquisition by foreigners. Since new the companies had to be private or joint-stock enterprises, the establishment of companies with the purpose of supporting charitable institutions was unwanted and accordingly forbidden. Given the importance of the project, the central government instructed the provincial authorities to report continuously on their progress in the matter.[47]

*Muslim Settlers*

In accordance with the confidential regulations, Armenian private and communal property provided the material basis for the Ottoman government's settlement program. Initially, Talaat's deputy, Ali Munif Bey,[48] supervised the confiscation and settlement process. On June 14, 1915, Ali Munif addressed the provincial authorities of those areas that were to be deported first. He requested a list of emptied Armenian villages. Furthermore, the local authorities had to provide information on arable land, including the quality of soil and its productivity. Data on the number of deported Armenians, their real estate, the size and value of the lots,

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of Congress utilized in this study are published in: *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*, compiled and edited by Ara Sarafian, Princeton, N.J. / London, Gomidas Institute, 2004.

47 Ali Munif to Sivas province, July 20, 1915 IAMM 66 *DH.ŞFR* 54-a/54; Talaat to Erzerum, Adana, Angora, Bitlis, Brussa, Diarbekir, Sivas, Trebizond, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Konia, Adrianopel provinces, Urfa, Izmid, Djanik, Karesi, Cesarea, Afion, Eskishehir, Nighde, Kutahia, Marash districts; Rodosto, Adana, Osmanie, Kozan, Josgad, Angora, Erzerum, Bitlis, Aleppo, Marash, Antioch, Brussa, Gemlik, Biledjik, Diarbekir, Sivas, Marsovan, Tokad, Samsun, Ordu, Trebizond, Konia, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Izmid, Adabazar, Eskishehir, Sivrihisar, Cesarea, Develi, Nighde, Afion, Urfa liquidation commissions, Jan. 6, 1916 IAMM 813 *DH.ŞFR* 59/239.

48 On Ali Münif see Kaiser, *Dall'impero alla republicca*, pp. 98-103.

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and where immigrants had been settled was also requested.[49] Likewise, Armenian schools and their equipment had to be registered.[50] By June 22, 1915, the province of Brussa and the districts of Caesarea and Karesi had been added to the deportation zones. On June 24, 1915, Ali Munif requested a report on the deportees' total number and destination.[51] Soon, many Armenian houses were distributed to Muslims refugees from the war zones.[52] Other new arrivals, like Arab families from Syria, were Muslims deported for political reasons.[53]

In order to co-ordinate the settlement program, the Interior Ministry increasingly needed additional data. On July 20, 1915, the ministry ordered a population census and general review of landholding in the empire. Within a month a registry, statistics and detailed maps of all landed property had to be produced. The material had to indicate the administrative structure down to the village level, the nationality of the inhabitants in the villages and boroughs, their past and present wealth.[54] On July 2, 1916, Talaat ordered a review of large non-

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49 Ali Munif to Adana, Aleppo, Erzerum, Bitlis, Van, Diarbekir provinces, Marash district, June 14, 1915 IAMM *DH.ŞFR* 54/15.

50 Ali Munif to Adana, Aleppo, Marash commissions, Adana, Erzerum, Bitlis, Diarbekir, Aleppo, Brussa provinces, Marash, Cesarea, Karesi districts, June 22, 1915 IAMM 316 *DH.ŞFR* 54/101.

51 Ali Munif to Adana, Erzerum, Bitlis and Van provinces, June 24, 1915 Bąb-i Alî, IAMM BOA, *DH.ŞFR* 54-137. It seems that the authorities in Adana were no rush to provide the requested information as Ali Munif had to remind them on July 10, 1915. Ali Munif to Adana province, July 10, 1915 IAMM 37 *DH.ŞFR* 54-374.

52 Talaat to Erzerum, Aidin, Bitlis, Beirut, Syria, Konia, Mosul, Van provinces, Mersina, Bolu, Teke, Lebanon, Zor, Tchanakkale, Afion, Kutahia, Menteshe, Marash districts, June 19, 1916 IAMM Statistical Dept. Gen. 6773 Spec. 296 *DH.ŞFR* 65/36; Talaat to Nighde district, July 12, 1916 AMMU Settlement Depart. *DH.ŞFR* 65/192; Kalfaian, Chomaklou, p. 169. Peter to Morgenthau, Samsun, July 10, 1915 Translation, Library of Congress, *Morgenthau Papers*, Reel 7/619. Nathan to Morgenthau, Mersina, Oct. 30, 1915 No. 501 copy encl. to Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, Nov. 16, 1915 No. 634 *US-NA, RG 59*, 867.4016/238; Report of Leslie A. Davis, American Consul, Formerly at Harpoot, Turkey, on the work of the American Consulate at Harpoot since the beginning of the present war, Port Jefferson, NY, Feb. 9, 1918 *US-NA, RG 59*, 867.00/803; Zeitun was one of the first Armenian communities to be deported in April 1915. The town was immediately resettled with Macedonian Muslims. Jackson to Morgenthau, Aleppo, May 12, 1915 No. 276 copy encl. to Jackson to Lansing, Aleppo, May 12, 1915 *US-NA, RG 59*, 867.4016/72.

53 Ministry to Konia, Brussa, Angora, Sivas provinces, Cesarea district, Dec. 27, 1915 EUM *DH.ŞFR* 59/107; Ministry to Djemal Pasha, Apr. 16, 1916 IAMM Settlement Dept. 17 *DH.ŞFR*. 63/11. Not all confiscated Armenian houses were, however, available for purposes of the IAMM. In Brussa CUP members registered Armenian houses in their own names. Officials of the land registry certified oral contracts between Armenians and CUP members who obtained the property privately or in the name of the CUP without paying anything. Trano to Embassy, Brussa, Aug. 19, 1915 No. 453/P copy encl. to Pallavicini to Burián, Jeniköj, Aug. 27, 1915 No. 70/P.B *HHStA* PA XII 209; [Trano] to Embassy, Brussa, Aug. 23, 1915 *HHStA* PA XII 209 No. 464/P copy encl. to Pallavicini to Burián, Jeniköj, Aug. 31, 1915 *HHStA* PA XII 209 No. 71/P.B.

54 Ministry to Adrianopel, Erzerum, Adana, Angora, Aidin, Bitlis, Basra, Baghdad, Beirut, Hijaz, Aleppo, Brussa, Diarbekir, Syria, Sivas, Trebizond, Castamonu, Konia, Mamuret-ul-

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Muslim land holdings in areas with a high concentration of foreign investment and plantation agriculture.[55]

The commissions were charged to supervise the settlement process and report regularly to the central government. One main task was to raise production as soon as possible to its former levels.[56] In the case of immigrants, however, obtaining property was linked to the acceptance of Ottoman citizenship. Many immigrants must have felt that this step was not advisable. On September 3, 1916, Talaat ordered that those who had not become Ottoman citizens were to be compensated all assets and sent away.[57]

In the empire's western provinces, the new settlers were predominantly Kurdish Muslims who were deported from the eastern region in an attempt to Turkify them. In the eastern provinces, whole areas like the districts around Diarbekir, Urfa and Husni-Mansur were designated "Turkification regions." Other settlers were Muslim refugees from Russian-occupied areas.[58]

Armenian property was also used to overcome shortages in supplying the Muslim population with necessities of daily life, like clothing and other goods.[59] Moreover, as the IAMM was organising the deportations and the liquidation of Armenian property, it used the property to finance the deportations. On October 2, 1915, authorities in Sivas were authorised to compensate Muslim wagon drivers for damage incurred during deportations with Armenian property. In the event the property value was insufficient, the IAMM promised to cover the balance.[60] A large part of the Armenian property was, however, never auctioned off or sold. It was used to supply the Ottoman army with items such as wheat, soap or medical supplies.[61]

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Aziz, Mosul, Van, Yemen provinces, Urfa, Izmid, Bolu, Djanik, Tchataldja, Zor, Asir, Karesi, Jerusalem, Tchanakkale, Menteshe, Teke, Cesarea, Mersina, Nighde, Marash, Eskishehir, Kutahia, Afion districts, and Medina , July 20, 1915 EUM Gen. 397 *DH.ŞFR* 54-a/51.

55 Talaat to Brussa, Aidin, Adana, Adrianopel provinces, Menteshe, Antalia, Mersina, Karesi, and Izmid districts, July 2, 1916 IAMM, Statistical Dept. 56 *DH.ŞFR* 65/140.

56 Ali Munif to Adana, Aleppo, Erzerum, Bitlis, Diarbekir, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Sivas, Brussa, Trebizond provinces, Marash, Cesarea, Djanik, Izmid, Karesi and Urfa Districts, and Adana and Aleppo Commissions for Abandoned Properties, July 13, 1915 EUM Gen. 384 *DH.ŞFR* 54-442.

57 Talaat to Adana, Angora, Konia, Sivas, Brussa provinces, Izmid, Eskishehir, Cesarea, Nighde, Ertughrul, Afion districts, Sept. 3, 1916 AMMU Spec. 445 *DH.ŞFR* 67/178.

58 Adanır / Kaiser, *Migration*. See also: Dündar, *İskan Politikası*.

59 Ministry to Adana, Erzerum, Angora, Bitlis, Djanik, Aleppo, Brussa, Sivas, Trebizond, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Konia provinces, Urfa, Eskishehir, Izmid, Karesi, Tchanakkale, Marash, Nighde, Afion districts, Brussa, Adana, Aleppo, Sivas, Djanik, Diarbekir, Erzerum, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Karesi commissions, Aug. 29, 1915 IAMM 502 *DH.ŞFR* 55/330.

60 Nazir to Sivas province, Oct. 2, 1915 IAMM 705 *DH.ŞFR* 56/254.

61 Ali Munif to Adana, Angora provinces, Izmid, Eskishehir, Karesi, Afion districts, Aug. 13, 1915 IAMM Statistical Dept. 454 *DH.ŞFR* 54-a/390; Hamid Bey to provinces, Aug. 25, 1915 IAMM Statistical Dept. *DH.ŞFR* 55/210; Mutassarif to chairman of commission, August 25, 1915, in: Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, p. 151. A more extensive list of need items is

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## *4. Local Competition for Plunder*

Naturally, the discounted transfer of Armenian property created opportunities for local Muslim circles to profit from the situation in ways different from the government's designs. Some Muslim companies managed to get hold of Armenian property cheaply by avoiding the public auctioning of the assets. Later, the companies sold the property to third parties, gaining considerable profits.[62] At Caesarea, a quickly formed Muslim company bought Armenian stores and goods wholesale, for 200 Turkish pounds. Shortly afterwards, the property was sold for 10,000 pounds.[63] At Brussa, the local CUP-Club and some of its members coerced Armenian house- and landowners to present themselves at the land registry. There they had to declare that they were selling their property voluntarily and that the offered price was adequate. Upon this declaration the Armenian owner was handed a sack with money. He had to count the sum and declare the sum to be correct. On leaving the room he had to put the money back into the sack and return the sack to the officials.[64]

At Trebizond, Austro-Hungarian consul Ernst von Kwiatkowski believed the confiscation theft on the part of the local officials. Like Armenian life, Armenian property was 'abandoned.' Army officers, officials and the police were taking part in the plunder. A high-ranking Ottoman official told Kwiatkowski that well over half of Armenian jewellery and money had disappeared. In Trebizond only T£1,200, 7,500 rubles, some jewellery and a few carpets had been confiscated, while soldiers were selling rings and other jewellery. At Kerrassund, the authorities had officially confiscated Armenian property with a total value of only T£102, while the real value had been estimated at about T£10,000.[65] At Adrianopel, wealthy Armenians were given 30 minutes notice before being rounded up and deported. The deportees were not allowed to take more than 40 piastres and some clothing with them. Later, the local officials organised parties in the emptied houses and took what they wanted. Afterwards, the remaining and less-valuable goods were auctioned off. The local Austro-Hungarian consul, Artur Ritter von Nadamlenzki, concluded that the Ottoman authorities had scored rich booty.[66]

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published, Ibid. p. 155; Burhaneddin to governor, Sept. 13, 1915, in: Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, p. 161; Ali Hamdi, Sept. 23, 1915, in: Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, p. 171.

62 Talaat to Liquidation Commissions, Feb. 16, 1916 IAMM Gen. 955 *DH.ŞFR* 61/31.

63 Talaat to Caesarea district, Feb. 9, 1916 IAMM *DH.ŞFR* 60/275. Similar practices had been recorded for the Caesarea district already by August 1915; Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, p. 157. For a list of profiteers from Cesarea see: Ahmet Rifat Çalika, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Adalet Bakanı Ahmet Rifat Çalık'nın Anıları*, ed. by Hurşit Çalika, Istanbul, n.p., 1992, p. 35.

64 [Trano] to Embassy, Brussa, Aug. 23, 1915 *HHStA* PA XII 209 No.464/P copy encl. to Pallavicini to Burián, Jeniköj, Aug. 31, 1915 *HHStA* PA XII 209 No.71/P.B.

65 Kwiatkowski to Burián, Trebizond, Sept. 4, 1915 *HHStA* PA XXXVIII 368 Z.54/P.

66 Nadamlenzki to Pallavicini, Adrianopel, Oct. 29,1915 Z. 95/P copy, Nadamlenzki an Pallavicini, Adrianopel, Nov. 2, 1915 *HHStA* PA XII 463 Z. 97/P copy encl. to Pallavicini to Burián, Constantinople, Nov. 7, 1915 No. 93/P.B. *HHStA* XII 463. For the plundering of

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## *5. Armenian counter strategies*

Individual Muslim profiteering was, however, not the only problem the Ottoman government faced. Understanding what was ahead of them, Armenian proprietors tried to save what they could by transferring their property to others. Sometimes assumed names were used in order to obscure this process.[67] Often, it seems, Armenians transferred their property to other Armenians who were not Ottoman citizens.[68] In an effort to thwart such transfers and sales, the provincial authorities at Trebizond declared that those Armenians who engaged in such activities would be court-martialled.[69] Another way of avoiding seizure by Ottoman authorities was to give valuables to American missionaries and consuls. The idea was that the deportees could later receive their assets through the mail at the places of their destination. In case of the deportee's death, the assets could be sent to relatives abroad.[70] Not surprisingly, the Ottoman government soon forbade the mailing of Armenian assets to their owners.[71] This restriction was a plain admission of official criminal intent. It made it absolutely clear that the authorities had no intention of forwarding proceeds from the sale of deportees' properties to their legal owners. There is no other explanation for the restriction on mailing Armenian assets.

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Armenian houses at Izmid see: "Report of a missionary," Izmid, Sept. 1, 1915, in: *Diözesanarchiv Wien*, Maria Empfängnis Verein II, fasc. 8.

67 Hamid to Adana province, Sept. 8, 1915 IAMM Statistical Dept. *DH.ŞFR* 55-a/171; Mutassarif to chairman of commission, August 18, 1915 in: Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, p. 159.

68 Ministry to Erzerum, Adana, Angora, Bitlis, Aleppo, Brussa, Diarbekir, Syria, Sivas, Trebizond, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, Van, Konia provinces, Urfa, Izmid, Djanik, Karesi, Cesarea, Afion, Marash, Eskishehir, Nighde districts, Aleppo, Adana, Sivas, Trebizond commissions, Aug. 28, 1915 IAMM 499 *DH.ŞFR* 55/280.

69 Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, July 26, 1915 *US-NA, RG 59*, 867.4016/105. The Armenian community tried nevertheless to safe some of their property. Heizer to Morgenthau, Trebizond, July 7, 1915 copy encl. to Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, July 20, 1915 *US-NA, RG 59*, 867.4016/103.

70 Davis to Morgenthau, Mamuret-ul-Aziz, June 30, 1915 No. 62 encl. to Hoffmann Philip to Secretary of State, Constantinople, Feb. 17, 1916 No. 970 *US-NA, RG 59*, 867.4016/269; Heizer to Morgenthau, Trebizond, Aug. 8, 1915, Library of Congress, *Morgenthau Papers*, Reel 7/667; Heizer to Morgenthau, Trebizond, Sept. 25, 1915 copy, Library of Congress, *Morgenthau Papers*, Reel 7/718; Peter to Morgenthau, Samsun, Dec. 4, 1915 No. 355 encl. to Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, Jan. 4, 1916 No. 805 *US-NA, RG 59*, 867.4016/259; Bertha B. Morley, *Marsovan 1915: The diaries of Bertha Morley*, ed. by Hilmar Kaiser, Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas Institute, 1999 pp. 11, 32.

71 Ministry to Sivas, Trebizond, Mamuret-ul-Aziz provinces, Djanik district, June 27, 1915 IAMM *DH.ŞFR* 54/202 Yuca / Orel, *Telegrams*, p. 119; Idem, *Ermenilerce*, p. 252.

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## 6. *Extending the plunder*

Armenian assets with foreign insurance policies posed a more complicated problem, since the payments on those policies had usually been transferred abroad. In order to get hold of these assets, the Ottoman authorities needed the foreign companies' co-operation. In other words, the Ottoman government demanded exactly the kind of assistance from foreign firms that it consistently denied to them. On January 11, 1916, the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce sent a memo to foreign insurance companies that were conducting business in the Ottoman Empire. The companies were asked to furnish inventories of their assets, debts and gages. The ensuing struggle culminated in a personal confrontation between U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau and Talaat. Disgusted by Talaat's demands, the diplomat rejected the demand.[72]

In the province of Adana, Ottoman authorities tried to extend the anti-Armenian program to the local Greeks. The central government requested information on Greek properties. While being intentionally slow in rendering this information, local authorities tried to quickly confiscate the property of rich Greek merchants and industrialists before the central authorities could act. The move, however, alarmed the Greek government. The latter swiftly intervened with its Ottoman counterpart and confiscations at Tarsus were stopped for the time being. The central government informed the local authorities that the confiscation had to be postponed due to political considerations.[73] Distrusting the

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72 Federal Insurance Comp. to Asfazadour, Zurich, Mar. 10, 1916 in Beylerian, *Les grandes puissances*, p. 175-176. A part of the correspondence of the New-York Life Insurance Comp. has been reproduced in Shavarsh Toriguian, *The Armenian Question and International Law*, 2nd ed. La Verne, CA: La Verne UP, 1988 pp. 136-145. US Ambassador Morgenthau recalled the incident in his memoirs: "One day Talaat made what was perhaps the most astonishing request I had ever heard. ... 'I wish,' Talaat now said, 'that you would get the American life insurance companies to send us a complete list of their Armenian policy holders. They are practically all dead now and have left no heirs to collect the money. It of course all escheats to the State. The Government is the beneficiary now. Will you do so?' This was almost too much, and I lost my temper. 'You will get no such list from me,' I said, and I got up and left him." Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, 1918, p. 339. Heath Lowry, ignorant of the available evidence, tried to present the issue as Morgenthau's invention. Heath W. Lowry, *The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 1990 pp. 41-47. For the story behind Lowry's story see: Roger W. Smith / Eric Markusen / Robert Jay Lifton, "Professional Ethics and the Denial of the Armenian Genocide," in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 9 (1995) pp. 1-22.

73 Minister to Adana province, July 1, 1915 IAMM 36 *DH.ŞFR* 54/264. See also: Ali Munif to Adana province, July 29, 1915 IAMM *DH.ŞFR* 54-a/165. On December 22, 1915 the Directorate for Public Security inquired with the provincial authorities in Adana how many Greeks were living there. How many mills, merchant houses, and schools they owned. About their political views, their economic position and who were their leaders. The announcement that the measures against Greeks had been postponed was obviously not just an excuse. Safvet to Adana province, Dec. 22, 1915 EUM Spec. 125 *DH.ŞFR* 59/62.

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local authorities, the Interior Ministry felt it necessary to remind the former that local elements must not be involved in the operation of the liquidation commission. These should exclusively consist of administrative and financial officials. Powerful local figures had obviously made their influence felt and profited from the confiscation in ways the central government could not approve.[74]

## *Conclusion*

The Ottoman deportation law and the law on abandoned property were both enacted retroactively. There were intended to provide excuses for the illegal action taken by Ottoman authorities. Such excuse-making was deemed necessary in view of future demands by the Ottomans' German ally and the Entente powers' threats of retribution. While Entente and German protests had an impact on Ottoman policies, they did not stop the Ottoman extermination and confiscation campaign. Instead these protests lead to the creation of a fictitious legality.

Both laws did not account for the actual orders given by Ottoman authorities. These orders reveal a comprehensive scheme aimed at altering the ethnic map for good. By May 30, 1915, the Ottoman government had officially embarked on a campaign to dispossess the Armenian population of the empire and use the booty to finance a demographic program. This decision constituted a point of no return. Not only was the ethnic map of the country to be changed, the Ottoman government decided to use the opportunity to create a dominant Muslim commercial and artisan class. Ideally, approved candidates were simply to slip into the economic role of their deported predecessors.

The entire government apparatus was involved in realising the scheme. Several central government ministries, provincial and local authorities, as well as village elders, co-operated in the transfer of Armenian private, ecclesiastical and community property. The program was a success. On February 27, 1917, Austro-Hungarian intelligence intercepted an annual report of the governor of Aleppo to the Ministry of Trade.[75] The governor stated that he had successfully enacted the central government's orders. The official estimated that while in 1915 80% of the trade hand been in Christian hands, now 95% of it would be under Muslim control.

The Ottoman government did not hesitate to disregard its own laws in order to achieve its goals. On November 23, 1916, Shukru Bey, the director of the IAMM, ordered the provincial authorities in Diarbekir to liquidate the property of those Armenians that had not been deported while other non-Muslims, who had likewise not been deported, were allowed to keep their possessions.[76] In

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74 Ali Munif to Adana Commission, June 22, 1915 IAMM 2 *DH.ŞFR* 54/105.

75 Intelligence Report, Constantinople, Feb. 27, 1917 No. 47 *HHStA* PA XL 275.

76 Shukru Bey to Diarbekir province, Nov. 23, 1916 AMMU, Iskan Dept. Gen 1089 *DH.ŞFR* 70/79.

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other words, Armenian property had to be liquidated in any case. Evidently, a simple order by a department director in the Interior Ministry was sufficient to overcome limitations set by Ottoman law. Following the government's genocidal logic, then, Ottoman law had turned into a mere fiction.[77]

77 Christian Gerlach's important study highlighting the importance of Armenian property for financing the Ottoman war effort appeared after the completion of this article. Christian Gerlach, "Nationsbildung im Krieg: Wirtschaftliche Faktoren bei der Vernichtung der Armenier und beim Mord an den ungarischen Juden," in: *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah*, pp. 347-422.

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# B:
# National and Social Group Discourses of the First World War

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# Babies or the Ballot?
# Women's Constructions of the Great War in Egypt

*Marilyn Booth (University of Illinois)*

In March 1915, the Cairo magazine *al-Jins al-laṭīf* published a profile of "General Joffre and His Wife". At the time, General Joseph Jacques Joffre (1852-1931) was commander of French forces, but it was not his recent defeat of the Germans in the First Battle of the Marne (1914) that this profile celebrated. The Joffres, enthused the writer, "consisted of a great man whose eyes guard millions of soldiers, standing as barrier in the face of any sudden enemy who might descend like a rushing torrent on his country and an excellent woman who guards that great man and protects him with her care [...] Joffre arranges his huge armies with a zeal that does not waver, [and] a strength that does not flag [...] for he draws strength from a helper in which the waters of love and loyalty never dry up, that heart of the true, fitting and good wife [...] Joffre stays up nights hunched over the map of war and takes every precaution with his soldiers and country [...] and his good wife takes every precaution with the person of that leader, pushing away his fatigue with a smile...."[1]

Joffre, made Marshal of France after his replacement as commander in December 1916, was known to his countrymen as "Père Joffre".[2] Here, the paterfamilias organizes the parallel structures of family and nation, as his home life nourishes his abilities in public space on behalf of a nation threatened by war. The couple is addressed as *jinirāl* and *jinirāl.* But if Madame Joffre (whose first name we never learn) is given a military title – *jinirāl* – it is for her domestic role, marshalling the forces of her husband. Yet the title makes the point that the home front was indeed part of the battle front.

During the Great War, "Famous Women" columns of *al-Jins al-laṭīf* and other women's magazines in Egypt featured spouses of European war heroes and nurses in the Western theatre of war. Both received praise for self-sacrificial "feminine" service to the nation. Given Egypt's colonial situation in all but name, it might seem surprising to find women of the imperialist metropolis

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1 "Al-Jinirāl Joffre wa-qarīnatuh," *al-Jins al-laṭīf* 7: 9 (March 1915), 305-6. See also the profile of Lady Roberts, spouse of Great Britain's military commander in India from the mid-nineteenth to the turn of the twentieth century, who is shown as supporter to her husband's work. "Nisāʾ mashāhīr al-rijāl: Al-Lādy Rūbirts," *al-Jins al-laṭīf* 7: 10 (April 1915), 345-49.

2 See Meirion and Susie Harries, *The Last Days of Innocence: America at War, 1917-1918,* New York: Vintage Books 1997, 394. My information on Joffre, though, comes from Douglas Porch, "Joffre, Joseph Jacques Cesaire," *World Book 1999*, online edition.

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celebrated in the Arabic biographies published in Cairo. It is less surprising when one reads these texts as voices within the choral discourses of elite nationalism, inflected by local appropriations of domestic "separate spheres" gender ideologies imported from Europe and grafted by Arab thinkers onto local histories of gendered practices and ideologies. The biographical images of these women could act as icons for a modernist nationalist map wherein women served the nation as mothers and healers, and thereby earned their citizenship. Such a feminine role ideology is by now well mapped for the nationalist histories of many societies across the globe, as part of the baggage of differentially articulated "modernisms". And, as the profile of *Jinirāl* and *Jinirālah* Joffre suggests, such a gendered mapping could be yoked to militarism as easily as to peacemaking.

The varied hardships and tragedies of war, and women's experiences therein, formed an important backdrop for elite Arab women's immediate post-war nationalist activism, unforgettably represented in the images of elite women's nationalist demonstrations in the streets of 1919 Cairo.[3] Students of European feminisms, too, stress the importance of the Great War to women's post-war activisms in Europe, and particularly to women's own perceptions at the time. Much of the work on gender and the European war front focuses on women's articulations of "feminine" healing and peacemaking capacities as both biologically innate and socialized qualities that, women and men argued, would give women particular strengths as political voices in a post-war world that cried out for healing. Yet it is noteworthy that in the women's press in Egypt immediately after the war, essayists (of both genders) who drew on the topos of war as feminine proving ground did not restrict themselves to the "feminine" arenas of mothering and healing. Rather, such commentators used women's work in wartime to argue for women's public political rights in the Arab world.

Through close textual analysis of essays and biographies in six wartime and post-war women's journals in Egypt,[4] this paper argues that the "mothers of the nation" trope was a beginning rather than an endpoint, a useful and comforting

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3 Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt*, Princeton N. J.: Princeton University Press 1995, 75-77; Beth Baron, "The Politics of Female Notables in Postwar Egypt," in: Billie Melman, ed., *Borderlines: Genders and Identities in War and Peace 1870-1930*, New York and London: Routledge 1998, 329-50.

4 These are: *Fatāt al-sharq* (Young Woman of the East, ed. Labībah Hāshim, 1906-39, abbrev. *FS*), *al-Jins al-laṭīf* (The Gentle Sex, ed. Malakah Saʿd, 1908-21, *JL*), *Fatāt al-Nīl* (Young Woman of the Nile, ed. Sārah al-Mīhiyyah, 1913-15, *FN*), *Majallat al-marʾah al-Miṣriyyah* (Egyptian Woman's Magazine, ed. Balsam ʿAbd al-Malik, 1920-39, *MM*), *Majallat al-nahḍah al-nisāʾiyyah* (Magazine of the Women's Awakening, ed. Labībah Aḥmad, 1921-39, *NN*), *Fatāt Miṣr al-Fatāt* (Young Woman of Young Egypt, ed. Emily ʿAbd al-Masīḥ, 1921-24?, *FMF*). Three of these were founded before or during the war, one edited by a Syrian Christian immigrant in Egypt (*FS*), one by an Egyptian Copt (*JL*), and one by an Egyptian Muslim (*FN*); and three were started in 1920-21, two by Egyptian Copts (*MM*, *FMF*) and one by an Egyptian Muslim (*NN*).

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image against which some women and men argued for *other* gender agendas. If these calls for women's active and public participation in nation-building became increasingly submerged in an economically and politically over-determined backlash against public women a decade later, they remain significant as part of the history of gender activisms in the Arab world.

Analyses of the women's press of Egypt in this period viewed it as above all formulating and urging a conservative agenda for women. And scholars of Egypt and elsewhere have emphasized activist women's muting of feminist demands in the interests of national/ist agendas. Despite both arguments' strengths, I argue here that the story is more complicated. First, the women's press did not speak with one voice. Second, scholarship on Egypt has tended to equate "domesticity" with conservatism when, in fact, it could operate to break down the old and bring in the new. Indeed, "domesticity" in the sense it was discussed in the press was a new formulation, and a malleable one. The trope of domesticity is susceptible to multiple uses and meanings: the "Mothers of the Nation" trope could be deployed strategically to argue for agendas that were not centred wholly on domestic space. Finally, the protests of women's journals that they were apolitical are not borne out by close attention to the content and rhetoric of their pages. Such avowals must not be taken at face value but rather should be interrogated through the lens of other discursive interventions in the same journal's pages.

How was the Great War constructed in women's magazines during and then immediately after the war, with reference to gendered experiences of war? Whose experiences were they? Second, how did these constructions of the Great War relate to an emerging post-war politics of feminism, nationalism, and elite struggles for power in Egypt? How might they have shaped the local gender agendas that were being set discursively and organizationally by local elites, but which were articulated as collective, national/ist projects? What sorts of female heroes were created? Third, did opponents of women's increased public visibility and voice use images of the war for their agendas? Finally, how did this use of war images contribute to what we might consider a local collective meaning or public memory of the First World War? Did women's magazines' use of war imagery "localize" the war, or did they distance it, as they focused on women's contributions on European fronts? And what does this say about the importance of the First World War to the formation and maintenance of politicized group identities in the eastern Mediterranean?

## *Viewing the War from Near and Afar*

What did readers in Egypt actually know about the war in Europe? The British Protectorate imposed censorship over the Egyptian press in 1914. Presumably, much of the news coming to Egypt would have been channelled through British sources, and the wartime propaganda machine of the Allies would have visited

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its skills on Egypt's readership.[5] Yet news of "the home front", as well as of the fighting, clearly reached editors of women's journals.

In sum, in essays in the women's press, the war was seen as violently initiating a time of possibility and change. Local nationalist hopes were implicated in this vision, of course, but it was a vision that surfaced before as well as after the 1919 popular attestations of support for the Egyptian nationalist delegation's demand for independence from Great Britain. In 1918, Egypt's elites had yet to face their post-war history of disappointment and disillusionment, said a 1918 editorial in the journal *Fatāt al-sharq*:

> We saw heroes racing each other onto the battlefields, and the secluded ones doing the work of men, and between the two, patient children ... sustained by love of [the] nation, for they had sucked its milk before their weaning ... Four years the likes of which no human being had ever experienced before ... striking the earth a great blow, shaking it east to west and north to south, until nations collided and crowns fell. The thrones of aristocracy collapsed before the voice of the people, demanding none other than freedom and security. If there is any hope for reform, this is its time, for it has been bought with hearts and souls. It is time for the easterner to be active, to follow the model of other nations.[6]

Yet discussion of the war in women's magazines was narrow in scope, and their silences are significant. These monthly miscellanies did not follow the events of the war, nor analyze the politics that structured it.[7] They did not discuss wartime conditions with any specificity; even the devastating famine of 1915-18 in Syria generated only a few articles, mostly focusing on charity works of women in Egypt for the benefit of the starving Syrian populace, and urging women to do more.[8] Surely this was not wholly attributable to a lack of information.[9]

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5 On the propaganda machine and wartime censorship see Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker*, New York and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch 1975, chap. 5.

6 "Taḥiyyat al-ʿām al-jadīd," *FS* 13: 3 (15 Dec 1918), 99-100 quotation 99.

7 I have found very few exceptions. An essay by Asʿad Dāghir using the post-war peace conference as its context speaks about the importance of the war in revealing the corrupt basis of some social systems, the determination to change them, and the rights of "the weak". Wars are seen here as necessary eruptions in the body politic caused by pressures and imbalances among different national groupings. The author mentions issues of free trade and capital-labour agreements as important to instituting peace. Asʿad Dāghir, "Bashāʾir al-ʿām," *FS* 13: 4 (15 Jan 1919), 171-76. An essay on economy in *FMF*'s first year refers to economic reasons for going to war, but this is simply a prelude to talking about economy in the family. Farīdah Aḥmad, "Al-Usrah: al-iqtiṣād," *FMF* 1: 1 (April 1921), 8-13.

8 See "Sūriyā tastaghīthu bi-abnāhaʾihā: Kalimah ilā al-sayyidāt," *FS* 13: 2 (15 Nov 1918), 49-50; "Mabarrat al-sayyidāt fi Ṭanṭā," *FS* 13: 5 (15 Jan. 1919), 214-16; and a letter from Athena Magdalānī in Manṣūrah about formation of a charity group there to help Syrian sufferers. The journal praises this effort. *FS* 13: 3 (15 Dec 1918), 104-5.

9 Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*, New York: Columbia UP 1999, 20, mentions news of the famine reaching Egypt. I have not yet been able to peruse the Egyptian press of the time to see how news of the war was reported.

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In sum, with their elite authorship and readership, these journals did not address the impact of the war on Egyptians or on Arabs in general. Wartime suffering was most often an abstract reference that served to underline what were seen as the more positive impacts of the war, and definitively gendered ones. The war in these publications was distanced, rather than constructed as local; at the same time, it was regarded as a world-shaking event with a post-war impact locally on elite social arrangements and, more implicitly, on modes of social control. I read this discursive distancing of the war and its localization within a struggle over gender arrangements as rhetorical moves shaped by class belonging, as well as by feminist hopes that were themselves class-specific.

That the war did not have a crushing impact on elite Arab women is suggested in biographical sketches of contemporary Arab women published soon after the war in women's magazines' "Famous Women" columns. Journalist Salīmah Abī Rāshid (1887-1919), eulogized in a 1920 obituary-biography, had proven her abilities by running her brother's Beirut political newspaper for two years in his absence. Then, "disappointed with the *nahḍah* in Syria" for its lack of attention to women's issues, Abī Rāshid founded a journal of her own, *Fatāt Lubnān*, not long before the outbreak of war, but had to suspend it when the war began; she hoped to publish it in a larger format after the peace, said her biographer, but she died in 1919, in her early thirties.[10] Another journalist, Mary ʿAjamī (1888-1965), longed to complete her education abroad, but her father's death and the outbreak of war prevented her.[11] Thus, in biography for the women who would have been reading and writing these journals, their hopes were more stymied by the inconveniences and obstacles to personal fulfilment than by the daily agonies of family separation, true financial hardship, or forced labour that Egyptians of other classes faced, or the prolonged agonies of the Syrian population.[12]

## *Babies*

If the war was traced in rather abstract, general, distant and didactic terms in these magazines, how were women's experiences in wartime constructed? During the war, women's magazines in Egypt focused on women's sacrifices in wartime,

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10 "SN: Salīmah Abū [sic] Rāshid," *FS* 14: 9 (June 15, 1920), 321-23; quotation, 323. The biography notes that she wrote a history of "some of the war's events."

11 Jurjī Niqūlā Bāz, "al-Yūbīl al-faḍḍī lil-anisah Māry ʿAjamī ṣāḥibat *Majallat al-ʿArūs* bi-Dimashq," *FS* 20: 9 (15 June 1926), 403-407.

12 In contrast, biographies in a Beirut-based postwar journal, Julia Ṭuʾmah's *al-Marʾah al-jadīdah*, spoke in some detail about relief work that local elite women performed during the war, thereby mentioning the dire conditions in which people had existed during the war. Ṭuʾmah tended to focus more heavily on local and contemporary women than did profiles in Egypt-based journals. On women and war work see "al-ʿAmilāt fī al-nahḍah al-nisāʾiyyah: al-Sayyida Labībah Filīb Thābit," *MJ* 4: 6 (June 1924), 234-36; "al-ʿAmilāt fī al-nahḍah al-nisāʾiyyah: al-Sayyida Liyā Barakāt," *MJ* 3: 11 (Nov 1923), 391-92.

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articulating essentialised notions of gender difference that portrayed men as warmongers and women as peacemakers and healers. Writing in early December 1914, one contributor utilized the popular genre of letters between female friends to write of her feelings in *al-Jins al-laṭīf*:

> The first month of the European war has passed. We are partway through the second but its tumult has not subsided, and we've not seen even a lightning flash of peace. Glory be to the One who changes things and does not himself change. Indeed, the bombs have grown louder, cannon resound, screams of the wounded mingle with the clang of swords and arrows, and people stand in the battlefield bowing only to that frightening statue erected before their eyes – the statue of personal ambition. Men get on with these things, while women stand by them binding the wounds of those in pain, giving them sedatives and salves, relieving their pains with sweet words and soft voices. How rare the points of resemblance between the two sexes. One kills and destroys; one cures and comforts, as we see our western sister doing, and the noble women of the Red Cross ... [13]

Like the Joffre profile, this text valorises women's work by essentialising it, as did many texts in the women's press of this time.[14] Women's patriotism is also constructed as an essential goad to men, pressing them into performing their gender roles in wartime. Yet this construction of female patriotism may have undermined the very doctrine of women's work as domestic and subordinate, for it carried women into public space. A story about a young Austrian woman whose fiancé is killed in war – "a courageous soldier, martyred in battle, went a sacrifice to his nation and people [*waṭan wa-qawm*]" is set in the time of Napoleon but carries contemporary resonance. For the bereaved woman's grief stemmed less from her beloved's death than from gendered boundaries that the text both reifies and blurs. Lena is sad,

> because she was not created a man, able to join the ranks of the soldiers and shed her blood for love of her *waṭan* ... She longed for this at a time when many cowardly young men, empty of the emotions of patriotism and shame, wished they were women so that their hearts would not fly at the sound of cannon.[15]

Lena performs a nationalist duty, warning her neighbours of the enemy's approach, and then dying of the wound she incurs; yet ultimately her heroism is that of the home front.

Biographies that traced *local* women's work during the war offered similar messages of female support and nurturance. Upon the outbreak of war, Alexandra Khūrī Avierino (1872-1927), Syrian journalist and activist in Egypt, "preceded her

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13 "Bāb al-rasā'il," from al-Banafsijah to al-Zahrah, *JL* 7: 6 (Dec. 1914), 207-209; quotation 207-8.

14 See, e.g., Wardah, "Malak al-rabb: Iyfūn Drypūndayh," *JL* 7: 4 (Oct. 1914), 121-26; Al-Zahrah, "al-Baʿal al-ṣaghīr," *JL* 7: 7 (Jan. 1915), 226-33.

15 Muḥammad Bahjat, "Shajāʿat fatāt," *JL* 8: 1 (May 1915), 26-30, quotation 26.

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peers in inviting her sister compatriots to aid the wounded."[16] The biography ends typically for this genre and publication context: "We wrote this hoping that she will be a sound model to those among women of the east who are searching for greatness – and indeed for men who are searching, too."[17] To laud contemporary women for binding the wounds of soldiers was to insert them into a battleground role traditional for women in both Europe and the Arab world. Indeed, local women did take up nursing during the war, as did women in Turkey.

Biographies in women's magazines made this a cross-cultural trope as they celebrated European women's nurturing of soldiers, which they may have witnessed or heard about locally, as members of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing service served in Egypt from 1915.[18] But it was earlier women who were profiled. Agnes Weston founded clubs for English sailors in the late 19th century, but her work remained relevant in 1916, when her biography appears in Arabic, praising her moral influence as well as material help: "She put in place a firm organizational basis for guarding the morals of the men of the navy" and was called "mother of the British navy."[19] It does not seem coincidental that so many similar biographies appear during the First World War.[20]

Pre-modern Arab women's exhortations to their men in battle were remembered at this time, too. Kanzah Umm Shamlah b. Burd al-Minqarī, an early Arab Bedouin poet, had a son "whom she suckled with the milk of respect for duty and self-sacrifice for the sake of honour"; moreover, she sent him off to war with her poetry, that "breathed the spirit of zeal and courage in the breasts of her folk ... her only son among them."[21]

Other biographical subjects were said to exemplify women's influence for peace. "If God had lengthened her days to 1914," exclaimed a 1921 biography of Victoria Empress of Germany (1840-1901), "she would have been able, with her influence, to get her son to change the course of politics and save the world from the disasters and terrors of the Great War." She had spent her last years, commented the profile, working to preserve peace in Europe.[22]

Thus, the "war heroes" celebrated in women's magazines during the war were women's auxiliaries to the military effort – exemplifying the mending, caring

16 Aḥmad Afandī Muḥarram and Walī al-Dīn Yakan Bek, "SN: Al-Amīrah Aliksandrah dī Afirīuh Fizinūskā," *FS* 10: 1 (Oct 1915), 2-11, quotation 8.

17 *Ibid.*, 11.

18 Juliet Piggott, *Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps*, London: Leo Cooper Ltd. 1975, 1990, chap. 9.

19 "Miss Agnes Weston [in roman letters]: Ajnis Wistūn: Umm al-baḥriyyah al-barīṭāniyyah," *JL* 9: 6 (Dec 1916), 201-206, quotations 204, title.

20 See, e.g., "SN: Al-Barūnah dī Runsart," *FS* 10: 9 (June 1916), 321-24; "SN: Iliṣabāṭ malikat Rūmanyā aw 'Karmin Sīlfā'," *FS* 10: 7 (April 1916), 243-46; Jurjī Niqūlā Bāz, "SN: Māry ʿAjamī," *MM* 7: 6 (20 June 1926), 324-26.

21 "SN: Kanzah," *FS* 11: 8 (15 May 1917), 329-30, quotations 330.

22 "SN: Fitūriyā imbarātūrat Alamanyā," *FS* 15: 10 (15 July 1921), 361-64, quotation 364.

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work that women were supposed to do, whether on behalf of militarism or in calling for peace. Such images contributed to the discourse of civic motherhood that post-war women in Egypt utilized to authorize their nationalist activisms.[23] It was a discourse that relied on a local historiography of women's activism and that showed many parallels with contemporary European discourses. It was also a discourse that could maintain class hierarchies in a time of uncertainty and blurred boundaries.

Anne Summers stresses that European women's working as nurses and factory supervisors during and after the war had implications for social control. These were middle- and upper-class women whose status as volunteers and whose social rank, as well as the cachet and social respectability of philanthropic activism, gave them power over the working-class women they supervised, but which also allowed them to claim authority vis-à-vis male administrators. The word "mother," she notes, can have many meanings, veering from nurture to moral control. The "mothers of the nation" were never working-class women.[24]

## *Ballots and Paycheques*

Victoria of Germany, praised for motherly peacemaking, had also drawn fire in her "second *waṭan*" for her political involvement; and she had written on the duties of ministers in a constitutional state as well as on "the necessity of separating the authority of church and state."[25] Biographies were one channel by which magazines addressed women's public political work and aspirations, even as they praised women's subordination of feminist demands to national needs. As late as 1929, a biography of English feminist leader Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) noted approvingly that she had dropped her feminist demands to work in the war effort. Yet it also remarked on the possible instrumentality of this move to feminist success, for her prioritizing had the effect, it claimed (not entirely accurately), of giving her agenda the post-war support of "soldiers and others." The biography speculated that if there had been no World War, perhaps there would have been "civil war" over women's rights in England.[26] Is it significant, or merely a matter of coincidence, that in these women's magazines it was Pank-

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23 Marilyn Booth, *May Her Likes Be Multiplied: Biography and Gender Politics in Egypt*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 2001, chap. 5; Baron, "The Politics of Female Notables"; Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation.*

24 Anne Summers, "Public Functions, Private Premises: Female Professional Identity and the Domestic-Service Paradigm in Britain, c. 1850-1930," in: Melman, ed., *Borderlines*, 353-76, esp. 371.

25 *Ibid.*, 364, 362.

26 "Wafāt Misiz Bankhurst aʿẓām zaʿīmah niswiyyah ʿarafathā Injiltīrā: Ṣafḥah min tārīkh jihād al-marʾah al-injilīziyyah," *MM* 10: 1/2 (Jan./Feb. 1929), 52-53.

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hurst who was featured, rather than the English suffragists who chose not to give the nation priority over their feminist agendas?

Appropriate to this prioritizing of the nation over gendered demands, while keeping those demands in view for the future, biographies of fighting women appeared during the war years, while those that featured women's political demands tended to be published after the war. Profiles of Arab and Muslim women active in politics and war clearly made the point that women's political visibility was not restricted to Europe.

Asmāʾ bt. Yazīd and Boadicea, both profiled after the war, make the parallel explicit in terms of women's war work. Asmāʾ (died c. 660 A.C.), one of the Companions of the Prophet and a convert to Islam after the *hijrah* to Medina, was an orator; her biography uses the opportunity to mention the heroic acts of pre-Islamic and early Muslim women.

> The Arab woman in her *jāhiliyyah* often preceded some men into battle ... if they were not fighters, they were healers, or they spurred [fighters] on, or carried water or bound up wounds. They witnessed the events and mingled in the ranks of warriors; they saw the dead and wounded, and shared in the pride of the victorious.

These attributes were carried into the days of Islam, "and we still read of those women and courage and initiative ... which calls today's lady to astonished pleasure, but in that day it was not amazing." Asmāʾ, the biographer comments, carried water to the thirsty and treated the wounded. "We know what the ladies of our age, the twentieth, did in the last General War; they were preceded in this by Umm Salamah [Asmāʾ] and her likes, some 1300 years before the world knew of the Red Cross and Red Crescent!"

But the heroism is not limited to healing. Asmāʾ, says the writer, went into the Battle of Yarmūk, emerging with "nine dead Rūmīs" to her credit.[27] The biography of Boadicea (d. 62 CE) begins with reference to the Great War, "in which have appeared the astonishing deeds of the women of Europe. So we present the lives of some of those women who were famous for deeds of war in the past."[28]

In biography and in other texts, it was after the Great War that the question of women's political rights was directly broached. For local consumption, writers reproduced contemporary European articulations of women as members of a civic body,[29] and echoed debates there on the efficacy of war as gendered proving ground.

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27 "SN: Asmāʾ bint Yazīd: Ṣāḥabiyyah, khāṭibah, shajāʿah," *FS* 18: 1 (Oct. 1923), 3-5, quotations 4, 4-5, 5.

28 As is true of many biographies in this journal, the text is copied from the biographical dictionary of Zaynab Fawwāz, *al-Durr al-manthūr fī ṭabaqāt rabbāt al-khudūr,* Cairo/Būlāq: al-Maktabah al-amīriyyah al-kubrā 1894 – but with the contextualizing reference to the Great War added, and also – typically – a generalizing statement about history preserving mention of her courage at the end, *DM,* 101-2. "SN: Būdīsiyā," *FS* 10: 2 (Nov. 1915), 41-42, quotation 41.

29 See Booth, *May Her Likes Be Multiplied,* chap. 4.

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In Egypt, discussion of political rights had not been absent from the pre-war women's press, but now it was more focused and sustained. Now, drawing rhetorical support from women's wartime wage labour in Europe, writers linked women's employment and political rights, as feminists in Europe were doing. This contrasted with the pre-war practice of gesturing separately and cautiously to the economic plight of single women as justifying training for steady non-domestic employment, on the one hand, and European women's political activisms on the other. Essays that glossed over women's employment as a matter of national service first and economic need second (while personal satisfaction or self-realization remained rhetorically a distant third) effectively supported both political rights and women's wage labour. This was a double feminist agenda that drew on both local nationalist arguments and European experiences in the war. References to pre-war women's work now occurred in a teleological feminist historiography that saw the opening of new areas of wartime work to women as a culmination of recent history. It seems no accident that the eminent Egyptian feminist and educator Nabawiyyah Mūsā (1886-1951) published her book *Woman and Work* so soon after the war, in 1920.[30] Mūsā did emphasize the theme of single women's economic need, but her book emerged in a discursive context where women's employment could also be approved as patriotic service.

To what reality did images of women's war work correspond? In England, for example, once conscription was imposed in 1916, women's labour force participation increased rapidly, adding 1.5 million women to the industrial labour force by the end of the war, about one million in munitions factories and others in transport, commerce and banking, and the civil service. Women worked in agriculture, many became nurses of course, and others entered military auxiliary work.[31] While this doubtless had an impact on many women's views of their own capabilities and desires, it did not necessarily correspond to the permanent benefit of women in general. Much of this work, directly related to the war effort, was temporary. Once men returned from the front, they took their jobs back, especially the better-paid positions. Meanwhile, women's newfound confidence and visibility generated resentment, and rather than enhancing their demands for a greater voice in public affairs, the overall impact of the war on women's acquisition of their demanded rights may have been negative. Yet, the costs of the Great War to feminism were not necessarily yet apparent. In England, commentators predicted permanent change in the gender balance of the work force and in women's opportunities; it was the seemingly positive movement of women into the workforce that commentators in Egypt saw and celebrated.

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30 Nabawiyyah Mūsā, *Al-Marʾah wa-l-ʿamal,* Alexandria: al-Maṭbaʿah al-waṭaniyyah, 1338/1920.

31 These figures come from Claire Tylee, *The Great War and Women's Consciousness: Images of Militarism and Womanhood in Women's Writings, 1914-64,* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press 1990, 11.

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For Egypt, one might assume that themes of both political and work rights would have been taken up *after* elite Egyptian women had appeared in the nationalist demonstrations of 1919, drawing wide praise. In fact, as I noted earlier, these topoi surfaced in 1918, if not before. It was then that Western political leaders' acknowledgment of women's wartime contributions were reiterated in local magazines. Labībah Hāshim (1880-1947) reported in *Fatāt al-sharq* on the September 1918 conference of, as she put it, "the women of the Allied nations"; she described the gathering as an inquiry into "woman's situation, her future, duties and rights." Hāshim quoted excerpts from Prime Minister David Lloyd George's letter to the conference, expressing, she said, his "great pleasure at what women had done in the war":

> I have often heard [she quoted Lloyd George as saying] that it is not appropriate to give women the right to vote, on the grounds that they are too weak to bear the burdens of a great war and are incapable of understanding it ... but what I have seen these days supports my belief that women understood the meaning of this war completely. I have confidence that they know perfectly well that the world does not have the blessings of peace and happiness as long as military force threatens weak nations. There is no doubt in women's eyes this war is a supreme struggle [*jihād*] for humanity's sake, and they accepted a peace only ... after the Allies were victorious over every savage force that wanted to disturb humankind's serenity.

Hāshim then quoted French Premier Georges Clemenceau's spokesman, greeting "courageous Woman, throughout these five years the paragon of excellence, patriotism, and sacrifice for victory's sake ... Had [women] neglected to perform their patriotic duties [*wājibāt waṭaniyyah*] then the strength of our soldiers on the battlefields would have been wanting ..."

With these seals of approval from the men now in the reader's mind, Hāshim noted that the British Parliament had granted women the right to vote by an absolute majority, "and the rest of the nations followed Great Britain's path."[32] Hāshim did not openly praise this decision, but her reportage of (some) women's acquisition of the vote, linking it to women's war work and omitting any mention of the arguments marshalled against this decision or the vociferous opposition to it in England, appears as cautious approval of political rights for women. In another essay Hāshim drew on the image of women's internationally shared interests, perhaps echoing European suffragists' sense that, to quote Nina Auerbach, "union among women ... is one of the unacknowledged fruits of war."[33]

The repetition of these images of women's political rights and visibility following upon their war work is significant in itself. This is not a theme that

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32 "Al-ḥayāh al-nisā'iyyah fī l-ʿām," *FS* 13: 2 (15 Nov 1918), 56-58, quotation 56-57.

33 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War," 258-323 in their *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century,* vol. II, *Sexchange*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1989, quoting Nina Auerbach, 270-71.

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Hāshim mentioned only once; rather, she returned to it again and again. It was a message with which regular readers would have become familiar.

Lest this and similar essays be dismissed due to the elite Syrian women's allegedly closer ties to western culture, let me note that similar themes surfaced in journals edited by Egyptian women, and in profiles of Egyptian women, in whatever journals they were published.

Thus, women and men writing in Egypt followed closely the events of the post-war period in Europe, and were aware that post-war feminist demands there were justified by proponents partly on the basis of European women's war work. The extent of familiarity with this argument is evident throughout the women's press. Perhaps the most striking indication is a 1921 essay by Ḥanīfah Ḥifnī Nāṣīf, "Men's Interests Lie in Giving Women the Right to Vote." In it, she addressed not the issue of whether women *should* work outside the home, but rather the subsequent issue of their conditions as workers. This has the effect of *assuming* women's presence in the workforce not as a phenomenon to be argued but as a fact, and the assumption then rationalizes women's demand for the vote.

> The misery of today's working woman attracts the notice of earnest men who have begun to sense that in advanced countries where the right to vote is fully applied, anyone who doesn't vote has no importance and no presence, and that the public authorities are not the slightest bit interested in women or their advancement as long as immediate political interests are not present. [They see] that sincerity and humanity, even if these create sympathy, are not enough, and that the only intelligent and quickly realizable way to rescue the modern woman from the muddled circumstances in which she finds herself is to give her the right to vote.[34]

Women, Ḥifnī Nāṣīf says, are attracted outside the home by the same economic laws that men had already begun to follow, and because their housework had become "uninteresting."

> It is foolish for men to prevent women from acquiring herself the means that suit her life economically ... man is always calling out that the family is in danger; yet he does not trouble himself to find a remedy for this asserted danger. Many people tell women: Your place is in the home and for its sake you were created ... and after a man says this with his tongue, he leaves her, to pursue his own interests and pleasures.[35]

If we are demanding the same political rights for women as for men, we are not enemies of the family, argues Ḥifnī Nāṣīf, but rather "friends who wish it well." Her conclusion is that "the countries latest to give her the vote are not only ungrateful to her work, but will be the last countries victorious in the arena of economic progress."[36]

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34 Ḥanīfah Ḥifnī Nāṣīf, "Ṣāliḥ al-rijāl fī iʿṭāʾ al-intikhāb lil-nisāʾ," *FMF* 1: 3 (June 1921), 79-85, quotation 79.

35 *Ibid.*, 84.

36 *Ibid.*, 85.

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Thus, if writers in the press evoked "caring professions" to suggest women's war activism as an extension of motherhood, they certainly did not stop there, sometimes with what now appear to be startling consequences. Male journalist Tawfiq Effendi Ḥabīb was in the chorus of voices in *Fatāt al-sharq* drawing on Lloyd George's remarks to urge women's participation in public life.[37] Rather than calling for women to focus on *tadbīr al-manzil* (home management), Ḥabīb wanted to see them involved in *tadbīr al-mustaʿmarāt* (management of the colonies); as in much European feminist discourse of the time, imperial interests are made to serve a feminist outlook, and the ironies of this convergence – particularly for a writer from the colonized world – are not broached.[38]

## *The Other Side*

Women's wage labour – as nationalist service or as women's right – was as controversial in Egypt as it was in Europe. Praising European women's dedication to wartime employment, women in Egypt did not necessarily support the same for their own society, either through criticism or through silence. It seems intriguing, for example, that women's magazines in Egypt, despite the interest they had shown from their inception in women's activities and pro-feminist discourse in Ottoman Turkey, did not describe Ottoman women's wartime work. Fatma Müge Göçek has noted that Turkish women's participation in the workforce, as well as their work in medical and social care and as soldiers during the 1919-22 War of Independence tended not to fuel the images of women that appeared in the Turkish media, even though – or perhaps because of – "[t]he mobilization of Ottoman women through participation in the labour force and in voluntary associations was a very significant factor in defining and transforming women's identities."[39] Were these Egyptian journals silent on Ottoman women's work because they did not know about it? Or were there other reasons? Was Ottoman women's work too close to home? European women could be simultaneously praised and distanced, taken as exemplars yet held at arm's length. Muslim Turkish women in the workforce were perhaps an image for which audiences in Egypt were not quite ready.

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37 Tawfiq Effendi Ḥabīb, "Al-Mar'ah wa-l-ḥarb," *FS* 13: 4 (15 Jan 1918), 139-41.

38 On imperial feminisms and discursive convergences there is an outpouring of work too copious to mention fully. I single out for mention Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1994; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*, New York and London: Routledge 1995; Felicity Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins 1995. On this convergence in biographies, see Booth, *May Her Likes Be Multiplied*, chap. 6.

39 Fatma Müge Göçek, "From Empire to Nation: Images of Women and War in Ottoman Political Cartoons, 1908-1923," in: Melman, *Borderlines*, 47-72, 49.

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The image of women in the wartime workforce was not received with universal approbation among the tiny elite that made up the authorship of women's magazines. Indeed, the trope of wartime work could also be used to argue explicitly *against* women's political rights. In fact, the gendering of the war experience was useful for this, and writers paralleled angry post-war voices in the West that also found women's presence in the workforce and in voting booths disturbing, blurring the gender boundaries of the "ideal" pre-war societies they wanted to resurrect.

## *Conclusion*

Women's journals, then, did not eschew political discussion. On the contrary, the battle over political and employment rights for women was waged in the women's press, among other venues. Women's work in wartime was a central trope in this discursive campaign. The diction of war and peace, liberation and captivity, infused the image of women's rights. Feminism's opponents dubbed political involvement, and especially women's emergence in the urban labour force, as "captivity". Its supporters termed the same developments "liberation". If certain magazines and writers were likely to line up on either side of the demarcation line, the variety of comment within journals reminds us that they were indeed a forum for varying opinions.[40]

What is noteworthy, though, is that the discursive ground seemed defined by proponents of women's public rights. Few denied that a *nahḍah nisā'iyyah* was crucial – or that it was happening. The controversy was over what this "woman's awakening" should mean. For all who commented in this press, the war's impact on women and on gendered divisions of labour – as they perceived it – seemed a significant touchstone for arguing meaning.

In this paper, I have argued that Arab women (and men) heard both messages, and exploited not only that of "service to the nation" in their own, anti-imperialist context, but also that of "deftness with machines". They used both images to argue for women's increased rights to remunerative work and political voice. If the war did not in fact alter the workings of the gender system – of any gender system – it seems worth listening to how voices at the time that argued the opposite might have been heard trans-nationally, might have had echoes where they were least expected by the speakers. If one goal is to "rewrite the history of the war in gendered terms,"[41] we should add the task of rewriting that his-

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40 The clearest example of this is *NN*, often seen as a "conservative" journal because of its Islamic cast. Yet, its editor, Labībah Aḥmad, is a fascinating example, at least in this period, of a rather open Islamic modernism that did not deny public work to women.

41 Françoise Thébaud, "The Great War and the Triumph of Sexual Division," transl. Arthur Goldhammer, 21-75, in: Françoise Thébaud, ed., *A History of Women in the West*, vol. V, *Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Belknap 1994, 24. See Joan

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tory in the terms of the colonized – and in terms of a complicated relationship of shared class and gender interests across colonizer-colonized boundaries (ones that are not necessarily pleasant to acknowledge now!). We should also examine both the transparency and the power of strategic moves that might have had unintended consequences, rather than taking them simply at face value. Written images of the war offered by and to elite Arab women through the medium of women's magazines not only celebrated women as the nurturers of male soldiers, but also buttressed calls for local women's active and activist participation in national politics and for women's rights to wage labour. At the same time, the rhetorical strategies of writers in this press may have set unintended boundaries around women's political demands by expressing them, sometimes, in terms of female service and an enhanced national domestic female space.

Of course, we cannot separate the war from its aftermath, or, likewise, women's understandings of it from their various commitments to a territorial, anti-imperialist nationalism. In the context of the latter, is it startling that Arab women exploited images of European women's war work to argue their own case for political rights and civic visibility? Interest in the impact of wartime events on women's lives in Europe was one of many paths by which these magazines traced a clear and positive, if not uncritical, interest in western feminisms and western women's struggles. Elite women in Egypt signalled neither a rejection of those paths, nor an easy acceptance: their appropriation of western women's experiences was far more complex. And the ambiguities and ambivalence over women's wartime roles that immediate post-war discourse *in* Europe and North America expressed were both processed and echoed by women and men in Egypt. That the European experience informed but did not determine the course of discussion in Egypt, and that writers took the immediate post-war moment as a time to review and reflect on the history of the campaign for new gender arrangements in the Arab world, suggests the maturity of that campaign, as it acknowledges the agency and creativity of local thinkers who drew critically on other histories. To foreclose either the power of these images or the resistance to them would be to reduce the complexity of the moment.

Yet we must end with a glance at the longer historical context. As some women's magazines in Egypt exploited images of European women's war work to argue for political rights and civic visibility, those war images may have altered elite women's own view of themselves, their sense of what was possible and appropriate for women. But if this was a moment of post-war euphoria, of a sense of a world suspended and ready for change, it was a moment that soon gave way to an increasingly sharp discourse on the limits to women's alleged new freedoms and roles. Political disillusionment, economic hardship, and women's real

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Scott, "Rewriting History," in: Margaret R. Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel, and Margaret C. Weitz, eds., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1987, 21-30.

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gains spurred a backlash beginning at least in the late 1920s. The iconic image of women's post-war activism was now the familiarly defined memory of elite Egyptian women – wives and daughters of the Wafd core – supporting their men in the famous 1919 women's demonstrations. The rather different political message offered by images of female munitions workers and suffragists seemed all but forgotten. In this sense, the images of wartime in the women's press did not apparently contribute to the formation of a sustained political feminist grouping in Egypt.

In another way, too, these images of the war in women's magazines seem evanescent, for they suggest a tenuous relationship with local experiences of the war. By focusing on European women's experiences, they seem to distance the Great War even as they appropriate it for local agendas. Above all, the images of the war that they chose to publish – and the absence of other images – may illustrate their own class position, which probably secluded them from the effects of the war more than their gender did. They celebrated women's work; rarely did they speak of women's working conditions or the resistance they met. They celebrated the 1918 achievement of the vote; they did not mention that this was a right open only to some women. The experiences of working class people and peasants in Egypt during and after wartime are not part of this discursive war.

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# Clericist Catholic Authors and the Crystallization of Historical Memory of WW1 in Lebanonist-Particularist Discourse, 1918-1922

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This study will analyze a sampling of Lebanese images and assessments of World War I taken from the clerical intellectual journal *al-Mashriq*, edited by Fr. Luis Shaykhū, and the more popular but likewise Jesuit-founded *al-Bashīr* newspaper from 1919-1925. A nativist tradition has existed in Maronite discourses that has been the reverse of eager to imbibe Europe's patterns of Catholicism, or French or other Western languages, or the secularized ideologies or histories of France and other Western societies. But as publications founded by European Catholics, and inclusive in their Catholicism rather than just Maronite, *al-Mashriq* and *al-Bashīr* carried the maximum range of reactions to the European as well as Middle Eastern theatres of the Great War.

## *Part One: The Perceptions of the warring Westerners*

### *1: Images of France (and french-speaking Belgium) in WW1*

#### *Ambivalence to France and the West*

The pre-World War I and post-WW1 setting of *al-Mashriq* had inculcated neither automatic support for Western powers such as France, nor automatic alienation from Muslim groups. Many clerical Catholic educators and writers in the 1920s feared that rising radical forces inspired by French anti-Christianity might soon take overall control of all levels of education in Lebanon, threatening both the clericists' survival as an elite and the transmission of a sectionally modernized Catholicism to new generations. Opposed local writers argued that secularist education had to be expanded to integrate the heterogeneous sects of post-1920 Greater Lebanon lest it one day fall apart. The dislike both clericists and modernizing Christians were developing for French and Western cultures qua exclusionary absolutes in education and government was Arabist common ground with Muslims that could foster some features for a linguistic nationalism.

The World War in some ways had underscored the need of the region's Christians for a Protector. But, in a sense, Shaykhū and his fellow conservatives were simultaneously arguing against the modern world as that was being patterned into existence by the history of the West, in particular thinkers who drew upon the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. One of the gravest consequences

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of WW1 for clericist writers was that by bringing down the Tsarist state it had ushered atheistical Communists to political power. But Catholic conservatives in Lebanon in the early 1920s characterized socialisms and the infant Soviet Union as one late emanation of the much wider secular sector of European Enlightenment thought that had been launched in France.[1] Clearly, Shaykhū – ideologue revered of a Maronite Church that was buying more and more agricultural land and would under Patriarch Antūn ʿĀridah venture into modern services and manufactures – was reluctant to let even social democratic parties or trade unions pursue any special interest of poor groups within politics.

Most clericists and Lebanese modernists read French, and both groups were anxious to prove to readers of Arabic that Europe was on their side. Such respect for France and the West among Christian Lebanese favoured the secularists more than the clericists in the debate given the movement of many West European nationalist states and certainly the French state to post-Christian patterns and ideas.

However, the spread in Lebanon of French-medium institutions and of connections with the French state had, since the 18th century, improved the material welfare and the bargaining power of diverse categories of Maronites in the Muslim-dominated Ottoman Empire. Shaykhū and other clericists who felt little love for some central thought-patterns and institutions connected to the secular French state, had still received formal Christian education in French: that language bonded them aesthetically to that polity. This acculturation and the formal Catholicism of most Frenchmen had kept enough strength to rally those writers to a French state they disliked when the context became her survival in the face of Germany.

*France in the War*

The Lebanese clericists' vision of the war was shaped by their bilingual bookishness as well as by religious emotions on which Allied propaganda played. Religious and other cultural sites influenced the opting for the French side by the clerical writers. Fascinated by the science of the new technology of long-range bombardment that France too developed in the War, Rafāʾīl Nakhlah the Jesuit noted that German long-range artillery firing on Paris on 23 March 1918 and thereafter from 120 kilometers away killed in a church 79 people who had come for prayer on Good Friday.[2] Germany's indiscriminate [or intentional? neopagan?] bombardments of sacred places of the Christians such as Riems cathedral fueled Shaykhū's choice of sides: the French troops did not destroy public buildings, churches and palaces and factories as the Germans did, except when they

1 Shaykhū, "al-Bulshufiyyūn: asluhum wa mabadiʾuhum wa ʿamaluhum" (The Bolsheviks: their Origins, their Principles and their Actions), *al-Mashriq* (January 1920), 47-54.

2 Nakhlah, "Taraqqī ʿulūm mundhu nushūb al-ḥarb" (Progress in the Sciences since the Outbreak of the War), *al-Mashriq* (September 1920), 641-642.

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were fortified to shelter hostile Germans – sleight of hand that barely concealed that total war had brutalized the French, too, to religious and other art or sites or culture as precious in themselves. And Shaykhū swallowed the self-validating propaganda of the French that they, if few others, stood for principles and universal [secular] enterprises far wider than the nationalisms firing the mayhem. A collapse of France would have ended "the freedom and liberty of the whole civilized world".

As was the case in other Muslim or Christian magazines in the Middle East, the demands of conveying the incessantly expanding technology of modern warfare widened the scope and capacity of the literary Arabic of Shaykhū and his *al-Mashriq* colleagues in the wake of World War I. On the whole, they conveyed the unprecedented technology well in their preferred literary language.

Like many clerical Lebanese writers, Shaykhū could have a sharp eye for the technical and practical manifestations of science (eg. war-planes and tanks) despite being at odds with so many things in the overall spirit of the modern West. But old Christian energies to his mind underlay France's new technologies of warfare. Shaykhū was trying to blend that French nationalism with Catholicism. The fighter pilot Georges-Marie Guynemer (1894-1917) in devastating the German airforce made people associate him with such "heroes" as Peter the Hermit and [recently canonized] Joan of Arc.[3] Here, Shaykhū had got close to sectors of medieval Christian history that some secular French writers too could and did integrate into their nationalism after a fashion. But he was unmindful of how much cultivated Muslim Arab readers might be antagonized by such linking of his Catholic group's ethos and a modern France that was now in Lebanon to Peter, a quasi-Frenchman whose incitatory preachings across Europe raised a huge if motley army for the crusade proclaimed by Pope Urban II. Hermit Peter preached a sermon on the Mount of Olives shortly before the Frankish forces stormed Jerusalem in 1096, wresting the al-Aqsa mosque from the Islamic world with massacres of any Muslims.

Shaykhū gave a sharp overview of the evolution of tanks during WW1 – "those fortified mobile machines equipped with machineguns that played an important role in the [World] War especially in its late period, casting fear into the souls of the Germans and directing death at their armies". However, the recent post-WW1 local history of Lebanon and Syria perhaps led Shaykhū to overrate their importance earlier in the fighting in Europe. "Tanks also played a considerable role in the recent triumph of the French against [Faysal's Hijazi-Syrian] troops, opening up for them the road to Damascus. Their number in the French army is [now] several thousand". Thus, Shaykhū's approval of France's scientifically innovative military might came in the context of his loyalty to her at that

3 Shaykhū, "Aʿẓamu tamma fī-l-ḥarb al-ʿāmmah: naẓarun ijmālī fī-l-ḥarb al-ūrūbbiyyah al-ākhirah" (The Immense Catastrophe in the World War: An Overview of the Late European War), *al-Mashriq* (February 1920), 137.

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point as a protector and at least patron to whom he gave title to crush neighboring Arab polities that could destabilize the fragile new Lebanon.

Fr. Shaykhū's (as the Jesuit Rafā'īl Nakhlah's) accounts of the military technologies the various combatants evolved in WW1 stand up today beside recent Western military overviews. However, his residence in the Arab world obscured from him much of the ongoing crisis the War had bequeathed in the morale of the Westerners. Rather, his stance to the War was an out-of-date ideological endorsement of the polity that now protected Lebanon. In her contest with Germany, France had functioned as the fulcrum of the world of Civilization in Asia and Africa as well as upon the battlefields of Europe. Despite all he knew of how many French people the War had killed and maimed, his ultimate tone was triumphalist in a way that rang hollow: France fought on steadfastly for more than four years through the terrors of the War until the laurels of total victory were placed upon her head.[4]

*Belgium: Catholicism and Resistant Patriotism*

When imaging World War 1, Shaykhū's Francophone pan-Catholicism did not allow him to develop the critical nuances about the Elder Daughter of the Church which could mark his discussion when the context was not the French polity's survival. His history of the War characterized the Belgium polity and its ruling groups as simplistically. For him, Belgium was the small Catholic victim of an implicitly almost non-Christian Germany. All the conflicting states of Europe had undertaken in their preceding pacts not to violate the borders of Belgium, but Germany violated international law when she invaded that small state. Faced with so overwhelmingly larger an occupying state, Belgium could have submitted with only verbal protests, the approach tiny Luxembourg understandably took. But Belgium's gallant king preferred to risk his state "amid the sympathy of the whole civilized world". Shaykhū ascribed to Kaiser Wilhelm II a letter that "all things have to be burnt and all – men, women and the elderly – killed and every tree and house destroyed because such means of terror can end the war before two months pass". Belgium's Catholicity, her official French language and culture, and the function of her resistance in delaying Germany's attack on France as the latter mobilized, all pushed Shaykhū to idealize that small polity and its ruling class.

While his book usually characterized the War's theatres in traditional military terms, Shaykhū's tribute to Belgium did take some account of civilian suffering and resistance. He described how the Belgian civilians brought out an underground daily newspaper that the occupiers could not trace, and which gave details of their tricks and oppression to the whole world. However, Shaykhū placed

4 Shaykhū, "Aʿẓamu tamma", (Feb. 1920), 136.

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an iconic hero who blended the French language and high Catholicism with Belgian nationalism at the head of the resistance. "That gallant primate, the honor of the religion, learning and the homeland, the cardinal [Desiree Joseph] Mercier defended the rights of his flock without regard to the governors of the Germans, who spared no effort to win him over, or to their threats".[5]

Cardinal Mercier (1851-1926) had in 1882 been commissioned to inaugurate the chair of Thomistic philosophy created at the University of Louvain at the request of Pope Leo XIII. His Institut Superier de Philosophie there issued the *Revue neo-Scholastique*, which the learned Jesuit Shaykhū could have read before the war. Mercier's reference to biology, physiology, neurology and the modern scientific and social disciplines would fit with the efforts of the *al-Mashriq* clericists to attach Europe's (especially France's) modern sciences to the religion. But Shaykhū's fusion of the sacred with political resistance in Belgium saw no shadings to either Mercier or the polity and nationalism he represented. Mercier identified the concept of "la patrie" with which he fired Belgians during World War I unconditionally with a unitary Belgium defined by French: he had no concept of the mounting grievances of his country's subordinated Dutch-speaking Flemings.[6] Linguistically repressive at home, that polity's pitiless exploitation of the Congolese under King Leopold II (r. 1885-1908) had disturbed Europe and the U.S. even in that era.

The harsh binary oppositions that Shaykhū and other Catholic Lebanese writers drew between despotic militarist, aggressive Germany and parliamentary, "free", self-defending France and Belgium showed the capacity of an auxiliary language to block out shades and nuances in a far-off reality to which it gave access. Shaykhū did not fully understand that the French military, in order to get in the first blow, were as eager to thrust into neutral Belgium as their German peers. However, France's Republican politicians did have more control (Britain's civilian leaders had more again) over the military than did Germany's civilian politicians and officials.

Lebanon's Catholic writers had not wholly dreamed up that France and Belgium's nationalisms became more Catholic as those two nations resisted Germany. The departure of the secular state's sometimes anti-Christian officials and teachers had shifted leadership and resistance in Belgium and Northern France to clerics and nuns whom German troops really could ill-treat in reprisals.[7] The secular leaderships themselves and the clericists together now developed such cultural instruments as the Joan of Arc cult in inclusive ways that could unite all

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5 Shaykhū, "Aʿẓamu tamma", *al-Mashriq* (June 1920), 471. Mercier in a 1914 Christmas message told his flock that "the religion of the Church makes patriotism a law: there is no perfect Christian who is not a perfect patriot", cit. in: Hew Strachan, *The First World War*, Oxford 2001, 1117-1118.

6 A.L. Wybleman, "Mercier", in: *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1967, 671-2.

7 See Strachan, *The First World War*, 1117-1118.

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categories in the nation. The new association of Catholicism with political patriotism unfolding in the French language would feed accumulating bracketing of Religion and Homeland in the development of Lebanese particularist thought down the 1920s and 1930s.

*2: Images of other Allied States*

Apart from France, gigantic, modern America, and Russia, the clerical Lebanese writers scanned did not present very clear or solid accounts of most other pro-Entente countries fighting in the Allied camp as states, societies or cultures.

Shaykhū's account blended the changing military situations of Russia with her cultural make-up. Her historical close racial relations with Serbia virtually forced her to enter the War when Austria issued her ultimatum.[8] It was not just his dislike of new forms of self-assertion by "lower" classes or confiscation of property that made him denounce the Bolsheviks' seizure of power: Shaykhū was disturbed by the looting of monasteries and destruction of churches that he had not dreamed up.[9]

Insightful about linguistic, religious and class divisions that foredoomed the war effort of the Tsarist Empire, Shaykhū was more military and accepting of the formal state-entity in his overview of Italy's participation in the War. Pope Pius X (1903-1914) had at last authorized local Catholics to vote in the Italian nationalist state with which his predecessors had struggled for forty years. Shaykhū duly swallowed the images of that shaky state that it had mobilized the masses of the population for the total war and that Italian high culture directed how people thought: "the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio raised up intrepid initiative in the people with his resounding odes so that the Italian armies surged forward as a torrential flood". Shaykhū, though, did not ask how many Italians could have comprehended either D'Annunzio's language or his almost proto-fascist nationalist concepts.

Overall, Shaykhū believed that Italy had proven her mettle in her battles for mountainous terrain with more than a million Austro-Hungarian troops in 1915-1918: the world that had had scant regard for Italy militarily now recognized the bravery and fortitude of her troops. Shaykhū gave a careful review of the swings of Rome's foreign policy prior to her late entry in 1915. He repeated the official narrative that the Central States with whom she had been had not informed Italy that war was coming, as though she were of no account, and that Austria had derogated from her rights in the Balkans in conquering Serbia and moving against Albania. Austria had put off handing Trieste over to Italy, which duly jumped over to the states of the Triple Entente. Still, Shaykhū's data showed It-

8 Shaykhū, "Aʿẓamu tamma", (Feb. 1920), 141-144.
9 Shaykhū , "al-Bulshufiyyūn", 47-54.

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aly in undignified straits when in 1918 Axis forces broke through to the plains to Venice and British and French forces had to come rushing.

Although it traced some linkages between high culture, nationalism, state policy and territorial tensions in the region, Shaykhū's account of Italy disappoints. It was very Catholic in a whimsical way: despite his rage against Germany and Turkey elsewhere, for him it was Divine providence that Italy's government rightly stayed neutral for a time because that allowed the Cardinals of the world to come to "the capital of Catholicism" in 1914 to elect the successor to the just-deceased Pope Pius X. Most of "the Italian people" was hoping at that point that their state would stay neutral to the end of the War.[10]

Shaykhū had glimpsed that the heterogeneity of the Tsarist empire foredoomed it to collapse in the War. As a West-attuned Jesuit who knew Italian high clerics in Lebanon-Syria, and given the secular-ameliorist nationalist Italian state's past conflicts with the Church, he could have clamped some critical analysis down on the fragile unity of an Italian polity whose recently-incorporated populations spoke distinct languages, and many of whose troops in WW1 did not understand the meaning of even the term "Italy" for which they were being ordered to fight – the neo-"country" that was indeed the recent invention of a bourgeoisie.[11]

Shaykhū did not grasp the cultural and kinship bonds that would draw the dominant U.S. groups towards the side of Britain during World War I. Given the profitability of the munitions the U.S. was selling to all the parties, Americans had never conceived that they might enter the War, he imaged. Then the German High Command in 1917 launched indiscriminate submarine warfare against all

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10 Shaykhū, "Aʿẓamu tamma", *al-Mashriq* (August 1920), 628-632.

11 Ibid. For many of the troops' incomprehension of even the name "Italy", see Paul Corner, "The Italian Experience of World War I: National Formation or National Disintegration?", paper read at the International Conference on the First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, German Institute for Oriental Studies Beirut, 28 April 2001 (see his contribution to this volume). Latin, as much as the book-language of Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch, had been the shared literary language of the areas that were proclaimed as "Italy" in 1861: thus, such languages as Sicilian and Sardinian remained dominant until cinema and TV and classrooms ended them from the late 1950s. Ernest Pulgram (1958) opted to "speak of Italian dialects rather than languages, perhaps for no better reason than that all of Italy once was and now is again a political unit, and does possess a national standard language"– which is to ignore the almost millenium and a half of disparate political units and birth of discrete languages that had intervened between the collapse of Roman power and the re-proclamation of the unit "Italy" in 1861. See Ernest Pulgram, *The Tongues of Italy: Prehistory and History*, Harvard 1958, 46. As Italy's Minister of Education Martini had wisecracked back in 1896, "Italy has now been created: it remains to make the Italians", in: Gilles Pecout, "Politisation et integration nationale en italie: les campagnes toscannes des anees 1860", *Revue Historique* (January-March 2001), 84. However, there were no political movements in Sicily or Sardinia to secede from Italy at the time Shaykhū wrote, in contrast to the tensions he registered in the Tsarist empire: regional nationalisms in Italy only came following WW2. Communication from Dr John Hajek, Head of Department of French and Italian Studies at Melbourne University, Australia, 22 November 2001.

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international shipping, even that of neutral states, gambling that cutting Triple Entente supplies to France could bring a swift victory. As Shaykhū observed, the sinkings enraged most peoples, "in particular the Americans given their pride and drive to preserve the freedom of nations for which they are noted", leading President Wilson to declare war on Germany on 2 April 1917. Shaykhū voiced more indignation against President Wilson for earlier pursuing a peace supposedly favorable to Germany, and for her slowness to join the War, than he had towards the state of sacred Rome. But he praised the 1,428,000 American troops who finally landed in France: once French CIC General Joffre trained them, they fought the Germans "with rare courage as though French honor had materialized in them" – a strong compliment from Shaykhū when the context was France's survival. Perhaps the Americans were thanking France on the soil of Europe for the aid she had once given America for its original winning of its independence – a motif that would have been fostered in Shaykhū by long-standing French literary discourse.

President Wilson, though, had "somewhat muddied his glory by issuing unclear statements about liberating the nations and granting them independence": Shaykhū feared that the unleashing of national demands could bring destruction and catastrophes worse than those of the last war.[12] Here Shaykhū was wary of the claims of Arab nationalisms or entities wider than Lebanon, a novel, controversial polity.

Shaykhū and *al-Mashriq's* analyses of WW1 were bounded by statal cultures, conventional patterns of diplomatic interactions, formal military balances between states and the degrees of courage of given armies – ethos – as determinants of the outbreak and outcomes of wars. Still, the economic explications of some French and British writers and perhaps even from the socialist and Communist enemy could also figure. Shaykhū described the War as "economic more than a matter of international relations [since] Germany ignited it only in order to expand its territories and to open markets for its commerce," – which could point to pacifist counter-discourses in Britain (eg. Norman Angell) that Britain's economic exclusion forced Germany to go to war.[13] Shaykhū observed that the Kaiser had some grounds for his hopes in the leadup that the British might stay out of the War because of "their concern for their trade: war would expand it and guarantee huge profits because it would freeze the trades of the combatant powers".[14]

12 Shaykhū, "Aʿẓamu tamma", (Aug. 1920), 632-633.

13 Shaykhū on V. Shchewish, *La Transsaharien et le premier Transafricain* (Tunis 1916), *al-Mashriq* (March 1920), 231-2.

14 Shaykhū, "Aʿẓamu tamma", *al-Mashriq* (April 1920), 288.

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Thus, Shaykhū sometimes ascribed economic motives to the choices and actions of states. Moreover, he and his colleagues hoped that the French mandate they championed would bring economic modernization and profits to Lebanon.

*3: Conceptualization of Germans*

Wilhelmian Germany became more and more unattractive to pro-clerical Maronites well before WW1 because of its tightening alliance with the central government in Constantinople that from 1908 was usually led by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The new Young Turk elite gave much more scope to threatening secular ideas throughout the whole Empire than had Sultan ʿAbdul-Ḥamīd with whom Maronite Patriarch Ilyās al-Ḥuwayyik had built up a live-and-let-live alliance in which he conceivably may have helped the Ottoman government repress local Maronite secularists.[15] The CUP also had centralizing impulses, and Germany was helping it improve its military capacities: as soon as they brought the Ottoman State into the War, the CUP militarily ended Mountain Lebanon's autonomy. After WW1, Christian authors in Arabic rapped "Germany, the aider of Turkey" for "allowing" sweeping violence by Turks, Kurds and Circassians against [mainly Syriac-speaking and Armenian] Christians in Mesopotamia and [in today's Turkey] Diyar Bakr, Mardin, Tur Abdin etc during the War – criminality by association rather than having taken part.[16]

More forward-thinking voices from among even the ranks of the vengeful French themselves were nudging Lebanon's Catholics to a more sympathetic understanding of the deep harm the late conflict and the post-War reparations had caused to Germany as well. The Alsatian-French author Got had reached the conclusion in his on-site researches with the French Mission in Berlin that Germany would never be able to lift itself to its feet again, however favorable the conditions, except after long years given the reparations it had to pay back to the Allies as compensation for everything it had destroyed in other countries. Thus, the Treaty of Versailles had to be revised.[17] (Got was overly pessimistic: the German currency was to restabilize in 1923, and the following year the Allies agreed to evacuate the Ruhr and grant Germany a more realistic payment schedule for reparations: by 1927, German industry had regained its 1913 high, but then the Great Depression hit all the world).

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15 Dennis Walker, "The Relations of Catholic Maronite Patriarch Ilyas Butrus al-Huwayyik with the Ottoman Turks", *IslamoChristiana* 28 (2002), 109-123.

16 Review of the 509-page book *al-Quṣārā fī nakabāt al-naṣārā* in *al-Mashriq* (January 1920), 71-2. Dr Gabriele Yonan of Germany was in 2000 researching links between Wilhelmian ministries and military and Ottoman attacks on Syriac-speakers during WW1.

17 Review by Fr. Gabriel Levenq of (Dr) Ambroise Got's *L'Allemagne après la Débâcle* (Strasbourg 1919), *al-Mashriq* (July 1920), 553.

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*Connections through Catholicism to Germans*

Catholic universalism finally reasserted itself – if weakly – over the French nationalism given a Christian patina, to which their auxiliary language had opened these clerical Lebanese. In one brief note, Shaykhū did rap "some extremists" in the victorious Allied powers who were expelling Catholic German missionaries from their Third World missions "lest, it is contended, they misuse religious evangelization as a means to propagate ... love towards their homeland". Shaykhū added his "weak voice" to that of the Pope and others to protest at restrictions that were further depriving a number of lands of the blessings of evangelizing "Christian civilization", given that the World War had cut down so many missionaries. The Allies could still try any Germans charged to have deformed the religion into an instrument for temporal aims, so alien to the thinking of Catholic missionaries.[18] [As though some Francophone Western missionaries had not inculcated love of the French state in the Fertile Crescent!]

In 1922, the science-aware Rafā'īl Nakhlah al-Yasū'ī tried to supplement or modify the hostile image of Germany that the French language had so deeply implanted in the opinion-makers of "the Catholics of the East" whom he now addressed. Nakhlah voiced understanding of the hatred that came from all corners against the people of the "covetous" Wilhelm II from its brilliant triumph in the 1870 war with France to its igniting of the flames of the late World War that had spread death and destruction over all areas of Europe. He took issue, though, with some who "have exaggeratedly dismissed Germany as in its entirety a purely materialist civilization that uses intellectual powers or the progress of the sciences and arts only to increase material prosperity and to expand the country by violating the rights of neighboring nations." In correction [to this Catholic view of Germany in the Arabic lands], Nakhlah highlighted as an instance of "real eternal civilization – justice, mercy [religion and ethics]" – in German life the association of Catholic pupils in German secondary schools, the Neudeutschland or Young Germany, founded immediately after the War and which by 1922 now had 25,000 members. Resolved to spread "Chastity" in "insolent" Weimar Germany, the students [like the clericists in France-mandated Lebanon] fought all that could foster promiscuity and prostitution in literature, cinema, theatre, public art, and fashions.[19]

Bismarck's – Protestantism-motivated? – Kulturkampf against Catholic schools was in the memory of Lebanon's Catholics when WW1 came. The less France-bound Nakhlah, who had some real Catholic universalism, liked Jesuit-directed Young Germany's stress on science beside religion. This and its retention of

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18 Shaykhū, review of J. Neuhaesler, "Appel aux catholiques de l'univers pour sauver les missions allemandes" (Munster 1920), *al-Mashriq* (July 1920), 554-555.

19 Rafā'īl Nakhlah al-Yasū'ī, "Almāniyā al-fatāt: aw jam'iyyat al-ṭalabat al-kāthūlīk" (Young Germany or the Association of Catholic Pupils), *al-Mashriq* (July 1922), 626-641.

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Homeland at the side of religion helped shape predilections now being passed on to the Maronite discursive tradition. (Some Germans were to assess long afterwards that such Catholic German youth movements and schools paved the way to the conversion of their middle-class youths to Nazism because they taught nationality and sniped at the urban, pluralist society of modernity emerging under Weimar).[20]

Rafāʿīl Nakhlah hoped, wrongly, that Germany could be redeemed into a polity in which Catholicism could flourish after the War. Yet, WW1 had made most literate Maronites swallow whole for the long term French nationalism's hatred of Germany, albeit with some adaption to clericist priorities. The Catholic clerical media in Lebanon mainly supported the most hard-line French positions towards Germany well into the 1920s. In early 1923, *al-Bashīr* rapped strikes by miners, boycotts and passive resistance against the French occupation in the Ruhr, and claims that by seizing coal mines and factories France had paralysed commerce and industry there. In refutation, *al-Bashīr* set out the assessments of the French ultrist politicians. In occupying the Ruhr after WW1, France had only been matching Germany, which in 1870 occupied provinces of France that she only evacuated after getting reparations for her losses in that war. France had to protect herself lest Germany catch her off-guard again.[21] Militarism: *al-Bashīr* excerpted accusations by War Minister Maginot in the French parliament that Germany was trying to rebuild its forces. Thus, France had to apply conscription to build a strong army of 52 divisions with "brutal" budgetary allocations.[22]

The high drama of France's struggle for survival in WW1 implanted in the literate discourse of the Maronites and Melkites many anti-German motifs from French nationalism. Some Lebanese Christian writers remained jumpy in the 1920s that the violence and mayhem of World War I could resume at any time. They continued to worry about France's safety from the expansionism of Germany, towards which they would remain suspicious and hostile in its Nazi period, in common with Muslim liberal intellectuals in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent.

By 1920, a friends-enemies dichotomy – "liberal" France versus militarist, post-Christian Germany – had been set for the long term into the Lebanese Catholic ethos.

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20 Friedrich Heer, *Revolutions of Our Time*, London 1974, 60.

21 "Mushkilat al-Ruhr: Ma-l-tarīqah ilā ḥallihā?" (The Problem of the Ruhr: What is the Best Way to Solve it?), *al-Bashīr* (24 March 1923), 1; "Fī-l-Ruhr", *al-Bashīr* (24 March 1923), 1.

22 "Faransā turīdu jayshahā qawiyyan: innahu khayru ḍamān li-ṣawn al-salām" (France Wants Her Army to be Strong: that is the Best Guarantee for Protecting the Peace), *al-Bashīr* (10 March 1923), 1.

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*4: World War I's Impact upon Ideology*

The havoc of WWI was assessed – or experienced – by many in Lebanon as an end of hope and of meaning in history. Preceding assumptions among Lebanon's Catholics that God or alternatively Progress (both as conceptualized from Europe) would order history towards human welfare faced a severe challenge from the death of millions. Clericist Catholic ideologues had to restructure Catholic Christianity to make it prevent or contain future conflict. The War had similarly devastated secular world-views in the Arab East. The Western states that had claimed to stand for Enlightenment, rationality and Progress had shown their capacity for atavistic devastation against each other. Thus, Lebanese and other Arab quasi-secularists now searched for supplementary meanings from established religions, although mostly in a theosophical way.

As disrespect spread in the world towards European states and cultures, the Maronite clerical writers had to respond to the manoeuvrings of Muslim apologists, the Arab theosophists and freemasons and the Arab post-Christian anticlerics to highlight their creeds, not Catholicism, as the solutions to conflict. Both post-Christian radical secularists and modernist salafi Islamists had long cited the crusader wars and the Inquisition as past violence and terror by the Church of Rome. An *al-Mashriq* article by Fr. Buṭrus Faraj Ṣufayr, "The Church and Resistance to Wars" welcomed that a group of eminent Englishmen were launching a League of Religions. Its ambition was to organize spiritual forces in the world to strengthen general peace and the joint interests of nations. *Al-Mashriq* recognized among those attending the England conference names of people representing different religions and sects, bishops and rabbis, as well as major thinkers and people working for social reform. "Those who in ancient and modern history worked most to end wars, or at least lessen their horrors, were the men of religion, and in particular the high clerics of the most widespread religion in the world, the Catholic Church".

Fr. Ṣufayr had partly penned his article out of fury at an essay by the West-acculturated Indian Syed Ameer ʿAlī (1849-1928), translated in Egypt's journal *al-Bayān*, which had striven to contrast Islam to the failure of Christianity after the Roman Empire adopted it to at all lessen the horrors of wars, oppression and extermination: Christianity had refused to address issues of international relations and reciprocal duties between nations. Ṣufayr retorted that Jesus set up the Church in the first place as the mechanism to establish in this world, after He ascended, his social teachings, and peace in given societies and in international relations. As Paul had put it, there no more remained amongst those who accepted Christ Jew nor Greek, not slave nor freeman, neither male nor female: all of them have become equal and one in the Messiah (Galatians 3:28). Ṣufayr cited NT verses that exhorted to forbearing pacifism even towards enemies. He challenged the Islamic apologists to muster for Islam clear verses on that level.

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Far from being part of past or recent violence in Europe, the Church and its Popes had always acted as the arbitrator to decide between kings and princes whose proclivities could have ignited war and social conflict, retorted Ṣufayr. In the middle ages, popes in Rome, when they saw ill-treatment by some Kings against their subjects, defended those who had been oppressed without any fear of the power that those tyrants exercized. Henry IV, the Emperor of Germany who ignited in Europe a war that inflicted catastrophes on its lands, finally was forced to submit and desist before the wise old man of Rome.

This characterization by Ṣufayr ignored that Pope Gregory VII (1073-85) was no such wise arbitrator who only intervened to bridle kings after they became violent and expansionist or repressive at home. Rather, it was the simultaneous drives of both he and Henry IV to expand their respective power-systems that drew them to their collisions. Gregory may have founded the Papacy's long-term supremacy over the Catholic churches and its claim to supervize the secular rulers of Europe, but in his life-time his drive to reduce kings to vassals sparked grotesque situations of double-popes and alternative kings or emperors for Germany and fighting and looting in holy Rome that far from fostered peace or stability or any regard for religion and the Church.

Ṣufayr argued that the papacy carried its immemorial arbitrative role in international high politics forward into modern history when its mediation by Pope Leo XIII in 1885 settled the conflict that developed between Germany and Spain over the Caroline Islands. Given the Church's track-record in settling a host of disputes and wars, the League of Nations should incorporate it into modern peacemaking, ending the sidelining. "Would not the world have avoided all the terrors and hatreds of the last World War, had Austria and Serbia both taken to the Holy See the issues of that conflict that set off all these wars and caused so much suffering?" Thus, Ṣufayr fleeted over the extent to which the international Catholic church had been cut down, sidelined, marginalized and hit by 19th century secularist, anti-clerical or downrightly anti-Christian regimes in Europe and Latin America that were determined to transform their national societies and their world standing without any trammels or meddling from the Church.

Lebanon's clericists remained on the defensive against Arab secularists who held up modern Europe's secularism. But Ṣufayr sought in the late War a religious imperative in history. "All the development of modern sciences only turned them into a terrible instrument that have made War unprecedentedly barbarous and destructive". Thus, only religions could bring the natures of people under control.

Ṣufayr rebutted the charges from Islamists and Christian-born Arab freethinkers that the church had itself committed or incited military aggressions. The popes had maintained properties to sustain the church, and this understandably led to the creation of a state which the Pope of Rome then had to defend by force if it were invaded. (Answering radically secular Italian nationalists?) The crusader wars and those of the European states against the expansionist Ottoman

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Empire were only defensive and proportionate. The Muslims themselves [= Arab nationalists including his bete noire Rashīd Riḍā, Egypto-Syrian editor of *al-Manār*] as well as the Christians had condemned the Ottoman Empire. Still, charges of the Arab free-thinkers and such salafists as Riḍā and his mentor Muḥammad ʿAbduh and the acculturated Muslim apologists about the "fanatical" crusades and Inquisition had cut close to home.[23]

We should not overrate ecumenical glimmerings in Fr. Ṣufayr that devastation in the late War now could force clergy of varied religions to work together. Ṣufayr might indeed accept even the odd token rabbi, but he voiced no sense that Muslim clerics might have to be inducted into the peace-making, or that Lebanon's Catholics had anything to learn from the Islam massively flowing around them.

Ṣufayr's semi-quietist passages that religion and the Church could only ameliorate, not end, social injustice could have been closer to Christianity's New Testament and sense of original sin. But the WW1 havoc and the taunts from the Islamists had pushed him to make Jesus the founder of International Law as he claimed a role for the Catholic Church in international relations and politics like that that Islam's modernists were now imaging for Islam.

It needed strenuous footwork to deny after 1918 that Christianity and its institutions had failed to motivate its adherents in Europe and the West towards peace and constructive solutions. Catholic writers and media in Lebanon were restructuring Catholicism in order to maintain it, but many felt that other instruments and groups had to be synthesized with Christianity to save humanity. Thus, *al-Mashriq* also gave a hearing to the new international mechanism of the League of Nations, more neutral and secular than the Church, which it saw as set up by governments in response to pressure from the populations that had lost so much blood. The author, Emile Ṭayyān, was a student at the French Law School who was to become a lecturer in Law at St Joseph's College. In 1920, the young Ṭayyān was in places Francophile in a way conventional among Maronites at that time. France had acted rightly to exclude Germany from the League of Nations following World War I: a League meant to promote freedom and justice and the observance of international undertakings could not admit states that had constantly broken their contracts and undertakings and barbarically swooped down upon others [= Germany's invasion of Belgium and France]. Since actions by the League had to be adopted in advance by unanimous vote, it had been right to exclude such states as Germany and Soviet Russia that it had to control.

In places, though, Ṭayyān's youthful essay diverged from the battered secular-ameliorist ideology of the French State whose language he loved. Intentionally or not, he might have been feeding the reaction among Christian Lebanese against

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23 Fr. Buṭrus Faraj Ṣufayr, "al-Kanīsah wa munāhaḍāt al-ḥurūb" (The Church and Resistance to Wars), *al-Mashriq* (July 1920), 524-534.

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Westerners in general in the wake of WW1, sparked by international realpolitik, contempt from French personnel and military in Lebanon, and by cultural incompatibility. In a critique of a range of Western states, not just Germany alone, Ṭayyān condemned the colonialist expansionism that Britain had carried forward through WW1 and the League structure itself. He feared that her takeover of Germany's former colonies (eg. South West Africa and Cameroon) with the League's ratification would become permanent since none of its texts gave it either the title or the means to supervise and end such supposed "protectorates" or "trusteeships". Even if the League had such a function nominally, who was there to compel the imperial state to withdraw from a trustee territory as its population became more able to govern itself? While dislike of Britain and being Francophile could go together in the 1920s, Ṭayyān then denounced Rome as a precursor of "civilized" states bent on conquests in his day. The nature of human beings has not changed for thousands of years: the ancient Romans when they conquered a town, depriving it of its liberty, used to then term it free or allied. "We only hope that the new words will amount to more than a veil". Whatever his exact intention, Ṭayyān had got very close here to France which presented herself as the Latin successor of imperial Rome in the Levant after WW1.[24]

Most groups of literate Lebanese Catholics had the strong bond of language to the thought and the survival of France. Yet many writers at least sometimes hinted edginess towards the hierarchical imperialism of the Western states. WW1 had shown again that constructive ideologies articulated from the West might not be able to contain violence and evil, or its Catholic and secular streams be synthesized.

## *Part Two: Perceptions of WW1 Conflicts in the Ottoman Empire*

### *1: The War in Lebanon*

#### *The Functions of the Indigenous Martyrs*

The formal execution or murder by some Turks of Catholic or Muslim Lebanese/Syrians shortly before or during World War I could define in two ways the indigenous nation-community that the clericists would henceforth strive to achieve. On one hand, if the items defined the Turks as Muslim and the victims as Christian, the events could alienate the Christian readership from not just the Turks but from Muslim Arabs of the Syrian interior and longer littoral. In the other direction, if Muslim Arab victims were also perceived as covictims because of the

24 Amil Ṭayyān, "Jamʿiyyat al-umam" (The League of Nations), *al-Mashriq* (October 1920), 754-768.

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literary Arabic they shared with the Maronites, then that could foster political community with wider Islamo-Arab populations – and perhaps Lebanon's affiliation to some pan-Syrian or pan-Arab entity.

Of the two possibilities, most items on pre-1918 Catholic victims that *al-Mashriq* carried fostered Lebanonism, but in an incomplete way. *al-Mashriq* published a retrospect in 1921 on the lives and execution of the two brothers Filīb and Farīd al-Khazīn (from a feudal family). It represented Filīb al-Khazīn (1865-1916) as from his youth having protested abuses of the Turks under the *mutaṣarrif* Wasa Pasha (governed Mountain Lebanon 1883-1892) from the Egyptian press. Once the French Consul appointed Filīb an honorary dragoman, the two brothers were emboldened to launch the newspaper *al-Arz* (The Cedar) which fiercely defended not just Lebanon's internationally-guaranteed autonomy but, perhaps equally, the ancient "sacred rights" (*al-huqūq al-muqaddasah*) of the protector France in the homeland. When Italy seized Libya from the Ottoman Empire, its armored cruisers sank two Ottoman torpedo ships in Beirut harbour. Filīb's lament at that time was that it had not been done by France, which alone among the Powers had the right to conduct such actions "in these lands". Clearly, the Ottoman central government one day might have more to fear from the pair than words or editorializing, but the early perspective of *al-Mashriq* in 1921 was of a recent Ottoman system in which the printed page could muster immense political power in itself and thus had to be controlled or repressed. The *al-Mashriq* retrospect speculated that it was the publication by the brothers in several volumes of Arabic translations of the correspondence between the Powers establishing France's maternal role and rights in Lebanon that made Jamāl Pasha, the last Turkish governor of Syria, decide to execute Filīb and Farīd.

The martyrs who sacrifice their lives for the particularist homeland are simultaneously sustained by a Christianity acculturated to the Catholicism of Europe's Latin peoples, eg. France. The two brothers had expected from the first day of the sitting of the court that it would sentence them to death as it had all others. They were sustained in jail as they prepared themselves for their final journey to their Creator and that other "heavenly Homeland" by their regular reading of Thomas Akempis' *The Imitation of Christ*, as well as prayer and meditation. There was a touch of hagiography in some details of the last weeks of the al-Khazīn brothers: for example their refusal to eat more than the needed minimum of the prison fare so that they could donate the rest to the poor.

In regard to current political context and functions, the *al-Mashriq* tribute was stylizing the death of Filīb and Farīd al-Khazīn to make it of use in the mobilization of Maronite audiences to the side of France in the ideologically much less clear-cut situation that was developing as France's imposition of her non-pious rule hit the Arabic culture, the political dignity and the solid, simple Christian religious values of the Maronites. French mandatory rule was turning out to be not quite the expected liberation or Pan-Catholic conjunction with a Christian

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protector. At least some Maronites had been showing signs since 1918 of now wanting to distance France by some sort of linkage to hinterland Muslim Syrian Arabs in a polity to be centered around Damascus. Ritual commemoration of model martyrs oriented to Latin Catholicism and to France could help contain such swings among *al-Mashriq*'s elite readership.

Greater political openness to Muslims in a context of the reaction against France after 1918 would be no new thing for Maronites or Melkites. Before 1914, various secular-minded groups (and Maronite Patriarch Ilyās Buṭrus al-Ḥuwayyik before 1908 and CUP rule) had at points sought closer political relations with Turks and/or Muslim Arabs in the sprawling, potentially lucrative Ottoman Empire. Such subversive precursors of affiliation to the Arab lands at expense of France had to be excised from Lebanon's history. The Francophile particularists mustered the strong narrative of suffering and martyrdom for God and Homeland to nullify the plurality of pre-1914 Lebanese Catholic history and ideologies. For a range of Catholics, martyrdoms during World War I finally showed the impossibility of affiliating to at least some Muslims in a political community, with distancing of the West's Christian powers, which integrative Ottomanism by some Maronites had already tried.

The (pre-WW1) memory that enraged the writer most was "the day that Lebanese faction rose up in the wake of the proclamation of the Ottoman constitution [after the CUP coup of 1908] to insist that Lebanon had to elect representatives to represent it in the [restored] Turkish parliament" in Istanbul. In this, the secularist-Ottomanist faction among the Maronites was being manipulated by Turkish officials and politicians to "deny Lebanon its independence and thereby prevent the European states from intervening in the affairs of this land/these lands" (*hādhihi-l-bilād*). The two al-Khazīn brothers blocked "those of the other doctrine" with the "unrelenting" (but not very physical) war they waged from their newspaper *al-Arz*. Their "logical" territorial nationalism (*waṭaniyyah*) presented legally airtight refutations: sending representatives to Constantinople would have violated Lebanon's autonomy ("self-independence") granted under a Constitution guaranteed by the great powers.

The holy blood of the saint-particularists whom Jamāl martyred opened the way to dismiss those who had worked for a humane political community with Ottoman Muslims as materialist opportunists in contrast. Yet these very denunciations underscored institutions and processes that had been operating to integrate Muslim Turks, Muslim Arabs, and Arabic Christians prior to the War and the martyrdoms. Archbishop ʿAbdallah al-Khūrī's 1921 elegy denounced "public posts (*al-waẓā'if*) that make people remiss from serious work, inclining them to prefer personal interest over the collective interest. Everyone knows how widespread this disease became in Turkey and Lebanon". But, the pure love of the two brothers for their homeland had made them spurn all posts the government offered to win their silence about its evil deeds. The two brothers' construction

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of patriotism *(al-waṭaniyyah)* only allowed them to court the protection of France which alone would actualize the homeland's interest.

*Al-Mashriq* imaged that the blood of the martyrs ended any possibility of some humane political community with Turks. For this, the Archbishop defined the group the two martyrs defended as Christian – yet it did not so fuse the Turkish enemy with Islam as to include Arab Muslims. The sufferings of Arabic, Syriac and Armenian Christians during World War 1 could activate ideas that would polarize those all together against Muslims in general or Islam. But the anti-Turkism of 1920s clericist-Catholic Lebanese writings that reconstructed memories of WW1 repression, martyrdom and suffering to fuel a new nationhood could keep up some affiliation to the hinterland's Arab Muslims. A sense that Syrian and other Muslim Arabs had been colleagues with Lebanese Christians in a joint linguistic-cum-ethnic coalition against the Turks in the wide Ottoman Empire was still vivid in *al-Mashriq*'s 1921 tribute to "the two martyrs of Lebanon."

As soon as their interrogation began, Archbishop ʿAbdallah al-Khūrī wrote, Filīb and his brother knew that they were heading for the same fate as "an elite of the [leading] men of Syria and Lebanon who were detained with them, and who were driven either to Damascus (*al-Shām*) or to Beirut for sentences of execution to be carried out against them – figures like [Muslims] Shafīq al-Muʾayyad and ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Zahrāwī whose bravery and preparedness to sacrifice their lives for the suffering homeland the Syrians will long remember. By the blood of those heroes the land [or lands – *al-bilād*] won title to be purified of the Turkish element" [= Ottoman phraseology] "and the corruptions it wrought". True, the Catholic writer remained aware of the separateness of faith of those recent allies. However, he felt obliged to "richly praise the patriotism of our Arab Muslim brothers who – despite their religious bonds with the Turks – were not deceived by their lying promises but kept up their fury at the injustices and terrible crimes they committed". Jamāl Pasha's ill-advised repression dug "a deep ravine that irreversibly separated the two [Ottoman] elements/ethnic groups (*al-ʿunṣurayn*)".

In this sector, the tribute to the two bearers of the standard of ultra-particularism and a sort of spiritual fusion with France, does have a sense of commonality in the face of the Turks at least that could blur the nation in Lebanon out into some wider Arab political nation. The memorization of martydom here could activate the sense of "*al-ʿArab*" as a cherished wide classical community in which Fr. Lūwīs Shaykhū had stressed the membership and roles of many Christians. This quicksilver margin of the tribute to the two al-Khazīn brothers could veer either way – to Lebanese particularism or to a wider Arab linguistic nationalism. This was, though, a margin.[25]

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[25] Archbishop Abdallah al-Khūrī, "Shāhidat Lubnān: al-Shaykh Fīlīb wa-l-shaykh Farīd Qiʿdān al-Khazīn", *al-Mashriq* (June 1921), 401-408. There had been a youthful radical, post-Christian element among the Maronites who called for Lebanon's inclusion into

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*Patriarch Ilyas Buṭrus al-Ḥuwayyik versus Jamāl Pasha*

During his 1922 account of Armenian suffering and death that he witnessed, the Maronite Yūzif Tawtal already termed Jamāl, the Ottoman governor of Syria during WW1, as "Jamāl Pasha the Murderer" ("*al-Saffāḥ*"), the epithet that would henceforth accompany his name in Lebanonist and Arabist nationalist discourses.[26]

During WW1, Jamāl Pasha as governor of Syria was intent to modify procedures to symbolize a partial shift of power from the Maronite church and from Mount Lebanon's autonomous institutions towards himself and the Ottoman central government. The Empire's central Turkish authorities had abolished the capitulations; Jamāl sent his troops into Mountain Lebanon and at one point imposed a blockade that starved many ordinary people there. The food-blockade came at a high-point of a long personal trial of wills between him and the Maronite Patriarch Ilyās Buṭrus al-Ḥuwayyik (appointed in 1899): Jamāl's troops were in the Jabal (Mountain Lebanon) but he did not disarm the Maronite population, conscript them widely or prohibit them from leaving it: this suggests that he meant to let food flow in again if al-Ḥuwayyik made some gestures of subordination, which the Patriarch inventively avoided as long or as much as he could.

In early 1922, Archbishop ʿAbdallah al-Khūrī published in the Jesuit-founded newspaper *al-Bashīr* a defence of stances that al-Ḥuwayyik had adopted towards Jamāl during the War. Al-Khūrī conceded that a section of the Maronites felt that the Patriarch had shown weakness at one point of his protracted confrontation with the man who symbolized Turkish rule when in October 1916 he signed a statement to the effect that Jamāl had treated the populations of Lebanon and Syria well, particularly the Christians. [The well-attended demonstrations after 1918 for a Greater Lebanon unit under French tutelage were in part upward pressure from Maronite sectors that had been radicalized by the war-time suffering: it was not just that the Patriarch organized them].

Yet, while ʿAbdallah's 1922 memorization did not focus that aspect, it looks from his data that Jamāl had been acting in geographical Syria without much control or monitoring from Constantinople. ʿAbdallah, an intermediary for al-Ḥuwayyik to Jamāl, recalled the latter as seeking written statements from local Christian leaders to counter articles appearing in the French press in 1916 that "the Turks" were determined to starve the Christian people to extinction in Lebanon and Syria, "that he had set up gallows" – the latter was the simple truth –,

Ottoman parliamentarism after 1908, but also "a group of the eminent/powerful/established figures" (*qawm min al-kibār*): see *al-Ahrām* editor Dāwūd Barakāt's obituary speech for Patriarch al-Ḥuwayyik in *al-Hudā* (1 February 1932), 4-5. Thus, a section of the established Maronite feudal class engaged with an Ottomanist integrationism that could slash the patriarchate's power.

26 Yūzif Tawtal, "Hawādith Dayr al-Zūr fī zamān al-ḥarb" (The Events in Dayr al-Zūr during the War), *al-Mashriq* (June 1922), 567.

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"and that the Maronites were eagerly awaiting the arrival of the French so that they could join them and expel the Turks and turn their country into a French colony". Such international reports had apprised the CUP leaders away in the capital that Jamāl had so alienated all the Syrians, the Muslims perhaps even more than the Christians, as to make their discontent threaten the Ottoman State's hold in those lands. Jamāl Pasha's repeated efforts to force Patriarch al-Ḥuwayyik into rituals of respect towards the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Istanbul that all non-Maronite Christian clerics accepted were to assure his far-away CUP superiors that his provinces were non-rebellious and quasi-normal.

Maronite clericist negotiators were concerned with their position and that of their populations before Turkish power. During the discussions with Jamāl on behalf of the Patriarch, ʿAbdallah replied that newspapers during wars strive to blacken the reputations of the enemy states. But the numbers of Lebanese people really were falling because at least 50,000 had died in the famine and with Lebanon now on the threshold of winter much food would have to be brought in by its close or the country would lose half its population. In al-Khūrī's narrative, the statement of good treatment from Governor Jamāl that the Patriarch would now sign was the latter's response to the existential crisis of Maronites in general that was now forcing him to negotiate and concede.

In the real past, Jamāl was rather pro-French culturally and he may have regretted the CUP's entry of WW1 on the German side.[27] But for the Patriarch, and for his subordinate Archbishop ʿAbdallah in his 1922 memorization, the connection with France was both a threat to the Maronites given the mood of the hard-pressed Turks, and a proud emblem of identity they flaunted in their face. When Jamāl questioned Maronite loyalty to the Ottoman state, ʿAbdallah responded that France had out of "love" of the Christians established many institutions in Lebanon such as the theological college in which he had learnt. The Maronites had duly loved her back, but, ʿAbdallah told Jamāl, that love had far from fostered in him "any inclination on my part for my country to become a French colony". When Jamāl voiced the same concern of loyalty to the Patriarch in a meeting on 21 July 1915, al-Ḥuwayyik similarly put the relationship with benefactor France within a frame of the Maronites' adhesion to the Ottoman State – which may have been his real stance up to 1908.

Jamāl Pasha was concerned in 1916 with his deteriorating standing in Istanbul, or his place in world Francophone history or perhaps how he would fare before some trial by the Allies if they won. He refuted at length images in the French press that could be construed to link him to an artificial famine. He rhetorically asked ʿAbdallah if he had sent the locusts in 1915 or stopped rain from falling in 1916 or organized the sea blockade by the Allied navies that cut off the flow of

27 Characterization of Jamāl to me by liberal-Lebanonist historian Youssef Mouawad 21 May 2001.

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food and funds from the Syrian diaspora? He now sounded eager to shower the Patriarch with grain, and did get the letter of commendation out of him that the Maronite side assumed would be understood in Europe and the Americas as having been coerced.[28]

ʿAbdallah al-Khūrī in 1922 had characterized the non-Muslim Lebanese in religious terms as Christian vis-à-vis Jamāl and the Turks. Going further, fairly secularist-liberal historian Youssef Mouawad (c. 2000) interpreted Jamāl/the Turks as motivated by a Muslim communalism seen as having persisted among elite Ottoman Turks amid their Westernization: Jamāl was trying to maintain the ancient pattern of relations of "dominant and dominated, people of the majority and those tolerated, Muslim and *dhimmi*" – a late echo of themes in the Mandate-period early Katāʾib. For Mouawad here, the conflict was not originated by issues articulated by the two men such as new taxes or whether or not the Ottomans should disarm or conscript the Christians: rather, the Ottoman officer Jamāl was mustering pressures and issues to bring the *dhimmi* to heel and call him to order.[29] Archbishop al-Khūrī did not formally characterize Jamāl's maneuvers thus in 1922 soon after the events, but many Maronites in the 20th century saw such a dhimmifying ethos constructed upon Islam as determining the attitudes of Turks and Muslim Arabs to Lebanon's Catholics. Tendencies in early mandate-period Catholic memorization to denounce oppressive Turks in terms of Islam were contained by the sober al-Ḥuwayyik's lack of much animus against that religion, and by Lebanese Catholics and Muslims Arabs having faced Turkish ill-treatment together – affinity that had to be highlighted to foster new Lebanonist or loose Arab political communities after WW1. During his trials of will with Jamāl, al-Ḥuwayyik had tried to present himself as in some ways an intercessor-representative for Druze/Muslim Lebanese individuals as well as for the Maronite sect: the clerical archivist Fr. Ibrāhīm Ḥarfūsh retransmitted it in 1934, in a period in which Greater Lebanon's Christians and Muslims had to be led to unifying images of their common past if the Lebanese state was to be viable in its coming independence.

But Jamāl and his sometimes post-Muslim new Turkish elite had concerns apart from religions and sects. Pro-France sympathies among a purposeful, compact population such as the Maronites during a World War could provide a bridgehead: his duty to defend the Ottoman state's territorial integrity bound him to clamp control down on the Maronite high clergy. No doubt, as a schizoid sadist, Jamāl relished his power to exile the Patriarch from Lebanon at

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28 Archbishop ʿAbdallah al-Khūrī, deputy of the Patriarch, "Ṣafḥah taʾrīkhiyyah min ayyām al-ḥarb" (A Page of History from the Days of the War), *al-Bashīr* (1 March 1922), 1-2. For al-Ḥuwayyik on the Maronites' loyalty before Jamāl Pasha on 21 July 1915 see Youssef Mouawad, "Exercise de dhimmitude: Patriarche Ilyas al-Huwayyik versus Jamal Pasha", Paper: c. 2000, 8.

29 Mouawad, "Exercise de dhimmitude", 1-2.

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any time and harm humans who were Christian Lebanese. On another plane, as an acculturated Muslim or post-Muslim, Jamāl may have felt all he and his category of Turks had in common with Francophone elite Lebanese as against traditional Muslims. After the suffering he had ran ordinary Lebanese through by manipulating the flow of food, a crestfallen Jamāl – so Fr. Ḥarfūsh's 1934 memorization ran – in a December 1917 meeting with al-Ḥuwayyik confided his tensions with the German military, and seemed understanding of the Maronites' preference for the French as mentors. In this swing, Jamāl was treating al-Ḥuwayyik as a peer in a common Francophone culture that would promote modernity, and such a respect or admiration towards the Maronites may have always been latent in his pressurizing of their leader.[30]

When facing Jamāl Pasha, in his untiring post-WW1 drive for a Greater Lebanon under French direction against resistance from some secularist Maronites as well as Muslims, and in the analytical sweep of his Arabic theological, social and political writings and addresses, Patriarch al-Ḥuwayyik today bulks large in any memory of Lebanon's history. The liberal Lebanese nationalist Dr ʿIsām Khalīfah, a Maronite, in 1997 historiography he also tailored to help bring all Lebanese back together after their 1975-1990 War so that they could take back sovereignty, focused on al-Ḥuwayyik's "resistance" to the war-time famine – but also that the Patriarch tried to intercede for and get relief to local Druze/Muslims as well as Maronites during the famine; that he associated non-Catholic sects with his lobbying for an expanded Lebanon, separation from Syria and the French mandate after the War; and that he wanted to minimize France's new control.[31] Gouraud's 1920 proclamation of that state was the first of two crucial turning-points for the construction of Lebanese sovereign nationhood, yet current inclusive Lebanonist intellectuals and academics do not then proceed to celebrate al-Ḥuwayyik as an icon-founder of Lebanon: his clerical function, and his long relation with the French, rule out acceptance by descendants of the Muslim populations that were incorporated by his efforts abroad more than by choice from them.

The sufferings of Mount Lebanon's Christians during World War I in the aftermath fuelled support among Catholics for a mandate by France. In the first item of the first issue in which *al-Mashriq* resumed publication in January 1920, Shaykhū argued for France as the coming mandatory with reference to the war-time sufferings of the Christians of Mount Lebanon. The break of five years that "the calamities" (= war-time conditions) imposed upon *al-Mashriq* had been borne by its editors with [religion-inspired] *ṣabr* (patience/resignation/endurance/

30 Ibid., 15-16. Mouawad based his analysis of the conflict between Jamal and the Patriarch on Michel Shiblī's biography of the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut Mgr. Buṭrus Shiblī, *Tarjamāt al-muṭrān Buṭrus Shiblī*, Bayrūt: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Kāthūlīkiyyah 1929, which carried extensive passages from the Archbishop's journals; and on church archivist Fr. Ibrāhīm Harfush's *Dalāʾil al-ʿināyah al-Samadaniyyah*, Jūniyah 1934.

31 Dr ʿIsām Kamāl Khalīfah, *Shakhsiyyāt bārizah fī taʾrīkh Lubnān al-muʿāsir*, Bayrūt 1991, 6-13 and 15.

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steadfastness). Although a Christianity-inspired ethos, Shaykhū's language here was certainly, as ever, tinted by Islam and its classical Arabs at every turn ("*al-ṣabr ul-jamīl li-ʿilmihim ann Allāha maʿa ṣ-ṣabrīn*" – a straight collage by Shaykhū of the language of Q 2:249, 8:46, 8:66, 12:18, 12:83!). Now, though, the aesthetic links to Arab Muslims were outweighed by the recent sufferings and the Francophone links as Shaykhū and his readers entered the new era of "hopes" that was transforming the world. Shaykhū hailed the Allies for having "entered the havoc of the war to defend civilization and the rights of the weak peoples and to break the yokes holding down those that had been enslaved". France "in the time of its war did not lose sight of our ordeals" and had spirited through "vast sums that saved from death thousands of people who were tottering with hunger".

Shaykhū's editorial viewed Turkish repression and ill-treatment of his group during the war as a heightening of a long-standing struggle in which France had for centuries been the "refuge" of the Empire's suffering [Christians]. France's protection had won for "the remnants of Christianity in the [Ottoman] East" capitulatory privileges that reduced their sufferings but made the Turks envious. Shaykhū here had half-insight that the relationship with imperial France itself sparked some repression from the Turks who wanted to maintain their state or empire, but he could not grasp the manipulative economic motives of France's expansion when he depicted her as always shedding her blood "for every noble principle" in the "purity of her intentions".

This editorial said that France offered relief from early after the Turkish collapse to "those in need from every sectarian group". But its overall presentation of France as acting in West Asia to promote as well as protect the Catholics there could alienate Muslim Arabs incorporated into the expanded homeland-unit from not just France but those Catholics who allied to her.[32]

Shaykhū's harsh binary oppositions here of (a) local Christians and a France that alone can modernize them against (b) Muslim Turks are intelligible in terms of the contraction of the Lebanese population during World War I, and the destroyed economy that that disintegration had bequeathed.

In one fleeting item, Shaykhū did connect "the famine [caused by] the Turks" and post-War clashes between some Shiite Arabs and some Maronite and other Christians in southern Lebanon. The wartime "famine has turned into the war of the sharp swords" of those shedding torrents of "the blood of our murdered Christian brothers" in Marjaʿyun, Akkar, Tyre [all incorporated into Grand Liban] and the areas of Marʿash [Southern Turkey: massacres of Armenians 1890, 1917] and Cicili. This pan-Christian twinge at least of Shaykhū could conflate the Turks who systematically harmed his people and other non-Arabic Christians during World War I into various sets of local [Arab Muslims] who were more

32 Lūwīs Shaykhū , "Taḥiyyat al-mashriq li-Qurraʾihi" (The Greeting of *al-Mashriq* to its Readers), *al-Mashriq* (January 1920), 2-3.

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small-scale in the harm they did. Shaykhū was disturbed, though, that the French "second mother" was taking a long time to crush these [Arab Muslim] enemies as a deterrent example.[33] This item fused France with Lebanon's Catholics, and indeed a range of Christian populations scattered over the Middle East, but failed to name the enemies it lumped together as all "the Muslims".

The context of items after 1920 about Turkish or Muslim hostility or atrocities in WW1, and France as a consequent protector was the growing reaction against France and in favour of community with Muslim Arabs among educated Maronites. Interpretations of WW1 were mustered in these disputes.

*The Effects of World War I for Zionism and the Jews*

For Shaykhū, WW1, and specifically the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire he did not love, represented a turning-point towards the restoration of political power to Jews.

In a 1920 overall study "Zionism, its Past, Present and Future", Shaykhū with classical French-like perspective and clarity surveyed the various groups, such as the lovers of Zion, Theodor Herzel and his de-Judaized European Zionists, and the various populations of Jews, Ashkenazi and Sephardic, that got drawn to migrate to Palestine.

Like many Arab-cultured clerics in Lebanon, Shaykhū could be oddly theosophist-like while a denouncer of freemasons: he defined the revival of Jewish strength as at the expense of Christians and Muslims together [in Palestine? the Arabic-speaking countries? the world?], although the armed Western Christian tradition that also fuelled his anger had formed in violent polarization against Islam during the Crusades. The entrance of the allies into Jerusalem in 1917 reminded the Christians of its conquest in 1099 by the Crusaders under Godfrey of Bouillon [Germanic but who mainly used French]. They did not foresee that their control over Jerusalem would now be contested by the Zionist group through the secret agreements that had been concluded between the great financiers among the Jews and the English State. Shaykhū interpreted this as having been revealed by the Balfour declaration of 2 November 1917 that the British government might well foster in the coming peace a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. The *al-Mashriq* article referred to, and Shaykhū clearly shared, the emotions of the Muslims as well as Christians in Palestine who raised their voices in protest and presented petitions to the League of Nations and to the allied states and to the Pope, leading English local personnel to offer reassurances – that there would never be any Jewish government in Palestine – in which Shaykhū intimated he lacked any confidence.

33 Shaykhū, *al-Mashriq* (June 1920), 477.

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World War I had placed at stake Maronite communities and crucial Catholic religious shrines in Palestine. How anti-Semitic was Shaykhū's essay? At one place, he recognized that many Jews themselves and especially the Sephardim opposed the idea of Zionism because it threatened to harm them in various ways. Overall, though, the almost pan-Islam-like logic of Shaykhū's usual attraction to wide religion-defined groups or blocs – macro-histories – here again made him accept that the modern Zionists did represent the past of the Jews and a globe-scattered community of diaspora Jews who responded enthusiastically to the Zionist entry of Palestine.[34] Shaykhū endorsed the 1920 argument of Hayfa Maronite priest Būlus 'Abbūd that if Britain established a state for the Jews in Palestine that would "exile or enslave all other groups". The ancient Israelite people in the age of its power had committed evil deeds that the prophets and Jesus excoriated: they now might again against the other races.[35]

Lebanon's Catholics, then, were quickly made aware that one of the most important long-term consequences of the Allied Powers' defeat and partition of the Ottoman Empire would be a serious Jewish settlement in Palestine with a drive for political statehood. Thus the Zionist settlement one day might link the Maronites out to Arab nationalists in the region (– or provide an alternative centre of power to checkmate them?).

*2: The Representation of Armenians*

Mountain Lebanon's Catholics had not interacted with Armenians just out there in the wider Ottoman Empire. In the early 19th century, Armenians in Aleppo established pious endowments (*waqfs*) to support charitable relief by monasteries in the Jabal's Kisrawan area of the Armenian but perhaps also Maronite poor.[36] In Shaykhū's period, Armenians also had studied for medical degrees in St Joseph's College in Beirut, and then, as doctors, treated Maronites: socialization that predisposed Lebanon's clerical and specialized Catholic elites to feel for suffering Armenians during World War I.

Shaykhū's learned journal *al-Mashriq*, in the wake of World War I, published two eye-witness articles recording massive deaths of Armenians under Turkish

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34 Shaykhū, "al-Ṣahyūniyyah: mādīhā, ḥāḍiruhā wa-mustaqbaluhā" (Zionism: its Past, Present and Future), *al-Mashriq* (October 1920), 768-778. Cf. review by Shaykhū of Moris R. Cohen, *Du Zionisme: Liberalisme ou Regime de la Tribu* (Paris n.d.); Cheikh Youseff el-Khazen, *L'Etat Juif en Palestine* (Paris n.d.); and Negib Mousalli, *Le Sionisme et la Palestine* (Geneva 1919): *al-Mashriq* (March 1920), 232-233.

35 *al-Mashriq* (September 1920), 715.

36 Data 15 June 2001 from Dr Stefan Knost, from his PhD thesis at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales titled *The Organization of Sacred Space: Muslim Waqfs Religious Institutions in Aleppo 1750-1850.* The two monasteries Knost had *waqf* documents for were Dayr Zimar and Dayr Yaznar, both in Kisrawan. Armenian clerics were still at their Zimar (or Bzimar) monastery in 1923: *al-Bashīr* (22 February 1923), 2.

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control during that conflict. The first, by the Maronite writer Yūzif Tawtal, described the arrival and fate of 300,000-400,000 Armenians driven from Anatolia to Dayr al-Zūr in an outlying province around Syria's Euphrates river. From an old Maronite family of Aleppo, Tawtal at the time of Turkey's 1916 violence against the Armenians had moved to the desert town to work as a Turkish-German translator. The other contribution, by the Armenian youth Badrus Arakiliyan who was only a teenager during the war, was written in French since he was educated by Jesuits in Anatolia, and then translated into Arabic by someone associated with *al-Mashriq*, or by Tawtal who had sheltered him as an escapee in his Dayr al-Zūr household.[37] The tone of both testimonies was flat and sober. For instance, Tawtal gave credit to Dayr al-Zūr's previous benign Turkish *mutaṣarrifs* Aḥmad Rashīd, and the wartime Jalāl Bey who did his best to house the expelled Armenians arriving from Turkey until the Committee of Union and Progress regime in Constantinople replaced him with "a savage beast reincarnated in a human body".[38] This article did not depict *all* Turks as evil.

Although the two items must rate as primary testimonies, the *al-Mashriq* editors had not sketched in the preceding political and ideological context. Prior to World War I, Armenians had not been just passive recipients of communal violence from various Muslim Ottoman groups in the districts of Asia minor in which they were most numerous. Not just political activism but urban "terrorism" had been coming from amongst the Ottoman Armenian populations that the Turks now in 1916 moved to break in a final way.

There were about 1,500,000 Armenians in the Ottoman Empire around the end of the nineteenth century, and 1,000,000 under Russian rule.[39] Both Muslim and Christian Arabic-speakers had in the leadup to WW1 been viewing with keen interest the rapid organization of Armenian nationalism. In an 1895 letter from Paris, the Egyptian nationalist Muṣṭafā Kāmil had urged his much less developed independence movement to seek organizational patterns from the "Eastern" (sic) Armenians' activism.[40]

Animus against Christian tenets or no, certain demographic realities had had to force any conceivable Ottoman government to crush Armenian demands for independence if its support from Muslims and thus the State itself were to survive. H.G. Hogarth pointed out that there was no "geographical unit of the Ottoman [Empire] in which Armenians are the majority. If they cluster more thickly in the *vilayets* of easternmost Asia Minor than elsewhere, ... they are con-

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37 "The Expelled One" Badrus Arakiliyan, "al-Ṭarīd al-armanī wa-najātuhu min al-atrāk" (The Deported Armenian and his Escape from the Turks), *al-Mashriq* (May 1921), 375-385; Yūzif Tawtal, "Hawādith Dayr al-Zūr fī zamān al-ḥarb" (The Events in Dayr al-Zūr during the War), *al-Mashriq* (June 1922), 562-570.

38 Tawtal, "Hawādith", 562-563.

39 Art. "Armenia", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 10th ed., vol. XXV, 637.

40 ʿAlī Fahmī Kāmil, *Muṣṭafā Kāmil Bāshā fī 34 rabīʿan*, vol. III, [al-Qāhira] 1908, 65.

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sistently a minority in any large administrative district". Where, then, was it possible to constitute an autonomous Armenia?[41] Establishing an Armenian state out of the Ottoman Empire thus had to muster the Powers' aid for some sort of transfer of Turkish- and Kurdish-speaking Muslims out of the areas to form the new state. That threat helped spark rising violence against Armenian populations by Muslims, which some Armenian militants had courted with their own "terror" to draw in the Powers for a partition.[42]

When in March 1915 Russian forces advanced on Van, some Armenians there revolted. The new Armenian uprisings inside Eastern Anatolia when combined with Entente thrusts from without threatened the heartland of the Turks and their ability to maintain any kind of state. March 1915 was the month in which Ottoman officials and police suddenly deported Arakiliyan and his sister and all other Armenians from the sylvan little town of Naw Shahr, most of whose residents were Turks and Greeks. Many males over 15 were taken away and the women, teenagers and children escorted off in columns by foot to Syria: most died on the way from denial of adequate food and exposure in circuitous marches that read to have been designed by the Ottoman officials and police involved to wear them down.

Arab observers at the time, and post-1970 Turkish and Armenian spokespersons and West-resident academics sympathetic to one or other of the two sides, concurred that by WW1 the Ottoman Armenians had been mobilized by nationalist political parties as no other populations before in the Ottoman lands and those in which Arabic is spoken. Yet the two testimonies *al-Mashriq* carried so soon after the quasi-genocide test how nationalist, and how politicized, the masses of these Armenians of Asia Minor had become by their final tragedy.

### *Religion Sustains*

Overall, the two witnesses recorded little or nothing about any national or political identification that might have sustained Armenians through such extreme experiences. But there are references to a Christian God. At one point in the forced march it looked likely that Arakiliyan and his sister and her baby would drop behind the column and be left alone at the mercy of brigands: he told her "let us move forward relying on God and if our strength fails us die on the road". Arakiliyan recalled that while waiting frozen and starving at Killis surviving on small amounts of coins the government handed out, the expelled Armenians observed Easter, "but our wretched condition did not allow us to at all taste the celebrations of the Christian world" [= affect to Catholic Europe]. Arakiliyan

41 Quoted Sir J.A.R. Marriott, Europe and Beyond: *A Preliminary Survey of World Politics in the Last Half Century, 1870-1920*, London 1933, 253.

42 Elie Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version and Other Essays*, London 1970, 295.

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repeatedly voiced gratitude to the Catholic European missionaries in Asia Minor who had educated him and in the process converted him from Gregorian orthodoxy. After their arrival in Dayr al-Zūr in June 1916, Arakiliyan, close to death imprisoned in an inn with other starved juvenile deportees, promises God that he will consecrate his life to the priesthood if he can slip out among the townsfolk. He did duly make himself a Catholic priest after the War.[43]

*The Christian West*

The remnants of Armenian populations that reached Syria faced ruin and possible extinction: but now they received some relief funds from the West. The divide between Protestant and non-Protestant churches ran deep in the internal societies of West Europe and the Americas, but even many Protestant Anglo-Saxons would identify with Orthodox Armenians when in polarization against Muslim Turks. Tawtal was given employment by the German Mission at Dayr al-Zūr to procure necessities and as a translator for their interactions with Turks. He thus could view the slaughter that the new *mutaṣarrif* Zakī Bey conducted against the deported Armenians from June 1916.[44] During the events, financial aid was coming from European and American charitable societies via the American consulate in Aleppo, which Tawtal would convey to the refugees,[45] until the feral Zakī ended such transfers.

Thus, these two items about the Armenians that *al-Mashriq* carried somewhat bore out for Maronites early in French mandatory rule that Christian populations in the Middle East could count on substantial aid from Westerners in disregard of their Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox divides, if they came into conflict with more numerous Muslims in the region.

As well as hating neighborhood Turks, the Maronite Tawtal very much believed in the ideology of World War, of two camps of nations fighting it out around the globe and of his duty to stand with the camp that pivoted around France. When, because he was among the few who spoke fluent German, he was offered the dragoman post with the German mission, he had to accept "despite my intense partiality [as a mission-educated Catholic] for France" in the Middle East and in macro-history.[46] After he was inducted into the Ottoman army, he was as overjoyed that the final British offensive from Sinai smashed the military reputation of Erich von Falkenhayn as that it drove the Turks from Palestine and Syria.[47]

After WW1, the Catholic priest Buṭrus Ghālib in his defence of an old alliance with France in the face of local reaction against her, wrote of Christians of

43 Arakiliyan, "al-Ṭarīd al-armanī", 381, 380, 383.
44 Tawtal, "Hawādith", 562-563.
45 Ibid., 567.
46 Tawtal, "Hawādith", 563.
47 Ibid., 569.

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the East without regard to their sects in the face of Muslim power: they all needed their Protector. Such pan-Christianism was not nourished by the divisive pride Arakiliyan and Tawtal voiced that they were Catholics of a West-patterned type. The Maronite Tawtal articulated pan-Catholicism rather than pan-Christianism towards the victimized Armenians he witnessed. He structured his data on the martyrdom of the Catholic Armenian priest Petros Aghajanian so as to depict the Gregorian clergy as intent to harm their Catholic clerical peers, and as traffickers of deported Armenian women. Aghajanian's relief and preaching work among all sects of the displaced Armenians quickly won the confidence of "in particular the non-Catholic Armenians who were not accustomed to encounter in their own clerics such zeal for their salvation". Aghajanian's expounding of the sufferings of Jesus to the victims in order to foster religious steadfastness would have looked to his Gregorian peers like poaching – a preliminary to conversion that had in it considerable abuse of some highly traumatized and dependent non-Catholics.[48] The indigenous converted or born Catholics often shared the assumption of the West's churches of some right or mission from God to erase the beliefs of all other confessions that claimed to be Christian, not to speak of Muslims, in the Third World. This sectarianism ran against thinking in terms of integrating a language-determined political nation for all Armenians (or one to link even just all Christians among the Lebanese).

*Images of Muslim Arabs*

What attitudes towards Muslim Arabs would this category of articles by or about (Catholic) Armenian survivors have promoted among Catholic Lebanese? Distinction has to be drawn between (a) images of Arab nomads and (b) those of sedentary or urban Arabs. *Al-Mashriq's* two articles imaged that during the marches the nomad category extorted the refugees' dwindling monies and belongings and abducted some of the surviving females.[49] They still lacked the attributed drive of the Turks to kill them all off. However, the item does indicate that some Arabic-speaking nomads had a kinder attitude. When the Turks heaped up the malnourished Armenian minors on carts to be taken for final drowning in the Euphrates, some who swam away found sanctuary in some camps of the Arabic-speaking nomads (*al-ʿurbān*): the Maronite Yūsuf Sukkar recovered some such minors and looked after them for the duration of the War.[50] Muslim men in Dayr al-Zūr, Tawtal imaged, took Armenian women into their house but for self-gratification; when they tired of them they drove them out.[51]

48 Ibid., 565.
49 Arakiliyan, "al-Ṭarīd al-armanī", 381-2.
50 Ibid., 384.
51 Tawtal, "Hawādith", 564.

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These two items from the still-recent destruction of the Armenians were anti-Turkish, but also could have resonated to Lebanese Christian folk-memories of the 1860 Druze-Maronite-Muslim mayhem in Lebanon and Damascus. The characterization of Syria's [Muslim] "Arabs" (= nomads? urban?) showed some as uncompassionate to at least Armenian Christians – could the Maronites build a pan-Syrian state with them? – but terminologies like "al-'Arab" may be antique and not belong to ethnicist, national or Islam-targeting modes of thought at all.

Few *al-Mashriq* items much identified a language-defined Armenian group or political nation whose core would be the majority that remained still mainly Orthodox-Gregorian. The main positive community in the two items by Arakiliyan and Tawtal was that between Catholics from different areas, languages and continents – a crude pan-Catholicism more than any national community of all who spoke Armenian or any incorporative pan-Christianism.

The two writers offer little about sects-integrating language nationhood as a source of resistance from the Armenians being deported. On balance, these materials suggest that rural Armenians had been less incorporated into the pre-1918 Armenian secessionist parties than (a) early Arabo-Muslim nationalists and (b) post-WW2 Armenian and Turkish ideologues and historiography have all imaged.

Why did Shaykhū choose to publish the two items as editor of *al-Mashriq*? There were old Armenian monastries in Mount Lebanon and Lebanon-Syria's Catholic professional studied with Catholic Armenians at St Joseph's College in Beirut-community. Maybe he reflected that Armenian refugees now settling in Lebanon would boost the Christian component of the tensely-balanced new multi-sectarian state of Greater Lebanon. Armenians for Lebanon's clericist Catholic intellectuals were – at least the Catholics among them – fellow-Christian co-victims of Muslim Turks. *Al-Mashriq* in the wake of WW1 seldom voiced awareness of Armenian-speakers in general as a political nation, although one brief item by Shaykhū did endorse post-War lobbying by Armenian nationalist lobbyists in Europe for statehood under tutelage.[52]

*Al-Mashriq* conveyed images of Westerners educating, treating and coming to the aid of Armenian Christians. Some might make that endorse the option of a French mandate for Lebanon. But could Christian minorities' connections with Western powers bent on partitioning out the Ottoman Empire have helped detonate violence and ill-treatment from Turks? And clericist intellectual milieus may not have been able to get their sympathetic memorization of the Armenians across to some ordinary Maronites, who left only precarious, marginal lives to Armenian refugees who subsisted on, hopelessly shattered, for decades.[53]

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[52] Here, Shaykhū definitely bracketed surviving Gregorian, Protestant and Catholic Armenians as one political nation: *al-Mashriq* (June 1920), 474-475.

[53] See the conte "Hakop" in Emile ʿAwwad, *Bisāṭ al-raml*, Bayrut 1981, 50-53.

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*3: The Famine under Turkish Occupation: The Process of Memorization*

*Al-Mashriq* had authority as the apex of Lebanon's high Catholic intellectualism, but Shaykhū publicized the much wider net of authors attempting accounts and overview-syntheses of WW1 and its Lebanon-Syria theatre in 1919-1925. The range of Christian writers in Lebanon who were attempting to produce constructions of WW1 reinforced each others' impact on the secondary elite of journalists and politicians who diffused the new world view out to wide classes of Lebanese.[54]

Some discordant works had to be kept out of the register of this new Lebanonist discourse. Some were by local Christians. The Maronite cleric Marun Ghusn during the War published verses in praise of the Ottoman Sultan Muhammad Rashad and the CUP's Enver and Jamāl. Shaykhū equally rapped the ecumenical-theosophist freemason Felix Fāris for publishing in 1916 from Aleppo an Arabic translation of a German nationalist book on Germany's progress in 25 years – he was only currying the favor of the Power that had become the ally of the ruling CUP, the Jesuit charged.[55] The surpassing Maronite poet Shiblī Mallāt, too, had paid compliments to the Turkish leaders during WW1, and later excused his words as to escape exile or dispossession, and to use the links to aid the poor and the clerics.[56] Yet given Mallāt's subsequent openness under the French to Arab Muslim leaders in the wide Middle East, his keeping up of contacts could have sprung from some drive for wide secular community, in which the post-traditional CUP sometimes prefigured later Muslim pan-Arabs. Such voices from Maronites and other Catholics could keep the Ottoman Empire still somewhat problematical for the incipient memorization of World War I as the closure of any community with Turks. Shaykhū was not happy that some local Muslim Arab writers, including some who were his friends, had published in solidarity with the Turks and their Caliphate during WW1, but that was a different type of problem for this new Lebanonist national memory.

The memorization of the direct Turkish occupation of the Mountain during WW1 and of the famine that occurred lacked much central direction from the weak Lebanese particularist government that France set up in 1920. Ambiguous, disturbing, unusable features in the cacophony of memories that various Catholic Lebanese voiced from the 1920s hampered the Famine from being commemorated by Lebanese state nationalism in the way that famines at the hands

54 For such reviews by Shaykhū of the numerous works that Arabic Catholics and Orthodox were bringing out see *al-Mashriq* (February 1920), 156, (May 1920), 393-394, (April 1920), 309-310 and (January 1921), 72.

55 Shaykhū, "al-Adab al-ʿarabiyyah mundhu nushūb al-ḥarb al-ʿumūmiyyah" (Arabic Literature since the Outbreak of the World War), *al-Mashriq* (July 1920), 483, 486.

56 Shaykhū, *al-Mashriq* (August 1920), 636.

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of a vivid enemy have been made central in the discourses of Irish and Ukrainian nationalisms.

In the early 21st century, the Westernist Maronite historian Youssef Mouawad was to question reticence about the famine in much official discourse and ritual life of the Lebanese state from 1920, and the failure of several generations of Lebanese authors to produce a single good perspective history of the WW1 period in the Jabal. Some writers asserted that the Turks deliberately starved the Christian Lebanese in retaliation for their loyalty to France. Yet some Christian families had made fortunes as middlemen, traders and brutal stockpilers of food out of the suffering and deaths of their ordinary correligionists, and duly were powerful in the system of the new Lebanon statelet throughout the 1920s and after, as some speeches of Patriarch al-Ḥuwayyik, an architect of Greater Lebanon and the mandate, hinted.[57] Jamāl's manipulation of the flow of foodstuffs in order to bring the Maronite high clerics to heel thus connected into the further development of the old feudal families and the ongoing class-formation of rising, newer bourgeois elements among the Maronites that were jostling for position against the sect's high clerics during WW1. The post-1920 Maronite political elite was not eager to set up any recurring rituals or discourse that – as well as the Islamo-Turkish enemy – would spotlight to ordinary Maronites and Christians aspects of evolving indigenous social structure it was in some ascendant families' interest to obscure. The events of the Famine had in them social disintegration, clan-selfishness and some profiteering atomism by fellow-Catholics that could call into question whether discourse-images of either a humane Lebanese nation-community or the Christian community sustained by a gentle God taught from churches had always had truth on the ground. The Famine could be the end of the ideologies if some parts were not tightly managed or whited out.

Rudiments for the neo-pagan particularist nationalism that was built up after the 1920 proclamation of Greater Lebanon were projected by Salmā Sā'igh (1889-1953), who published in mostly feminist Arabic journals and journeyed to

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57 Al-Ḥuwayyik soon after the collapse of Ottoman rule: the (he did not say Muslim) profiteers "left no commodity essential to sustain life without monopolizing it, and no source of income for poor people, however modest, that they did not seize." Al-Ḥuwayyik, *al-Dhakhā'ir al-Saniyyah*, Jūniyah: Maṭba'ah al-Mursalīn al-Lubnāniyyīn 1931, 490-491. Luṭfullāh Naṣr al-Bākāsīnī (1922) as well as the Turks like al-Ḥuwayyik blamed "the class of the rich and those who make commerce out of wars" – but perhaps also some Maronite clergy whom he hinted skimmed donations from abroad: Mas'ūd Ḍāhir, "Istirātijiyyat al-ḥiṣār wa-l-tajwī' ḍidda Jabal Lubnān 1914-1918" (The Strategy of Blockade and Starvation Against Mount Lebanon 1914-1918), paper read before the International Conference on the First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, Bayrut 29 April 2001. Much of one 1921 *al-Bashīr* article attempted to end rumors among the laities about embezzlement by at least one high cleric of relief donations from abroad during WW1: "Ṣafḥah ta'rīkhiyyah fi 'amal siyādat al-muṭrān Būlus 'Aql athnā' al-ḥarb al-'umūmiyyah-2" (An Historical Page about the Works of His Eminence the Archbishop Būlus 'Aql during the World War-2), *al-Bashīr* (5 February 1921), 1-2; first instalment 3 February 1921, 1.

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Brazil. Her articles were republished at the end of the 1930s in the hard-cover collection *Nasamāt*. Yet a problem for the construction of a new triumphalist Lebanonist national ideology was caught in her apprehension that the Great Famine inflicted a sort of end of meaning and ideology on the Christian inhabitants of Mountain Lebanon who passed through it during WW1. The crisis in the Mountain under Jamāl Pasha had left little heart in many for post-war construction and modernization. In "Church Bells of the Season" (*Nawāqīs al-ʿīd*), Salmā Sāʾigh lamented the privations of the years of the war:

> "Remind us, bells, of those black days ... cold as death when the death-rattle of the dying and the curses of the crucified cut into your moaning, making us hear the lamentation of Lebanon, walking behind the great funeral procession! ... The people entering the churches with heads bowed, coming out with hearts and souls broken and unbelieving, for hunger knows no faith! Remind us of them all, the exiled and the crucified, the starving and the persecuted".

In "Yā bilādī" Salmā Sāʾigh hymned her "homeland, the Mountain of the cedar, an objective unattainable to the most ambitious of conquerors over the ages. Their invading hosts faded away one after the other but Lebanon remained until now in glorious life above its decaying monuments." She wanted the dead civilizations the monuments such as those at Baʿlabakk represented to be systematically maintained in new museums to foster the new community consciousnesses getting differentiated in Lebanon-Syria. "O sons of my land who are near and far: give me a homeland or I shall die."[58]

Thus, the famine in Mount Lebanon during WW1 could offer Salmā Sāʾigh an activist or motivating message as building a Lebanese state got under way. As frequently, though, as her anger against a Turkish enemy, the social disintegration left her and ordinary Lebanese with a deadening sense of the meaningless loss of the victims, and the fragility of all ideologies. Her contribution to memory of that sector of World War 1 retained a communal Catholic identity to the extent that church bells remained the emblem over the group, but she had a humanist sense that beliefs could hold frail humans together only so long as the sufferings did not become too great. Her mild feminism and injection of images from pagan pasts into her rough nationalism were at odds with the clericist Catholic ideology of the 1920s at least.

Gratitude to the French in the light of the past national suffering was implanted among educated Lebanese by use of art and new communications media. The two litterateurs Jean al-Dibs and [the freemasonic, sometimes pan-Syrian] Felix Fāris invited Bayrut's journalists and writers to an exhibition. It was of statues that Jean al-Dibs had sculpted and photographs Fāris had collected to represent "the sufferings, oppression and hunger inflicted [by the CUP regime]

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58 Rafāʾīl Nakhlah al-Yasūʿī, "Salmā Sāʾigh fī-l-nasamāt", *al-Bashīr* (13 April 1940), 3; Ibid. (29 April 1940), 3; museums for nationalistically-relevant antiquities, ibid. (20 April 1940), 3.

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upon our land during the Great War and then of France's achievements following the war – that miracle of love and magnanimity by which she lifted us up from our collapse, bandaged our wounds and revived our economic and national life".

*Al-Bashīr* assessed that the audience responded to "the orator" Felix Fāris' accompanying verbal commentary: the two intended to take the exhibition on a tour – with use of moving film – of the Americas "so that the sons of the homeland in the diaspora can witness the horrors of the war and scenes of the homeland and its population"[59].

In this particular stance by Fāris and al-Dibs, depiction of the horrors the Lebanese population passed through under the CUP during World War I gave France credibility as the mandatory power with the skills as well as the affection to set the economic havoc right. Past national struggle and suffering were being implanted in the Lebanese elite and potentially wider audiences using a combination of media new in the Middle East.

The clericists and the French in unison cited the motif of past relief by France to justify the new Mandate. In 1921, a superior abbot of the Maronite Order Fr. Ighnātiyūs al-Tannūrī at the Order's seminary, along with the other monks, elaborately welcomed the Governor of Lebanon [Commander Albert] Trabaud [– whose appointment had not been welcomed by young Maronite radicals who wanted a native governor and especially not a Frenchman of peremptory military background]. One of the brothers delivered an "elegant" French speech in which he praised the governor for his "painstaking labors ... today to lift the Lebanese population up into the realm of development and prosperity" [= economic and financial infrastructure, entrepreneurial private enterprise and transcontinental capitalism]. "The Governor, in thanking the superior abbot [al-Tannūrī], praised his colleagues, the clergy who are advocates for religious values" replied:

> "I can never forget that bill you sent to me [during World War 1] to ask for a loan of one million franks you could use for the relief of your homeland's destitute. The French Government donated the full amount."

Then Governor Trabaud said that since the Lebanese were the friends of France and the Orient's Frenchmen, he would "spare no effort to lift the population of the Jabal up from their fallen state, to the very summits of glory"[60].

This particular reconstruction of the living history of ill-treatment and famine that the Jabal's Christians suffered in WW1 was, then, being injected by the French and a category of particularists into a forming collective identity that would simultaneously (a) differentiate Maronites/Catholics from wider Muslim speakers of Arabic, and (b) argue their almost inherent linkages to a Western power. Such post-1918 structuring of the memorization of a past of war-time suf-

59 "Al-Fann wa ḥubb al-waṭan" (Art and the Love of Homeland), *al-Bashīr* (1 October 1921), 3.

60 "Raʾīs ʿāmm al-raḥbāniyyat al-baladiyyah wa-hakīm Lubnān al-kabīr", *al-Bashīr* (8 January 1921), 2.

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fering would made more acceptable the tutelage that was indeed to offer more modernization and prosperity to some categories of Maronites, although still leaving most rural Maronites poor when the mandate finished in the mid-1940s.

Communications from French officials under the mandate are often notable for how little community they affirmed with the Maronites and Melkites. *Al-Bashīr*'s extracts from the speech of Governor Trabaud nowhere indicated that he termed either himself or the state or the people he represented as "Christian", or that any feelings from a shared Christianity had motivated him or other Frenchmen to come to the relief of the Maronites during the starvation. It was the Maronite order his compliments said had the religious values.

*Some Openness to Turks Continues*

A certain inconclusiveness about how many Turks set out to harm Arabic-speaking Christians, and how far, marked some early Maronite recording of memory of the World War 1 period in the Jabal (Mount Lebanon). While the symbols and rituals of Christianity gave many Maronites the resolve to survive the years of the war, they were not always at once totalistically dichotomized against the Muslim Turks in the post-war Catholic narrative that was forming. Some capacity for openness continued in the psyche of individuals in each group, despite the extreme distrust that many Turks had vented as their empire disintegrated and died.

A mixed item of this kind was Yūsuf Būṭrus Saʿd's late 1922 piece "The Star of the Wise Men from the East". The setting was Christmas Day 1916 and the threat of family disintegration caused by the famine as it forced the Lebanese to sell their homes, stock and lands for a little food – a perspective not far from Salmā Sāʾigh's. The impressment of doctors into the Turkish armed forces had not left many around to treat the victims of the local epidemics. Saʿd's very literary item voiced rage that the oppressors stripped from Lebanon's slopes [for the Empire's military Railway] "the trees that the ancients had planted with such effort ... so that they might take from Lebanon even the beautiful climate that God had given it after they sentenced its people to starvation". A father was brought before a martial law court after light in the shape of a star was seen rising from the cave in which his ill-nourished family was sheltering on Christmas Eve. Given all the Allied warships at anchor outside Beirut and Junieh, the Turks understandably thought the Maronite rite a signal to them. After the father is taken away, a red government cow wanders to the wife and children, who then takes it to the court that is trying her provider. Touched by the family's honesty, the court frees the husband, and grants a reward of wheat to them. The local Turkish governor, ʿAlī Ziya Pasha, the owner of the cow, gifts it to the family out of pity at their poverty: the cow and the wheat see the family through the months of scarcities of foodstuffs that follow.

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In this narrative, the incarnate Christ-god is the emblem defining Lebanon to itself and to others, and Turks as a collectivity are hated for their wartime actions. Yet a complete dichotomization against Christianity is missed: some Turks are seen as non-vicious or good. Also, the narrator states that he learnt of the arrest from overhearing a few Turkish soldiers, which could indicate that understanding of Turkish had spread more in the Jabal.[61]

*Al-Mashriq*'s accounts of WWI massacres against Armenians could deepen fear against at least the Turkish category of Muslims amongst Lebanese Christians. Yet Fr. Luis Shaykhū did in 1920 present his "salutations to some noble individuals of the defunct regime who – even if their number did not pass beyond the fingers of the hand – refused to get involved in the savagery of their fellow-Turks and indeed tried to resist their injustices ... by treating the suffering people with kindness and by defending those who were being persecuted: may God reward them!"[62] The publication of bilingual Arabic-Turkish volumes on Beirut and Mountain Lebanon was an ongoing outcome of the intellectual collaboration that the Lebanese had conducted with some Muslim Turks to 1919.[63]

Despite all they had suffered at the hands of the Ottomans during World War 1, the things that Lebanese Catholics had built up with Turks during that Empire's five centuries, especially the moralistic stances and pretences that always went with membership for all Ottoman groups, continued into the 1920s.

In sexual morality and their structuring of relations between the sexes, Catholicist-particularist organs and spokesmen in Lebanon voiced more sympathy for the oriental puritanism of their Muslim neighbors than for the more open permissive attitudes of a France whose Christian and modernist character they held up as some kind of model only in some contexts. In mid-1922 *al-Bashīr* quoted the official Turkish newspaper *Taqvim-i-Vaqa'i'* that some Muslim ladies in coming to roam here and there outside their houses were violating both [Islam's] religious law (*sharīʿah*) and "national morals". The Maronite ecclesiastics of that era were not far behind Islamic-minded Turks in regard to regulating

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61 "Najm al-majūs" (The Star of the Wise Men from the East), *al-Bashīr* (23 December 1922), 3-4. In regard to increased ability of Maronites to read Ottoman Turkish, it is to be noted that in 1922 the *al-Bashīr* editor reacted with irritation to demands by the *Yeni Adana* paper that Turkey get Iskandarun despite Arabic-speakers being the largest group there: "Bayn al-ḥaqīqah wa-l-iddiʿā'" (Between Reality and a False Claim), *al-Bashīr* (23 December 1922), 161.

62 Shaykhū, "Taḥiyyat al-mashriq li-qurrā'ihi" (The Greeting of *al-Mashriq* to its Readers), *al-Mashriq* (January 1920), 2.

63 Shaykhū, "al-Adab al-ʿarabiyyah", *al-Mashriq* (July 1920), 482; Turkish officials and Arab Jesuit scholars seem to have collaborated on the wartime *Mabāhith ʿilmiyyah wa ijtimāʿiyyah ʿuniya bi-nashriha lajnah min al-udabā'*, which Shaykhū identified as "the most enjoyable [scholarly] book yet published about [Mountain] Lebanon": *al-Mashriq* (January 1920), 73-74.

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women: if they wore revealing dresses to masses the priests had to deny them the Holy Sacraments.[64]

The memories of Turkish cruelty or dereliction against the Lebanese and other Christians during World War 1 were not strong enough to snap the "Eastern" commonality many Catholic Lebanese felt they had with the Turks vis-à-vis Westerners – even Catholic ones. An article titled "The Beauty Competition in Rio de Janeiro", and published in the *al-Bashīr* in 1931, mingled Catholicism's sexual puritanism and an "Eastern" kinship with the Turks. The competitors at the international contest had been forced to wear only modest costumes due to the preceding campaigns by Brazil's men of religion. "Eastern patriotism" had been shown by Brazil's Christian Lebanese when they received the lonely Turkish entrant – Jewish, although they would have welcomed a Muslim Turkish woman – almost as warmly as Lebanon's.[65]

In the 1930s, Rafa'il Nakhlah and some of his Lebanese clerical colleagues monitored the functionality with which the Ataturkists widened mass education and popularized a coherent nationalist world view by a Latin-script reinvention of Turkish. Nakhlah accepted the – "materialist," positivist-like – new Turkish ruling class' purging of the pedantic superstructure of Arabic and Persian loan words to propagate a practicable print-medium much closer to popular speech. He wanted Lebanese educationalists to follow features of the new Turkish readers that quickly taught primary school pupils rapid reading.[66]

*Patterns of Long-term Significance*

World War I stands as a turning point in the development of Catholic Lebanese identity. Global warfare activated the full triple make-up (Arab-Western-Christian) of the multi-lingual clerics. Of all groups in the Arab World, the Catholicist-Lebanese elite had the strongest simultaneous sense of the two – Middle Eastern and European – theatres of warfare together.

The war years ended forever the option of any membership by Maronites in any multi-lingual, multi-religious state or confederation headed by Turks. The strong narrative of the blood pouring out from a few individual Maronite martyrs – they functioned more than the wide famine – now ended any need to understand, let alone refute, the propositions advanced by an opposed faction of Catholics who had sought co-citizenship with Turks. The martyrs and the famine

64 "al-Azyā' al-khulaʿiyyah: sulṭān Turkiyyah yuḥāribuhā" (Indecent Dress Fashions: the Sultan of Turkey Fights Them), *al-Bashīr* (8 July 1922), 1; "Manʿ al-Azyā' ghayr al-muḥtashimah" *(Prohibition of Immodest Dress Fashions), al-Bashīr* (13 July 1922), 1.

65 "Musābaqāt al-jamāl fi Rio de Janeiro", *al-Bashīr* (12 February 1931).

66 Fr. Rafa'il Nakhlah al-Yasūʿī, "Kutub al-qirā'ah li-l-madāris al-ibtidā'iyyah fi Turkiyyah" (Children's Readers of the Primary Schools in Turkey), *al-Bashīr* (September 15, 1939), 3.

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could henceforth foster interpretations of Catholic identity that tended to blend creed and homeland-polity.

Yet the other grouping carried on. Amīn al-Rayḥānī after 1918 still lamented the refusal of many Catholics of the post-1908 Ottoman parliamentarism, and pan-Arab or pan-Syrian successor-ideas were developed. The classicist tastes of the clerics themselves towards literary Arabic as a language and culture fostered community with Muslim Arab neighbours. The Lebanese Maronite particularism that now was to be developed would have in it (a) a tendency that strove to build more constructive political relations with West Asia's Muslim Arab populations, and (b) another that wanted sweeping separation and a protector West.

The war in Europe and then the arrival of racist, incompatible French soldiers and officials put in flux how all categories of Lebanon's Catholics came to view the French and Westerners after 1918. The issue of France's survival and the Francophone link softened the hatred the ultra-clericists had voiced against the West's secularism and positivism. Following the French jingos, Shaykhū tried to present the War as a triumph for France and even such Catholicism as it had, but *al-Mashriq*'s data left no doubt of the sweeping destruction in Europe out of which all its states and all their ideologies stumbled depleted and feeble. Throughout the Mandate, Maronite cleric-politicians from the patriarchs down were discreetly aware that after WW1 the morale and purpose of their profiteering French patrons could cave at any moment – that France might leave them in the lurch.

A parliamentarism that would last in Lebanon required that Maronites and Muslims and Druze feel that they had shared culture, ideas and fruitful common enterprises in the past. But some clericists read from WW1 patterns of a camp of pan-Catholic nations vis-à-vis a Muslim Middle East back into the crusades of the Middle Ages and from there into the new 20th century. This could place Arabic-speaking Christians and Muslim Arabs in two separate warring international camps. The clericists' themes that the French mandatory was motivated to its maternalism towards Christians by a shared (attenuated) Christianity with crusader roots could make some Muslims reluctantly put into the new statelet more opposed to "the Maronites" as well as represser France. Conversely, the forming commemoration of shared victimization by a common Turkish enemy during WW1 increased the chances for Christians and Muslim Arabs to construct community in at least the expanded Greater Lebanon state that General Gouraud set up in 1920.

The War's loss of life and its chaos would long make it hard for pro-clerical Catholic writers to formulate any pan-Christian ideology really able to bracket Christianity, Eastern Christians, the West and modernity. The War placed in question if any ideology or alliance could any more motivate or be viable.

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# The Plight and Relief of God's Nation: The First World War and the German Templar Community in Palestine

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## *Introduction:*

Including Palestine's German Templar community in a meaningful discussion of the First World War period provokes some reservations.

Not only was the community quite small and short-lived in Palestine-Syria, it was quite alien in character compared to the indigenous Middle Eastern communities. Nevertheless, there are several reasons why any study of how the First World War is remembered and commemorated in the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean would be incomplete if it neglected such passing historical events as the German Templars.

Though the Templars left Palestine at the end of the Second World War, they began to settle in Palestine in 1868 and in the intervening years struck physical, spiritual, cultural, political and emotional roots in the region – all of which have become part of the community's history.

Notwithstanding their idiosyncrasies, the German Templars were part of the larger encounter between the Orient and Occident in the 19th and early 20th century which left its imprint on cultural and political aspirations as well as socio-economic processes and transformations. As such, their activities in Palestine have become inextricably interwoven with an important era of Palestinian-Syrian history. The German Templars left an historical imprint not only in the shape of architectural relics, like houses and cemeteries, but on the mental maps of Palestine that continue to exist today, in Templar communities and beyond.

Any consideration of the Templars plight in the First World War must look back to the 19th century, since it constitutes, in Aleida Assmann's terms, the Templars' cultural memory. This paper examines five aspects of the community's experience in Palestine: 1) the Templars' world view and the "Oriental Question"; 2) the Templars' ambivalent commitment to German Middle East policy up to 1916; 3) wartime experiences and sufferings; 4) the Templars' and Britain's assumption of mandatory rule over Palestine; 5) the community's reflections on the First World War and the Arab movement in Syria; the interaction between "the self" and "the other" and some specific modes of commemoration.

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## *1) The Templars' world view and the "Oriental Question"*

The Templars' attitudes toward the First World War (particularly up to 1916) and their corresponding actions were deeply influenced by their earlier frustrations with German and European politics. Indeed, it was these frustrations that brought them to Palestine in the 1860s and which distinguished them from such millenary Christian movements as the American Presbyterians.

The founders of the Society of Templars, the theologian Christoph Hoffmann and, the merchant and social revolutionary Georg David Hardegg, had been involved in the post-Napoleonic revolutionary events of the 1830s and 1840s. They were repelled by the strengthening of French Catholicism under Napoleon III, by the ultra-monetarism and potency of the Vatican and the dogmatic tendencies in German Protestantism, in addition to the national disunity and the setbacks of the unification efforts of 1848 and 1866.

They believed that Europe, and the 70 million German-speaking people in particular, were in a state of moral decay for which they held responsible the ideas of the French Revolution. A German moral regeneration (with its subsequent positive impact upon Europe) could only be brought about by some major universal mission that the German nation would have to carry out – comparable to the British, whose sectarian splits had been overcome by their rule over India.

The direction of the German-speaking people's mission was dictated by geography – that is the Danube valley and the Adriatic Sea, which look towards the Middle East.

The Templars impressed upon Austrian Imperial Minister Anton Ritter von Schmerling in 1862, that there would be no solution of the "Oriental Question" without the restoration of Jerusalem to Christendom. However, the prerequisite of this restoration was the creation of an independent Christian empire of Syria and Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital.

The solution of the "Oriental Question" was thus intimately tied to the solution to the "German Question". "Die deutsche Verfassungsfrage ist nur zu lösen durch die Lösung der orientalischen Frage." ("The constitutional question of a united Germany can only be solved through a solution of the oriental question.") Austria's policy of safeguarding the stability of the Ottoman Empire was perceived of as a serious mistake.

The Templars' emigration to Palestine and their founding agricultural settler communities were conceived as providing a model for the restoration of Germany's social fabric along Christian lines of action, without the shackles of Catholic and Protestant dogmatism. The Templars – "a pietistic movement of puritanical social persuasion"[1] - saw themselves as Christian "free-thinkers" and unitarians, guided by the prophecies of the Bible.

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1 Haifa May Seikaly, *Transformation of a Palestinian Arab Society 1918-1939*, London 1995, 23.

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## 2) *The Templars' political outlook on the Middle East and their ambivalent commitment to German Middle East policy on the eve of the First World War and up to 1916*

A systematic survey of the Templars' journal *Die Warte des Tempels* up to 1916 suggests that the community had several major political concerns.

There is extensive reportage on locusts, climatic disorder, bad weather and their agrarian implications, which were often interpreted in religious terms – for instance, as the wrath of God. In addition, there are persistent lamentations about the encroachments of unruly Bedouin upon cultivated land. These encroachments seem to have accelerated with the paralysis of Turkish rule (the word "Ottoman" is hardly used) as Istanbul became embroiled in wars with Russia or in the Balkans. Up to the 1870s, Turkish power is generally considered to have been on the brink of eclipse, which made a Christian take-over imminent.

> Der traurige Zustand der durch Laster entnervten türkischen Herren und der im Elend verkommenen christlichen Bevölkerungen bürgt dafür, daß die Stunde, wo der Orient seiner uralten Bestimmung zum Mittelpunkt des Geisteslebens der Menschheit wiedergegeben wird, nicht mehr fern ist.[2]

However this Christian optimism received a setback with the Greek-Turkish wars in the late 1890s. The new vibrancy of the "Ottomans" is explained by the vigour of the pan-Islamic movement, which, it was feared, could pose dangers to the spread of Western culture in the Orient. Attention was drawn to the mobilisation of Islamic sentiment in British-ruled India. The *Warte* advised laconically: "Es wird ... gut sein, wenn diejenigen, welche sich für die Hebung des Orients interessieren, auch dieser Erscheinung hin und wieder einige Aufmerksamkeit schenken."[3]

The journal's extensive report on the First Zionist Conference in Basel in 1897 said that it deserved the Templar community's interest and attention. Nevertheless, some of the passages seem implicitly critical of the hasty manner in which some 10,000 Russian and Romanian Jews had emigrated to Palestine and been converted into peasants. The report reveals the kind of competitive cooperation between the Templar and Zionist agricultural endeavours at the time.

As has correctly been pointed out, it was the Templars' success as agriculturalists – they were initially subsidised by Baron de Rothschild – which had convinced the Zionists that agricultural cultivation in Palestine could be rewarding. Until the 1920s, the Templars and Zionists had a kind of good neighbourly cooperation which thereafter gave way to competition in which – thanks to their greater resources – the Zionists gained the upper hand.

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2 *Die Warte des Tempels* 47 (1866), 185.
3 *Die Warte des Tempels*, Jg. 53 (1897), Nr. 46, 363f

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The annual birthday celebrations in honour of the German Kaiser William II and, on occasion, of his predecessor William I were striking political commemorations. However, they should not be mistaken for expressions of unreserved support for the alliance between the German emperor and Sultan Abdulhamid. On the contrary, the Templar community in Palestine saw the advantage of this alliance to be the protection it afforded against wanton Turkish interference.

Although the Templars do not seem to have undertaken missionary work, they showed an interest in inter-cultural dialogue and in exploring common theological ground. But their occasional meetings with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch may simply have been courtesy calls.

A paradigmatic shift occurred with the rise of the Young Turks and the Young Arabs' Congress in Paris in 1913. In their journal the Templars usually took neutral positions. In this case, partisans of the opposite factions commented on the event.[4]

On the whole, as the ultimate collapse of Ottoman rule was taken for granted, the Templars were more worried by the expansion of French Catholic cultural and political influence in Syria and Palestine. The Templars' cultivation of the Prussian Emperors also followed the strategy of raising money for supporting German educational institutions in the region.

The Templars perceived the Ottoman entry into the First World War as a step closer to the fulfilment of their aspirations for the restoration of a Christian Syria and Palestine. This explains their very patriotic reportage on the German war effort and on the enthusiasm and bravery of Templar conscripts and volunteers.

The Templars' diplomatic mission to the Duke of Württemberg in 1913, thence to the imperial government in Berlin, provides a most revealing insight into the community's political thinking on the eve of the First World War. In an extensive memorandum (attributed to Gottlieb Schumacher from Haifa) the Templars described the hardships of their pioneering work in Palestine, the growing threat emanating from the French and, finally, their ideas on how to maintain Palestine as a territorial entity and as a German sphere of influence. Palestine's boundaries were delineated as running from the Egyptian border to Ra'is al-Naqourah in the west, to the foothills of Mount Hermon (Jabal al-Shaykh) and as far afield as Damascus in the east. It was expected that Russia and Great Britain would concede to this plan, and that France would eventually submit to it.[5]

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4 *Jerusalemer Warte*, Jg. 69, Nr. 30, 28.7.13, 235.

5 See Alex Carmel, *Die Siedlungen der württembergischen Templer in Palästina 1868-1918: ihre lokalpolitischen und internationalen Probleme*, Stuttgart 1973, 201.

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## *3) War-time experiences and sufferings*

It is hardly surprising, then, that the Templars greeted the outbreak of the First World War with exemplary (German) patriotism. The coming of the war was hailed as a decisive hour, "eine entscheidungsvolle Stunde", "a holy war" which would bring to fruition what Germany's most prominent statesman Count Otto von Bismarck had once pronounced: "We Germans fear God and nothing else in the world."

As the Templars saw it, the entrance of the Ottoman Empire into the war enhanced the chances of a German-protected Syrian-Palestinian Christian state. The Templars' journal, however, was published in Jerusalem under the eye of the Turkish censor. As such, it meticulously reported the recruitment of its brave conscripts and volunteers. In order to avoid being intercepted by British vessels in the Mediterranean, they took the dangerous land route via Aleppo and Istanbul to reach the German fronts in Europe. The German-Turkish alliance saved the Templar communities from the fate of the Zionist colonies. The Jews either had to register as Ottoman citizens – as about 20,000 of them did – or else face deportation or voluntary emigration.

This is not to say that the Templars received a "most-favoured nation" treatment by the Turks. On the contrary, after the outbreak of the war the new Turkish government had been quick to abolish the Capitulations and even cancelled the extra-territorial postal services of the European states. The Templars' devout Prussian patriotism was also a precaution. The German emperor was seen as a safeguard against Turkish wantonness.

The Templars did suffer, of course, as did most of the population under the economic impact of the war. The Mediterranean import-export trade had collapsed. The British-controlled Egyptian authorities had embarked on a boycott of Syrian-Palestinian coastal cities. Banks like the Deutsche Palästina Bank, the Anglo-Palestinian Bank, the Credit Lyonnais or the Ottoman Bank faced panic-stricken customers and simply closed their services, bringing the local economy to a complete standstill. The export losses of citrus-growers and wine manufacturers could not be compensated by credit. Dairy farming for daily local consumption was the only thing that kept some of the Templar colonies alive.

The Templars usually expressed their sorrows in religious terms, trusting in God who sent them unexpected allies. Not only the entire Muslim world but also parts of the Jewish community, were praying for a German victory, whereas a part of the indigenous Christian community in Palestine placed its hopes in the French.

God seemed to have sided with the Germans, as suggested by the British defeat at Kut al-Amara in lower Mesopotamia and at Gallipoli. The deployment of German troops and of Bavarian air squadrons in Palestine under General Falkenhain, in preparation for the Turkish-German offensive against the British-held

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Suez Canal, seemed to follow God's providence, whereas Jamal Pasha's bloody reign in Syria would vanish.

On the other hand, since God's plans were shrouded in mystery, even defeat could harbour ultimate victory. The German-French wars of 1806 and of 1870/71 were quoted as evidence. Whereas the German victory in 1871 had only brought about German unification on a small scale, the outbreak of the First World War had already brought much success by defeating the Social Democrats. The Templars held the social democrats responsible for many of the ills of German society and for splitting the German nation. Now the Christian German nation was triumphantly on the march to its final destination in the Holy Land.

## *4) The Templars and Britain's assumption of Mandatory rule in Palestine*

A comparative reading of the Templars' accounts and interpretations of the war in the Middle East before and after 1917 reveals the immense compensatory capacity which a religious mind, trust in the Bible or sheer faith can provide for overcoming moments of despair. In the wake of the German-Turkish defeat in Palestine and General Allenby's capture of Jerusalem in December 1917, there was no shortage of cataclysmic events and new sufferings on the part of the Templars.

About a thousand Templars from the precincts of Jaffa and from southern Palestine – mostly women, children and old men – were deported to the Helouan camp near Cairo in Egypt. They later rejected offers of repatriation to Germany on the grounds that they regarded Palestine as their home and that many of them, born there, had never even seen Germany. Those in northern Palestine either withdrew with the German-Turkish forces to Aleppo and beyond, or else profited from British indulgence. The survival of the German Templar community in Palestine after 1918 was safeguarded mainly by the intercessions of British unitarians and their lobbyists in the House of Lords.

The Templars recommended themselves to the new British rulers in Palestine as excellent agriculturalists, good neighbours to the Jewish colonies and immigrants, and staunch anti-Catholic and anti-French allies, in short, as components of good orderliness in a sphere of British rule, albeit in an environment of growing Arab-Jewish unrest. The Templars themselves must have felt relieved not to come under French Catholic rule. Interestingly, although they seemed not to have been too grief-stricken by the fate of the Kaiser – at least they did not call for an official day of mourning - they nevertheless expressed their admiration for Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg, upon whom the German emperor had entrusted the responsibility for the German nation.

It is because of this prevailing and somewhat reactionary patriotism that the Templars could more adequately be called "God's nation" rather than by the Biblical term "God's people".

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## 5) *The Templars' reflections on the First World War and on the Arab movement in Syria. The interaction between "the self" and "the other" and some specific modes of commemoration*

Having come so close to the fulfilment of their aspired restoration of a Christian Syria-Palestine in the first half of the First World War, it is surprising how easily the Templars submitted to their unexpected fate. It is even more astonishing keeping in mind their later involvement in the Second World War. A good third of their active community in Palestine joined the German Nazi Party which led to the expropriation and dissolution of the Templar colonies in Palestine and to the transfer of the larger part of the community to Australia.

An explanation of the Templars' attitude in the immediate aftermath of the First World War may be found in their complete faith in Biblical prophecies which left ample room for interpreting the new political disorder. One might argue that it was not the outbreak of the war itself but rather the Bolshevik Revolution and the spread of atheist post-war Communism that were seen as ushering in the era of the anti-Christ. Worse, not only Communism, but also other "false doctrines", like the new Christian-revolutionary sects or the anthroposophical teachings of Rudolph Steiner, were mushrooming.

It may be indicative of their occidental bias that the Templars were less concerned with indigenous Syrian discourse about their cultural and political future and more preoccupied with the new ideological challenges emanating from the West and from inside Germany. The secular constitutional ideals and beginnings of the Weimar Republic received no cheers from the Templars. They distrusted the national-liberal Chancellor Gustav Stresemann, who tried so hard to win over the German expatriate communities, "das Auslandsdeutschtum". They were more concerned with the social decay in Germany, the "soziale Fäulnis" of the Christian West and the German nation, lest it affect their own communal life, be it in Germany or in Palestine.

Despite the return of the Egyptian internees and some others whom the war had forced back to Europe, the Templar colonies in Palestine were in danger of dissipation, threatened by new material life-styles or simply by stagnation into historical relics. Strictly speaking, the Spiritual Temple could be erected anywhere Templars gathered. In the aftermath of the First World War, the Templar community in Palestine, whose numbers had shrunk to half its pre-war size, had no doubt that Zionism was winning the day. The number of Jewish immigrants and the financial means of the Jewish National Fund were beyond anything the Templars could dream of.

There were moments when the Templars thought that the influx of German Jews, even Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Europe, could strengthen the

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common German cultural bonds in Palestine. Meanwhile Templar agriculturists had turned into entrepreneurs, small industrialists, merchants, hotel managers and academics. Their journal *Die Warte des Tempels* no longer gave first-hand accounts of agricultural achievements and hazards but instead quoted extensively from the British-Jewish "*Palestine Weekly*".

The normalisation of post-war prices and of daily life, the slow resumption of pilgrim tourism from Europe and the United States, the occasional expulsion of Bolsheviks, the introduction of the telephone, the British administration and the ever-growing tension between Arabs and Jews made new headlines. Occasionally, accounts of wartime memories such as the British occupation of Jerusalem and Haifa or the Christmas celebration in Wilhelma in 1917 – not the good old days – were thrown in.

## *Conclusion:*

The overall significance of the First World War continued to be painted in sombre colours. Post-war materialism, together with new revolutionary stirrings and pseudo-religious movements, were interpreted as harbingers of a greater catastrophe. The Templars were to ready themselves against new threats and false prophets. The settlements – in particular the cemeteries – in Haifa, Sarona, Wilhelma, Bethlehem (in Galilee) and Jerusalem should be kept alive through spiritual exercise and remembered as symbols of spiritual achievement and as a trust. The Templars perceived themselves as the living example of the spiritual temple; their lives did not exert missionary zeal but gave testimony. Their religious mode was considered to be one among others.

It did not bother them that they lived in a kind of closed society. What worried them more was the dispersion and the concomitant erosion of the spiritual foundations of communal life. Today's Templars maintain an interest in and express pride in their historical episode in Palestine and feel misjudged by those Israeli historians who would lump them together with the National Socialists.

The Templars still engage in collective forms of commemoration and soul-searching, such as visiting their old homes and their graves and engaging in Biblical exegetics at weekend seminars in Jerusalem. There have also been individual forms of commemoration, including obituaries in the Templars' journal – which end with the announcement that the ashes of the deceased will be transferred to Haifa. In another case in 1923, an old lady from Stuttgart by name of Barbara Brenner, who had lived in the Middle East for 35 years and knew some Arabic, wanted to use her sewing skills to find a job in Palestine. She wanted this not so much in order to make money but to do something useful and spend her old age in the proper place.

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# Jerusalemer Warte.

(„Früher: Warte des Tempels")

## Wochenblatt

zur Beleuchtung der wichtigsten Fragen unserer Zeit.

(Entered at the Postoffice of Buffallo as second-class matter.)

Gérant responsable Chalil A. Haddad.

Bezugspreis: Bei der Expedition, Jerusalem jährlich frs. 8.--, halbjährl. frs. 4. — Bei den Deutschen Postämtern in der Türkei und in Deutschland, jährl. ℳ 7.—, halbjährl. ℳ 3,50 zuzüglich etwaiger Transitgebühren. Bei den Oesterr. Postämtern der Levante jährlich frs. 9,10, halbjährl. fr. 4,67. Streifbandsendungen im Weltpostverein jährlich fr. 10,60.

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**Jahrgang 70.** Montag, den 10. August 1914 **Nr. 32.**



Inhalt: Der Krieg (S. 249). — Göttliche Führungen (S. 250). — Rückblicke (S. 251). — Österreichs Forderungen an Serbien (S. 252). — Ein Attentat auf den Khedive (S. 253). — Bruchstücke aus der Geschichte Israels (S. 254). — Neueste Nachrichten (S. 255). — Geschäftsanzeigen (S. 256). —


## Der Krieg.

Jetzt ist er da, der Krieg. Nicht nur der kleine österreichisch-serbische, der aus der Blutsaat von Sarajevo entsprang, sondern auch, als unmittelbare und blitzschnell eintretende Wirkung des ersteren, der große, längst befürchtete, von wachen Menschen vorausgesehene europäische Krieg, der Weltkrieg — oder sagen wir, solange er auf Europa beschränkt bleibt: ein Weltkrieg! Noch eben lasen wir in den zuletzt eingetroffenen europäischen Zeitungen von allerlei schönen Wünschen und Hoffnungen, daß es wie bei den Balkankämpfen im Vorjahre so auch diesmal gelingen werde, den österreichisch-serbischen Konflikt zu „lokalisieren" d. h. zu verhindern, daß außer Oesterreich noch eine andere Großmacht hineingezogen werde — da treffen auch schon in unheimlich rascher Aufeinanderfolge die inhaltschweren Depeschen ein, welche allen Friedenshoffnungen ein jähes Ende bereiten, sie im Keime ersticken. Rußland leiht Serbien, seinem letzten ihm rückhaltlos vertrauenden Schützling auf dem Balkan, bewaffneten Beistand gegen Oesterreich, zwingt dadurch Deutschland dem bedrohten Bundesgenossen in unerschütterlicher Treue beizuspringen und schafft so dem lauernden Frankreich die Gelegenheit, in russischer, durch Milliarden erkaufter Bundesgenossenschaft den unablässig vorbereiteten „Revanche"-Krieg gegen den verhaßten Sieger von 1870 zu unternehmen. Ueber die Stellungnahme Englands, des bisherigen dritten Partners im Geschäftsring des sogen. Dreiverbands, und Italiens, das ja zum Dreibund gehört, liegen hier zurzeit noch keine zuverlässigen Nachrichten vor. Was wir aber jetzt schon gewiß wissen, reicht vollständig für die schreckliche Erkenntnis aus, daß einer der furchtbarsten Völkerkämpfe entbrannt ist, welche die Menschheitsgeschichte kennt — furchtbar in Hinsicht auf die ungeheuren, nie erhörten gegeneinander aufgebotenen Menschenmassen, furchtbar in Hinsicht auf die nie dagewesene Vervollkommnung der Kriegswerkzeuge und Zerstörungsmaschinen zu Land, zu Wasser und in der Luft, furchtbar endlich in Hinsicht auf die dämonischen Leidenschaften, die sich in diesem Kampfe auszutoben begonnen haben. Welche ungeheuren Opfer an Gut und vor allem an kostbarem, unersetzlichem Menschenblut stehen dabei auf dem Spiel! Und das alles um der unzähmbaren Vergrößerungssucht eines verhältnismäßig untergeordneten slavischen Volksstammes willen — der Serben? O nein, der österreichisch-serbische Konflikt war nur der Tropfen, der das volle Gefäß zum Ueberlaufen, der zündende Funke, der das Pulverfaß zur Explosion brachte, das Stückchen Schnee, mit dem der Lawinensturz beginnt. Der sogenannte „europäische Frieden" war ja längst ein Trugbild, in seinen Stützen und Unterlagen gänzlich vermorscht; er glich nur noch einer dünnen Eisdecke, die schließlich bei der geringsten Belastungsprobe brechen mußte. Rußland hielt offenbar mit dem Ausbruch des österreichisch-serbischen Konflikts den Augenblick für gekommen, seine alte Orientpolitik, die auf die Vorherrschaft im slavischen Balkan und vor allem am Bosporus und in Kleinasien, und damit im näheren Orient überhaupt abzielt, mit aller Kraft und mit allen Mitteln wiederaufzunehmen. Hiefür hatte es sich seit Jahren durch den Zweibund den Beistand Frankreichs gesichert, welch letzteres bei diesem Pakt einen Helfer für den nie aus dem Auge gelassenen Rachekrieg gegen Deutschland gewann.

Natürlich wendet sich unser Auge in diesem Augenblick vor allem unserem deutschen Vaterlande zu, das bereits nach zwei Seiten den Kampf aufgenommen hat zur Verteidigung seiner im Jahre 1870 durch schwere Opfer errungenen und ihm gebührenden Stellung im Kreise der Völker. Dieser Kampf ist schwer und erheischt die Anspannung aller Kräfte, eine Opferwilligkeit bis zum letzten. Und auch wir stehen ja nicht als müßige Zuschauer auf unserem Außenposten hier im heiligen Lande. Auch bei uns hat der Befehl des Kaisers die „Dienstpflichtigen" unter die Fahnen gerufen und sie sind ihm,


Jerusalemer Warte, 08/10/1914
Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart

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مدير مسئول
خليل ع. حداد

يروسالم قارطة

مدير تحرير
كوستوب بولس

# Jerusalemer Warte.

## Wochenblatt

zur Beleuchtung der wichtigsten Fragen unserer Zeit.

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Jahrgang 72. Montag, den 29. Mai 1916 Nr. 22

Inhalt: Kriegsbetrachtungen (S. 167). — Aus den Belgischen Aktenstücken II. Sir Edward Grey (S. 169). — Bericht aus Haifa (S. 171). — Russischer Kriegsaberglaube (S. 172). — Neueste Nachrichten (S. 173). — Familiennachrichten (S. 174)

### Kriegsbetrachtungen.

Stuttgart, den 15. April 1916.

Es regnet und ist kalt. Hoffentlich schadet die Kälte den herrlichen Blüten nicht, mit denen der Frühling jetzt schon, fast etwas zu früh, prangt —. wie werden die Soldaten dieses Wetter empfinden in den Schützengräben oder im offenen Kampf bei Ypern oder bei Verdun oder in der Woevre? Doch so empfindlich sind unsere tapferen Feldgrauen nicht, daß ihnen das bischen Regen oder kühle Witterung viel ausmachen würde. Aber förderlich ist das nasse und schlüpfrige Wetter nicht für die Arbeit vor dem Feind und erfreulich ist die Nässe im Schützengraben auch nicht, aber was ist das alles gegen den Kugelregen des Trommel- oder Sperrfeuers der Artillerie und des Maschinengewehrs? Und doch müssen sie sich oft diesem aussetzen und im Sturmschritt gegen dasselbe und durch dasselbe durchstürmen. Bald fällt hier einer bald dort. Unbekümmert darum müssen sie vorwärtseilen, um den Feind aus seiner Stellung zu werfen und so dem gräßlichen Regen ein Ende zu machen. Wir sitzen bequem daheim im geheizten Zimmer, aber sie sind draußen im Kugelregen, im nassen und kalten Schützengraben und müssen mit ihren Leibern eine Schutzwehr bilden für das Vaterland, für Eltern, Brüder, für Weib und Kind, damit der barbarische Feind nicht eindringen kann ins Land, denn wie die Feinde hausen, wenn sie ins Land kommen, hat man in Ostpreußen gesehen. Wir können unseren Helden draußen an der Front nicht dankbar genug sein, daß sie uns die Feinde bisher ferngehalten haben und wills Gott sie auch fernerhin fern halten werden.

Die Sonne tritt aus dem Wolkenschleier. Wie doch die ganze Welt gleich so viel schöner sich ansieht im rosigen Licht. Möchte doch bald das Licht des Friedens über Europa aufgehen, damit dem gräßlichen Morden endlich Einhalt getan wäre. Doch davon sind wir noch so fern, daß wir den Frieden nicht einmal wünschen können. Jetzt noch nicht können wir Frieden wünschen; denn es wäre ein fauler Friede. Solange die Feinde nicht niedergekämpft sind, so daß sie um Frieden bitten müssen, können wir keinen Frieden wünschen: denn er wäre nur eine wahrscheinlich kurze Pause, in der doch kein wirklicher Friede herrschen würde, sondern der wirtschaftliche Krieg gienge doch weiter und wir kämen nicht aus der wenn auch nicht tötlichen so doch immerhin lästig genug empfundenen Handelssperre heraus, die ja die Engländer auch nach dem Krieg fortsetzen wollen. Deshalb müssen wir den Krieg solange fortsetzen, bis ihnen die Lust zum wirtschaftlichen Krieg vergeht und sie Frieden machen müssen auf die Bedingungen hin, die wir unter den gegebenen Umständen ihnen vorschreiben müssen.

Mit dem furchtbaren Ringen der Landheere im Westen, Süden und Osten muß der Ubootkrieg Hand in Hand gehen, bis wir England die Zufuhr abgeschnitten haben und der Hunger die zähen Engländer mürbe macht.

Schon muß Frankreich zugeben, daß seine Kraft erschöpft ist und es nicht auch noch einen Teil seiner Macht gegen Bulgaren und Türken einsetzen kann, sondern die dorthingesandten Truppen wieder zurückrufen muß um dem furchtbaren Druck der Riesenschlange widerstehen zu können, die sich gegen seine Westfront stemmt und durchzudringen droht durch den eisernen Ring, mit dem es den ihm bis jetzt verbliebenen Teil seines Gebiets bisher zu schützen vermocht hat. Vergeblich erschöpfen sich Russen und Italiener in blutigem aber vergeblichem Anstürmen gegen die Front der Deutschen und Österreicher um den schwer seufzenden Franzosen Erleich-

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**Jahrgang 72.** Montag, den 14. August 1916 **Nr. 33**

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### Der Tod eines Volkes.

In Nr. 49 der „Warte des Tempels" Jahrg. 1877 hatte ein Artikelschreiber, gestützt auf die Stelle der Offenbarung Johannis 2,23: „Und die Kinder der Isabel will ich zu Tode schlagen", die Anschauung ausgesprochen: daß die romanischen Völker, Franzosen, Spanier, Italiener, welche unverbesserlich seien, am Tage des Herrn völlig vernichtet werden werden, weil sie schließlich den Grundstock der antichristlichen Macht bilden werden. Dieser Ansicht ist Christoph Hoffmann in einem „der Tod eines Volkes" überschriebenen Artikel in Nr. 6 des Jahrgangs 1878 mit eingehenden Ausführungen entgegengetreten, die gerade jetzt wieder, in den Tagen des christlichen Völkerkriegs, an dem ja auch die Franzosen und Italiener beteiligt sind, besonders beachtenswert erscheinen und davon wir deshalb das Nachstehende entnehmen:

Gehen wir ruhig und kaltblütig untersuchend auf die großen Gesetze der Völkerentwicklung zurück, so finden wir, daß jede stärker ausgebildete Volksindividualität ihren großen und scharf gemessenen Zeitraum mit den vier großen Geschichtsabschnitten des Entstehens, Blühens, Reifens, allmählichen Vergehens durchläuft, und daß jeder derselben auch noch ein Zeitabschnitt versuchter und oftmals gelingender Wiederaufleb ung zu durchleben vergönnt ist. Italien erzeugte nach einer ruhigen und stillen Vorgeschichte, in welcher sich kleine Genossenschaften und Ansätze zu Nationen bildeten, ein großes organisches Volk, eines der größten Völker der Weltgeschichte, das römische Volk, als seine reifste hervorsprießende Frucht. Die Römer waren martialische Ackerbaumänner, ausgerüstet mit einem furchtbaren, Alles niederwerfenden Charakter und kraftvoller, tätiger Willenskraft, wie ein solcher bei keinem andern Volk in der Weltgeschichte vorkommt, ausgerüstet mit einem scharfen Verstand, durch welchen sie ihre innere Verfassung in der festen und scharfsinnigsten Weise ausbildeten und regelten und die Welt, welche sie niederschlugen, auch zu regieren verstanden. Sie wurden die Schöpfer des römischen Reichs, der Politik und Völkerregierung im großartigsten Maßstabe, und die genauesten, kräftigsten und scharfsinnigsten Organisatoren des militärischen Wesens. Alles hat Hand und Fuß bei den Römern, und sie sind eines von den durchschlagendsten vollwirkendsten Völker der Weltgeschichte. Von 754 vor Christus bis 476 nach Christus war ihr Lebenslauf ihnen geordnet, und ihnen Zeit und Raum zum Dasein im Völkergedränge der Weltgeschichte gegeben, etwa 1230 Jahre. Jetzt suchte das römische Volk wieder aufzuleben, aber es gelang ihm nicht, so wie es war, sich wieder herzustellen, weil die Entartung zu furchtbar gewesen war, weil der natürliche Charakter im römischen Volke zu selbstsüchtig und egoistisch sich entwickelt hatte. Gleichwohl dürfen wir an einen Ausspruch des größten römischen Schriftstellers, Konsuls und Senators Cicero erinnern, welcher sagte: Andere Völker übertreffen Rom in diesen und jenen Eigenschaften, in Wissenschaft und Kunst die Griechen, in Handelschaft und Industrie andere Völker, sogar in ungestümer Tapferkeit glaubt er, daß die Gallier es den Römern zuvortun, und tut dann den uns sonderbar klingenden Ausspruch: „dagegen an Religion und Frömmigkeit übertreffen die Römer alle anderen Völker." Dieser Ausspruch Cicero's fällt uns sehr auf, er ist aber nicht ganz ohne Grund, nur ist die Religion der Römer ein Teil ihres Rechtes. Die Religion ist ihnen die Scheu vor den Göttern, die Bedenklichkeit, sie zu erzürnen, so daß nicht bloß der Einzelne, sondern der Staat alles tut, um in der

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# Changes in Protestant Assyrian Self-Awareness after the First World War

*Martin Tamcke (University of Göttingen)*

For the so-called "Assyrians" or "Nestorians," the First World War was the second decisive disaster from which they would not truly recover as a people.[1] Up to the present day the memories of these events continue to nurture the ecclesiastical and national self-confidence of this people.

Relying primarily on source material from Lutheran Nestorians communities, this paper will evaluate the early memories described in the statements of some who were affected by these events. German officials provided the Lutheran Nestorians with a great deal of financial support and expected a continuous flow of reports during the First World War. This community is thus a good source of information about this period.[2]

These sources provide us with a rare opportunity to begin to understand how the memories of these events changed. Those who reported these events and kept them alive in their memories all shared a similar social position: all being members of the clergy of the "Apostolic Assyrian Church of the East".[3] Almost all of them studied in Germany, and they all maintained an intensive level of contact with their German partners in the German Empire before, during and after the First World War. Because of their educational qualifications, they belonged to the intellectual elite of their community.

Because of their confessional imprinting, and especially their contact with German Lutheranism, the early stages of the war saw them between all fronts, as it were, marginal relative to the Presbyterian-Nestorians (who were united with the Russian Orthodox Church), the Chaldeans (who were united with Rome), and those who remained loyal to the traditional Church. Julius Richter was the first to refer to this group as "Lutheran Nestorians" in order to emphasise – with a critical undertone – that the members of this group were striving to reform

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1 Rudolf Strothmann, "Heutiges Orientchristentum und Schicksal der Assyrer", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 55 (1936), 18-82; Gabriele Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust: Die Vernichtung der christlichen Assyrer in der Türkei*, Göttingen 1989.

2 Martin Tamcke, "Die Arbeit im Vorderen Orient", in: Ernst-August Luedemann, ed., *Vision: Gemeinde weltweit*, Hermannsburg 2000, 511-547, esp. 519-534; idem., "Die Hermannsburger Mission in Persien", in: *Zu Geschichte, Theologie, Lithurgie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen*, Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte 9, Hamburg: LIT 2000, 231-273.

3 Martin Tamcke, "Die Kontroverse um die Gültigkeit der lutherischen Ordination anstelle der Priesterweihe in der Kirche des Ostens (Nestorianer)", in: Michael Kohlbacher and Markus Lesinski, eds., *Horizonte der Christenheit*, Oikonomia 34, Erlangen 1994, 268-271.

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their church in the spirit of Lutheran theology, within the framework of the Eastern Church.[4]

This paper will focus on the correspondence of Pera.[5] Born on March 11, 1882, the son of the priest Pera Johannes, like him he studied evangelical theology in Germany. Upon his return to his homeland in 1904, he was confronted with the backward living conditions of his fellow countrymen. This was important to his individual profile, as he was forced to come to terms with his inner alienation. To him the contrast between Germany and Persia seemed too great. It was therefore difficult for him to reintegrate into his homeland and he was only gradually able to readjust to his "former existence," as he called it. "It seems as if one were pulled out of the modern world and placed into the time of the old patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

His plans to further develop and reform the educational system were ambitious. He immediately considered founding a secondary school and a theological seminary. When these plans were not realised, he sought refuge in Urmia in Persia, where the German Orient Mission (Deutsche Orient-Mission) had established itself.

While still working as a priest for the Apostolic Assyrian Church of the East, he founded a congregation of German Russian Lutherans in the city near the newly founded German Church of Urmia. This congregation's members were drawn primarily from the Russian forces living in the region. While fending off efforts to bring the Eastern Church into communion with the Russian Orthodox Church at the turn of the century, he was among the Lutheran Nestorians who contributed to the decisive reorganisation of the Eastern Church.[6]

The Nestorian priests understood their work to be in direct competition with that of the Anglican mission.[7] The confessional rivalries brewing in the Middle East mirrored those among the European nations at the same time. Thus the Lutheran Nestorian leadership was suspicious of the English education of the

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4 Julius Richter, *Mission und Evangelisation im Orient*, Gütersloh 1908, 232-233.

5 Martin Tamcke, "Urmia und Hermannsburg: Luther Pera im Dienst der Hermannsburger Mission in Urmia 1910-1915", *Oriens Christianus* 80 (1996), 43-65; idem, "Nach Russland: Deutschland, ja, über den Ozean, in das Land der Freiheit und des Dollars: Streiflichter aus deutschen Akten zur ersten Migrationswelle der Ostsyrer (Assyrer/'Nestorianer')", *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies (Formerly Het Christelijk Oosten)* 54 (2002), 25-38; idem, "Luther Pera's Contribution to the Restoration of the Church of the East in Urmia", *The Harp* VIII/IX (1996), 251-261.

6 As a result of this the Lutherans, who had close ties to Germany and consciously remained in the Church of the East, were not just much more active than the Anglicans – who, at least publicly, prevented conflict with the Russians – they also got caught up in the maelstrom of imperial politics. Martin Tamcke, "Warum ist es so gekommen?" (Karl Röbbelen), Die Hermannsburger Erfahrung des Nestorianer-Genozids, in: Wolfgang Günther, ed., *Verstehen und übersetzen*, Hermannsburg 2000, 87-108.

7 J. F. Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England, a history of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrien Mission*, Oxford 1992.

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Patriarch of the Apostolic Assyrian Church of the East. They often stated that the Anglicans had won his support for their interests.[8] When the Patriarch and his envoy, Mar Abimelek Timotheus, had the Lutheran-dominated "Patriarchal Committee" replaced by an Anglican one, the Lutherans saw this as an Anglican victory.[9] Conflicts with the Russian Orthodox mission and with the advocates of Nestorian-Russian Orthodox Union became more frequent and nearly turned violent.

These conflicts were made into a political issue by the diplomatic intervention of the German Empire, which sent Rudolf Nadolny as counsellor to the German legation in March 1913 to support German settlers and German interests in the region. This brought the Lutheran Nestorians even closer to the German side.[10] Pera played an active role in all of these conflicts. He had a clear opinion of the war, both with regard to the Russians and the English.

As early as 1910 he wrote, "The Patriarch and his bishops are much too much in the hands of the British".[11] And when his father was removed from his church, abused and thrown in jail by the Russian Orthodox in 1914, the surveillance of Pera also became more extreme. At the beginning of the war his house was surrounded by Russian soldiers every evening. Soon many Lutheran Nestorians had "the feeling that they, as friends of Germans, were surrounded by Russian spies".[12] In addition to this, the ethnic and religious conflicts between the Christian – primarily Nestorian – and Muslim populations of Urmia increased dramatically.

In spite of these events, Luther Pera continued to regard himself as more of a Lutheran than an Assyrian/Nestorian. He described himself as a "Nestorian" in religious terms and as a "Syrian" in ethnic terms. The term "Nestorian" was the one foreigners traditionally used for the community; by applying it to himself and his church, he evoked a caused headache that had dogged the final dogmatist of his church, Ebed Jesus, in the Middle Ages. Ebed Jesus used this foreign term for want of an alternative.[13] It is remarkable that Lutheran Nestorians

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8 Pera Johannes, 17.4.1908, ArELM (Archive of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission), Hermannsburg; Martin Tamcke and Pera Johannes, "VI Symposium Syriacum 1992", in: René Lavenant, ed., *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 247 (1994), 361-369; Martin Tamcke, "Die Konfessionsfrage bei den lutherischen Nestorianern", *Aram* 5 (1993), 521-536.

9 Karl Röbbelen, Circular 3, Hermannsburg 1909, ArELM; Mar Aprem, *Mar Abimalek Timotheus: A Biography*, Trichur 1975.

10 Siawusch Sohrab, *Die deutsch-persischen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, Frankfurt 1976; Erns C. Suttner, "Die Union der sogenannten Nestorianer aus der Gegend von Urmia (Persien) mit der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche", *Ostkirchliche Studien* 44 (1995), 33-40.

11 Luther Pera, 5.5.1910, ArELM.

12 Anna Friedemann in *NLMP* (*Nachrichten aus der lutherisch. Mission in Persien*) 2,2 (1915), 6.

13 Martin Tamcke, "Ebed Jesus", in: *Metzlers Lexikon der christlichen Denker*, Stuttgart 2000, 216-217.

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simply referred to themselves as "Syrians" when describing their ethnicity, because at this time the term "Assyrian" had begun to establish itself, in line with English-language convention.

In October 1913 Lutheran Nestorians used their contacts with German missionary officials to express their emphatic wish to be protected by the German government through its diplomatic representatives in Persia.[14] Thus, it was no surprise when the Lutheran Nestorians sought help from the Germans in Urmia at the beginning of the war. For example, in November 1914 Anna Friedemann informed missionary officials in Germany of the following:

> "They came to me one by one in order to request that I provide them and their families with lodgings in the orphanage. They did not feel safe in the villages. All residents had fled. Fighting between Russians, Kurds and Turks was of course already well under way and all sense of order had vanished."[15]

Their belongings did get stored in the German mission, but the Germans themselves were ordered to leave the country, and soon there were no more German workers at the mission. Now the Lutheran Nestorians, who had aligned with German interests, could not rely on anyone for their protection. However, they consciously did not choose to leave with the retreating Russian troops, as many members of their ethnic community had done. Although they initially greeted arriving Turkish troops as allies, the degree to which they were terrorised by the Kurds was, according to Pera, "beyond description".[16] In fact, in Pera's opinion, Muslim residents of the city had invited the Kurds to Urmia. He spoke of how "all Christians were without protection and were subject to the fanatical anger of the Muslim population".[17]

Pera was, therefore, inclined to see the conflict as religious in nature. With killings and extortion came epidemics, and Pera lost his son to typhus. When Pera and his family were besieged and trapped in their own home, they were saved by the spirited intervention of a young Muslim and his five brothers, who took Pera and his family into their home.[18] Shattered by his experience of (German-allied) Turkish rule, Pera saw the Russians, who were rapidly returning to Urmia, in a new light. The Russians had "freed the Christians from their captivity".[19]

No longer attached to Germany and its allies – the result of first-hand experience of terrorised defencelessness in the face of illegitimate attacks, murder and blackmail – Pera reoriented himself.

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14 Luther Pera and Pera Johannes, 7.10.1913, ArELM.
15 Anna Friedemann in *NLMP* 2, 2 (1915), 6.
16 Luther Pera in *NLMP* 2, 4 (1915), 15.
17 Ibid., 14.
18 *NLMP* 2, 4 (1915), 14-15.
19 Luther Pera in *NLMP* 2, 4 (1915), 16.

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> "God prevent these brutes from returning; otherwise no Christians will remain in good health, rather they all will be slain under great torment if the Russians should leave this place, so would we, at once and empty handed, go with them, otherwise we are lost."[20]

To this point, Pera's reports have made it possible for the reader to assume the role of eyewitness observer. All these reports were written as the described events were still underway: they are summaries of events that had just been experienced and are written from the perspective of a privileged outsider. With the final withdrawal of the last Russian troops, he and his family fled first to Tabris. When cholera broke out there, they moved on to Southern Russia. From there Pera and his family travelled across Russia and Sweden to reach Germany in the winter 1915/16. Germany marked the first phase of Luther Pera's migration. He emigrated to the US in 1926, where he took over the Assyrian-Lutheran parish of Chicago, where his descendants still live today. It was in Germany, though, that he first began making use of his recollections of the First World War. The eyewitness period had come to an end. He now gave talks where he presented his memories to an interested public.

An example of such public recollection can be found as early as 21 June, 1916. Pera was travelling across Germany giving talks on the situation in his native country when he presented a report to an audience of 200 at a membership meeting of the "Verein für lutherische Mission in Persien". "When I think of my beautiful homeland", he began, "I see before my eyes the worst images of destruction".[21] He described the miserable situation of the Assyrians in detail – the large losses, and the decline of entire villages. His talk led a parish member to pose a question related to the very existence of the Lutheran Nestorians: How was it possible that German politicians were able to co-operate with Muslim Turks, but were incapable of protecting parish members, who had declared their support of the German mission?[22] Didn't this represent an astonishing contradiction between imperial pretensions and onsite political capabilities?

The homeland, left behind, was transfigured after just one year. This transformation took place because of the fear that the Nestorians' home might be lost forever, because a migrant can only watch helplessly from a distance as everything takes place and because he could not seriously consider the possibility of returning. The poor country whose backwardness had reminded him of the times of the Biblical patriarchs had now become a "beautiful homeland".

All of this caused Pera to distance himself from his host country, despite all of his proclaimed solidarity with Germans. In fact, he wanted to leave Germany sooner, rather than later. Although he had made great efforts to separate himself from the Mother Church and its patriarch shortly before the war, the forces of

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20 Luther Pera in *NLMP* 2, 4 (1915), 16.
21 Luther Pera in *NLMP* 3, 4 (1916), 4.
22 *HMB* (*Hermannsburger Missionsblatt*) 1916, 186-188.

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history now suddenly placed him back at the side of the Patriarch. Now he could even speak of "our noble Patriarch", with whose fate he now sympathised out of solidarity, despite all the calls for caution from German politicians.[23] He no longer accused the patriarch of being too heavily influenced by the English Anglicans. Neither did he recollect how he had once insisted on a placement in the mission station of the German Orient Mission – in order to be "on German ground" as he expressed it at the time – because there the patriarch wouldn't be able to "influence" him.[24]

While the war was still under way, Pera enunciated a realisation that became apparent to many other Assyrians after they had tried in vain to defend their own state: Assyrians stood on their own, and at a critical juncture they could count on no political or military assistance from any other country. It was a remarkable realisation. By describing his people as essentially alone, he had abandoned all the utopias that had once influenced him – utopias based on the presence of Germans in his native country. As the devout Pera he was often given to saying, "We have received the most important lesson – that we cannot rely on the power or help of any humans, but only on the all-powerful living God".[25] He tended to conclude his remarks with such depressing sentences as, "Thus the present looks very dark, and the future even darker".[26]

The present darkness was twofold. He was faced with the irreversible events in his homeland, and simultaneously had to come to terms with his situation as a migrant in Germany where – despite repeated efforts over an extended period – he couldn't find permanent employment as a priest. In 1920 he was temporarily active as a locum tenus in Alsace, before leaving for America, a move he was unable to make in 1915 and 1916 because of the political situation and the imminent US entry into the war.

Pera's transformation, from reporter to memoirist, affected his inner being. Because of the Nestorians' repeated sufferings, this Westernised, German-oriented individual was, as it were, re-incorporated into his ethnic group. Like other Lutheran Nestorians, he did not abandon his ties to Germany in the following phase of his life, but these ties did become less important. While still in Germany, Johannes Lepsius encouraged Luther Pera to write down his memories of the events of the war and offered to publish them. Unfortunately, Pera's work is lost.[27]

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23 Ibid., 188.

24 Luther Pera: 27.2. 1910, ArELM.

25 *HMB* 1916, 188.

26 Luther Pera in *NLMP* 3, 4 (1916), 4.

27 The memories of another Lutheran Nestorian, Lazarus Jaure, with the title "My Experiences and Lessons in Persia During the World War" ("Meine Erfahrungen und Erlebnisse in Persien während des Weltkrieges"), also remained unpublished. Lazarus Jaure first offered his writings to the Lutheran Publication House in Philadelphia, which showed interest in the work but then encouraged him to search out a German readership. His

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Whereas Pera once used his ethnicity to reform his parish in the Lutheran spirit, he now used his relationship to the Lutheran Church in Germany to mobilise appropriate representatives and come to the aid of his people. In 1933 he turned to his own former missionary council, through which he was able to contact the German State Department in Berlin, to request diplomatic action against the renewed persecution of Assyrians in Iraq.[28] Hence memories became the motivation for political engagement.

In June 1987 Steven Pera, a descendant of the Pera family, published a few of the reports from the German archives, as translated by Victor Pera for American Assyrians.[29] Thus German sources became the basis for continued remembrance. Steven Pera announced in 1987 that he would begin translating his Syrian ancestors' letters in German and New Eastern Syriac. This task has apparently not been carried out.[30]

Steven Pera nevertheless felt it important to comment on these historical transformations. He pointed out that the members of the "Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East" – which was at the time already under the leadership of Mar Dinkha IV – had referred to themselves as "Assyrians." However, in the documents from the First World War and shortly thereafter they referred to themselves as "Syriac". Accordingly, he speaks of "the present-day Nestorians" to refer to the Church of the East. Here we can see that things have come full circle. The word "Nestorians", which the Lutheran Nestorians used when referring to their religious affiliation, and the word "Syriac", which was used to refer to their ethnicity, were now both subsumed in the term "Assyrian". The term "Assyrian" was in turn coined nationally, so that the national term took the place of the other two terms and made them into relics of the past. But what truly strengthens the Assyrians' sense of community today is the memory of belonging to those those refugees who escaped the Turks and "the wild Kurds", those who are dispersed around the world, a small minority without a homeland.

What I have ascertained here by referring primarily to Pera's text is verified by referring to other representatives of the Lutheran Nestorians. Wartime experience and the experience of political helplessness that followed, strengthened the national identity of Lutheran Nestorians, who had up to that point felt marginalised because of their level of education and their connections to Europe. Their interests as a group, once based on improving the educational levels of their

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manuscript, which was sent to Germany on May 8th, 1932, vanished without a trace and was never published. Lazarus Jaure, 8.5.1932, ArELM; Martin Tamcke, "‚Eingeborener Helfer' oder Missionar? Wege und Nöte des Lazarus Jaure im Dienste der Mission", in: Martin Tamcke, Wolfgang Schwaigert and Egbert Schlarb, eds., *Syrisches Christentum weltweit*, Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte 1, Münster: LIT 1995, 355-385.

28 Tamcke, "Luther Pera", 64-65.

29 G. Haccius, *The Lutheran Mission in Persia* (transl. Victor Pera), ed. Steven Pera, Chicago 1987.

30 Haccius, *Lutheran Mission*, 3.

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countrymen to European standards and the renewal of their church, were put aside in favour of helping their ethnic group, which in turn helped increase ethnic solidarity and reduce elitist isolation.

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# C:
# The Social Effects of the First World War. Suffering during and after the War

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# The Commemoration of the "Spanish Flu" of 1918-1919 in the Arab East

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Although it was one of the deadliest epidemics in history, the influenza pandemic of 1918/19 had virtually disappeared from collective memory until recently.[1] This article is about why it has not been commemorated given that other, arguably less important events – war, famine, and repression – have dominated collective memory in the Arab East.[2]

## *1. Disease and history*

The study of disease and its impact on history recently gained popularity in historical research. The 1990s – and especially the years 1999 and 2000 – witnessed an upsurge in the number of publications dealing with epidemic diseases in general and the influenza pandemic of 1918/19 in particular, though without filling in all the gaps.[3] It seems as if the turn of the century triggered a re-evaluation of the decisive events of the 20th century. Quite surprisingly, many multipliers of memory – historians, journalists, as well as laypeople – only recently realised that the Spanish flu (as the epidemic has frequently been called) was not only the deadliest epidemic of the 20th century, but also one of the deadliest in human history.[4]

Furthermore, the outbreak of hitherto unknown diseases like ebola, the rift valley fever and mad cow disease – not to mention AIDS and SARS – heightened awareness that the current wave of globalisation will help the spread of epidemic disease. Therefore, a closer look at the epidemics of the first wave of globalisation in the 19th and early-20th centuries might provide a glimpse into scenarios that may hit us again in the 21st century.

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1 A pandemic is an epidemic that afflicts most parts of the world. With regard to the Spanish flu, I use both terms synonymously.

2 For a sophisticated discussion of the term "collective memory" cf. the article by Christoph Schumann in this volume.

3 Cp. e.g. Lynette Iezzoni, *Influenza 1918. The Worst Epidemic in American History*, New York 1999; Gina Kolata, *Flu. The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus that caused it*, London 1999.

4 The term "Spanish flu" seems to have been coined because the first reported cases were from Spain. The pandemic, however, did not have its origin in Spain.

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From the late 1970s onwards, an ever-growing number of studies have dedicated themselves not only to disease itself, but the social and cultural history of epidemics. It has been shown that the historical impact of epidemics does not limit itself on the material and economic structures of a given society.[5] Rather, historians have begun focussing on the "collateral damage" of disease. As a result, medical history has increasingly become a field of study for the social and cultural historian.

In times of epidemic crisis and their aftermath, peoples' reactions offer insight into their intellectual and religious convictions, their mentalities and their forms and mechanisms of commemorating their history. Furthermore, epidemics are an ideal subject for a comparative historical analysis of either facts or memories, as they appear on all continents and among all cultures. In many cases, their devastating effects on human life are similar in societies that otherwise widely differ in geographical and cultural terms.

Their commemoration, however, may differ even regionally, according to mechanisms we do not yet know. In the case of the Spanish flu, differences between Middle Eastern countries abound, while there are parallels between societies as diverse as the United States and Central Arabia (Najd)[6] on one hand and Syria and Germany on the other.[7]

With regard to the Middle East in general, research has lagged behind the common trend in Western academia. Notwithstanding some minor exceptions, only the 1990s witnessed the emergence of a limited trend towards the social and cultural history of epidemic disease. Most studies still focus on aspects of public health, i.e. on the reaction of Middle Eastern or European states to the challenges of cholera.[8] Related materials are easier to access in Western archives and therefore studies on the social and cultural effects of epidemic diseases – which require a much higher level of methodological sophistication – are relatively scarce.

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5 Terence Ranger and Paul Slack, eds., *Epidemics and Ideas. Essays on the Historical Perception of Pestilence*, Cambridge 1992.

6 The "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" was only founded in 1932, Central Arabia (Najd) being the core region of the new state. In 1918/19, the then ruler of Najd, Ibn Saʿūd (d. 1953), controlled only Central and Eastern Arabia.

7 I have addressed some of these issues in a non-academic article: "Seuchen und Krieg im Jahr der Gnade. Die Spanische Grippe 1918/19 in Arabien und Syrien", *fundiert. Das Wissenschaftsmagazin der Freien Universität Berlin* 01/2002, 128-135.

8 Nancy Elizabeth Gallagher, *Egypt's other wars: epidemics and the politics of public health*, Syracuse, NY 1990; Amir Arsalan Afkhami, "Disease and Water Supply: The Case of Cholera in 19th Century Iran", in: Jeff Albert et al., eds., *Transformations of Middle Eastern Natural Environments: Legacies and Lessons* (= Bulletin Series. Yale Schools of Forestry and Environmental Studies, No. 103), New Haven, Co. 1998, 206-220; Anja Pistor-Hatam, "Pilger, Pest und Cholera. Die Wallfahrt zu den Heiligen Stätten im Irak als gesundheitspolitisches Problem im 19. Jahrhundert", *Die Welt des Islams* 31 (1991), 228-245.

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## 2. *The influenza pandemic of 1918/19*

The "Spanish flu" was the most devastating pandemic since the great plague of the 14th century.[9] It seems to have broken out in the United States, most likely in Kansas. Spreading with the American troops mobilised for transport to France, the disease made its way across the Atlantic and then spread on all continents.

In its first wave it hit the US in spring 1918, without killing large numbers of people. However, sometime in late summer the virus mutated, most likely in Brest – where the American Expeditionary Force in Europe operated its main harbour for shipments to and from France – but possibly also in Boston and Freetown.[10] Several characteristics of this virus differed from those of the common forms of influenza. Most notably, mortality among those struck by the disease was considerably higher than during ordinary flu epidemics. Secondly, influenza normally kills the weaker parts of a population, namely the very old, the very young and the sick. This time, however, it killed the supposedly robust and vital parts of the population, namely people between 15 or 20 and 40 years of age.

According to rough estimates, it killed at least 20 million people. Our knowledge of the influenza in the Middle and Far East is still extremely deficient, however. Estimates of 40 million victims worldwide do not seem to be exaggerated, especially as mortality rates in Asia seem to have been higher than in Europe or the United States, and because students of the pandemic ignored the influenza in Asia. Some recent publications speak of more than 50 million victims.[11] In many cases regions already struck by malaria, like rural Iran and the Western coast of the Persian Gulf, witnessed higher mortality rates than others.[12] Afkhami concludes that Iran must have lost between 8.0% and 21.7% of its population.

One of the influenza's most noteworthy effects are its forms of commemoration, which – although the world has tended to forget the disease – differ widely. In Western Europe, especially Germany where more than 225,000 people were killed, influenza was a subject reserved for the medical specialist for 80 years.

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9 Michael Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East*, Princeton/N.J. 1977.

10 Standard articles and books on the Spanish flu are: Alfred W.Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918*, Cambridge (et al.) ²1989; K. David Patterson and Gerald F. Pyle, "The Geography and Mortality of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 65 (1991), 4-21; Fred R. van Hartesveldt, ed., *The 1918-1919 Pandemic of Influenza. The Urban Impact on the Western World*, Lewiston et al. 1992.

11 Amir Arsalan Afkhami, "Compromised Constitutions: The Iranian Experience with the 1918-19 Influenza Pandemic", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 77 (2003), 367-392, here 368. Niall P.A.S. Johnson and Juergen Mueller, "Updating the Accounts: Global Mortality of the 1918-1920 'Spanish' Influenza Pandemic", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 76 (2002), 105-115.

12 Afkhami, "Compromised Constitutions", 369, 382, 386-390. On the Western coast of the Persian Gulf, Qatif seems to have been a city with a particularly high mortality.

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The disease seems to have been wiped out of the collective and even the individual memory. Only in 1999 a number of articles in newspapers and magazines appeared, reviving the lost knowledge of the virulence and historical significance of the epidemic.[13] This boom was paralleled by a growing number of publications about the influenza in the United States as well, where many individuals still had long and frightening stories to tell.[14]

## *3. Influenza in the Middle East*

Empirical information about the Spanish flu's impact in the Middle East is very scarce. There is one article by Amir Afkhami on the influenza in Iran. Scattered information is available on its impact in the Arabian Peninsula. In Central Arabia, the general idea that we have of the event and its impact is partly due to the commemoration of the epidemic, which is still vivid and intense. The influenza year (1337 of the *hijrah*) is still remembered and talked about quite frequently as the "*sanat al-raḥmah*", the "year of mercy". – In Northern Najd the influenza is known as "*sanat al-sakhnah*", the year of the heat – a reference to the disease's high fever.

The memory of the terrible losses of life – in an environment that had always been sparsely populated – is rather vivid and interest in the epidemic seems to have increased in recent years. This is perhaps due to the growing awareness that "post-modern" epidemic diseases like the rift valley fever have already reached Arabian soil.[15]

The Spanish flu hit Arabia in the late fall of 1918/19 and lasted for about three months. In November or December the Saudi ruler, Ibn Saʿūd (reigned 1902-1953), called for an American doctor of the Arabian mission in Bahrain, Paul Harrison, because an epidemic had broken out Riyadh. According to Harrison, about 100 people a day died during his stay in Riyadh. In a letter dated January 18, 1919, he wrote: "The whole town was sick, so much that the bodies were carried out on donkeys and camels, two to a donkey and [illegible] to a camel."[16] Several members of Ibn Saʿūd's family died, among them his son and heir apparent, Turki.

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13 Cp. e.g. Günther Stockinger, "Die Rückkehr der Killer", *Der Spiegel* 16/1999.

14 Cp. e.g. Iezzoni, *Influenza*, passim.

15 The rift valley fever broke out in September 2000 in the Asir province close to the Yemeni border and in Yemen proper. The epidemics had its origins in East Africa. According to Saudi government estimates, 124 people died until March 2001. "Saudi-Arabien 2001", in: *Nahost Jahrbuch 2001. Politik, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Nordafrika und dem Nahen und Mittleren Osten*, ed. by Deutsches Orient-Institut, Hanspeter Mattes, Opladen 2002, 149-157, here 157.

16 Eleanor Abdella Doumato, *Getting God's ear: Women, Islam, and Healing in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf*, New York 2000, 173, note 2.

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Harry Philby, a British official and traveller in Najd, confirms the devastating impact of the epidemic, reporting about 25,000 people killed in the Central Arabian cities. Of these only the members of the urban elites, namely scholars, merchants and members of the ruling families, are known to us.[17] The death toll seems to have been especially high among the religious scholars, the *ʿulamāʾ*, and their students. Their study circles were hotbeds of the disease. Since these young men were to form the backbone of Najdi society for the years to come, it is hardly possible to overestimate the negative impact the influenza had on Central Arabian society.[18]

A Najdi historian and contemporary of the pandemic, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ṣāliḥ al-Bassām (d. 1953/54) mentions that in 1337 (1918/19) an epidemic spread all over the world:

> "In 1337 a great disease afflicted all parts of the world, Bedouin and townspeople alike. It killed an uncountable number of people until only some individuals were left praying in the mosques and the markets were empty... ."[19]

His words reflect the awe the disease provoked in Arabia in 1919, and many other contemporary texts show that the epidemics was indeed perceived as a decisive event in Arabian history. Another eyewitness, the chronicler ʿAbdallāh al-Bassām (d. 1927), a relative of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Sāliḥ, wrote: "In 1337 a devastating epidemic spread in Najd and afflicted townsmen and Bedouin alike. Such a large number of people died that God alone could count them."[20]

Philby's description of innumerable Bedouin dying hints to a characteristic feature of the disease: the mortality rates of the Bedouin across the peninsula seem to have been higher than those among the settled population. This holds true for the whole region, including the Bedouin of Syria and Iraq, who lived in close contact with their brethren in the South and who frequently migrated into the inner deserts in the cold season. Stories still abound of whole tribal units perishing because the sick were unable to attend their animals, which died because their owners were unable to raise water from the wells or move when the pasture was exhausted in a certain region.

This is especially surprising as it is commonly believed that life in the countryside is healthier than that in the cities, which – due to the large number of human beings and animals living there – is said to host a far larger number of bacteria and viruses. However, epidemic diseases regularly hit the rural population much more harshly than the cities. Due to the smaller population of the

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17 Harry St. John Philby, *Arabia of the Wahhabis*, London 1928, 254.

18 Guido Steinberg, *Religion und Staat in Saudi-Arabien. Die wahhabitischen Gelehrten (1902-1953)*, Würzburg 2002, 64f. and 443-446.

19 ʿAbdallāh b. Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sāliḥ al-Bassām, ed., *Khizānat al-tawārīkh al-najdiyyah*, vol. 5, al-Riyāḍ 2000, 95f.

20 ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad al-Bassām, *Tuḥfat al-mushtāq fī akhbār Najd wa-l-Hijāz wa-l-ʿIrāq*, ed. by Ibrāhīm al-Khālidī, al-Kuwayt 2000, 416.

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countryside, diseases rarely become endemic. However, the rural, or Bedouin, populations more frequently suffer from malnutrition, so that when an epidemic disease does hit, it proves to be more fatal.[21]

Medical specialists label this phenomenon "virgin soil epidemics". The Spanish flu was no exception. All over the world, mortality rates were much higher in rural than in urban areas. This holds true for the "native American" population in their reservations in North America, peasants in Iran and Bedouin in Arabia.[22]

The Spanish flu was only one of a series of ecological and man-made catastrophes to hit the region.[23] A drought, which afflicted the whole peninsula since 1915, the blockade of Ottoman territories by the British and their allies (including Ibn Saʿūd) and different epidemic diseases like typhoid, typhus, dysentery, influenza and cholera all had a devastating impact on Bedouin society.

Their sources of livelihood were threatened, or destroyed, to such an extent that the famous Ikhwān movement reached the brink of open rebellion in 1919. The Ikhwān (lit. brethren) were former Bedouin who had been settled following a subtle mix of religious persuasion, economic incentives (all the more potent as their traditional sources of livelihood were threatened by ecological crises) and governmental pressure. Once settled, they formed a religiously motivated, highly fanatical fighting force in the service of Ibn Saʿūd.

However, in 1919 they openly defied orders by the central government not to attack fellow Bedouins and raided neighbouring territories without permission from Ibn Saʿūd. Some even attacked townspeople and merchants who were travelling through the desert. Only through a combination of violence and persuasion did Ibn Saʿūd manage to contain the Ikhwān leaders and regain control of his realm. The Spanish flu seems to have been one of the factors triggering their rebellion.[24]

## *4. Famine, Disease and Influenza in Syria*

Although information about the influenza in Syria is much scarcer than for Central Arabia, there is no doubt that it ravaged the urban population of this region as well. Typically, epidemic diseases in Greater Syria occurred in combination with famines and drought. People died, and in many cases it remains unclear from the sources exactly why people died and which scourge hit the region at a

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21 William McNeill, *Seuchen machen Geschichte. Geißeln der Völker*, München 1976 [German translation of: *Plagues and Peoples*, 1976], 79.

22 For Iran, cp. Afkhami, "Compromised Institutions", 377, 381f.

23 Steinberg, *Religion und Staat*, 443f.

24 *Ibid.*, 442-449; On the Ikhwān in general cp. John S. Habib: *Ibn Saʿuds Warriors of Islam. The Ikhwan of Najd and Their Role in the Creation of the Saʿudi Kingdom, 1910-1930*, Leiden 1978.

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given time. In an ordinary cycle of events bad weather – more specifically prolonged drought or an invasion of locusts – was followed by famine, which weakened the population so that the field was prepared for an epidemic disease. From the 1820s, the most common disease was cholera, *the* 19th-century disease. In several cases, economic and medical crises were followed, or caused, by political and social turmoil – like the events of 1826/7 and possibly 1848.[25]

A similar cycle of events can be distinguished between 1915 and 1919. Like the peninsula, Syria was hit by a prolonged period of drought, starting in 1915. With the war, the situation escalated. In a pioneering article, "The Famine of 1915-1918 in Greater Syria", Linda Schatkowski-Schilcher has provided a detailed account of the famine and its causes, though without dealing with the influenza. It might be included in the "starvation-related diseases" she mentions here, an expression which can be found in other books about the period as well. However, the Spanish flu was not necessarily "starvation-related" and the 500,000 Syrians she counts as having died as a result of the famine probably contained a large number of influenza victims.[26]

Events in Central Arabia and Greater Syria evolved along similar lines. First came a famine caused by ecological catastrophe and the wartime blockade by the Allied forces and the Ottomans. This was followed by the outbreak of epidemic diseases like typhoid, typhus, dysentery, influenza and – according to the Shi'i scholar Muḥsin al-Amīn – even cholera in Lebanon's Jabal ʿĀmil. Then, social and political turmoil erupted at the end of the period.[27]

The main difference between the Central Arabian and the Syrian experiences is that influenza was not commemorated to a similar extent in Syria as in Saudi Arabia or even in Egypt – where the memory of the epidemic is still quite vivid as well. Literature is largely silent on the disease in Greater Syria. The comparative approach helps to identify the role of influenza in Syrian history.

Arguably, the influenza had a political impact as well. The years between 1918 and 1920 are considered to be of utmost importance to the history of Syria and the whole Middle East. The demise of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent

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25 In 1826/7, Syria was struck by bad weather and disease, followed by political unrest among the urban poor. In 1848, large-scale popular unrest broke out when a cholera epidemic hit the city. Dick Douwes, *The Ottomans in Syria. A History of Justice and Oppression*, London/New York 2000, 19f. and 124; Zouhair Ghazzal, *L'économie politique de Damas durant le XIXe siècle. Structures traditionelles et capitalisme*, Damas 1993, 163.

26 Linda Schatkowski Schilcher: "The Famine of 1915-1918 in Greater Syria", in: John P. Spagnolo, ed., *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective. Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani*, Reading 1992, 229-58, here 229.

27 For Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm's description of the cholera epidemics in Jabal ʿĀmil cp. *Autobiographie d'un clerc chiite du Gabal 'Amil* : tiré de, *Les notables chiites, Aʿyān al-shīʿa / Muḥsin al-Amin*. Traduction et annotations par Sabrina Mervin et Haitham Al-Amin. Damas, Institut Français de Damas 1998, 164ff. I would like to thank Dr. Rainer Brunner (Freiburg) for providing me with this reference.

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establishment of French and British rule decisively shaped the future of the region and it would be highly desirable to find out what role epidemic disease might have played in the course of events.

However, in Syrian autobiographies, even in those cases where the famine is mentioned and described, epidemics are only a minor subject. The former Syrian politician and prime minister Khālid al-ʿAẓm's (1895-1964) "*Mudhakkirāt*" serves as a striking example of this genre of literature. His narrative of the war years focuses on Cemal Pasha and his activities. Cemal Pasha became famous as the Ottoman governor of Damascus and the commander of the V. Ottoman Army in Syria during the war years. His rule was characterized by a ruthless repression of Arab nationalism in the province, which made him a prime object of Arab nationalist authors' criticisms.

Al-ʿAẓm concentrates on his father's role during these events, and gives special weight to the arrival of the British and Sharīfian troops in Damascus in October 1918, his father's meetings with King Faysal, the events during the Paris Peace Conference, and other issues of politics and diplomacy. When talking about the population's reactions, he mentions that people in Damascus were "not very much interested in the war". However, he states that they were affected by the fact that many men served in the Ottoman Army and by the enormous rise in prices – especially for staples like wheat, rice, coffee, sugar and tea. Al-ʿAẓm mentions neither famine nor epidemic disease.[28] Other writers – like Muḥammad Jamīl Bayham – mention the famine, which must have been a dominating feature of peoples' lives in these years. However, he does not give due weight to the importance of epidemic disease.[29]

These and other writings are dominated by important political events of the period: the Arab Revolt, military operations, British and French wartime agreements, the establishment of the mandates, and the execution of Arab nationalists. Arab nationalist authors focus on Cemal Pasha as the main responsible for all evil that struck Greater Syria during the war.[30] According to them, the Ottoman leadership intentionally used the scarcity of foodstuffs to decimate the local population in Syria and Lebanon. In their narratives, the Arab nationalists are the heroes, martyrs in the fight against a foreign occupation.

For their part, pro-Ottoman authors – while also preferring to talk about important political and military events – tend to focus on different issues and largely ignore the famine. Whenever they mention the famine, they blame the Allied governments and their blockade of Ottoman territories for the scarcity of

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28 Khālid al-ʿAẓm, *Mudhakkirāt Khālid al-ʿAẓm fī thalāthat mujalladāt*, vol. I, Bayrut: al-Dār al-Muttaḥidah n.d., 74 and passim.

29 Muḥammad Jamīl Bayham, *al-ʿAhd al-mukhaḍram fī Sūriyā wa-Lubnān*, 1918-1922, Bayrut: Dār al-Ṭalīʿah n.d., 186f. and 197.

30 About Cemal Pasha, cf. the article by Christoph Schumann in this volume.

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foodstuffs. In both narratives, however, Cemal Pasha and his rule in Damascus are central elements.[31]

## *5. Mechanisms of commemoration*

The marked discrepancy in the forms of commemoration in neighbouring regions like Central and North-western Arabia, which were similarly affected by the disease, requires an explanation.

Although any analysis of the mechanisms of commemoration of the influenza has to remain highly hypothetical, a comparison of the Central Arabian and the Syrian experiences might provide some valuable insights. First, however, it is necessary to stress that the Syrian case conforms to the norm of "global amnesia" which struck humanity after the catastrophe, although the Spanish flu was much more destructive and global than the so-called "World War". A reasonably vivid individual and collective memory of the disease seems to be confined to Saudi Arabia. What were the reasons for this amnesia?

Firstly, epidemics which appear only once and severely are more easily forgotten than those which appear more frequently. This might be one of the main differences between the Black Death and the influenza. Influenza had already broken out in 1890-1892, as recorded by Muḥsin al-Amīn during his stay in Najaf.[32] It has broken out again several times since then. The specific virus that proved to be so deadly in 1919, however, seems to have been an exception, causing people in 1919 to think of influenza as an inconvenience rather than a disease.

This may be one of the reasons why it did not leave a greater impact on human memory in general. Furthermore, one of the influenza's main characteristics was the rapidity with which it appeared and then disappeared, as nearly every person living in 1918/19 came into contact with the virus and thereby gained immunity. Moreover, people are always ready to expunge the intolerable from their memory.

Secondly, the Middle East in 1918/19 was still a region periodically ravaged by epidemic diseases that had already been wiped out in Europe. Most prominent among these scourges was smallpox, periodically killing children all over the Middle East.[33] Central Arabian chronicles sometimes unknowingly mention typhus, when describing the severe headaches of the victims. Even cholera visited the region before the First World War, twenty years after it had dis-

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31 This tendency has also found its way into European history writing. Cp. Mouna Liliane Samman, *La Population de la Syrie. Étude géo-démographique*, Paris 1978, 126. The author here refers to Jean Pichon, *Le partage du Proche-Orient*, Paris 1938, 20f. as her source.

32 *Autobiographie d'un clerc chiite*, 129f.

33 Philby, *Arabia of the Wahhabis*, 254; Donald R. Hopkins, *Princes and Peasants. Smallpox in History*, Chicago/London 1983.

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appeared from Europe. Epidemic disease was still such a common phenomenon in the Middle East – especially in connection with famine – that it was perhaps not regarded as worth mentioning in many cases. Moreover, medical knowledge in the region was not very developed in 1918.

It may be worth inquiring whether physicians in the Eastern Mediterranean could differentiate among death from typhus, typhoid, dysentery, cholera, flu and starvation, especially as even American and European medical doctors proved totally helpless when confronted with the Spanish flu. The virus itself hid its true nature from medical specialists; most influenza victims died of secondary pneumonia and not of influenza itself.[34]

The influenza's outward symptoms were not as frightening as those of cholera. In many cases, people tend to remember not the medically most dangerous diseases – which cholera is not – but rather those with the most terrible outward symptoms. In comparison to other diseases, influenza did not afflict its victims with symptoms so terrifying as to leave traumatising marks in the minds of contemporaries. This holds especially true in comparison with Cholera, which in 1918-1919 was still vividly remembered. Its horrifying outward symptoms helped lead to its becoming a catalyst for social and religious upheaval in Europe and the Middle East, especially in Central Arabia.[35]

These remarks do not give us a satisfying explanation for the difference between the forms of commemoration of the Spanish flu. At first, one might think that Central and Eastern Arabia were simply hit harder than Syria. This is possible, as epidemic disease tends to visit those regions that live in relative isolation. Central Arabia was in no way isolated, but was definitely a regional backwater compared to Syria.

However, influenza was only able to spread as effectively as it did because soldiers were transported back and forth between France and the United States, and common wisdom holds that the virus only mutated because of the huge concentrations of American soldiers in their points of embarkation. The symbiotic relationship between war and the Spanish flu existed outside Europe as well. Troop and population movements in the Mediterranean, Egypt, Turkey and Syria in autumn 1918 provided the virus with excellent long-distance carriers.

In fact, more than half of the 17 German soldiers buried in the Protestant cemetery in Beirut died in December 1918 and January 1919, when the war had already ended and when the Spanish flu seems to have been at its peak in Lebanon and Syria.[36] These soldiers died as a consequence of epidemic disease, not wartime injuries. Because of the troop concentrations in the Eastern Mediterra-

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34 Iezzoni, *Influenza*, 26f.

35 Steinberg, *Religion und Staat*, 400-402; For a detailed discussion of the political implications of cholera epidemics cp. Richard J. Evans, "Epidemics and Revolutions: Cholera in Nineteenth-Century Europe", *Past and Present* 120 (1988), 123-146.

36 Author's visit, May 1, 2001.

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nean, the spread of the flu was even more likely in Syria than Central Arabia, especially as many Bedouin took refuge in Damascus from famine, drought and disturbances.

One explanation for the difference in the forms of commemoration is that Syrians were directly affected by the war, while Arabians were not. Ottoman confiscations of livestock and agricultural produce, Ottoman conscriptions, the British/French blockade of the Ottoman ports and the subsequent conquest of Syria by British troops were solely confined to Syria (and Iraq). Thus, the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire – especially Syria and Palestine – were hardest hit by war and famine. The Spanish flu's impact was thus hidden under a layer of other, seemingly more important events.

In Germany, famine, the end of the war and the crucial events of 1918/19 dominate collective memory. Similarly, the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of Arab nationalism and the loss of independence seemed more worthy of recollection, if only because they had an obviously lasting impact on Syrian history. There were heroes and martyrs to be celebrated and villains like Cemal Pasha to be condemned. Comparatively speaking there is nothing heroic in the fight against a virus, something mostly unknown to people in 1919. People caught it and died within hours, with nobody knowing what to do. This must have seemed quite a miserable and banal death. Remembering helplessness and banality, however, is seldom very popular.

A second explanation might have been the shock Central Arabians felt as they realised that they were in no way immune to developments outside their country and outside the Muslim world. As the quote by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bassām shows, people were aware of the global nature of the pandemic and that true Muslims were just as afflicted by the disease as other Muslims – whom devout Wahhabis believed were "less true". Even unbelievers shared their fate. This has a parallel in the US, another country where the pandemic is more vividly commemorated than usual, as the disease showed very strikingly that in spite of geographical isolation, the country was exposed to global influences.[37]

Furthermore, memory always reflects political interests and influences.[38] In Saudi Arabia, many people believed (indeed, may still believe) that disease is divine retribution to chastise mankind for its sins. Religious circles, i.e. the *ʿulamāʾ* and their followers, still spread this message in cases of outbreaks of epidemic diseases.[39] For example, Saudi religious scholars commonly interpret AIDS as a

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37 Iezzoni, *Influenza*, 12; Even today, events showing that trans-national problems like international terrorism directly affect the US seem to shock Americans society.

38 For a fascinating account of the commemoration of the famine in Lebanon and its different constructions by rulers and the ruled, respectively, cp. Michael Gilsenan, *Lords of the Lebanese Marches. Violence and Narrative in an Arab Society*, London/New York 1996, 115-156

39 This viewpoint had already been elaborated by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (1372-1449). Cp. David Panzac, *La Peste dans l'Empire Ottoman 1700-1850*, Louvain 1985, 290-293.

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just retribution for immoral behaviour, illicit sexual discourse and homosexuality. They also use the outbreak of diseases to encourage people to follow their teachings. A famous Najdi chronicler wrote:

> "A pious and learned man from Midhnib in Qasim told us that when the disease broke out he had a dream, in which he found himself outside of the city. There he saw two armed men on white horses. He was gripped by a terrible fear that overwhelmed him so that he was not capable of fleeing from the scene. The two men caught up with him, greeted him and calmed him down by saying that they would not harm him: 'We are not aiming at you. We and God want to chastise the inhabitants of this village because they do not repent their sins. This is why we will chastise them just as He has chastised the people of Sodom and Gomorrah'."[40]

The message conveyed in this text is clear: Righteous believers do not have to fear disease.

In Syria, Arab nationalist discourse dominated political life in the coming decades. They identified either the Ottomans or Great Britain and France as the enemies of the Arab nation and therefore tried to hold them responsible for the misery of the war years. This was especially important because hunger and misery remained important aspects of individual and collective memory. Blaming impersonal evildoers like bacteria or viruses was obviously useless and so the influenza has virtually disappeared from collective memory in Greater Syria.

40 Ibrāhīm b. ʿUbayd al-ʿAbd al-Muḥsin, *Tadhkirāt uli al-nuhā wa-l-ʿirfān bi-ayyām Allāh al-waḥīd wa-l-dayyān wa-dhikr ḥawādith al-zamān*, 4 vols., Burayda: al-Salmān 1406, vol. II, 243f.

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# Ottoman Psychiatry in the Great War

*Yücel Yanıkdağ (Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond)*

> Who are these? Why sit they here in twilight?
> Wherefore rock they, purgatorial shadows,
> Drooping tongues from jaws that slob their relish,
> Baring teeth that leer like skulls' wicked?
> - These are the men whose mind the Dead have ravished.
> Wilfred Owen, "Mental Cases"

This paper will explore the psychological and social ramifications of war and captivity on soldiers by examining how physicians understood psychological breakdowns during the First World War. As contemporary Ottoman studies on POWs [prisoners of war] are non-existent, war neurosis, or what was commonly known as "shell-shock," will be examined first. In addition, the soldiers' psychological maladies will be located within the medical discourse and practice of the time.

A related question is to what extent professional discourse and doctors' sense of national responsibility determined diagnostic practices and prejudices. In this context, the paper will argue that the Ottoman doctors came under German influence. Accordingly, the state of German psychiatric medicine will be looked at briefly.

## *Turkish Psychiatry and the German Connection*

The first medical school (*Mekteb-i Tıbbiye*) in the Ottoman Empire was established in 1827. Other schools were subsequently established; European teachers were brought in to teach various subjects. Some students were sent to Europe to study – initially to France, but more often to Germany at the end of the century.[1]

The study and practice of modern psychiatry in the Ottoman Empire started with Dr. Raşit Tahsin at the very end of the 19th century and continued with Dr. Mazhar Osman (Uzman) into republican times. Raşit Tahsin, Mazhar Osman and his students – Drs. İhsan Şükrü (Aksel), Fahrettin Kerim (Gökay) and others of the same generation – were heavily influenced by the famous German psychiatrist Emile Kraepelin. Most of them, including Mazhar Osman and Fahrettin Kerim, were students of the great German psychiatrist. The German psychiatric

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1 Kazım İsmail Gürkan, "14 Mart 1827, Türkiyede Hekimliğin (Batı)ya Dönüşü", *Tıp Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1 (1966), 1-33.

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influence in Turkey continued until it was supplanted by the Anglo-Saxon school in the 1940's.[2]

Meanwhile, in Germany heavy industrial development in the late 19th century led to an increased number of industrial and railroad accidents. German legislation gave financial compensation to people suffering from the mental effects of industrial and railway accidents.[3] With this act the Empire institutionalized Berlin neurologist Hermann Oppenheim's diagnosis of traumatic neurosis, a precursor to today's post-traumatic stress disorder (hereafter PTSD).

Oppenheim treated post-traumatic nervous symptoms as a distinct entity resulting from the direct – anatomical or psychic – effects of traumatic events. His many critics viewed such symptoms as hysterical reactions, emphasizing the processes that occurred within the accident victim's mind rather than the damaging impact of any external traumata. According to this line of reasoning, traumatic events do not make healthy people sick, rather sick people react pathologically to traumatic events.

Oppenheim's opponents soon blamed the new pension policies for creating an epidemic of "pension neurosis" within the working class. By attributing the condition to the patient's psyche rather than the direct effects of the accident, the hysteria diagnosis offered doctors an alternative to traumatic neurosis. Explaining these symptoms simply as hysterical reactions also made trauma patients ineligible for pensions from the state treasury, which was rapidly heading toward bankruptcy. Oppenheim's opponents viewed sufferers of psychic trauma as pension seekers and advocated cutting off compensation.[4]

Soon after the Great War started, German soldiers began breaking down in epidemic numbers, displaying functional disorders of sight, hearing, speech and gait as well as insomnia, tremors and uncontrollable emotionality, which were simply diagnosed as "war neurosis". The subdivision of war neurosis into specific neuroses provoked considerable confusion and conflict among the medical

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2 Günsel Koptagel-İlal, "Son 100 Yılda Türkiye'de Genel Çizgileriyle Psikiyatri ve Psikosomatik Hekimliğin Gelişimi", *Çerrahpaşa Tıp Fakültesi Dergisi* 12 (1981), 364; Yaman Örs, "Regional Report: Psychiatry and Philosophy in Turkey–Godotian Expectations?", *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology* 5 (1998), 266-67; N. Y. Oğuz, "Cumhuriyet dönemi Türk Psikiyatrisine evrimsel bir bakış", unpublished paper presented at the Fourth Turkish Congress of the History of Medicine, Istanbul, 18-20 September 1996; Özcan Köknel, *Kötü Ruhtan Ruh Sağlığına: Türkiye'de Psikiyatri Tarihi*, Istanbul: Alfa, 1998, 266-286; *F.* K. Gökay, "Raşit Tahsin Hocamız", *Tıp Dünyası* 9 (1936), 3069-76; Ihsan Schükry [Şükrü] and Fahreddin Kerim, "Die Geschichte der Psychiatrie in der Türkei", *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie und Psychisch-Gerichtliche Medizin* 84 (1926), 405-07.

3 Paul Lerner, "Psychiatry and Casualties of War in Germany, 1914-18", *Journal of Contemporary History* 35 (2000), 14.

4 Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Neurosis and German Mental Medicine, 1914-1921* (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1996), 103-19.

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community.[5] Having seen similar symptoms a decade or so before, Oppenheim diagnosed these sick soldiers with traumatic neurosis. Other skeptical doctors saw his ideas as dangerous, anti-patriotic and extremely costly to the state.[6]

These two views came into direct conflict at a 1916 congress of the German Psychiatric Association convened in Munich to discuss wartime nervous and mental illnesses. Drs. Max Nonne and Robert Gaupp were particularly relentless in attacking Oppenheim and his theories.[7] It was not that these doctors believed the sick soldiers were all dissemblers, though they believed there were many who were. Rather, they believed that the malady was a "legitimate" disorder separate from any war-related factors. Sufferers of traumatic neurosis or "pension neurosis" were not simply seen as frauds, but as genuinely ill; their malady was simply termed a "sickness of will" (*Willenskrankheit*).

The larger problem with placing the emphasis on "will" was that – since the doctors argued that recovery was a matter of willpower – the patient was considered to be at fault if he did not recover.[8] The anti-Oppenheim faction claimed success in treatment of these soldiers through suggestion, including electrotherapy, and crude forms of psychotherapy. They claimed their success as proof that these disorders were products of the mind and not the body. In addition, they argued that studies on prisoners of war and those with serious injuries showed that war neuroses seldom occurred among these groups.

Thus, only those in need of an excuse to get away from the war were likely to "flee into illness" through neurosis. A prisoner, Gaupp's conference argument continued, would not be served by becoming hysterical, for a hysterical condition would guarantee neither a trip home nor a pension. Gaupp attributed war neurosis to terrified, weak-willed individuals' flight into hysterical symptoms and argued that neuroses would actually work against the interest of prisoners because the prisoner must endure so that he can return home healthy.[9]

Ottoman doctor Mazhar Osman left the conference with the conclusion that war neuroses had little to do with war and that similar neurosis could not be found among prisoners of war. His German teachers and colleagues concluded

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5 Robert Weldon Whalen, *Bitter Wounds: German Victims of the Great War, 1914-1939*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984, 61-63.

6 Lerner, "Psychiatry and Casualties of War", 15-17.

7 Paul Lerner, "Rationalizing the Therapeutic Arsenal: German Neuropsychiatry in World War I", in: Manfred Berg and Geoffrey Cocks, eds., *Medicine and Modernity: Public Health and Medical Care in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 126-27; Mazhar Osman, "Harb Nevrozları" in *Şehir Emaneti Şişli Müessesinde Emraz-ı Akliye ve Asabiye Müsamereleri, 2 Mart 333-6 Nisan 333 İctimaları*, No. 4, Dersaadet: Hilal Matbası, 1333, 3-8.

8 Whalen, *Bitter Wounds*, 65; George Mosse, "Shell-shock as a Social Disease", *Journal of Contemporary History* 35 (2000), 103.

9 Lerner, *Rationalizing the Arsenal*, 122-127; Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 120-22.

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that these men suffered from hysteria and that those who were weak-willed, lazy, cowardly and terrified of war had wished it upon themselves.

When he returned home, Osman presented and published a summary of the neurosis debate. Although he mentioned Oppenheim's argument, it is clear that he believed that Gaupp and Nonne had discredited Oppenheim's theory.[10] He related Gaupp's argument that "war neurosis was very rare even among those prisoners who were exposed to extreme trauma."[11]

The German doctors' attitude towards war neurosis was clearly shaped by their assumed duty to save the state from bankruptcy by turning away the pension requests of the hysterical. Did the Ottoman doctors adopt the findings of the German doctors without questioning the cultural and economic context in which they were made? Were these attitudes and the medical knowledge shaped by the specific cultural and economic environment of First World War-era Germany transferred to Turkey?

## *War Neurosis in the Ottoman Empire*

Some historians point to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 as the first major war where numerous cases of war neurosis were detected among the Russian soldiers.[12] It is unlikely that the Ottoman soldiers – outnumbered, outgunned and surrounded – were somehow immune to the war neurosis to which their opponents succumbed. Yet the first substantial psychiatric studies of Turkish soldiers started to appear only in the late-20th century, as PTSD was detected amongst the soldiers who fought in eastern Anatolia against Kurdish guerillas.[13]

Thirty-nine soldiers were hospitalized at the mental asylum of Toptaşı in 1923-24. The small number pales in comparison to the large number of war neurotics in Germany and England.[14] Germany had 200,000 and England followed with

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10 Mazhar Osman, "Harb Nevrozları", *Şişli Müessesinde Emraz-ı Akliye ve Asabiye Müsamereleri, 2 Mart 333-6 Nisan 333 İctimaları*, No. 4, 3-8.

11 Mazhar Osman, "Harb Nevrozları", 7.

12 Catherine Merridale, "The Collective Mind: Trauma and Shell-shock in Twentieth-century Russia", *Journal of Contemporary History* 35 (2000), 40; Anthony Babington, *Shell Shock*, London: Leo Cooper 1997, 21.

13 See Mehmet Sungur and others, "Common Features of PTSD Cases Amongst a Group of Military Staff Referred From the Southeast Region of Turkey", *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly* 9 (1995), 279-84. In addition, Nadire Mater, *Mehmedin Kitabı: Güneydoğuda Savaşmış Askerler Anlatıyor*, Istanbul: Metis Yayınları 1998, provides the war stories of forty-two Turkish soldiers who fought in southeastern Turkey against the Kurds. Some of the stories clearly show evidence of PTSD.

14 During the years 1923-1924 there were only thirty-nine officers hospitalized at Toptaşı for various ailments. Twelve of these officers were listed as schizophrenic. By trade the officers constituted the second largest group of patients after day labourers (*rençberler*). It is likely that some of these *rençber*s were discharged enlisted men listed under their peacetime occupation. Ranked by ailment, schizophrenia came in second, showing a major increase

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80,000 war neurotics – four percent of all casualties.[15] If we assume that only three percent – less than the four percent average – of all casualties became war neurotics, we arrive at a possible number of 39,000 war neurotics in the Ottoman Empire.[16] Yet there is no mention of these men at all in secondary literature and only passing allusions in the primary literature that relates to the war and health.

Clearly the best evidence to show the incidence of neurosis related to war and captivity would be the statistics and reports prepared by the doctors or other officials who examined Ottoman soldiers referred from the fronts or returning from captivity.[17] In most cases, however, the prisoners did not undergo physical exams upon their repatriation, and a psychiatric exam would have been even more extraordinary.[18]

Much like the non-existent statistics on POWs or war neurotics in general, there is a clear dearth of medical studies concerning this period. Making use of the somewhat limited number of publications that appeared, however, shows how Ottoman doctors viewed mental disorders related to war and war captivity.

With some doctors reporting on German and others on French psychiatry, it is clear that Ottoman psychiatrists were aware of the psychological problems the war was causing soldiers of other nations.[19] The first Ottoman doctor to observe the connection between exploding shells and the soldiers' strange symptoms was Doctor Yahoub.[20]

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in comparison to previous years. *Istanbul Emraz-ı Akliye ve Asabiye Müessesi Senelik Mesaisi: 339-340 Senelerine Mahsus* , Istanbul: Kader Matbaası, 1925, pull-out table and 322-23.

15 Four percent seems to be a generally correct rate of war neurotics in relation to total war casualties. Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 8; and Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land, Combat and Identity in World War* I, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1979, 185. In England the actual number of cases of war neuroses diagnosed during the First World War was 80,000, but after the war 200,000 men were given pensions for war-related nervous disorders. Allan Young, "W. H. R. Rivers and the War Neurosis", *Journal of the History of Behavioral Sciences* 35 (1999), 359.

16 This number does not take into account the unusually high number of Ottomans who were afflicted with pellagra, which would clearly increase the number of neurotic patients.

17 The Ottoman psychiatrists of the time were based at Toptaşı Asylum and later the asylum in Bakırköy. Toptaşı Bimarhanesi was a very old and small building. In 1927 the hospital was moved to *Reşadiye Kışlası* (army barracks) left vacant after the Great War in Bakırköy, which then became the *Bakırköy Ruh ve Sinir Hastalıkları Hastahanesi* (Bakırköy Hospital of Mental and Nervous Diseases). For a brief history of Turkish psychiatry see Fahrettin K. Gökay, "Türk Tababeti Ruhiye Tarihi", *Tıp Dünyası* 48 (1975), 368-79.

18 For examples and further references regarding the Ottoman state's indifference to the plight of the repatriated POWs see Yücel Yanıkdağ, "Ottoman Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914-22", *Journal of Contemporary History* 34 (1999), 83 and note 57.

19 Mazhar Osman, "Harb Nevrozları"; Mustafa Hayrullah, "Harb-i Hazırın Emraz-ı 'Asabiye ve 'Akliyeye Öğretdikleri", *Emraz-ı 'Akliye ve 'Asabiye Müsamereleri,* Numero 7, Istanbul: Hilal Matbaası, 1333, 8-17.

20 His name is mentioned as "Dr. Yahop" in M. Hayrullah, *Asabiye Hastalıkları*: *Nuhâ, Asabımuhitiye, Sempatik Sistemi Hastalıkları, Nevrozlar,* Istanbul: Devlet Matbaası 1929, 2: 490. "Dr. Yahop" must be Yahoub Garabet as also mentioned by H. Hatemi, "Balkan Harbi Yaralıları Adlı Eser ve Dr. Yahoub", *Tıp Tarihi Araştırmaları* 4 (1990), 97-99.

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Noticing an artillery soldier whose arms hung loosely by his sides and whose head fell between his shoulders, Yahoub concluded that exploding shells had caused the soldier's condition. Having witnessed thousands of similar cases, other doctors joined in with similar symptoms – partial paralysis, blindness, arched back, and stuttering – they had noticed among frontline soldiers.[21] Even if Ottoman doctors did not record the individual cases of war neurosis they witnessed, the soldiers knew on a more personal level how it all started:

> "...the damage first starts psychologically. When the war of movement that distracts [the soldier] comes to a halt and the gloom of the trenches starts after months of inaction, a melancholy surrounds the soul at first. This melancholy starts with the person becoming introspective. When a private, a simple soldier, becomes introspective what he finds is his own material and brutal self."[22]

As there were not enough psychiatric specialists in the Ottoman army, the task of examining mentally unstable soldiers fell to general practitioners. In most cases the soldier or officer was not sent to a psychiatric hospital after being diagnosed by a doctor at the front. Unlike their German and British counterparts, the Ottoman doctors did not use common terms such as war neurosis or "shell shock" to refer to the conditions of these soldiers. Both the lack of a common terminology and the varying levels of training among the non-specialist doctors make it difficult to determine whether different terms might refer to the same condition.[23]

Whether doctors called it hysteria, neurasthenia, schizophrenia or any other name, it is relatively clear that there was not a standardized way to identify war-related neurosis.[24] It is quite possible that some affected soldiers were not easily identified and diagnosed. However, credible evidence shows that the sufferings of many soldiers were regarded as fraudulent, the soldiers themselves as "malingerers".

Writing decades after the Great War, a military doctor stated that during the war it was difficult to identify the pathological character of the reactions of schizophrenic soldiers. He admitted that during the Great War doctors and officers in the Ottoman and other armies made many mistakes in identifying schizophrenics. It was clear now, he continued, that modern warfare "could cause various mental disorders amongst those who were constitutionally weak....

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21 Nazım Şakir, "Travma Sar'ası", *Askeri Tıb Mecmuası* 56 (1927), 281; M. Hayrullah, *Asabiye Hastalıkları*, 489; Mazhar Osman, *Psychiatria*, 275-76.

22 Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam*, Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi 1997, 109.

23 They referred to their soldier-patients' illnesses with various names: *ateh-i nâbehenğâm and vakitsiz*, or *erken bunama* (in Ottoman usage all meant *dementia praecox*, later known as schizophrenia), *isteri* (hysteria), *nevrasteni* (neurasthenia), *travma sarası* (traumatic epilepsy), *da' al-raks* (tremors or shakes ).

24 In fact, doctors themselves usually stated that it was very difficult to diagnose some of the ailments as they resembled each other.

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Most of these unfortunate people faced war-time laws and were considered guilty ... [and] some were given the death penalty in the heat of battle."[25]

As psychiatric medicine became more advanced, more doctors conceded that thousands of people who may actually have been sick with some form of war neurosis were put in prison or executed for desertion and dereliction of duty because they were thought to be feigning illness.[26]

Convinced that large numbers of men were malingering, when every man was needed on the front, some Ottoman doctors tried various methods to filter out frauds. Some of these methods closely resembled the practices of their German colleagues. These methods included powerful electrotherapy (the Kaufmann method), isolation, restricted diet, injection of pain-causing drugs[27] and showers with pressurized cold water.[28] In Britain and the Ottoman Empire, overworked physicians viewed malingerers as a negative influence on troop morale. It seems British doctors went out of their way to prove that war neurotics were simply frauds.

Why were many Ottoman soldiers misdiagnosed while others were not diagnosed at all? A major part of the problem was that there were not enough qualified doctors. It is not known how many psychiatrists served in the Ottoman army during the war, but the total of all doctors, including recently conscripted medical students and civilian doctors, amounted to just over 2,400 – or less than one-tenth of the doctors in the German army (26,300).

These doctors also suffered high casualty rates; by the end of the war 12.5 percent of them had died and many others had become POWs.[29] Because the number of psychiatrists was so inadequate, in most cases it was the general practitioners who diagnosed the mental ailments of soldiers. It seems that only in some instances were the soldiers sent to the major military hospital in Istanbul, Haydarpaşa, where there were psychiatrists on duty. Few patients stayed more than a week or two at the military hospital in Istanbul. At the end of this "observation" period their fate was decided: asylum, front, or punishment.[30] The general short-

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25 Mevlut Doğantuğ, *Orduda Sinir ve Ruh Hastalıkları Serisinden: Erkenbunama (Şizofreni)*, Istanbul: Askeri Basımevi 1946, 39-40, and 1.

26 Nazım Şakir, "Orduda Temaruz (Simulation)", in: *Ordu Doktorunun Nöropsişiatri Kılavuzu*, 145; Fahrettin Kerim, *Yorgun Sinirler ve Marazi A klar Üzerine Ruhi Tedkikler*, 1928, 46-48.

27 Although Ottoman doctors do not go into any detail about this drug, it must have been ether injected just under the skin. This method, considered not dangerous but extremely painful, was also used by the European psychiatrists.

28 Nazım Şakir, *Orduda Temaruz* (Simulation), 147. Nazım Şakir says that hypnosis was not used at all for treatment.

29 A break-down of all the doctors by nationality and religion would look like this: Turkish, 1,701; Greek, 340; Armenian, 246; Jewish, 119; Catholic, 79. Dr. General Kemal Özbay, *Türk Asker Hekimliği Tarihi ve Asker Hastahaneleri*, Istanbul: Yörük Basımevi 1976, I: 304-07. On the number of German doctors see Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 36.

30 E. H. Jones, *The Road to En-Dor: Beeing an Account of how two prisoners of war at Yozgad in Turkey won their way to Freedom*, London: John Lane, 1920, 289.

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age of doctors and especially psychiatrists was an important shortcoming. Clearly, as some of the psychiatrists also related, it was often a life and death question for soldiers who suffered from legitimate disorders.

One psychiatrist complained that while many truly sick soldiers were treated like frauds, some other "shrewd and clever sons of Anatolia and Arabia – the true malingerers – were not always detected" by the non-specialist doctors and even medical committees who examined them.[31] Dr. Nazım Şakir enviously lamented that "the countries, especially the Great Powers, we were bold enough to fight, had established hospitals and medical sections close behind the lines for mental disorders... [and] treated conditions [such as] traumatic neurosis – of which *[some of us] had not even heard* [my italics] – in these hospitals."[32]

It is highly likely that Dr. Şakir is alluding to the non-specialist and civilian doctors conscripted into the army. General military preparedness aside, lacking trained medical personnel the Ottoman army was not prepared to deal with the medical consequences of modern warfare. Consequently, many war neurotics were not diagnosed or were misdiagnosed as frauds.

Cases of misdiagnosis must have been commonly known among the psychiatrists, for some doctors questioned the diagnosis made by specialists and non-specialists alike. Citing the case of an officer, Zihni Efendi, who had "muscle fatigue, headaches, loss of appetite, changed gait and personality," Dr. Şükrü Hazım, complained that some Ottoman doctors were inclined either to diagnose any mental illness they could not recognize as neurasthenia, or alternatively to deem neurasthenia a minor disorder.

When Dr. Şükrü examined the officer, he re-diagnosed him with the more serious schizophrenia, which, the doctor implies, also changed his pension salary upwards.[33] He pleaded with other doctors not to take neurasthenia so lightly as to use it as an all-purpose diagnosis.[34] Even the most distinguished psychiatrists declared as late as the 1930s that "hysteria, neurasthenia, traumatic neurasthenia, epilepsy, obsession are maladies that closely resemble each other."[35] The Ottoman doctors were not alone in their complaints of diagnostic confusion regarding war-related psychoneurosis. German and British psychiatrists were having diagnostic difficulties as well.[36]

In 1930, Mazhar Osman published the case of a Great War veteran who possibly fits into this category. This patient saw action in Yemen, Gallipoli and in the East against the Russians, where he was wounded. The soldier stated that he

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31 Nazım Şakir, *Emraz-ı 'Asabiye ve 'Akliyede Teşhis*, 182.
32 *Ibid.*
33 Şükrü Hazım, "Nevrasteni ve 'Ateh-i Nâbehenğâm", *Emraz-ı 'Akliye ve 'Asabiye Müsamereleri*, No. 9, Istanbul: Hilal Matbaası 1334, 29-30.
34 Şükrü Hazım, *Nevrasteni ve 'Ateh-i Nâbehenğâm*, 30-31.
35 Mazhar Osman [Uzman], *Tababeti Ruhiye*, 23.
36 Martin Stone, *Shellshock and the Psychologists*, 249-51; and Allan Young, *W. H. R. Rivers*, 367.

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"must have gone insane at that moment," and shot himself in the foot. Some years later, the same man murdered his wife and mutilated her body. Although we do not know anything else about the patient's life between his "going insane" and killing his wife some years later,[37] it is highly possible that he suffered from a mental ailment that was not diagnosed when he was treated for his wound. It is also likely that because he shot himself in the foot, he was viewed as someone who deliberately shot himself to get out of returning to the front, and thus was not taken seriously.[38]

## *Mental Breakdown in Captivity*

If war neurosis was diagnosed and misdiagnosed in various ways by the specialists and non-specialists, how did the doctors view the repatriated POWs? As mentioned, publications on the POWs are nonexistent; therefore, most information comes from works on general psychiatry, where references to war captives are minimal. As there were about 200-250,000 Ottoman POWs in the Great War, this lack of medical literature about them seems particularly troubling. In the absence of medical case studies of repatriated POWs, it is worthwhile to look for evidence of the prevalence of psychological disturbance among the prisoners as reflected in captivity narratives. For the sake of brevity, this will be kept to a minimum.

In order to correctly isolate instances of mental ailments, the medical literature on what was then known as "barbed wire disease" must be briefly reviewed. It is possible that people of different cultures show different symptoms of trauma in captivity, but the lack of Turkish literature on this topic leaves no alternative but to consider works of western medicine. Still, this review should be adequate to compile a general list of symptoms that normally point to the existence of barbed wire disease and other anxiety and depressive disorders in prisoners of war.

Very few prisoners who were in the prison camps for over six months escaped barbed wire disease. According to a study published right after the Great War, the disorder showed itself in various ways and to varying degrees – from easy excitability to introspective apathy. It was characterized by irritability, restlessness, memory lapses, lack of concentration, moodiness, general depression and nightmares. Contemporary literature concluded that the effects of barbed wire disease were exacerbated by 1) lack of privacy; 2) uncertainty about the duration of captivity; and 3) irregular or non-communication with home.[39]

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37 Mazhar Osman, "Mecnunlar Arasında Mücrim Tipleri, 5", *İstanbul Seririyatı* 12 (1930), 3687-89.

38 For a sample simulation diagnosis of a man who had just been called up to serve in the military, see Mazhar Osman, *Harbde Görülen Vakayiden*, 5-6.

39 Adolf L. Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease: A Psychological Study of the Prisoners of War*, London 1919, 3 and 53.

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Arguably, most of these exacerbating factors particularly applied to Ottoman POWs. A report by the Danish vice-consul in Irkutsk, filed with the American Legation in Russia, for example, stated that there was "an abnormally high percentage of mental disturbances ... During four and a half years of imprisonment, the greater part of the prisoners have aged from fifteen to twenty years ... The Turkish und [sic] Hungarian peasants have suffered especially in this regard."[40]

The symptoms of PTSD as listed above correlate with evidence of psychological disorders found among the Ottoman POWs in various camps as reflected mostly in the captivity narratives. One prisoner in Russia observed that in his camp "anger and nervousness among the prisoners were like a contagious disease. Everyone was a powder keg to the point that a simple word a fellow prisoner of war might say, even a greeting, was enough to greatly infuriate another prisoner to the point of physical response." The author, a lieutenant, clubbed his major with a hard object for jokingly refusing to return a book he had borrowed.[41] Yet another POW in Russia observed of one of his comrades:

> "the behaviour of one ... changed markedly. He took off his clothes and threw them, with all his money, into the toilet .... He had become a different person. ... Sometimes he would hide in the corner of a large room, close his eyes, and shout, "I closed my eyes! You can't see me! ..." At night, we couldn't sleep because of his screaming ... Finally, it was decided to send him to the Moscow asylum ... [At the quay where a crowd had gathered] he ... began to shout very loudly, '*Enver Paşa doloy*' (To hell with Enver Paşa)!' ... [He] shouted, "I am a Muslim. I descended from the skies. Henceforth, you shall make the sign of the cross to me and not to Jesus."[42]

In one of the Egyptian camps Lieutenant Cemil Zeki noticed that "this life of captivity affected us deeply .... A few friends went insane and committed suicide .... Poor young Turks continued to be washed out in this fashion in the deserts."[43]

The captivity narratives indeed contain evidence of prisoners' suffering from mental problems, but what did the physicians make of these disorders? Unfortunately, the statements and observations of the doctors on the POWs are rather distant and overly general.

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40 "General Condition of Health Among the Hungarian and Austrian Prisoners in Siberia", enclosure in 763.72114/5081, October 10, 1919, 1. For somewhat similar statements about the POWs in Malta and Italy (interned since the war in Libya) see "German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Subjects Interned in Malta", enclosure in 763.72114/1803, 13 July 1916, 2; and "Note Verbale [translation] by the Sublime Porte", in 763.72114/2687, 27 March 1917, 1.

41 Ahmet Göze, *Rusya'da Üç Esaret Yılı*, 2nd printing, Istanbul: Boğaziçi n.d., 73.

42 Mehmet Arif Ölçen, *Vetluga Memoir: A Turkish Prisoner of War in Russia, 1916-1918*, Gainsville: University of California Press, 1993, 102-104. The prisoner then continued with rather obscene comments.

43 Cemil Zeki (Yoldaş), *Kendi Kaleminden Tëğmen Cemil Zeki (Yoldaş): Anılar-Mektuplar*, Istanbul: Arba 1994, 26.

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In these publications we regularly encounter vague statements like "... we saw incidents of captivity psychoses at Toptaşı after the [Great] War."[44] In an earlier publication, in which he promises to take up the subject of POWs on another occasion – a promise never fulfilled, to my knowledge – Fahrettin Kerim's remarks remained equally minimal and passive: "Most of our officers and men returning from Egyptian camps were disabled with this kind of insanity [schizophrenia]. The restricted life of captivity can leave marks even on the strongest of nerves."[45] Again, we encounter the implication that some people were more prone to become ill than others. Predisposition, according to the physicians, was a factor among the POWs as much as among the non-POW war neurotics.

Decades after the Great War Mazhar Osman states, almost as an afterthought, "It has come to our attention [that] ... many of our soldiers and officers who were able to come back alive from Egypt, India, and Siberia had schizophrenia [and] *dispersed among their families* [my italics] like the living dead ... The number of [these schizophrenics] was so high as to boggle the mind."[46]

If there were so many, one might wonder why there are no statistics or studies on these prisoners. Clearly, one clue lies in Mazhar Osman's phrase "dispersed among their families like the living dead." It seems that most of the prisoners were not diagnosed or treated before they "dispersed." While there may have been some medical negligence here, it is important to note that the city to which the POWs returned was under Allied occupation. Moreover, after the allied occupation of Istanbul, the city's largest hospitals were taken over by the French and British forces to treat and house their own men.[47]

Among the published case histories of neurotic patients, it is very rare to find one about a prisoner. In one of these rare cases, the ministry of justice referred a man named Serkis Kapancıyan, an Ottoman Armenian, to the mental asylum in 1922. Serkis claimed that during the war he fought on the Palestinian front, where he was captured by the British. After two years in captivity, he escaped. After his return, during Allied occupation, Serkis complained of intestinal problems, and he went to Yedi Kule Armenian hospital, where a doctor operated on him against his wishes. This operation, according to Serkis, left him crippled for

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44 F. Kerim Gökay, "Harpte Nöro-psişiyetri", *Tıp Dünyası* 14 (1941), 4770, reprinted as "Harpte Nöro-Psişiyatri", *Dirim* 16 (1941), 1-3.

45 "*Mısır kamplarından dönen zabitan ve askerlerimizin ekserisini bu nev cinnetle malül gördük. Esaretin kamplı mahdut hayatı en sağlam sinirler üzerinde bile mes'um tesirler bırakır.*" Fahrettin Kerim, *Yorgun Sinirler ve Marazi Aşklar Üzerine Ruhi Tedkikler*, 1928, 46-47.

46 "*Mısırdan, Hindistandan, Sibiryadan sağ gelebilen askerlerimizin ve zabitlerimizin bir çoğu erken bunama ile canlı ölü halinde ailelerinin arasına karışmışlardır.*" Mazhar Osman Uzman, *Psychiatria*, 4th printing, Istanbul: Kader Basımevi 1947, 169. In some cases the number of those ill is stated as "*akıllara dehşet verecek kadar çoktu.*" See p. 303.

47 Kemal Özbay, *Türk Asker Hekimliği Tarihi ve Asker Hastahaneleri*, Istanbul 1981, III (A-Z), 362-63.

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some time. He decided to take his own life, but unable to go through with it, he killed the doctor who had operated on him.[48]

Admitted to a mental asylum, Serkis behaved violently. He attempted to kill a doctor and one of the orderlies with a home-made knife and attempted suicide a few times. Serkis was diagnosed as a degenerate and psychopath, yet no connection was made at all to his captivity.[49] It is possible that Serkis did not suffer from a disorder related to captivity, but no adequate connection was made to any of the factors in this man's otherwise normal pre-war life as a cause of his malady. His complaints of intestinal disorders may possibly have related to recurring bouts of pellagra he suffered while in British captivity in Egypt. Pellagra, which had struck more than 10,000 Ottomans in Egypt, results in intestinal problems, dementia, and eventually death; this would also shed light on his unstable mental condition.

## *War Neurotics and the Doctors*

In their self-appointed role as guardians of the mental health of the Turkish nation and the military,[50] many doctors passed judgment, if indirectly, on those who had taken part in the Great War. In their accounts one can see evidence of blame and denial, as well as the doctors' constructions of manhood and health.

As late as 1941, some doctors explained that most of the psychoneuroses caused by war were, in fact, due to fear and nervousness. "[T]here is nothing at first, but as a result of [the soldier's] imagination sometime after [the explosions] one may see dumbness and paralysis."[51] According to this psychiatrist, if the soldier had been braver, less nervous and better able to control his imagination, he would not have been affected by the exploding shells.

Another Turkish psychiatrist declared in 1947 that some of the thousands of soldiers who developed symptoms of hysteria because of a simple abrasion or having fallen on a limb could be cured with the simple question, "Are you not ashamed?"[52] This moralistic approach to curing war neurosis – appealing to the individual soldier's sense of honour – was also practiced among shell-shocked men by European doctors.[53]

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48 For another example of a former POW who murdered someone see Şevket Aydemir's account of Hüseyin Çavuş, who murdered his wife in a most gruesome fashion (*akıl almaz bir cinayet*). Şevket S. Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam*, Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi 1997, 398-99.

49 Mazhar Osman, "Mecnunlar Arasında Mücrim Tipleri", *İstanbul Seririyat2* 12 (1931), 3776-79.

50 See Mazhar Osman Uzman, *Tababeti Ruhiye*, Istanbul: Kader 1941, 7-9, for statements regarding this assertion.

51 Fahreddin Kerim Gökay, "Harb ve Sinir", *Tıb Dünyası* 14 (1941), 4611.

52 Mazhar Osman, *Psychiatria*, 225-26.

53 Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land*, 169.

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One doctor wrote: "Hysteria is a psychosis for people given to imagination rather than people who think logically. [And] this is the reason why it is more common among women."[54] However, despite this statement, in general, Ottoman doctors did not associate hysteria with femininity. Here again is a similarity with Germany, where war neurotics were portrayed as weak-willed, opportunistic and parasitic, but rarely as effeminate.[55]

In England, however, shell shock was described as "the product of womanish, homosexual, or childish impulses in men."[56] How is the general absence of references to effeminacy among Ottoman victims of hysteria explained?

The answer must be related, at least partially, to the Ottoman doctors studying in Germany, where hysteria relating to industrial accidents had reduced its association with effeminacy. In addition, a few Ottoman doctors were still trained in France, where Jean-Martin Charcot's and Babinsky's work on male hysterics had blurred the association between hysteria and women. Accordingly, while having no experience with men who became hysterical as a result of industrial or train accidents, as in industrialized states, the Ottoman physicians generally overlooked hysteria's feminine connotations.

Associations were made with other factors, however. One neurologist claimed that in order for a man to become a hysteric, he must "above all possess an inherited psychologically degenerative background."[57] This idea of an inherited predisposition was commonly held among Ottoman physicians who studied in both Germany and France.

Charcot's concept of "diathèse" advanced the idea of individuals being constitutionally predisposed to traumatic experience.[58] Consequently, Ottoman doctors were also inclined to connect mental ailments with physical symptoms and argue that certain traits made some more vulnerable to psychological diseases brought on by war.[59] Like many of their European colleagues, they believed that the "weak and degenerate" were more likely to break down under the pressure of war.

Who were these "degenerates" predisposed to psychoneuroses? Using bodily signs to establish diagnosis of the 70,000 patients seen at the Erzurum hospital during the early part of the Great War, 2,000 men from the rank and file – since no degenerate could be in a position to become an officer – were identified as degenerate.

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54 Rasim Adasal, "Sinir Ihtilâğları ve Bayılmaları", in: *Ordu Doktorunun Nöropsişiatri Kılavuzu*, Istanbul: Askeri Basımevi 1946, 73.

55 Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 412.

56 Elaine Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender", in: *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, University of California Press 1993, 323, quoted in Lerner.

57 M. Hayrullah, *Asabiye Hastalıkları*, 480.

58 Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 104.

59 Mazhar Osman Uzman, *Tababeti Ruhiye*, 14-15. An American psychologist, Norman Fenton, in the mid-1920s observed that it was traditional among the physicians to make this connection. George Mosse, *Shell-shock as a Social Disease*, 105-06.

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Symptoms of degeneracy included misshapen nose, skull, mouth, face, legs and arms, and disproportional genital organs, muscles, and extremities. Among these 2,000 men, 1,320 were diagnosed as having deficient intelligence, attention and memory.[60] In almost all cases degeneracy was seen as hereditary. Ottoman doctors paid close attention to the family history of their soldier-patients – although not as militantly as German (and especially British) physicians – who assembled family pedigrees that purported to show that soldiers who broke down in war did so because of their tainted heredity.[61] As Eric Leed also argues, reading the symptoms of war neurosis into hereditary degeneracy had two consequences: it marked the neurotic soldiers with a sign of moral inferiority, and it removed the symptom from the context of the war.[62]

Convinced that psychiatry was the foundation of racial hygiene – a trend of growing popularity across the world – and moreover that psychiatrists had a very important role to play not only in society but in the screening of military recruits, one doctor related that: "When many young men were running to the nation's borders to fight, there were those who shamelessly tried to get out of service and deny themselves the honour of carrying weapons."

At the same time he argued that every physically fit person could not be a soldier. "A soldier," he continued, "must be as fit mentally as he is physically ... How could one assign a duty to a simple soldier who is more stupid [brainless] than the horse he feeds ... A psychologically disabled man does not constitute a whole man under our law."[63] Does this mean that a war or captivity neurotic was an incomplete man as well?

In the post-war years, occasional studies appeared along the lines of German racial hygienic theory that pointed out the fallacy of Darwin's theory. Mirroring the ideas that eventually lead to the sterilization or euthanasia of people deemed unfit across the world,[64] this argument claimed that it was not the fittest who had survived the Great War, but rather, the "unfit" who had survived. The brave and fit soldiers, according to the argument, sacrificed themselves in defence of

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60 Nazım Şakir, "Erzurumda Santral Sertababetine Vurud Eden (70,000) hastada Muayene-i Maddiyye-i Ruhiye Yapılmış (2,000) Neferin Dejenere Derece ve Yüzdeki Nisbetleri", in: *Şişli Müessesinde Emraz-ı Akliye ve Asabiye Müsamereleri*, No. 2, Dersaadet: Matbaa-i Zeliç Biraderler 1332, n.p.

61 Martin Stone, *Shellshock and the Psychologists*, 252.

62 Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land*, 171-72.

63 "*Her kolu bacağı sağlam olan askerlik edemez, asker vucudu kadar başçada sağlam olmalı. Yem verdiği beygirden beyinsiz bir nefere nasıl iş verilir.*" Mazhar Osman, "Ruh Tıbbının içtimaiyatta Rolü", *İstanbul Seririyatı* 19 (1937), 205; Mazhar Osman Uzman, *Tababeti Ruhiye*, Istanbul: Kader Basımevi 1941, I: 9.

64 For similar policies in England and the Unites States see Randall Hansen, "Eugenic Ideas, Political Interest, and Policy Variance: Immigration and Sterilization Policy", *World Politics* 53 (2001), 237-63.

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the nation, whereas those who were "weak, cowardly, lazy, and unfit" became ill or pretended to be ill to save themselves.[65]

The correlation between this Turkish doctor's views and those of some German physicians is striking.[66] This theory created still another problem for the nation. The argument followed that "the deaths of so many fit and noble men in battle creates a shortage of capable men and as a result of this shortage many of the weak men acquire the opportunity to easily marry eligible woman and produce children."[67] The implication is clear; these weak men should not marry and produce similarly degenerate offspring.[68]

As was the case in other belligerent countries, post-war Ottoman-Turkish doctors saw themselves as the leaders of a new era of health, as the mental hygiene movement became more popular around the world. As such, they assumed the role of guardians of Turkey's mental health and came to play a much greater and more visible role in the everyday life of the nation.

They established and became leading members of associations like the Turkish Society for Mental Hygiene and Green Crescent – Temperance Society. Articles, especially in *Sıhhi Sahifeler,* ranged from how one could become a better citizen, to mental and general hygiene. Along with other psychiatrists and neurologists, they spoke out against alcohol and drug abuse, which they thought led to insanity and degeneracy. One of them, Fahrettin Kerim, even became the mayor, subsequently governor, of Istanbul.

Ottoman doctors *were not* any less sympathetic than German and British doctors. Moreover, the economic concerns of Ottoman doctors could not have been an important factor, as the empire did not have as developed and encompassing a pension system as Germany. However, the doctors' control over their patients was real. While some soldier-patients were treated harshly, there is no documented backlash from former patients or lay people regarding the doctors' treatment of the war neurotics and POWs. Similarly, no counter-narrative of their illness and treatment developed among the war neurotics and the POWs.

## *Conclusion*

There were many war neurotics in the Ottoman Empire, and Ottoman physicians were clearly influenced by their German teachers. Ottoman physicians – especially the non-specialists – were rather distrustful of the common soldier claiming to be affected by modern war. Usually the doctors saw instead a weak

65 Mahmut Şemsi, *Harbin İstifai Tesirleri ve Zabitlerimizin, Neslimizin Islahındaki Ehemmiyetleri,* Istanbul: Askeri Matbaa 1933, 24-26.
66 Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 46-47.
67 Mahmut Şemsi, *Harbin İstifai Tesirleri*, 23.
68 *Ibid.*, 11.

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person attempting to escape his duties as a man. They believed that only the constitutionally weak and degenerate, and those who were given to imagination, suffered from ailments related to war.

Consequently, many neurotic soldiers were treated as frauds. In the eyes of the doctors, real and normal men were not nervous, did not give in to their imagination, controlled their passions and bodily movements, and had a well-built and proportioned body. In many ways, the Ottoman psychiatrists were children of their time. Nearly all of their ideas and prejudices were shared by European doctors; in fact, they had learned many of them from their European teachers and colleagues.

German doctors had decided that neurosis was not a common malady among prisoners of war – consequently, the unbalanced mental condition of thousands of Turkish POWs was largely ignored. In addition to those who may have suffered from the mental consequences of captivity without organic causes, the more than 10,000 pellagrous soldiers with neurotic symptoms coming back from the Egyptian camps must also be considered. At that time Turkey had neither the hospitals nor the expertise to deal with these mentally ill and dying people.

From the Ottoman officer – locked up in Austrian Garrison Hospital Number 1 in Vienna, who screamed all night – to the former prisoner in Burma – who brutally killed his wife after his return[69] – the prisoners of war and war neurotics were not considered legitimate victims of war. Consequently, their horrific experiences did not become emblematic of the shocking ordeal that was the Great War.

[69] The officer in question must have been fighting on the Galician front as part of an Ottoman unit sent there by Enver Pasha. K. R. Eissler, *Freud as an Expert Witness: The Discussions of War Neuroses between Freud and Wagner-Jauregg*, Madison: International Universities Press 1986, 197; and Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam*, 147.

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# Panel II:
# Symbolic Processing of the First World War

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# A:
# Images, Histories, and Narratives of the War as Reflected in War Monuments, Historiography, Autobiographies and Literature

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# War Memorials and Cemeteries in Turkey[1]

*Klaus Kreiser (University of Bamberg)*

Between September 1911 and September 1922 Ottoman soldiers fought in five wars. Those eleven years contained only 22 months of peace altogether. The diminution of the Ottoman population by killing, murder, starvation, disease, and migration during this period was tremendous.[2] Only a small percentage of the war casualties are known by name and origin. The greatest tribute was paid by the participants in the Great War. Perhaps four fifths of the assumed 150 000 victims known by name, rank, origin, and unit lost their lives between 1914 and 1918. This estimated number includes only soldiers who were drafted at recruiting offices on the territory of the future Republic of Turkey. The battle of Gallipoli/Çanakkale took a toll of 57 263 dead and about 211 000 wounded, prisoners and missing persons.[3] A survey of the 740 officers who had graduated from the war academy in 1319 M./1903 lists 129 persons killed in action (*şehîdler*) during the last Ottoman wars. This book, a typical genre of Turkish memorial literature, was dedicated to the "blessed souls of our glorious martyrs" by the compiler, a retired colonel in 1943.[4] A considerably smaller number of the war victims is individualised by memorials bearing inscriptions.[5]

It does not appear very reasonable to isolate the Turk's World War experience from the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1922). Nevertheless, this does not mean that these wars were inseparable events for the survivors. But I shall argue that the "basic components" of the specific Turkish cult of the dead soldiers was shaped during this close succession of wars between 1912 and 1925. I do not reduce this "Grundbestand", in the sense of

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1 The following materials are part of a documentation on public statuary, monuments and memorials in the Islamic World. For preliminary results compare Klaus Kreiser, "Public Monuments in Turkey and Egypt, 1840-1916", *Muqarnas. An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* 14 (1997), 103-117; "Public Monuments in Kemalist and Post-Kemalist-Turkey", *Journal of Turkish Studies* 26/II (2002), 43-60. Special thanks for biographical support goes to Bülent Arı (Ankara), Petra de Bruijn (Leiden), Gottfried Hagen (Ann Arbor), Hakan Karateke (Berlin, Wien, Gazimagosa), Wolf-Dieter Lemke (Beirut), Sami Önal (Istanbul-Kadıköy), Günsel Renda (Ankara), Akşin Somel (Ankara), Dr. Dz. Kur. Kd. Albay Celalettin Yavuz, Dean of the Deniz Harp Okulu at Tuzla-Pendik. Colin Heywood (London) and Rhoades Murphey (Birmingham) read a draft version of this paper.

2 Justin McCarthy: *Muslims and Minorities*, New York 1983.

3 *Şehitlerimiz. Osmanlı-Rus, Osmanlı-Yunan, Trablusgarp, Balkan, Birinci Dünya, İstiklâl, Kore, Kıbrıs, İç Güvenlik*, Ankara 1998, 5 vols. (T. C. Milli Savunma Bakanlığı). For the numbers on Çanakkale see vol. 1, 44.

4 Ali Şefik Öngün, *1319 (1903) de Harbiyeden çıkan subaylar için kırk yıllık Hatıra*, Ankara 1943.

5 *Şehitliklerimiz*, Ankara 1971 (M.S.B. İnşaat ve Emlâk İskân Daire Başkanlığı).

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Reinhart Koselleck,[6] to iconographic forms. Verbal genres such as poems and songs have to be considered equally for an understanding of the national and religious semantics.[7] During these years we witness an obvious shift from pious remembrance to the erection of visible monuments and memorials,[8] from a religiously inspired cult of martyrdom to a more secular form of memorialization, from anonymity to individuality.

For an adequate comprehension of the Turkish discussion on war memorials, the development before 1914 must not be neglected. It is in fact surprising that there are no large-scale monuments for the hundred thousands who perished in the Russian-Turkish war of 1293/1877-1878. The Freedom Column (*Abide-i Hürriyet*) erected in Istanbul (Ill. 1) as a commemoration for the victims of the "counterrevolution" of 1909 and the memorials for the pioneers of Ottoman aviation constitute an exception. Still it is rewarding to compare the *renaissance de l'orgueil français* with the Ottoman hyper-nationalism during the Balkan wars.

## *Martyrs of the air*

Both phenomena have a close affinity to military aviation. A French author, Etienne Rey, wrote in 1912:

> "Il fallait aux Français, d'abord l'essor de l'aviation, ensuite les menaces de l'Allemagne (...), elles sont devenues les deux pivots de notre *foi patriotique*. (...) Il faut y ajouter, comme valeur morale incomparable, le lourd tribut payé à la mort par l'invention nouvelle (de l'aviation). Les découvertes ne s'ennoblissent que du sacrifice des vies humaines et seules, l'auréole de la mort leur confère tout leur éclat. Le sang versé (...) pour assurer à leur pays la suprématie de l'air a achevé de rendre sacrée la cause de l'aviation."[9]

In February 1914 the Ottoman aviators, Staff-Captain Fethî and Lieutenant Sâdık died as "aviation martyrs" not far from lake Tiberias after the engine of their aircraft broke down. Their bodies were brought to Damascus, where they were buried next to Saladin's tomb.[10] Fethî and Sâdık had left Beirut "after three

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6 Rainer Koselleck, *Zur politischen Ikonologie des gewaltsamen Todes. Ein deutsch-französischer Vergleich*, Basel 1998, 7: "Die ikonographischen Gemeinsamkeiten sind größer, als die nationalen Besonderheiten zu erkennen geben können."; Rainer Koselleck and Michael Jeismann, eds., *Der politische Totenkult. Kriegerdenkmäler in der Moderne*, München 1994, 9.

7 See for example Sadri Karakoyunlu, ed., *Türk Askeri için Savaş Şiirlerinden Seçmeler (1914-1918)*, Ankara 1987.

8 A discussion of the difference between "monument" and "memorial" is not intended in this paper. An American art historian put it simply and convincing: "We erect monuments so that we shall always remember, and build memorials so that we shall never forget. (Arthur C. Danto: "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial", in: *The State of the Art*, New York 1987, 112.)

9 Raoul Girardet, *Le nationalisme français. Anthologie 1871-1914*, Paris 1983, 230.

10 Hülya Yarar, Cengiz Eroğlu and Musa Türker, eds., *Yurtdışı Şehitlikler*, Ankara 1999, 84.

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days of official receptions, galas and flying exhibitions".[11] They were honoured by the so-called Tayyâre Şehîdleri Abidesi, built in the conventional broken column form (Ill. 2). The foundation stone for this was laid in 2 April 1914 in front of a district city hall in Istanbul.[12]

## *Stones of Revenge*

For the modern observer the so called *intikâm taşları* – literally "stones of revenge" – offer an interesting and bewildering sight. During and after the Balkan wars, they combined both the function of a war memorial and a vow of vengeance, in order to keep open the injury of the loss of Rumeli (1913). One is reminded of the well known motif of the French Republic: *la blessure toujours ouverte,* referring to the loss of Alsace-Lorraine.

One example stands close to the present Bulgarian-Turkish frontier: It is an obelisk inscribed with the word "revenge" and the name of a victim of Bulgarian atrocities in 1913 (Ill. 3). The monument was solemnly inaugurated in the presence of many notables. It was destroyed after the change of the demarcation line between Bulgaria and Turkey (1914) but rebuilt in 1965 (!).[13] Revenge was the main motive for the regiment *müftü* İzzet to write his "Sermons on the Holy War and Religion for the (monotheistic) Muslims".[14]

## *Abdülhakk Hâmid: "Zafer" – The Sevastopol poem*

The construction of the first Ottoman war memorial began after 1857, but for trivial reasons it was not to be finished before 1933. It is located in the Black Sea harbour town of Sinop. The motive for this incomplete memorial was the attack of the Russian Navy which destroyed almost entirely the Ottoman Black Sea fleet in 1853.[15] Nearly half of the town was burnt down. This prelude to the Crimean War caused a large number of casualties, including hundreds of civilians, and prompted an outcry in West European public opinion.

Unlike the almost complete neglect of commemorative war monuments by the Ottomans during the 19th century, the Russians and the Western allies of Turkey spared no effort to immortalize the glory of their arms between 1854 and 1856 – not only on the Crimean Peninsula but also in Istanbul and in many places in their capitals.

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11 Fouad Debbas, *Beirut. Our memory. A guided tour illustrated with picture postcards*, 2nd. rev. ed., Barcelona 1994, 227.

12 Kreiser, "Public Monuments".

13 Oral Onur and Latif Bağman, *Edirne anıtları*, Istanbul ca. 1987, 36-41.

14 İzzet, *Mevâ'izü 'l-cihâd ve'dîn li'l-'asâkiri 'l-müvahhidîn,* Istanbul 1331/1913.

15 *Sinop İl Yıllığı 1967*, Sinop 1967, 145-146.

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A contemporary English guide book described the British Cemetery in Üsküdar (Skutari on the Asian shore of the Bosporus) with the following words: "Here, amid the more costly tombs of officers, may be seen the simple grass-covered mounds, beneath which rest in peace 8 000 British soldiers, who died in service of their Queen and country." Murray's *Hand-Book for Travellers* continues:

> "In striking contrast to the oriental burial-places, the British cemetery is admirably kept (...) The enclosure is planted with trees and shrubs, and there is a large granite *obelisk*, supported by four angels, by Baron Marochetti, which is seen from a long distance."[16] (Ill. 4)

The "striking contrast" between European and Oriental cemeteries was also sensed by an Ottoman observer who visited the Crimean battlefields in 1881: Abdülhakk Hâmid (1852-1937), *şâ'ir-i a'zam* ("poet laureate") and the most representative author of the late Tanzimat period. In Sevastopol he mentions the decorated graves (*müzeyyen mezarlar*) of the French and British, whereas "to the Muslim deceased splendour and embellishment pours from the sky".[17]

> *Es-selâm ey ketîbe-i 'ulyâ...*
> *- Vatan u runda cân veren ihyâ –*
> *Ey şu vâdide hâk olan asker!...*
>
> Salutation, oh noble army
> For the sake of the Fatherland, you gave your life – reviving the fatherland
> Oh soldiers, who were transformed into dust in this valley!

In the following stanzas the word *vatan* ("native place or country, motherland, fatherland") is mentioned another three times.[18] The designations for the dead heroes are the words *er* ("soldier of the lowest ranks") and *asker* ("soldier") apart from the – at least in Ottoman usage – exquisite *ketîbe*. The term "hero-martyr" occurs only once in the plural *şühedâ*. The poet pays explicitly tribute to the sacrifice of the anonymous soldiers. His depiction of ordinary combatants seems rather modern. At the beginning of the 20th century, this was a comparatively new attitude in English and continental war memorials.

At the end of his poem, Abdülhakk Hâmid evokes the figure of "the *vatan* trembling like a mother over the grave of her children".[19] Despite the "modern"

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16 *Handbook for Travellers in Constantinople, Br sa, and the Troad*, London 1893, 110. – The artist is the well-known Italian sculptor Carlo Marochetti (1805-1867).

17 Cited by Süleymân Nazîf, *Âbide-i Şühedâ*, Istanbul 1343/1925, 5-6. The poem was published under the title *Zafer* in Abdülhakk Hâmid, *İlhâm-ı Vatan*, Istanbul 1334/1918, a collection edited by Süleymân Nazîf. – A plain memorial ereceted in 1860 for 260 Turks still exists in Balakvala between Sevastopol and Yalta (see *Şehitliklerimiz*, Ankara 1971, 102).

18 A correct French rendering of *vatan*-would be the female *la Patrie.*

19 Compare a work of the French artist Paul Cabets (1815-1876) called "Eighteen Hundred Seventy One/M D CCC L XXI" which was the most moving piece of sculpture in the *Salon* of 1872. "It shows a young woman personifying France in an attitude of profound grief. The pose itself has a long tradition reaching back to ancient Rome..., but Cabet's deeply felt rendering of it embodies the trauma shared by the entire nation" (Horst

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personification of the state as a mourning mother, the author emphasises the Muslim funeral tradition. He contrasts the Muslim graves, which receive their decoration from heaven, with the adornment of English and French burial-places; in the Christian cemeteries, an "idol" (*peyker*: "something that is worshipped as a god"), in form of an obelisk, towers above the graves.

## *World War I*

Memorials for fallen soldiers were a rare sight before 1914. Yet during the Great War, a growing number of commemorative stones and tablets were created. Some were enlarged after the war, like the Memorial of Kūt al-ʿAmāra in Iraq.

There is a striking contrast between the 50 fallen men (43 privates, 7 officers) whose names have been documented and the Turkish losses estimated at 10 000.[20]

The Ottoman "War Magazine" (*Harb Mecmuası*), which appeared between late 1915 and June 1918, includes a number of photographs of more or less improvised monuments. Exceptional is a column (Ill. 5) in the midst of regular graves. The column shows a close resemblance to the gun-barrel shape of the *Abide-i Hürriyet* in Istanbul-Şişli.[21] The caption under the photograph reads: "Do not forget the debt to the martyrs! At Biga: A picture of the sacred land of the martyrs, whose glory at Çanakkale is our source of pride."

In the illustrations of the "War Magazine" burial compounds of formations such as divisions and regiments can be distinguished. For example, on the bank of the Tigris memorials for generals and officers were set apart from those of non-commissioned officers and privates. The funerary monuments are limited to the conventional repertoire: obelisks, columns (sometimes in the *vanitas* form of a broken pillar) and tombstones. Regimental burial compounds have a regular shape and correspond to the "Kreuzbeet" of the German and Austrian allies. These geometrical compounds were probably the result of the German influence. Uniform or even legal regulations for the burial of combatants in the German speaking countries did not exist before the Prussian-French war of 1870. It was left to the regiments to bury their dead. During the World War the newly introduced identity disks allowed verification of the individuals. Cemeteries were laid

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Woldemar Janson, *19-th Century Sculpture*, New York 1985, 177). For a discussion of the woman depicting the Egyptian nation see Beth Baron: "Nationalist Iconography. Egypt as a Woman", in: James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni: *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (1997), 105-124.

20 Hülya Yarar, Cengiz Eroğlu and Musa Türker, eds., *Yurtdışı Şehitlikler*, Ankara 1999, 31; J. B. Kelly, "Kūt al-ʿAmāra", in: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 5, Leiden 1986, s.v.

21 *Harb Mecmuʿası* 1, 13 (October 1332/1916) 206. "Şehîdlere minnet borcunu unutma. Çanakkalenin ölmez mefâhir ile bize gurûr besleten şehîdlerin diyârından bir levha: Meşhed ve âbidesi."

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out both on the front and in the home country, whereas the completion of monuments was deferred to the post-war period.[22] The number of gravestones and cemeteries for the German and Austrian allies of Turkey is also very limited.[23]

## *Süleymân Nazîf and the project for an* Âbide-i Şühedâ *at the Dardanelles*

"A martyr's death in combat is the apogee of the believer's aspirations; it is the noblest way to depart this life and is a guarantee of God's approval and reward."[24] One may speculate if the Islamic notion of "Honour of Martyrdom" excludes a formal and regular burial. The renowned theologian İzmirli İsmâ'îl Hakkı (1869-1946)[25] cited in his book "Donations to the Champions of Islam" (*Gâzîlere armağan*) which was commissioned (*tahrîr ettirilmiştir*) by the Ministry of War in 1332/1913-1914[26] a famous saying of the prophet Muhammed concerning martyrdom (Arabic with the Turkish translation): "We buried them with their blood and their bloodstained clothes. At the day of resurrection blood will flow from the veins of those who are on the path of God, their colour will be the colour of blood, but their odour will be the odour of musk." Therefore the martyrs will be buried with their bloodstained clothes. Their weapons alone will be taken. This understanding of battlefield martyrdom, which says nothing about gravestones and memorials, underwent an important change during the wars of the early twentieth century.

In the pamphlet *Âbide-i şüheda* ("Monument for the martyrs"), printed in 1925, the poet and journalist Süleymân Nazîf (1869-1927)[27] called the Turks who had survived the war to contribute for a memorial at the entrance of the straits at Çanakkale. The ardent patriot and distinguished orator was only a couple of years younger than Abdülhakk Hâmid (who survived him nevertheless). A common denominator of the Sevastopol poem and the pamphlet for a memorial at Çanakkale is not only the citation of the poem *Zafer* but the existence of Christian burial grounds within the range of visibility. Süleymân Nazîf mentions the English cemetery at the first pages of his proclamation:

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22 Meinhold Lurz, *1. Weltkrieg (Kriegerdenkmäler in Deutschland* T. 3), Heidelberg 1985, 109-110.

23 Peter Jung, *Der K.u.K. Wüstenkrieg. Österreich-Ungarn im Vorderen Orient 1915-1918*, Graz 1992, 170-171.

24 E. Kohlberg, "Shahîd", in: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 9, Leiden 1997, s.v.

25 Ali Birinci and M. Sait Özervarlı, "İzmirli, İsmail Hakkı", in: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 530-535.

26 1332 AH corresponds to 30. November 1913 to 18. November 1914. It was probably published immediately after the declaration of war by the Sultan-Kalif. There exists also a modern Turkish version under the title *Yiğitlere öğütler* ("Counsels for the heroes"), Ankara 1964.

27 Süleymân Nazîf, *Âbide-i şühedâ*, Istanbul 1343/1925.

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"The English spent millions of gold coins and built an enormous monument for their dead at Çanakkale. The majority of the English soldiers who died at Çanakkale did not belong to their own race (*ırk:* referring to Australians and New Zealanders). Whereas such memorials (*nişân-ı tezâkir*) were (even) given (*ihdâ*) to those who did not die for their native country (*vatan*), all we can do for our men will be extremely little (...). Yet we see at the present moment for our martyrs nothing but an endless 'arch of oblivion' (*tâk-ı nisyân bî-payân*). This is a disgrace and abasement for our nation and our history."

The empty and endless "arch of oblivion" is not the merciful sky of Abdülhakk Hâmid. Süleymân Nazîf calls (without using this widespread term for Triumphal Arch) for a *tâk-ı zafer,* a dignified memorial representing the whole nation. An already existing *şehîdlik* at the city walls (Ill. 6) of Istanbul was far from fulfilling Süleymân Nazîf's expectations.[28]

"There is a cemetery in Istanbul for the soldiers who where transported as wounded persons from the front at the Dardanelles and who suffered martyrdom in the capital.[29] This memorial is supported by a state agency with public funds. Yet it is the task of the whole nation to acknowledge their debt to the fallen soldiers."

The avoidance of "ingratitude" (*nankörlük*) is one of the key notions in Süleymân Nazîf's speech.[30] The *Âbide-i şühedâ*-project is intended to honour the dead combatants who fought at all fronts: Caucasus, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and the martyrs of the War for Independence (*İstiklâl şehîdleri*). In his opinion all contributions would please the heroes who fell in action in Galicia, at the Isonzo, in the Dobruja, and Macedonia. In his list of war theatres the *İstiklâl şehîdleri* are inserted between the two other groups.

Süleymân Nazîf's memorial committee was to my knowledge never established. His idea to honour all the Ottomans in the way of a post-Ottoman "Nationaldenkmal" was never realized. The Çanakkale monument (Ill. 7) which is generally perceived as a substitute for a national monument was finally finished in the 1950s.[31] Mehmed Akif (Ersoy, 1873-1936), the famous proponent

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28 After the proclamation of the Republic the first official cemetery in Istanbul was transferred from the responsibility of the Ministry of War to that of the Ministry of National Defence. In 1924 its upkeep was entrusted to a private association (Erdem Yücel: "Edirnekapı Şehitliği", in: *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 3, Istanbul 1995, 133. – Four years after his death the municipality of Istanbul built a honorary grave for Süleymân Nazîf at Edirnekapı! ("Süleyman Nazif mezarı Edirenkapı", in: *Mimar* 2, 21-22 (July-August 1932), 199-201).

29 C. H. Baer, ed., *Der Völkerkrieg. Eine Chronik der Ereignisse seit dem 1. Juli 1914*, vol. 8, Stuttgart 1917, plate before p. 204: "Begräbnis türkischer Soldaten in Defterdar am Goldenen Horn".

30 The concept of "gratitude" in the sense of patriotic obligation reappears in the title of a children's book by Aziz Nesin (1915-1995), an author who is unsuspected of any religious affiliation (*Borçlu olduklarımız. Çocuklara öğütler*, Istanbul 1976). Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı (1910-1956) of nearly the same age as Aziz Nesin, wrote a poem "The Unknown Soldier" which included a call against the growing "ingratitude" towards the combatants (*Otuzbeş yaş*, Istanbul 1946, 1983).

31 Doğan Erginbaş, *Anıt-Kabirler ve Zafer-Asker Anıtları*, Istanbul 1950, Ill. 33 with the caption "Canakkale Zafer ve Meçhul Asker Abidesi" (see Ill. 7 at the end of this article).

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of a Islamic Turkey, had pleaded in vain against a "mausoleum of stone" for the Çanakkale martyrs, when he composed the following verse: "Wrapped in God's mercy, these sanctified servants will not enter a mausoleum of stone (*taş türbe*), they just expect the wanderer to recite the first sura of the Kuran (*fâtiha).*"[32]

## *Zekeriya Sertel: National Pilgrimage and the Unknown Soldier Controversy* [33]

In the same year (1925), a new controversy arose regarding the question how to honour the dead. This was an inevitable result of the outstanding role of Mustafa Kemâl (Atatürk, 1881-1938) in the defence of the Straits and as the organizer of the War of Independence. The debate focussed on the project of a monument for the Unknown Soldier at Dumlupınar, where the decisive battle against the Greek Army had been fought in 1922. By that time, the notion of the Unknown Soldier – an unidentified warrior who has died in battle – had already become one of the most hallowed symbols of several nations. In fact, there were already tombs of the unknown soldier on many battlefields. Yet in Turkey the Unknown Soldier had not become such a part of national lore as in France or America.

In summer 1925, the independent journalist Zekeriya (Sertel, 1890-1980) published in his monthly *Resimli Ay* an article under the heading *Meçhûl şehîdin huzûrunda* ("In the presence of the Unknown Soldier").[34] Zekeriya pleaded for the building of a memorial for the Unknown Soldier, a monument which already existed in his imagination with columns of smoke and a cupola of fire.

"The miracles created by the people can only be represented by the tomb of the unknown and nameless hero." Zekeriya continued with a visionary description of a national Arafat (the mountain near Mecca where the pilgrims camp overnight). This "new" Arafat will attract crowds of "national pilgrims" (*millî hacılar*), not wrapped in the white garment of the pilgrims to Mecca (the *ihrâm*)

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32 Şehîdler Âbidesi için:
*Gök kubbesi altında yatar, al kan içinde,*
*Ey yolcu, şu topraklar için can veren erler,*
*Hakkın bu velî kulları taş türbeye girmez;*
*Gufrâna bürünmüş, yalnız Fâtiha bekler".*
The Çanakakle memorial bears like many other modern Turkish memorials an inscription with another verses of Mehmed Âkif:
"Ye Soldier who fell for this earth
May the ancestors descend and kiss that noble brow
O who will dig the grave fit for thee
For the burial history itself to narrow."
(translation in Hüseyin Uluaslan, *Gallipoli Campaign*, 1998, 22).

33 Slightly abbreviated from a paragraph in my article "Public Monuments in Kemalist and Post-Kemalist-Turkey".

34 1. August 1341 M./1925 under the pseudonym *Seyyah.*

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but circumambulating the tomb in red clothes, symbolising the blood of the martyrs:

> "Dumlupınar has risen to the character of a National Arafat. In lieu of the Arafat in the South which has been circumambulated by approximately 1300 years, a new holy mountain was created in the East. This new Arafat is neither a heap of earth which assumes importance nor a chain of rocks with sharp cliffs. It is a peak of victory which owes its existence to the accumulation of the bones of the martyrs. That is the reason why the national *hacıs*, who line up in rows are not wrapped in the white pilgrims' garment. If the people who make the circuit around the Unknown Soldier should need a special costume then its colour was determined by the sublime nature of the event. You can only appear to the presence of the martyrs who clothed themselves with the shirt of fire (i.e. went through the ordeal) with a red garment."

Although Zekeriya paid due respect to Mustafa Kemâl saying that the defence of Anatolia was a wave of enthusiasm directly inspired by the "great and incomparable Gazi" and although he adorns his columns with a photograph of the "Great Hero after the military and political victory", an answer appeared immediately: Ali Kılıç (1888-1971), a close friend and aide-de-camp of Mustafa Kemâl, wrote in the Istanbul daily *Akşam* that it was not the people who had successfully won War of Independence, but Mustafa Kemâl alone. Without him the revolt of the people would have been meaningless. The attempt to reduce the importance of the commander-in-chief by putting forward the idea of the "Unknown Soldier" could only be interpreted as ingratitude (*nankörlük*).

Although never realized Zekeriya's vision corresponds more or less to the 19th century European "Nationaldenkmal" as a direct continuation of religious cults by patriotic ceremonies.[35] One has the impression that Ali Kılıç had seen Süleymân Nazîf's pamphlet and taken up the word "ingratitude" in a different meaning: it is not to the dead heroes, but to the living gazi that the nation owes gratitude.

Two years after the argument between Zekeriya and Ali Kılıç a first memorial for the soldiers of Dumlupınar was erected. It was devoted to an unknown standard bearer (*sancakdâr*) whose corpse was allegedly discovered by Mustafa Kemâl himself when he inspected the trenches of the battlefield after the decisive victory over the Greek army. The commander-in-chief was said to have been moved by the sight of a soldier whose stiffened arm still kept the standard in an upright position. And the decision was taken that this should be the symbol for a future monument of the Unknown Soldier. If this story is more or less true, it means that the notion of the Unknown Soldier was given up after 1924. Nevertheless the foundation for the memorial was laid in the same year during the first official commemoration of the battle and it was unveiled three years later. Although memorials for non-anonymous soldiers who fell in the wars between 1912 and

35 It would be attractive to compare the forms of sacralization of the nation in Europe with the change of meaning of religious symbols in Turkey.

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1922 are not missing, the *Şehîd Sancakdâr* was closer to the idea of representativeness of a single man for the army.

Contemporary texts and Mustafa Kemâl's speech seem to use the terms Martyr soldier/*şehîd* and Unknown/*meçhul asker* in the same sense. Participants of the 1924 commemoration such as Falih Rıfkı (Atay, 1894-1971) extolled the event in the national substitution of religious terminology. Zekeriya Sertel would still use it a year later: "The pilgrimage (*ziyaret*) to Dumlupınar is the *hacc* of the Turks. Whosoever has the capacity would circumambulate this place. The hearts of all Turks are every day turned towards this direction of prayer (*kıble)*."

In order to honour the victims of the battle of Çanakkale some projects for a "Monument of the Unknown Soldier and the Victory" *(Çanakkale Zafer ve Meçhul Asker Abidesi*) were prepared. But after the realisation the term "Unknown Soldier" does not seem to be any more in official use. When Asım Us (1884-1967) visited the Unknown Soldier memorial in Trieste in 1931 he noted:

> "This cemetery was the most meaningful of all I have seen of this kind. Confronted with this view we reflected our Dumlupınar. There we have also a memorial. We could transform it in the way of the Italians and make it more vigorous and meaningful."[36]

Both places, the peninsula of Gelibolu and the hills of Dumlupınar are victory memorials which owe their existence to the military genius of Mustafa Kemâl, whose colossal mausoleum in Ankara (completed in 1953) overshadowed the importance of the war monuments.

## *Mustafa Kemâl's Equestrian Statue at Ankara: The Gazi as the incarnation of the victorious Anatolian people*

Although it is difficult to determine why the idea of an Unknown Soldier was not very popular – did it also conflict with the religious concept of personal martyrdom? – it is clear that during Atatürk's lifetime statues of other personalities were not erected. Neither the Turkish nor the French text of the public subscription in 1924 in memory of the National Victory (Ill. 8) mentions the word *şehîd/martyr.* Rather unexpectedly, the text contains a hint to the pre-islamic Central Asian myth of Ergenekon when referring to the efforts of the Anatolian population during the war.[37] The Austrian sculptor Heinrich Krippel (1883-1945) conceived four heads of wolves which surround the monument instead of the allegories or animals such as lions in western art.

Mustafa Kemâl is perceived as the incarnation of the spirit of the double battle against the interior and exterior enemies. "Mustafa Kémal Pacha en sa per-

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[36] Asım Us, *Hatıra Notları. 1930dan 1950 yılına kadar Atatürk ve İsmet İnönü Devirlerine ait Seçme*, Istanbul 1966, 40-41.

[37] *Notice sur le concours concernant le monument à ériger à Angora par l'initiative du journal "Yéni-Gune" en commémoration de la Victoire Nationale*, Constantinople 1924.

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sonne peut être consideré comme l'incarnation même de l'âme combattive qui à soutenu cette double lutte / Mustafa Kemâl Paşa bu iki türlü mücâdeleʿnin rûhunu kendi şahsında bütün kuvvetiyle temsil edebilir." Scenes of the War of Independence and revolutions were depicted on the reliefs on the bases.[38]

This reluctance to commission statues of other personalities during the Kemalist period is astonishing since the intelligentsia of the early Republic shared the conviction of the French positivists that statues produce a deep effect in the sense of national education. It can only be explained by the strong authoritarianism of Atatürk and the sycophancy of his entourage. Civic leaders and heroes are not completely absent in the early Republican statuary, but they only reinforce the central figure and never claim an independent place. The best known memorials which display Atatürk's fellow-combatants İsmet (İnönü, 1884-1976) and Fevzi (Çakmak, 1876-1950) are Pietro Canonicas monuments on Taksim square in Istanbul and Heinrich Krippel's in Ankara (Nation) and Afyon (Victory). Later examples reproduce this triad in an official way.

## *Conclusion: The end of the sacralisation of the nation?*[39]

It would be possible to establish a continuity from these early examples of war memorials to the Korean War, the invasion of Cyprus and even as recent a chapter as the memorialization of the victims in the war against the PKK. The almost complete absence of communal war monuments (in France there exist 35 000 of them in villages and towns) is one of the most striking peculiarities of the Turkish pattern of memorialization. In view of the continuing veneration of Atatürk and the collective burial of victims of the Kurdish guerrilla (PKK) in barrack-squares one may ask if the two sides of one national cult reflects unbroken enthusiasm for martyrdom in the service of the fatherland.

A short notice which appeared in the best-selling Turkish daily paper *Hürriyet* after the Bayram in 2001 (6 March 2001) under the title "Paying a visit to the martyrs" (*Şehide ziyaret*) may serve as an outlook. The reporter related that people went on a visit to the graves at the Edirnekapı Şehitliği, cleaned the marbles of the tombs and watered the flowers they had brought with them. Prayers were said and wishes were made "The young people should not die anymore. The young men who are sent with great tom-tom to the barracks should come back home laughing and playing." – This is quite different from the lofty "Either champion of war or martyr" (*ya gazi ya şehit*) I heard during the Cyprus operation in summer 1974.

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38 Osama Kıvanç, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Anıt Heykelleri (1923-1946)*, unpublished dissertation Hacettepe Üniversitesi Ankara 1998.

39 Symposium Leipzig 2000.

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Ill. 1) The Freedom Column (Abide-i Hürriyet) – Istanbul-Şişli (1911) with names of victims of the counterrevolution in April 1909.
(Photo Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Istanbul KB 19.067)

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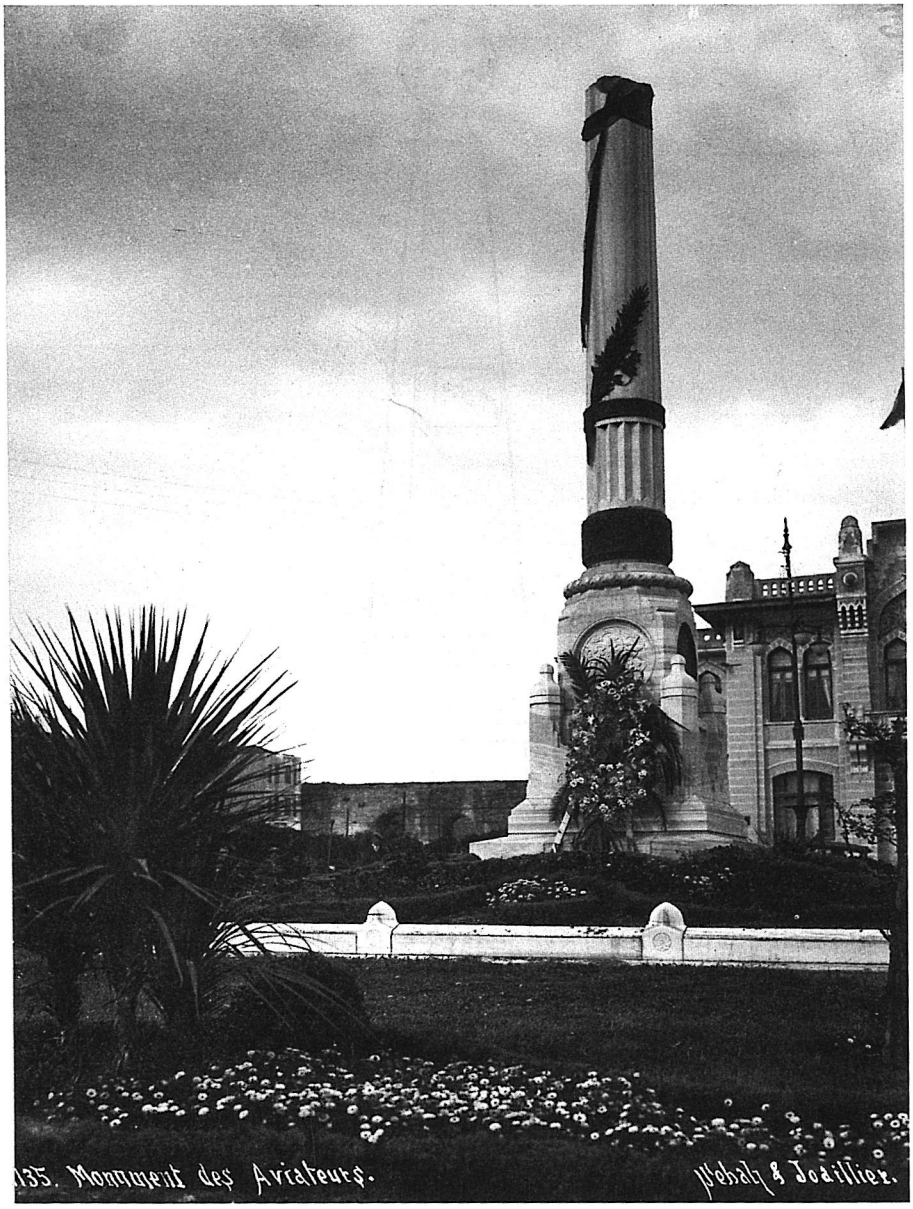


Ill. 2) Air Victim's monument (Tayyâre Şehîdleri Abidesi) – Istanbul-Fatih 1914. (Photograph by Sebah & Joaillier, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Istanbul 9841)

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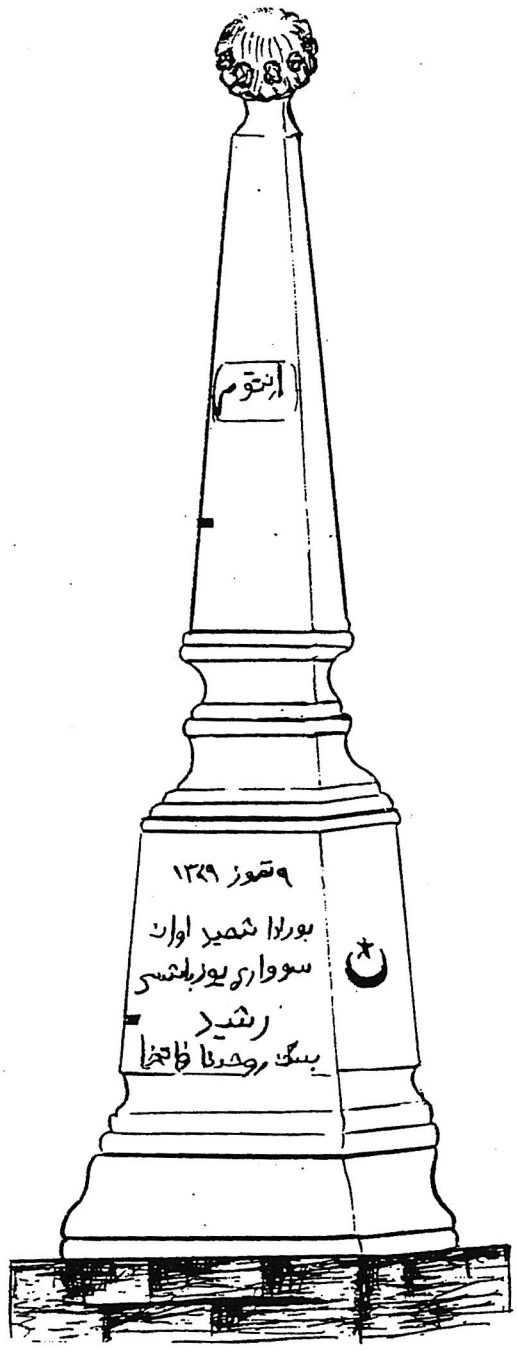


Ill. 3) Revenge Stone (İntikâm taşı) – Cisr-i Mustafa Paşa 1913.
(Oral Onur and Latif Bajman, *Edirne anıtları*, Istanbul ca. 1987)

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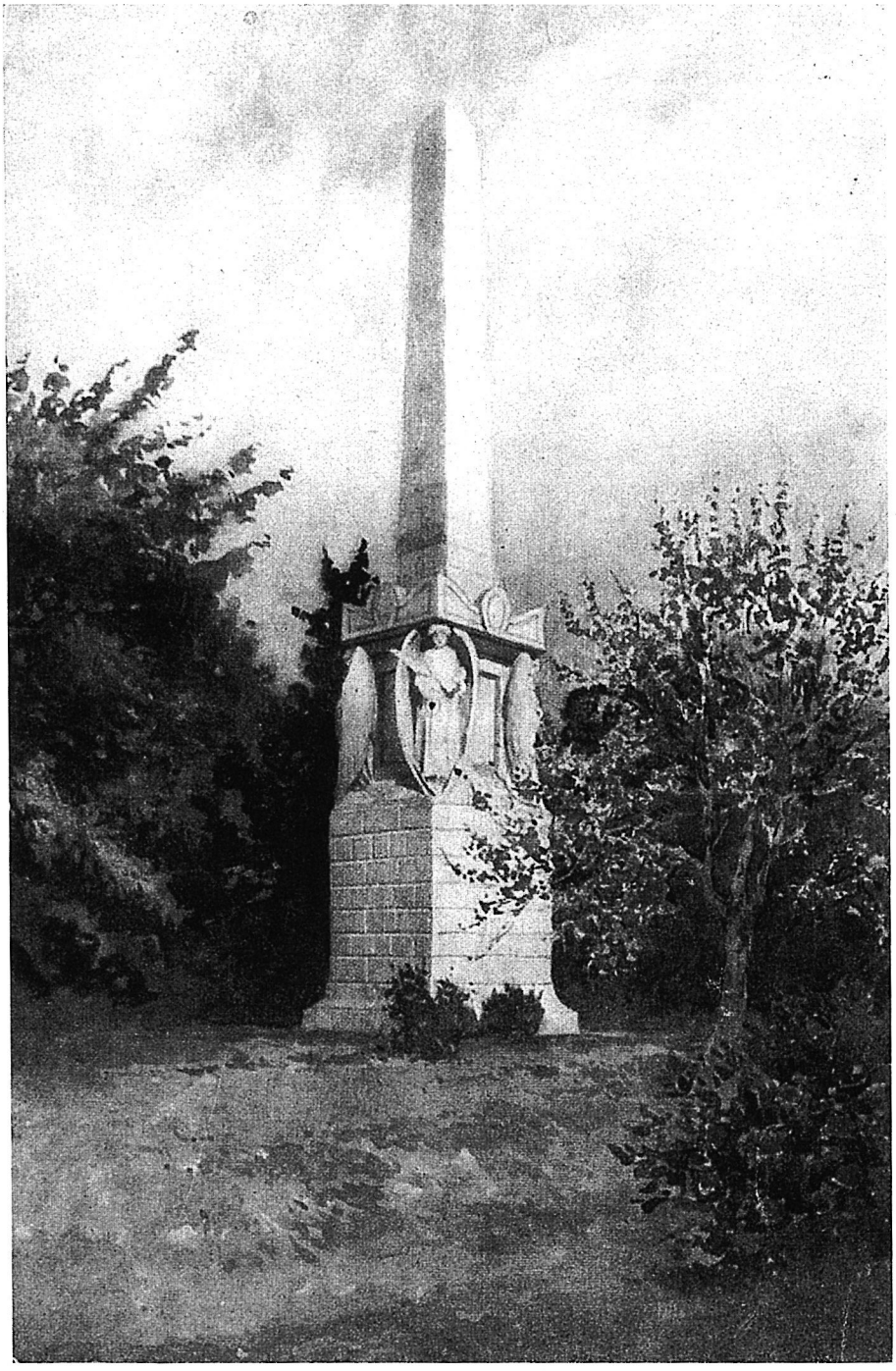

Ill. 4) Carlo Marochetti (1805-1867), Crimean Memorial – British Cemetery, Istanbul-Haydarpaşa (coloured clipping of a magazine?).

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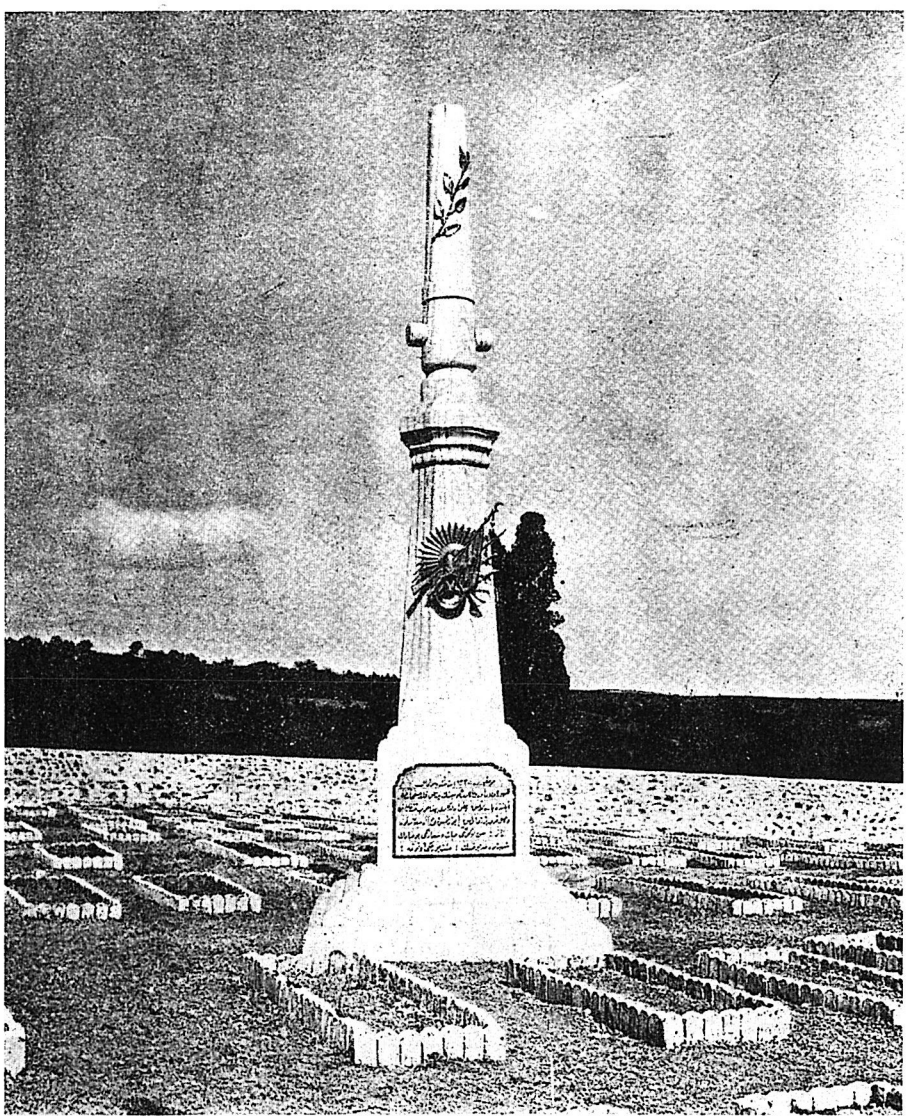

Ill. 5) Soldier cemetery with column (Meşhed Abidesi) in Biga/Çanakakale. (Harb Mecmuası 1332 M./1916, No. 13, 206)

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Ill. 6) Improvised cemetery at Istanbul-Defterdar.
(C. H. Baer, ed., *Der Völkerkrieg*, Stuttgart 1917, plate before p. 204)

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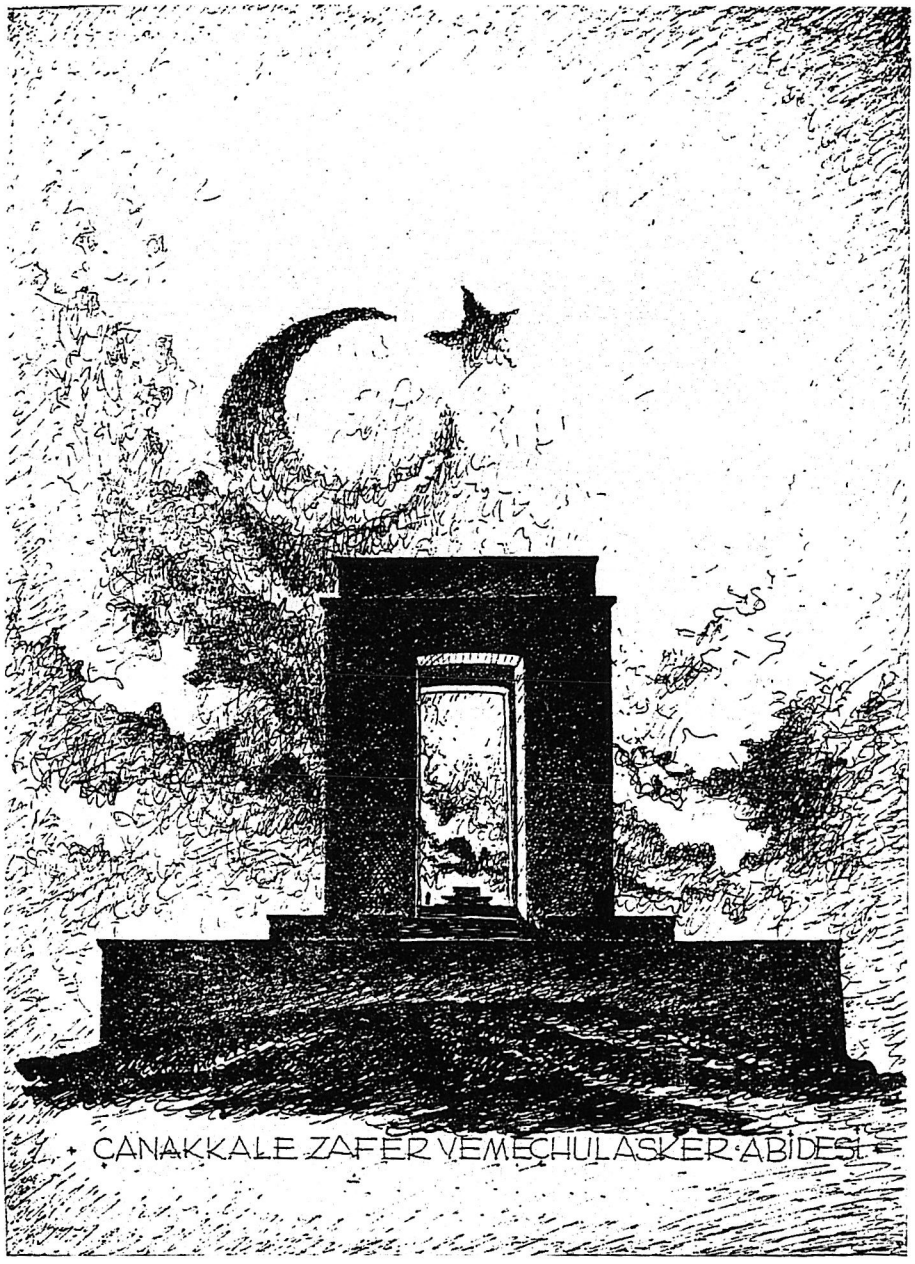


Ill. 7) Çanakkale Memorial.
(Doğan Erginbaş, *Anıt-Kabirler ve Zafer-Asker Anıtları*, Istanbul 1950, Ill. 33)

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Ill. 8) National Victory Monument in 1924 – Ankara.
(Photograph of 1929).

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# The Cult of the Fallen Soldiers in Italy after the First World War

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Italy's entry into the War in May 1915 was accompanied by a sharp polarisation of the political landscape, and for the most part met with detachment and disapproval from the population. Even after 1915 no "union sacrée" was able to coalesce. The soldiers' identification with the War remained weak, and the situation was characterised by a high level of desertion and unwillingness to fight. In late 1917, after the defeat in the battle of Caporetto, which bore some features of a military strike, the country only narrowly avoided complete defeat. The growing readiness to protest on the home front had erupted in serious riots as early as 1917. There can be no doubt that for the majority of the soldiers and population, the "Great War" was a traumatic experience.[1] Far more Italians died in the First World War than in all recent wars put together: 671,000 soldiers, 16% of the fighting troops, almost 4% of the male population.[2]

Nevertheless, after 1918 a positive image of the War soon asserted itself and was to survive for a very considerable time, a "posthumous consensus" which marginalised critical and pacifist tendencies and was cemented by Fascism. It can be said that after 1918 neutralist Italy, which had opposed entry into the conflict, lost the battle around the War a second time.[3] The cult of the fallen soldiers played a central role in this process. Mourning for the fallen contained a destabilising potential that needed to be defused. Anger and hatred had to be transformed into apolitical reverence, grief for the dead transformed into pride and a collective consensus for the nation in whose name the War had been fought. The disciplining of mourning was, moreover, a precondition for any renewal of a bellicose policy, as carried through by the Fascist regime in the mid 1930s.

The patriotic cult of the dead that developed after 1918 was of particular significance for Italy, where the process of "nationalising the masses" clearly lagged behind other European countries like Germany, France or England. There are various reasons for this backwardness. The divergence between the monarchist and republican traditions in national symbolism and liturgy certainly played a role, as did the strong competition from the church, which hardly participated in

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1 See Antonio Gibelli, *La grande guerra degli italiani 1915-1918*, Milano 1998, 11; Antonio Gibelli, "Grande guerra e identità nazionale nelle testimonianze dei combattenti", in: Paul Corner and Simonetta Ortaggi, eds., *Grande guerra e mutamento*, Roma 1997, 617-634.

2 See Giovanna Procacci, "L'Italia nella grande guerra", in: Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto, eds., *Storia d'Italia*, Vol. 4: *Guerre e fascismo*, Roma 1997, 3-99, 91.

3 See Mario Isnenghi, "Alle origini del 18 aprile. Miti, riti, mass media", in: Mario Isnenghi, ed., *I cattolici dal fascismo al 18 aprile*, Venezia 1977, 277-329.

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the national cult and continued to dominate urban topography and the festival calendar. A further factor was the liberal elite's traditional attitude to politics, largely failing to develop a sensitivity to the opportunities for generating political consensus through the populist mobilisation of national emotions.[4] In Italy, the 'nationalisation of the masses' did not make its decisive leap forwards until after the First World War, and then in the context of mass death and grieving. Ceremonies commemorating the fallen after the First World War may be considered the first national cult to encompass the whole country, and the first broad-based manifestation of patriotic civil religion in Italy.[5]

The most important remembrance ceremony on a national level after 1918 was the ritual around the 'Unknown Soldier' in 1921.[6] Similar ceremonies had already been held a year earlier in Paris and London.[7] In Italy the project first emerged in July 1920, in the context of the national-democratic veterans' movement. These circles saw the simple soldier as the War's real hero and as a timely symbol of national community. Honouring him would reconcile torn post-war society with itself and provide ritual closure for the War. In the 'Unknown Soldier' a potent emblem of the national had been found, capable of straddling class and party barriers as well as taking account of the War's democratising dynamic. The new symbol also meant that the friends and family of the numerous war dead whose bodies were never found could be given a collective body and a site on which to focus their grief and memory work.

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4 See Oliver Janz, "Nationalismus im Ersten Weltkrieg. Deutschland und Italien im Vergleich", in: Oliver Janz, Pierangelo Schiera, and Hannes Siegrist, eds., *Zentralismus und Föderalismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Deutschland und Italien im Vergleich,* Berlin 2000, 175-177 (italian ed.: *Centralismo e federalismo tra otto e novecento. Italia e Germania a confronto*, Bologna 1997).

5 There has not yet been an exhaustive study of the topic for Italy. Initial overviews can be found in: Mario Isnenghi, *Le guerre degli italiani: Parole, immagini, riccordi 1848-1945*, Milano 1989, 341-348; Mario Isnenghi, "La grande guerra", in: Mario Isnenghi, ed., *I luoghi della memoria. Strutture ed eventi dell'Italia unita*, Roma 1997, 273-309; Patrizia Dogliani, "Les monuments aux morts de la première guerre mondiale en Italie", *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 167 (1992), 87-94; Patrizia Dogliani, "La mémoire de la grande guerre en Italie", in: Jean-Jacques Becker, ed., *Guerre et cultures*, Paris 1994, 315-321; Gibelli: *Grande guerra*, 330-356; Mario Isnenghi and Giorgio Rochat: *La grande guerra 1914-1918,* Milano 2000, 518-525; Oliver Janz, "Trauer und Triumph. Politischer Totenkult in Italien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg", in: Gerd Krumeich and Jost Dülffer, eds., *Der verlorene Frieden: Politik und Kriegskultur nach 1918,* Essen 2002, 61-75; Oliver Janz, "Grande Guerra, memoria", in: Victoria de Grazia and Sergio Luzzatto, eds., *Dizionario del Fascismo,* Torino 2002, 627-630.

6 See Vito Labita, „Il milite ignoto. Dalle trincee all'Altare della patria", in: Sergio Bertelli and Cristiano Grottanelli, eds., *Gli occhi di Alessandro. Potere sovrano e sacralità del corpo da Alessandro Magno a Ceausescu,* Firenze 1990, 120-153; Bruno Tobia, "Il Vittoriano", in: Mario Isnenghi, ed., *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita,* Roma 1996, 243-254; Bruno Tobia, *L'altare della patria,* Bologna 1998, 61-86.

7 See Ken Inglis, "War memorials: ten questions for historians", *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 167 (192), 5-22; Ken Inglis, "Entombing unknown soldiers. From London and Paris to Bagdad", *History and Memory* 5/2 (1993), 7-31.

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The idea was taken up by the government under the Reformist Socialist Ivanoe Bonomi. In November 1921, accompanied by huge public sympathy, the body of an unidentified soldier was taken to Rome in the open carriage of a special train which followed a highly symbolic, and skilfully choreographed, route from the north-east of the country to the capital, making numerous stops along the way. On the third anniversary of the end of the War the body was interred in the national monument to Vittorio Emanuele II. In this way the imposing memorial – dedicated only in 1911 – to the monarch who had presided over Italian unification became a memorial to patriotic sacrifice and to the nation as such. Accordingly, after 1921 it was no longer called the "Vittoriano" but the "Altare della patria", the altar of the fatherland.

In the opinion of many at the time, the ritual around the 'Unknown Soldier' was liberal Italy's first genuinely popular patriotic ceremony. The event met with a strong positive response from the population and was actively supported by almost all political groupings, though this consensus was reached only at the price of a considerable blurring of content. For example, no speeches were held at the closing ceremony. The political Right celebrated the ritual as an apotheosis of patriotic fulfilment of duty; others saw it pre-eminently as a mourning ceremony that recalled the human cost of the War. Neither were the Socialists and Communists entirely immune to the innovative symbolism – they too paid their respects, but to the 'Unknown Soldier' as a "fallen proletarian".

After 1918, memorials for the fallen soldiers were built in most Italian towns and villages.[8] These war memorials were not only significantly more numerous,

8 Unlike England, France and Germany, for Italy there have been only local studies of war memorials. See Claudio Canal, "La retorica della morte. I monumenti ai caduti della Grande Guerra", *Rivista di storia contemporanea* 4 (1982), 659-669 (Torino); Antonello Negri, "Monumenti ai caduti in Lombardia", *Notiziario dell'Istituto storico della resistenza in Cuneo e Provincia* 28 (1985), 201-231 (Pavia); Renato Monteleone and Pino Saracini, "I monumenti italiani ai caduti della Grande Guerra", in: Diego Leoni, Camillo Zadra, eds., *La grande guerra. Memoria, esperienza, immagini*, Bologna 1986, 631-662 (Genova); Associazione nazionale combattenti e reduci: Federazione provinciale di L'Aquila, ed., *I monumenti ai caduti di guerra in provincia di L'Aquila*, L'Aquila 1989; Silvia Cuppini, Giacomo De Marzi, and Paola Desideri, *La memoria storica tra parola e immagine. I monumenti celebrativi nella provincia di Pesaro e Urbino dal Risorgimento alla Liberazione*, Urbino 1995; Vittorio Vidotto, Bruno Tobia, and Catherine Brice, eds., *La memoria perduta. I monumenti ai caduti della Grande Guerra a Roma e nel Lazio*, Roma 1998; Gianni Isola, ed., *La memoria pia. I monumenti ai caduti della prima guerra mondiale nell'area trentino-tirolese*, Trento 1997. None of these studies covers the south of Italy. This literature, often rather inaccessible, has hitherto received almost no attention outside Italy, and comparative, synthetic accounts have thus not done justice to the Italian case. See George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, Oxford 1990 (German ed.: *Gefallen für das Vaterland*, Stuttgart 1993); Inglis, "War memorials"; Reinhart Koselleck and Michael Jeismann, eds., *Der politische Totenkult. Kriegerdenkmäler in der Moderne*, Stuttgart 1994; Jay Winter, *Sites of memory: sites of mourning*, Oxford 1995; Reinhart Koselleck, *Zur politischen Ikonologie des gewaltsamen Todes. Ein deutsch-französischer Vergleich*, Basel 1998.

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but also less contested, than those of the 19th century.[9] As in other countries, they gave pride of place to the plain soldier, not to army commanders, monarchs or politicians, and thus accommodated the democratising thrust of the War.[10] Behind them was a very wide range of agents, the exact makeup of that range varying from place to place:[11] veterans, the bereaved, church congregations, local notables and associations. Frequently, the projects were initiated or supported by the municipal administration. Central state authorities played only a minor role.

These initiatives usually encompassed a broad political and social spectrum. In the name of collective mourning and patriotism, they generally succeeded in making their concern into a matter for the whole community and in mobilising its local pride. The memorial committees often came to mirror local social structures and power relations, reaching from the local elite to the lower middle classes. They anchored themselves firmly within local cultures of sociability and festival, something which contributed to the projects' popularity and success. Thus, the dedication ceremonies, dominated by the 'high diction' of the local elite, were normally followed by popular festivities.[12]

The Catholic church's participation in commemorations for the fallen soldiers was considerable.[13] This was something new, for previously there had been almost no overlap between patriotic and church-based cults and symbols in Italy.[14] Many memorials were built near churches or in graveyards. The dedications of the memorials were usually held in the presence of church dignitaries and often opened with a mass. Frequently, the congregation itself honoured its dead with memorial tablets, often long before a memorial was built on the local piazza. These church-based remembrance ceremonies followed organically on from the requiem masses of wartime, which continued to be celebrated after 1918.[15] Likewise, the war cemeteries at the Front are imbued with Christian symbolism and elements of religious architecture, and important locations of war memory, such as Monte Grappa, were dedicated by the Catholic church as sacred places, becoming the destination for patriotic pilgrimages with the participation of church organisations.[16]

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9 See Bruno Tobia, *Una patria per gli italiani. Spazi, itinerari, monumenti nell'Italia unita (1870-1900)*, Roma 1991.

10 See Inglis, „War memorials", 6-8.

11 See Manuele Riosa, "Comitati locali e potere politico: i caratteri della committenza", in: Vidotto, Tobia, and Brice, eds., *Memoria perduta*, 11-28.

12 Ibid., 19-22.

13 See Isnenghi, *Guerre degli italiani*, 341-349.

14 See Ilaria Porcini, "Lo statuto e il Corpus Domini. La festa nazionale dell'Italia liberale", *Il Risorgimento* 47 (1995), 149-173, in particular 151-157. See Ilaria Porcini, *La festa della nazione. Rappresentazione dello Stato e spazi sociali nell'Italia unita*, Bologna 1997.

15 See Riosa, "Comitati", 16.

16 See Isnenghi, "Alle origini", 283-285; Livio Vanzetto: "Monte Grappa", in: Mario Isnenghi, ed., *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita*, Roma 1996, 361-374.

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Most memorials bore the imprint of an underlying affirmative and national stance. Appealing to an apparently apolitical sense of mourning, they produced a consensus that had never existed during the War itself. They were shaped by the ideology of patriotic sacrifice, which had been a central component of nationalism since the 19th century (not in Italy alone).[17] The leitmotifs of this ideology recur abundantly in the inscriptions: the soldier's death as sacrifice for the fatherland, the right of the dead to eternal remembrance, their continued life in the space of memory and in the future generations of the national community, for whom they must act as a model. The inscriptions portray the War as a just struggle for Italy's freedom, unity and greatness; the memorials ask to be viewed as a gift of gratitude the local community owes to its war dead. The reinterpretation of death as sacrifice and of the fallen soldiers as heroes aims to defuse trauma and grief. It accommodates the need of the bereaved for consolation and a sense of meaning. The dead are promised eternal commemoration and thus immortality, while the promise to the survivors is that their individual grief will be enshrined in collective memory.

Within this framework, however, very different aspects predominated from case to case. In the first years after the War the inscriptions were still extremely diverse. The whole spectrum of patriotic and interventionist war ideology can be found, and the heroicising semantics of military virtue is present from the start. But the language of pain and grief, which puts death and loss at the centre of attention, is also common. Very widespread are formulations which present the fallen soldiers as "sons of the community". These locality and family oriented wordings, too, direct the focus to mourning and loss.[18]

The visual aspect of the memorials draws mainly on the classical repertoire.[19] Tradition dominates. One thing is new: the representation of the plain soldier, which was unknown in the battle monuments of the 19th century. However, the preference continues to be for obelisks, columns, stelae and allegorical female figures. The iconography of victory and military glory abounds, even before the advent of Fascism. The visual language, too, is diverse and ambiguous as a whole.[20] There are representations not only of victory and triumph, heroism and fatherland, but also of grief and pain. Eagles, lions, laurel wreaths and flags are represented, but so are palms and crosses. The portrayal of the soldier covers a broad spectrum, from heroic pose to dying warrior. The female figures vary

17 See Peter Walkenhorst, „Nationalismus als politische Religion? Zur religiösen Dimension nationalistischer Ideologie im Kaiserreich", in: Olaf Blaschke and Frank-Michael Kuhlemann, eds., *Religion im Kaiserreich*, Gütersloh 1996, 503-530, 512-514.

18 See Francesco Bartolini, "Gloria e rimpianto. L'evoluzione delle epigrafi", in: Vidotto, Tobia and Brice, eds., *Memoria perduta*, 53-64.

19 See Vittorio Cicala, *I monumenti a ricordo delle battaglie per l'indipendenza e l'unità d'Italia*, Voghera 1908.

20 See Isnenghi, *Guerre degli italiani*, 345-347.

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widely as well, including everything from the winged goddess of victory, to torch-bearing statues of liberty, to grieving mothers.[21]

The first few years after the War in Italy also saw a pacifist-oriented cult of the fallen soldiers, which found expression in many public commemorative plaques.[22] Most of these were initiated by Socialist municipal authorities or the veterans' organisation 'Lega proletaria'. The league encompassed the whole socialist spectrum from the PSI (Partito Socialista Italiano) to the Communists, and had more than one million members in spring 1920.[23] On these pacifist plaques the dead were described not as "the fallen" but as "victims", and the War was decried as a massacre. The inscriptions were suffused with accusations against the rulers responsible for the War. Here the goal of memory work was to strengthen the survivors's class consciousness and their hatred of war.

Barely a trace of this subversive cult of the dead is left in Italy today. Even before 1922 it had met with resistance from the authorities. Many tablets were removed just a few months after being dedicated, or else had their inscriptions altered.[24] Other memorials fell victim to the 'punitive expeditions' of the Fascist fighting corps, especially the tablets in the Socialist party meeting places preeminently targeted by the Fascist violence that peaked in 1922.

On the Fascist takeover of power, the cult of the fallen soldier in Italy entered a second phase. New accents were set with the 'parks of remembrance' decreed by the Education Ministry in late 1922. Outside Italy, this new form of the cult of the dead was paralleled only by the German 'groves of the heroes'.[25] It was the schools which were primarily mobilised for the creation of the parks. In all Italian localities, gardens were to be laid out where the schoolchildren would plant a tree for every fallen soldier. In many respects the project complemented the ritual of the 'Unknown Soldier'. If that involved giving a collective name to an actual body which had lost its identity, with the parks the soldiers whose bodies had not returned to the homeland were given a virtual body.[26] Deploying the nature symbolism of youth and eternal return, the 'parchi della rimembranza' lent the cult of the dead an almost joyful and vitalist note. Here, the central point was the defeat of death and the immortality of the fallen soldiers, who were mythically amalgamated with the subsequent generation without any need to resort to the Christian symbolism of passion and resurrection. It seems the decree from Rome was implemented quite rapidly and widely, one of the reasons perhaps being that the initiative catered to the needs

21 See Monteleone and Saracini, "Monumenti italiani", 637-645.

22 Gianni Isola, "Immagini di guerra del combattentismo socialista", in: Leoni and Zadra, eds., *Grande guerra.* 519-544, 530-532; Gianni Isola, *Guerra al regno della guerra? Storia della Lega proletaria mutilati, invalidi, reduci, orfani e vedove di guerra (1918-1924)*, Firenze 1990.

23 See Isola, "Immagini", 520-522.

24 Ibid., 535-537.

25 See Mosse, *Gefallen für das Vaterland,* 109.

26 See Gibelli, *Grande guerra*, 347.

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of the bereaved for an individual commemoration of their loved ones. Over 5,700 parks of remembrance were laid out in the first year alone.

The Fascist regime pushed the local cult of memorials further, trying to reduce its ideological ambiguity and to instrumentalise it politically. There were now practically no opportunities left for open opposition to the hegemonic discourses. The 'Lega proletaria', the most important focus for the crystallisation of socialist war memory, was dissolved in 1924. The significance of central state intervention increased, and with the new Party organs new actors made their appearance at the local level. Fascist rituals overlaid local commemorations of the dead with their own style and purposes.[27] The dedication of memorials was now often linked to the opening of Fascist Party offices. The regime attempted to monopolise war memory and to represent the 'Fascist revolution' as the culmination of the national rebirth that had begun with the War. The Fascist 'martyrs' were integrated into the cult of the dead soldiers,[28] and the Fascist roll-call of the dead, one of the movement's most important rituals, was transferred to commemorations of the war dead. In this way the fallen soldiers were reinterpreted as pioneers of Fascism and the dead of the Fascist movement as the executors of their legacy.

The Fascist influence was strongest where no memorial for the fallen soldiers had yet been built.[29] Often initiatives that had so far been unsuccessful now received more active support from the authorities and the Party, and obstacles were swept from their path. In many places local Party organs themselves took the first step. In cases like these, competition with other municipalities or districts and their Party sections played an important role, since the lack of a war memorial could be interpreted as a failure on the part of the local Fascist functionaries, especially in areas where the Left had previously been strong.[30]

However, overall it is the continuities that dominate. The memorial cult continued to be driven by very diverse local forces that were able to preserve a certain degree of autonomy. The memorials retained a considerable diversity of voices and a wide range in design and message, even if the room for manoeuvre was narrowed. In the literature, the thesis is often propounded that vitalist, masculinist, heroic and bellicose elements now gained prominence in the iconography of memorials, with the symbolism of death and grief losing ground.[31] It is certainly true that Fascist statements repeatedly called for such shifts in accent,[32]

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27 Ibid., 350f.

28 Ibid., 351.

29 The local studies available show that by the end of 1922 public monuments to the community's war dead had been erected in around 30-35% of towns and villages, and by the end of 1924 in around 55-65%. See Janz, "Trauer und Triumph", 71.

30 See Riosa, "Comitati", 16.

31 See Monteleone and Saracini, "Monumenti italiani", 363-365; Dogliani, "Monuments aux morts", 93.

32 See Gibelli, *Grande guerra*, 350; Monteleone and Saracini, "Monumenti italiani", 633.

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and the change can be observed in the wording of invitations to tender for monuments, especially those issued by state authorities[33] – yet the programmatic transformation from cult of mourning to cult of heroism found only limited expression in the memorials themselves. No sudden, clean break is discernible. Depictions of dying soldiers become rarer, but they can still be found even after 1925, and not just in isolated cases. Conversely, tall soldierly figures storming ahead with gun or banner in hand are encountered in memorials well before Fascism. Yet neither motif dominated, either before or after 1922; instead, the obelisks, columns, stelae and allegorical female figures remained predominant throughout. Genuinely Fascist symbols, like fasces, are exceptions.[34] The semi-nude, classicist hero figures did become more frequent in Italy but – contrary to George L. Mosse's claim – this symbolism of masculine heroism and the nation's youth and strength did not achieve centrality, even during the Fascist regime.[35]

The inscriptions show clearer shifts.[36] Shorter, stereotypical phrasings become more common; the semantic range narrows. On the retreat are the language of the Risorgimento and democratic interventionism, as is the phrase "greater Italy". Rarer, too, is the vocabulary of sacrifice and martyrdom, which despite its patriotic weight still accords central importance to death, and the manifold forms with which the local communities gave expression to collective grief for their "sons". The idealisation of the fallen soldiers is now achieved less often through a notion of sacrifice, one ultimately fed from Christian sources, and more often through the semantics of manly military heroism. The fallen are now more frequently located on an imaginary line of tradition stretching from Roman antiquity, a line whose vanishing point now frequently appears as the new empire envisioned by Fascism. The marked increase in rather terse, formulaic dedications in the mould of "To Our Fallen" is more ambivalent. It may result from the passing of time, a distance that lessened the need to search for meaning and provide elaborate interpretations. Also significant is the fact that complex memorials, relying primarily on visual communication, became increasingly common in the course of the 1920s, at the expense of the simpler and cheaper commemorative plaques of the first years after the War, where the focus was the inscription.[37] However, it is also possible that the choice of such brief texts may veil remnants of resistance and a stance of protest against highly-coloured rhetoric.

It is not the case that every local community erected a memorial to its war dead, as is often claimed in the literature.[38] Not even Fascism was able to fill

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33 See Simona Battisti, "La fabbrica dell'arte: tipologie e modelli", in: Vidotto, Tobia, Brice, eds., *La memoria perduta*, 39-52, 45.

34 For more detail on these findings see Janz, „Trauer und Triumph", 73.

35 See Mosse, *Gefallen für das Vaterland*, 129.

36 See Bartolini, "Gloria e rimpianto", 53-55.

37 Ibid., 58-59.

38 See Canal, „Retorica", 660; Gibelli, *Grande guerra*, 348.

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every gap. In the province of Genua, for example, 21% of towns and villages have no memorials – mostly the smaller and more impoverished communities in the mountainous hinterland.[39] In the province of Pesaro-Urbino, 13% of towns and villages remained without a memorial to the fallen. This should not be attributed to poverty alone, but probably also indicates the presence of local antipathy towards the cult of the dead, a cult that was coming more and more strongly under Fascist control.

Only in the third phase of the cult of the fallen soldiers, during the 1930s, was Fascism able to leave behind the heterogeneity and polyvalence, the traditionalism and localism of the municipal commemorations of the dead.[40] The regime now began to construct large-scale national memorials at the former Front: on Monte Grappa, Pasubio and Montello, in Oslavia, Caporetto and Redipuglia. These places were designed to give monumental expression to the Fascist state's claim to power. Thus, symbolic border fortifications were built, visible from afar and marked by colossal towers and statues. They usually also functioned as cemeteries and ossuaries, housing the mortal remains of the fallen. In the course of these ambitious architectural projects, most of the war dead who had been buried in the widely scattered cemeteries along the Front were exhumed and gathered together in a limited number of burial places. These monuments became popular destinations for a battlefield tourism led by the schools, Fascist mass organisations, veterans' associations and the Italian Alpine Club.[41]

The most important of these places of remembrance is Redipuglia, near Triest. At this site alone, over 100,000 bodies were laid to rest, among them the remains of 60,000 unidentified corpses.[42] The site is a gigantic apotheosis of military order and discipline reaching beyond the grave – but also of equality and anonymity. Class differences are levelled. The dead rest under huge steps that climb a slope appearing to lead up into the heavens. The steps are inscribed with the names of the soldiers and a thousandfold the word "Presente". The impression is that the fallen have reported for a roll-call before the state and the 'Duce'. Yet even here the regime was not able to free itself entirely from the monarchy and the church: there is a resurrection chapel with related frescoes and crosses large enough to be seen from far away, and at the site's centre stands the monumental sarcophagus of the Duke of Aosta, a member of the royal family and army commander during the War. He had died peacefully in 1931 and here represents the leadership principle as a counterpoint to the mass of the dead.

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39 See Monteleone and Saracini, „Monumenti italiani", 649.

40 See Isnenghi, "Grande guerra", 305; Isnenghi, *Guerre degli italiani*, 347-348.

41 See Dogliani, "Monuments aux morts", 92-94.

42 See Patrizia Dogliani, "Redipuglia", in: Mario Isnenghi, ed., *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita*, Roma 1996, 375-390, 378.

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# The Impact of the First World War on Lebanon's History and Memory: The Case of Shakīb Arslān (1869-1946)

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Historical writing constitutes one of the main stages in the intellectual development of a social group or entity (community, nation, etc.), its expectations and aims, as well as its arguments. Assuming that history-writing and ideology, as well as history and identity, are mutually related – indeed interdependent – history-writing provides a basis to establish or dispute identity. Growing from past and present experiences and often succumbing to ideological concerns, historical images look to the future. Some scholars speak of "new pasts for new futures". In this vein, history may show itself as memory – collective, social or cultural – as recovery or as invention. Of course, these three manifestations of history often overlap.[1]

This paper deals with 'history as memory' – as related to Lebanon during the First World War. It focuses on the activities and writings of a prominent figure in this period, Shakīb Arslān. Born in the Lebanese village of Shuwayfāt in 1869, Arslān died in Beirut in December 1946, just a few weeks after his return to Lebanon from 28 years of exile in Europe, spent mostly in Germany and Switzerland. Hailing from a wealthy, princely Druze family in Mount Lebanon, Arslān was groomed to become an 'Arab-Ottoman gentleman'.

The tutelage of the Egyptian scholar and reformer Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849-1905) and the example of the Pan-Islamist activist Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1897), with whom Arslān had close contacts, made him a dedicated exponent of Islamic solidarity. Throughout his life, Arslān asserted the Arab identity of his Druze community and established himself as an orthodox Muslim serving the interests of Sunni Islam, in his view most perfectly upheld by the Ottoman Empire. Politically this meant, both before and during the War, Arslān's uncompromising loyalty to the Ottomans. Even after their downfall – with secular Arab nationalism, Lebanese confessionalism and European liberalism in the ascendant – his loyalty expressed itself in terms of a sort of 'Islamic nationalism'.[2]

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1 Bernard Lewis, *History - Remembered, Recovered, Invented*, Princeton 1975; Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1993; David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge 1988. - As for memory, see the new approaches of Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, Munich 1999; Jan Assmann: *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis*, Munich 2000, 11-44; Harald Walzer, ed., *Das soziale Gedächtnis. Geschichte, Erinnerung, Tradierung*, Hamburg 2001.

2 The basic study of Arslān that fully treats his life, his thinking and his activities is by William L. Cleveland, *Islam against the West. Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic National-*

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In his 'autobiography' (*sīrah dhātiyyah*) and in a series of articles published in the journal al-Manār,[3] Arslān tried to justify his position during the War, when Mount Lebanon lost its special status of *mutaṣarifiyya* and became a regular Ottoman territory under the harsh rule of Aḥmad Jamāl Pasha (1872-1922), military commander-in-chief and civilian governor of the Syrian provinces from December 1914 to January 1918. Arslān's familiar relationship with Jamāl Pasha gained him a number of critics and enemies, mostly from Mount Lebanon's Christians, but also from parts of the Druze community, including some family members. Trying to be a trusted Ottoman loyalist and, at the same time, a responsible local intermediary between Jamāl Pasha and his fellow Arabs, earned Arslān animosity.

Arslān was drawn so centrally to the events of the war by the special position of his family, and his own personality. The Arslāns had long-standing contacts in Istanbul; after 1912, family members supported the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the backbone of the Ottoman government. Arslān's own, almost friendly, relationship with the Ottomans went back to the later years of ʿAbdülḥamīd's II reign. Like this 'sultan-caliph' (ruled 1876-1908/09), Arslān perceived the danger of Europe's imperial ambitions in the Ottoman Empire. From 1908 onward, he was given a chance to serve his cause. Although he was an active supporter of the monarchy, he approved of the Young Turks' new regime and gave his full support to its policy to repel foreign invasion. During the Italian invasion of Libya and the Balkan Wars (1911-1913), Arslān expressed his pro-Ottoman stance, both through his presence at the front and his public statements supporting Islamic solidarity.[4]

Between 1914 and 1916, Arslān served as deputy to the Ottoman parliament (as did his brothers Nasīb and ʿĀdil). Because of his excellent connections with leading Ottoman officials, he was a member of the welcoming delegation for Jamāl Pasha upon his arrival in Syria, after the Ottomans entered the First World War in October 1914. Arslān saw in the Turkish commander a man of "belief in

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*ism*, Austin 1985; for Arslān's views on the Druzes to be Arabs and Muslims, see also Toufic Touma, *Paysans et institutions féodales chez les druses et les maronites du Liban du XVII siècle à 1914*, Beirut 1972, 751-753, and Kais M. Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, Leiden 1992, 356-357.

3 Al-Amīr Shakīb Arslān, *Sīrah dhātiyyah*, Beirut 1969 (the *Sīrah* does not cover Arslān's whole life, it stops in 1922); Shakīb Arslān, "Kawārith sūriyyah fī sanawāt al-ḥarb," *al-Manār* 23 (1922), 121-134, 202-212, 290-299, 373-382, 459-466, 548-552, republished in Najīb al-Buʿaynī, ed., *Dhikrayāt al-amīr Shakīb Arslān ʿan al-ḥarb al-kauniyya al-ūlā wa-ʿan al-majāʿa fī Sūriyā wa-Lubnān*, Beirut 2001. This volume also contains other statements by Arslān related to the First World War, taken from various contemporary journals. Beyond this, Arslān was a prolific writer on many other, non-political topics including poetry and classical Arabic literature.

4 For further details, see Cleveland, *Islam against the West*, 16-23; for a comparison of Arslān with two famous contemporaries, see Axel Havemann, "Between Ottoman Loyalty and Arab 'Independence'. Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, Jirjī Zaydān, and Shakīb Arslān," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5-6 (1987-1988), 347-356.

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the virtues and future of an Ottoman nationalism based on Moslem solidarity".[5] He appreciated the commander's religious orientation and also shared his impatience to demonstrate in some forceful manner the vitality of Islamic Ottomanism. Full of enthusiasm, Arslān participated in the commander's first (failed) military campaign.[6]

Nevertheless, Arslān quickly established himself as an interlocutor between Jamāl Pasha and the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon. Although opposed to the Francophile sentiments of many Maronite Christian leaders, Arslān preferred a conciliatory attitude toward the Maronites, hoping to win their loyalty to the Ottoman cause and preserve the empire's unity. He tried to maintain peace between the different communities in Mount Lebanon. Seven years after the war, he wrote in a letter to a friend: "I used to say to the Druze, 'He who has a Christian friend whom he visits once a month, should, under the present circumstances, visit him once a week. And if you are able to perform any humanitarian deed for the Christian sons of your watan, now is the time to do it, for our main pillar is harmony'..."[7]

However, it did not take long for Arslān to discover that the role of mediator, in his view a plea for Ottoman patriotism, could be risky. Because of his pro-Ottoman position, both before and during the war, and his easy access to Jamāl Pasha, Arslān was regarded by a wide spectrum of people as a collaborator. This accusation dogged him for the rest of his life, more than all the other controversies and rumours that he engendered.

In the 1960's Sunni Muslim writers, such as Sāmī al-Dahhān and Aḥmad al-Sharabāṣī, presented brief apologia but otherwise avoided discussing this critical period in Arslān's life. The Maronite historian Toufic Touma, however, labelled Arslān "the man of equivocal situations" (l'homme des situations équivoques), referring both to his role in wartime Lebanon and later in European exile.[8] Touma's negative evaluation of Arslān can be read as a typical example of a confessionally-biased historiography. More generally, it testifies to the entanglement of history-writing, ideology, history and identity, which still looms large in Leba-

5 George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, New York 1965 (Reprint), 151. Jamāl Pasha has mostly been characterized in a purely negative manner; for a reassessment of his personality and policy, see Hasan Kayal, "Wartime Regional and Imperial Integration of Greater Syria during World War I," in: Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler (eds.), *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation. Bilād al-Shām from the 18th to the 20th Century*, Stuttgart 1998, 295-306; for Jamāl Pasha's own views, see Ahmed Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman, 1913-1919*, New York 1922.

6 Arslān, *Sīrah*, 140-147.

7 Published in: Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Yazbak (ed.), *Aurāq lubnāniyyah* 2 (1956), 340.

8 Touma, *Paysans et institutions féodales*, 729-740; Sāmī al-Dahhān, *al-Amīr Shakīb Arslān. Ḥayātuhu-wa āthāruh*, Cairo 1960, 74-77; Aḥmad al-Sharabāṣī, *Shakīb Arslān. Dāʿiyyat al-ʿurūba wa-l-Islām*, Cairo n.d. [1963], 34-40.

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non.[9] Here, the focus lies on Arslān's own views and defence of his actions. There are in particular four wartime events which formed his reputation: 1. the treatment of the Maronite patriarch Ilyās Ḥuwayyik; 2. the deportation of several hundred Arab notables to Jerusalem and Anatolia; 3. the execution of Arab 'nationalist' leaders in Beirut and Damascus; 4. the failure of the famine-relief effort. How did Arslān comment on these issues? How did he justify himself?

## *The Maronite Patriarch*

After Jamāl Pasha's arrival in Damascus he summoned Patriarch Ḥuwayyik to reside there as well, to keep him under the governor's immediate supervision. In Arslān's opinion, this would have been a personal humiliation to the patriarch and an insult to the Maronites in general. Discussing the matter with Jamāl Pasha, Arslān managed to persuade him that Ḥuwayyik would best serve his community by remaining in Mount Lebanon. Arslān was praised by the Maronite leaders for his success in maintaining their patriarch's sanctity.[10]

However, in the following months, Jamāl Pasha's position hardened, and the patriarch was forced to present himself several times to the Turkish commander. This stood in sharp contrast to the courteous treatment accorded the leading Druze religious dignitary (*Shaykh al-ʿaql*), including a personal visit by Jamāl Pasha to his residence, in the company of Arslān. Some Maronites thus reproached Arslān for working to degrade the office of their religious leader.[11] The charge cannot be supported – Arslān himself indirectly dismissed it – but it is representative of the confessional tensions and suspicions that permeated Mount Lebanon, and of the sentiments engendered by the Druze *amīr*. Although some people felt uncomfortable with Arslān's growing influence, he was nonetheless expected to act as mediator, at least as an interlocutor, with the Turkish officials.

## *The Deportations*

During his reign over Syria, Jamāl Pasha exiled several hundred people (Arslān estimates the number at 1,000) to Anatolia, and probably less than 100 to Jerusalem. In the commander's view, a policy of deportation, which was introduced in early 1915, would be an effective tool to intimidate people and to keep potential opponents of Ottoman policy under control.[12] The deportees were accused of

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9 I have recently dealt with Touma's work in this larger context; see: Axel Havemann, *Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung im Libanon des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts. Formen und Funktionen des historischen Selbstverständnisses*, Beirut/Würzburg 2002, 196-198.

10 Arslān, *Sīrah*, 136-139; Arslān, "Kawārith sūriyyah," 125-126; compare Touma, *Paysans et institutions féodales*, 705-709.

11 *Aurāq lubnāniyyah* 1 (1955), 547-549.

12 Jamāl Pasha, *Memories*, 213.

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close contacts with the French or British, and therefore considered disloyal. According to Arslān, he came to the defence of some of the arrested and exiled Maronite notables. Among them was Khalīl al-Khūrī, father of Lebanon's first president Bishāra al-Khūrī. The latter's memoirs praised Shakīb Arslān for efforts to obtain his father's release from exile.[13]

Other victims of deportation, however, waited in vain for Arslān's help to be set free. In some cases, he could manage a release, in others not. As he pointed out, he was not a completely free mediator. Although his access to Jamāl Pasha gave him a chance to intercede, he had no power to override the commander's decisions.[14] So Arslān was left vulnerable to charges of favouritism. Touma, for example, states that Arslān's claim to have worked equally hard for the release of all the exiles may not be true and that the only Druze to be permanently deported were his political enemies.[15] There is no evidence to prove these reproaches, however, whereas a great deal of evidence points to Arslān's concern for the well-being of the exiles.

## *The Executions*

By the summer of 1915, Jamāl Pasha was a frustrated ruler; his forces were depleted and Syria was seething with discontent. Rumours of underground movements were incessant, and he decided to intensify his repression. He pronounced the Arabs mentioned in documents seized from Beirut's French consulate to be guilty of treason. Later, he wrote: "I decided to take ruthless actions against the traitors."[16] These actions consisted of arrests and hearings before a military tribunal. Eleven individuals were hanged in Beirut in August, 1915, and another 21 more were executed the following May in Beirut and Damascus.[17] Because the executions included both the innocent and the guilty, they became a symbol of Arab martyrdom to Ottoman oppression. Anti-Turkish hostilities were stirred up, and with the proclamation of the Arab Revolt in June 1916 the executions became a patriotic symbol.

For some people, Shakīb Arslān was considered complicit in the executions. Arslān exerted great efforts to defend himself from these charges. He claims he thought arrests were temporary, and was deeply shocked upon learning of the

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13 Arslān, *Sīrah*, 147-149, 155; Arslān, "Kawārith sūriyyah," 126; Bishāra al-Khūrī, *Haqā'iq lubnāniyyah*, Beirut 1960, vol. I, 96.

14 Arslān, *Sīrah*, 154-159.

15 Touma, *Paysans et institutions féodales*, 731. On the contrary, Arslān even pleaded for the return of one of his opponents: *Sīrah*, 154.

16 Jamāl Pasha, *Memories*, 207.

17 Nicholas Z. Ajay, Jr., "Political Intrigue and Suppression in Lebanon during World War I," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5 (1974), 140-160; Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 185-190.

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executions. He claimed to have argued with Jamāl Pasha up to the point where his own life was under threat, and that he had vainly tried to appeal to CUP leaders Ṭalʿat Pasha and Enver Pasha. Arslān says he was powerless to do anything against the Ottoman will. His opponents argued that Arslān was not as helpless as he claimed.[18]

## *The Famine*

Although he lost confidence in Jamāl Pasha because of the executions, Arslān's loyalties to the Ottoman Empire were not shaken by wartime events in Syria. This led to another, very serious, accusation after the war: that he did nothing to relieve the suffering caused in Lebanon by the famine. With the loss of manpower through military conscription, and the confiscation of land and crops by the occupying Ottoman Army, the civilian population faced terrible hardships. These became further aggravated by a plague of locusts, by the collaboration of some Syrian merchants with Ottoman officials in withholding produce, and by the allied forces' effective blockade.[19]

In his account, Arslān describes in great detail how he worked tirelessly in the Ottoman parliament and in private with authorities in Istanbul to arrange for international relief organisations to distribute food in Lebanon. He blamed the Allies for the thousands of deaths in Lebanon, because they had refused to lift the blockade even for humanitarian reasons.[20] Arslān's arguments appear credible, and there is no evidence to disprove his defence. Why he should be held especially responsible for the famine is not clear. Even Touma points to the fact that the blockade hurt Arslān's friends and family as much as it did other people in Lebanon.[21] However far-fetched the accusations might be, they followed Arslān throughout his life.

Arslān's association with Jamāl Pasha during the first two years of the war provided the major reason for the attacks and charges against him. An explanation for Arslān's behaviour and actions can be found in his character, in his political and social beliefs, and in the special circumstances of Mount Lebanon. Arslān was clearly a man of involvement who could not, in this time of crisis, remain passive. His autobiography reveals a man always on the move, touring between various cities on some mission or another. He was convinced he was engaged in a just cause, namely, loyalty to the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic caliphate.

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18 Arslān, *Sīrah*, 170-183; Arslān, "Kawārith sūriyyah," 129-132.

19 Antonius: *The Arab Awakening*, 203-204, 240-242; for an analysis of this issue, see Linda Schilcher, "The Famine in Syria 1915-1918," in: John Spagnolo (ed.), *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective. Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani*, Reading 1992, 229-258.

20 Arslān, *Sīrah*, 225-236.

21 Touma, *Paysans et institutions féodales*, 739.

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Until the executions of 1915, Arslān found no fault with Jamāl Pasha's strict security measures. He wrote: "I was in complete accord with Jamāl Pasha until he began this new policy of terror and oppression, which I saw as a great danger to the future of the Ottoman Empire."[22] When he criticised the commander's policies, he did not condemn their severity as much as their failure; in Arslān's view, rather than preventing a split between Arabs and Turks, these policies caused one. In his complaints to Jamāl Pasha, he made clear that a policy of force would be contrary to the interests of the empire. Concerning the release of a group of prisoners threatened with execution, he stated: "Some of those detained in ʿAley are my friends and some are my enemies, but that is not the issue. The only issue is the concern of the empire and the community of Islam."[23]

Arslān explained his standpoint not as anti-Arab, but as pro-Islamic. For example, he was infuriated by the Arab Revolt because he regarded it as an attack on Islamic unity, and as a treacherous act of separatism directly responsible for the post-war European occupation of the Arab provinces. Arslān's vision of a strong and integrated Islamic community explains in part his relationship with Jamāl Pasha, who was also deeply committed to the political and social role of Islam and the preservation of the empire. These nearly identical views let Arslān remain in Syria after the executions, where he worked as editor-in-chief for Jamāl Pasha's propaganda newspaper al-Sharq.[24] The paper attempted to appeal to the Islamic sentiments within the empire and, at the local level, to support the Turkish commander's unpopular policies in Syria.[25]

In late 1916, Arslān went to Istanbul to resume his work in parliament; he never lived in Syria again. His reputation among many people was based on their perception of his acts during the first two years of the World War. In 1917 and 1918 Arslān, on behalf of the Ottoman government, went to Germany to establish contacts with the diplomatic and academic community and to campaign for the Ottoman cause amongst the German public. At the final victory of the Arab Revolt in October 1918, Arslān was in Berlin. As the collapse of the Ottoman Empire appeared imminent, he decided not to return to the Middle East out of fear for his security. He moved to Switzerland, which became his main place of exile, although he always travelled between different cities, mostly in Europe. Near the end of his written memories, Arslān lamented: "I have been in

22 Arslān, *Sīrah*, 157.

23 *Ibid.*, 160, 175-176, 180.

24 *Ibid.*, 169-170.

25 Apart from local editors, German orientalists were called by the Ottomans to serve on the staff of the paper and to inform about the benefits of the wartime alliance to Islamic peoples. For the Germans' role, see Kayal, "Wartime Regional and Imperial Integration"; Johann Strauss, "The Disintegration of Ottoman Rule in the Syrian Territories as Viewed by German Observers," in: Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler, eds., *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation. Bilād al-Shām from the 18th to the 20th Century*, Stuttgart 1998, 307-329.

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Europe ever since."[26] For some years in the 1920's, he made Berlin his base of political activities.[27] However, that stage of his life as well as his later career is another story.

The German historian Reinhart Koselleck has demonstrated the importance of synchronic and diachronic factors in the influence of both World Wars on social consciousness.[28] The synchronic factors include: 1) The immediate experiences of the war, which are different for each individual but which lead to common ground for all those concerned; 2) The consciousness with which these experiences are digested, and which is shaped by specific political, social and cultural conditions stemming from the pre-war period, such as language, religion, political organisation, generation, gender, family and affiliation to class and stratum; 3) The specific activities of people during war, such as giving orders or having to execute orders on command, to be at the front or to work away from the front, to be exposed to forms of compulsory labour or other privations.

The second diachronic factors are the experiences that grow into memory. The memory of war is subject to the war's consequences; many things are forgotten while others persist to agonise the consciousness; many events are suppressed, and others glorified. In this process, victory and defeat usually turn into changing perspectives of past, present and future, of experiences and expectations, dependent on the group or social unit concerned. One manifestation of this matter is the political worship (or cult) of the dead and, closely connected to it, the function of war memorials.[29]

When applying these general principles to the case of Shakīb Arslān, both the synchronic and the diachronic factors more or less fit into what has been said about him. His immediate war experiences, his ('semi-official') functions and the general socio-cultural conditions that shaped him offer clear proof that synchronic factors were a formative force of social consciousness.

Looking at the diachronic factors, things become more ambiguous. We hear nothing from Arslān about political worship of the dead or of war memorials, but in his writings there is a lot of memorising of the Ottoman past and justification of his own behaviour, if not that of Jamāl Pasha. As for collective memory stemming from war experiences and the way of intellectually digesting these experiences, it seems that one can consider this man as a historian in a larger sense.

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26 Arslān, *Sīrah*, 262.

27 Berlin was in these (and later) years a centre of Muslim, mostly Arab opposition, with an own press of most different political views; see Gerhard Höpp, *Arabische und islamische Periodika in Berlin und Brandenburg 1915-1945, Geschichtlicher Abriss und Bibliographie*, Berlin 1994.

28 Reinhart Koselleck, "Erinnerungsschleusen und Erfahrungsschichten. Der Einfluss der beiden Weltkriege auf das soziale Bewußtsein," in: *ibid.*, *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik*, Frankfurt 2000, 265-284.

29 For the cult of the dead and war memorials in the Ottoman context, not only with regard to Syria during the First World War, see Klaus Kreiser's contribution to this volume.

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He is not a professional history-writer, but someone whose memories and rationalisations clearly reflect his social consciousness and political beliefs. Arslān offers a fascinating example of the relationship between history and identity in one man, between the different layers of time and place as embodied in the different stages of human life.[30]

30 Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 19-26, 78-96.

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# Taming the Past, Shaping the Future: The Appropriation of the Great War Experience in the Popular Fiction of the Early Turkish Republic

*Erol Köroğlu (Sabancı University, Istanbul)*

The First World War of 1914-1918 is an obvious historical fact. Yet its relatively long duration and the multiplicity of its direct and indirect agents make it a complex one. The abundance of events during the war, and the various points of view, direct our attention to an important and problematic issue: the remembrance and representation of the war. There is no fixed narrative of the war – either in general world history, or in national ones. The complex nature of the war inhibits the creation of a particular narrative and causes multiple interpretations by different narrators in every culture.

Narratives of the war, especially the fictional ones, are "belated" representations. An author who writes a novel or a memoir about the war in a later period, say 1928, approaches the event *retrospectively*. The author's reminiscences and interpretations of the event are heavily determined by the political, socio-cultural and psychological conditions of his/her present time. During this belated narration, then, the interpretation does not proceed from the war as a real event. Rather, the event itself becomes the result of interpretation.

Wolfgang G. Natter, in his *Literature at War 1914-1940: Representing "the Time of Greatness" in Germany*, interprets the representation of the war in German literature within the framework of this belatedness:

> "[F]ragments that could not be integrated or that were censored from integration into a context of significance at the time of the event were, after a period of forgetting, reordered according to later experiences. The concept of belatedness suggests an ongoing rewriting of experience, impressions, and memory traces in the context of new phases of development. (...) Post-1918 writings of the war can thus be perceived as engaged in a wider, belated, and inter-discursive battle for control over the war's events, dates, and symbols – that is, as individual efforts to authorize specific competing narratives and their attendant "lessons" for the present."[1]

This analytical framework is applicable not only to the German case, but to all others as well. This paper will focus on the Turkish praxis of the "inter-discursive battle for control over the war" by a general evaluation of Turkish popular fiction. But before that, I would like to use an autobiographical passage to exemplify my theoretical perspective on matters of remembrance and representation.

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1 Wolfgang G. Natter, *Literature at War 1914-1940: Representing the "Time of Greatness" in Germany*, London/New Haven 1999, 6, 17.

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The author of the passage is Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (1889-1974), one of the most prominent novelists of the Republican period. He was also an important political figure, a *Jacobin* Turkish nationalist, meaning he rejected everything from the Ottoman past, and in its place he propagandized a new national history that began in 1919 with the War of Independence. This passage is from the epilogue of his *Ergenekon*, a compilation of essays he wrote during the War of Independence, published in 1928:

> "When I was eighteen years old, I was an anarchist. My biggest goal was to assassinate a powerful, important man. Later on, I wanted to be a revolutionary leader and to mobilize the masses. When I was thirty years old, I gave them all up, became cynical and indulged in material pleasures. However, a spiritual sickness woke me up from the sickness of the flesh. A mystical love struck me. After all this, I found the love of nation and wished to sacrifice my life for this love. Yet I was my own prophet in this new religion. Therefore, my soul was yearning for a leader. Whence I heard His [*sic*] voice beyond Anatolian plateaus, I understood the difference between illumination and fire, ecstasy and fever. Only under the command of this teacher of my nation, I was illuminated. My soul found a divine order. Shame to those vagrant souls that lack such an order!"[2]

In this passage, Karaosmanoğlu gives us a teleological narrative of his conversion to nationalism between 1900 and 1928. He was a Young Turk in 1900 and wanted to kill Sultan Abdulhamit II (1876-1909). Around 1908 he wanted to be a revolutionary who would lead the masses. He was desperate in 1912-1913 because of the tragedies of the Balkan Wars, and became a nationalist during the Great War. Yet, the Unionist warlords could not fulfil his ideals and he found his real leader, *the teacher of the nation*, Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938) during the War of Independence.[3]

These are the hidden historical facts in that passage. However, the reminiscence and representation of those facts here by Karaosmanoğlu are not natural or objective. Had he found himself in different political, socio-cultural and psychological conditions in 1928, he would have narrated this story differently. Therefore, we observe the features of belatedness in Karaosmanoğlu's narrative, in which the real events are not the basis of his interpretation, but the result of his interpretation.

This conclusion about Karaosmanoğlu's narrative is also applicable to the popular[4] novels of the early Republican period in Turkey. These novels use the

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2 Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Ergenekon: Milli Mücadele Yazıları* (*Ergenekon: National Struggle Writings*), Istanbul 1973, 227-228.

3 For the Turkish history of this period see Erik J. Zurcher: *Turkey: A Modern History*, revised ed., London and New York 1997, 80-173.

4 I use this term to indicate that these are *second-rate* novels. However, there was no distinction between them and the more literary and canonized novels during their time of production. The reading public of early Republican Turkey was not differentiated and defined according to social class distinctions. *Milli roman*/national novel was a preferred label in the publishing sector for all historical and political novels of the period. It is relevant to compare these popular novels with the British middlebrow novels. For a detailed discus-

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historical facts of the Ottoman-Turkish Great War experience to tell their stories; however, the objective reality of the events are transformed into a subjective representation, in which the era of their production, i.e. their political, social and cultural contexts, are formative.

"Narration" of the Ottoman-Turkish war experience in Turkish historiography and literature is an ongoing process and it displays peculiar features different from that of other cultures. This peculiarity stems from a specific historical context. According to students of the war, the Ottoman Empire was the most anachronistic belligerent in the Great War, due to the war's highly industrialized nature.

We understand the relevance of this generalization when we look at the various problems facing the Ottomans during the war. We can see the wartime Ottoman state faced enormous political, demographic, economic, fiscal, educational and infrastructural insufficiencies compared to other belligerents, especially Britain, France, and Germany.[5] The Ottomans survived until the end of the war with the economic and military assistance of their main ally, Germany.[6] Defeat, however, led to occupation and the end of the Ottoman state in 1918.

The story did not end there, nor did it begin in 1914. "The sick man" of Europe in the 19th century, The Ottoman Empire was bleeding badly in the first decade of the 20th century, the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 being the forerunners of collapse. Due to that ordeal, the Young Turk government viewed the Great War as an opportunity to regain the lost power of the state. Yet it ended in failure and Turkish nationalists started the War of Independence in Anatolia, the last resort of the old empire. That struggle ended with a victory against the Greek and Armenian armies and created a new nation-state in 1923. Given this historical context, it would not be wrong to look at the Ottoman-Turkish experience of the Great War as a ten-year struggle between 1912 and 1922.

This ten-year period determines the perception and representation of the war after 1922 in modern Turkish literature. At first glance, defeat in the Great War looks like year zero; the Ottoman Empire collapses at the end of the war and the "national struggle" that creates a new nation-state starts soon after. On the surface, modern Turkish historiography and literature also approach the matter from this perspective, yet at a more profound level, the dominant attitude in the "narration" of this historical event is different.

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sion of these novels in the context of the First World War, see: Rosa Maria Bracco, *Merchants of Hope: British Middlebrow Writers and the First World War, 1919-1939*, Oxford 1993.

5 For a succinct presentation of this argument, see: Erik J. Zurcher, "Little Mehmet in the Desert: The Ottoman Soldier's Experience", in: *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced*, eds. Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle, London 1988, 230-241. For the most detailed narrative of Ottoman experience of the war, see: Ahmet Emin [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, New Haven 1930.

6 For the German-Ottoman alliance of the First World War, see: Ulrich Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire: 1914-1918*, Delmar and New York 1968.

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There is no "Great War" theme or genre in modern Turkish literature. However, "the War of Independence" narratives of the nationalist period (until the early 1940s) and the Leftist works in 1960s are well-known chapters in modern Turkish literary historiography. Those fictions generally do not start with the national struggle, but with the Great War.

I want to give a list of those novels, which is not comprehensive, but shows the prevalence of those now-forgotten narratives during the heyday of the nationalistic period between the 1920s and the 1940s:

1. Ercüment Ekrem Talu, *Gün Batarken* (*At Dusk*), Istanbul 1920.
2. –, *Kan ve Iman* (*Blood and Faith*), Istanbul 1922.
3. Mehmet Rauf, *Halas* (*Salvation*), Istanbul 1928.
4. Aka Gündüz, *Dikmen Yıldızı* (*The Star of Dikmen*), Istanbul 1928.
5. Etem Izzet, *On Yılın Romanı* (*The Novel of the Ten Years*), Istanbul 1933.
6. Burhan Cahit Morkaya, *Yüzbaşı Celal* (*Captain Celal*), Istanbul 1933.
7. –, *Cephe Gerisi* (*Home Front*), Istanbul 1933.
8. –, *Ihtiyat Zabiti* (*Reserve Officer*), Istanbul 1933.
9. Attila Aykut, *Silah Arkadaşları I* (*Comrades in Arms*), Istanbul 1942.
10. Server Bedi [Peyami Safa], *Ateş* (*Fire*), Istanbul 1944.
11. Behzat Sinopluoğlu, *Kan ve Sevgi* (*Blood and Affection*), Istanbul 1946.
12. Sami Hekimci, *Gülseren ve Milli Mücadele* (*Gülseren and the National Struggle*), Istanbul 1949.

Indeed, these widely read popular novels of the nationalist period are not unusual for Turkish fiction in their approach to the Great War. Even the canonical texts by such nationalist authors as Halide Edib Adıvar (1884-1964) and Karaosmanoğlu remember and represent the Great War experience in terms of the subsequent War of Independence.

However, their interpretations betray more individualistic voices. Those interpretations of the so-called "high literature," especially the ones written in the earlier 1920-1928 period, influenced post-1928 popular fiction in many ways. Despite this influence, the main factor shaping those novels was not their high-literary precursors, but the official interpretation of the Kemalist power bloc.

After the establishment of the Republic, the 1923-1928 period forms a distinctive phase in which Mustafa Kemal and his cadre struggled against their opponents in political and economic realms: the liberal economic experiments in a poor, sparsely populated and underdeveloped country, Kurdish uprisings in Eastern Anatolia, abolition of the Caliphate, elimination of remnants of the CUP (Committee of Union and Progress) and so on. Political leadership did not have the time to intervene in the realm of cultural hegemony. Hence, relatively more individual interpretations and depictions of the nation are seen in narratives written before 1928.

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The popular novels written after 1928 were more in accordance with the official ideology because Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk*[7] (1927) provided a meta-narrative for the interpretation of the national struggle story. The literature written in 1933, the tenth year of the Republic is exemplary for its replication of the official ideology. We can say that the intervention of the state in the cultural realm is stronger in this period, literally the period of "the single-party regime." The popular novels published from 1933 on represent the experience of the Great War in a standard, even formulaic manner.

The main concern of the Turkish nationalistic literature until the end of the 1940s is the construction of a national imagination. It is a belated project continued from the late Ottoman period. The construction of the nation-state hegemony greatly needed a completed national imagination. Therefore, the popular fiction writers – as the organic intellectuals of state hegemony – tried to reinforce national unity by creating an affirmative national image in their literary production. In these popular novels' representations of the Great War, then, the main protagonist is the nation.

The nation's overall image in those novels is a "sacrificed Messiah nation".[8] They carry the true national essence of Turkishness in every moment of the war and even under the regime of the Ottoman Empire. This national essence, however, is limited to specific groups: Anatolian peasants, young nationalist intellectuals from Istanbul – who served as reserve officers in the war – and low-ranking army officers.

Characters belonging to these groups are positively national, even before the Great War. They suffer every sort of pain at the fronts – or the home fronts – but they are patient and self-sacrificing in the face of all for the salvation of the *patria*. They are depicted as awaiting their time and the proper leader to appear to become a happy and exemplary nation. They confront the assaults of external

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7 *Nutuk* ("speech" or "discourse" in Turkish) was a speech delivered by Mustafa Kemal as the President of the Turkish Republic at Ankara during the Second Congress of the Republican People's Party between 15-20 October, 1927. His polemical narrative of the history of the National Struggle was directed against his political rivals, and it took 6 days to deliver. It was first published in Arabic script in the same year and published several times in Latin script. For an English edition, see: *Nutuk: A Speech Delivered by Ghazi Mustapha Kemal "Atatürk" in October 1927*, Istanbul 1985. For a discourse analysis of *Nutuk*, see: Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları*, cilt 1: *Atatürk'ün Nutuk'u*. (*The Official Sources of Political Culture in Turkey*, vol. 1: *Ataturk's Nutuk*), Istanbul 1991.

8 This metaphor is the creation of Romantic nationalism; Jules Michelet imagined the nation as such in his studies of the French Revolution. Polish nationalist and poet Adam Mickiewicz referred to Poland as the "Christ" of the nations. The religious imagery of nationalism is functional: "References to past sacrifices became a familiar theme of modern national histories, in part because such references carried a strong political message. If ancestors had sacrificed their blood and bodies to save the nation (the images were often religious), the present generation should not hesitate to make new sacrifices for those who would come later." Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism: Political Cultures in Europe and America, 1775-1865*, New York 1998, 56.

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enemies and sacrifice their blood not only for their own objectives, but also for treacherous non-Muslim minorities, Arabs and incompetent allies such as Germany, Austria and Bulgaria.

Popular fictions do not depict the wartime enemies – such as Britain, France and Russia – as the detestable figure of "the other". However, their imperialistic greed is criticized in some instances, for example, when the Gallipoli defence is represented. However, the war is accepted as a neutral fact, though undesirable.

The unforgivable episodes of the war involve the treacherous acts of the non-Turkish elements within the nation. Though the Turks and their commanders fought for them, the minorities collaborated with the enemy. Ottoman Armenians, Greeks, Jews and Levantines deserted the army to rob the nation; Arabs stabbed the Turkish nation in the back for British gold.

Reckoning with these internal enemy figures is one of the most common themes in popular novels. The novelist frequently reminds the audience of its national enemies and satisfies the reader with the unhappy fate of these enemies at the end of the novels. They could not accomplish their evil goal of destroying the Turkish nation, and instead became slaves of the imperialists after the war. The Arabs are a special source of hatred in the popular fiction of the 1930s.[9]

In short, ethnic groups living under the umbrella of the empire are rejected and depicted as traitors in the popular novels. When a character that is not Turkish appears as a member of the Ottoman army in a novel, he figures negatively. He is recruited forcefully; he is reluctant to fight; even if he fights, he does not have national faith; when he finds the opportunity, he flees the front. The non-Turkish ethnic groups are not the only rejected groups in the popular novels. These novels have a more important and, in a sense, more abstract "other" to reject. The *ultimate other* is the Ottoman past.

The rejection of the past is ambivalent. Some popular novels were more realistic and rejected the dictatorial war government of the Committee of Union and

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9 The main reason for this hatred is the famous Arab Revolt and brutal Arab raids against the retreating Ottoman Army in 1918. Burhan Cahit Morkaya (1892-1949), the famous popular novelist of 1930s, was the champion of anti-Arab sentiments: "I assure you that the enmity of these blasted subjects [Arabs] is worse than the strongest state's hostility. It is more dangerous. There are rules in a war. Yet these are ingrates during peace and cruel and treacherous in revolt... They were these Muslim Arabs, even those kaffiyeh-wearing cursed Sheriffs who blinded captured Turkish soldiers with red-hot irons in the Havran Mutiny." Burhan Cahit Morkaya, *Captain Celal*, Istanbul 1933, 49.
There was, however, a more overt and functional reason for this hatred during the 1930s. Mustafa Kemal and his cadre implemented radical reforms to create a modern and secular Turkey. Strong religious life and institutions were the targets of the Kemalists during this period and the image of "filthy, treacherous, uncivilized and fanatical Arab" functioned as a metaphor of the anti-modernist, fanatically religious internal "other". For Kemalist modernization and its interaction with the Arab world, see: Orhan Koloğlu, *Bir Çağdaşlaşma Örneği Olarak Cumhuriyet'in Ilk Onbeş Yılı (1923-1938)* (*The First Fifteen Years of the Republic as a Modernization Case (1923-1938)*), Istanbul 1999.

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Progress. Other, more ambitious novels – such as Etem Izzet's (1903-1967) *The Novel of Ten Years* or Aka Gündüz's (1886-1958) *The Star of Dikmen* – attack anything Ottoman, including the Sultanate and the Caliphate. Sometimes a total critique of all the aspects of the past is evident in the same novel.

If we start from the more realistic points raised in these novels, the main target is economic corruption during the war years. During the four years of the war, profiteering became a common reality, due to the CUP's well-known "national economy" policies. Those war profiteers and black marketers are depicted as vampires, even if they are ethnic Turks, and they are evaluated outside the nation, as collaborators with internal enemies.[10]

These exploiters are important as they point to the real felons in the popular novels: the main responsibility of the nation's suffering rests with the politicians and the statesmen. When we add the Ottoman high command to this group, the higher ranks of the CUP appear on the stage.

The popular novels represent the power brokers of the CUP as inept, greedy and egoistic. They are not capable of leading the nation; they jeopardize the future and gamble with the blood of Turkish soldiers. They are all perverts of power and stupidly sacrifice the nation to gain more power through an alliance with imperial Germany. All the defeats, such as the Sarıkamış and the Canal campaigns, occur due to their ignorance, ineptitude and greed.

The implications behind those accusations are clear indeed. The Unionist regime was the predecessor of the Republican period and its remnants were alive, though the leading triumvirate of Enver, Talat and Cemal Pasha had vanished as a political danger for Mustafa Kemal. The 1926 executions of the CUP remnants, following an assassination attempt on Mustafa Kemal in Izmir, eliminated all opposition in political life.

The Independence Tribunal accused and punished the suspects not only for the assassination plot, but also for their Unionist past. On the other hand, Mustafa Kemal needed to legitimate this purge symbolically. The *Nutuk* thus appeared in 1927 to accuse and condemn Unionist activities. The popular novels after this year used the *Nutuk* as a model and rejected the Unionist past as a non-national and irrational period. The protagonists in these novels with true national essence are not happy under the corrupt power of the Unionists and await the appearance of the Messiah, or the national chief, who will unite his people around himself and liberate them.

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10 "The profiteers aren't concerned about the blood on the gold they collect; on the contrary, the scent of blood makes that money more precious. You would think they are drunk with it. If you stop the war, they'll be stupefied; because they don't know how to trade and how to save their wealth in normal times. The merchant of war is a different creature. 'Conscience' means 'benefit' in his language. He salts his bread with people's tears." Ercüment Ekrem Talu, *Gün Batarken* (*At Dusk*), Istanbul 1920, 33.

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The Ottoman Sultanate and the Caliphate are also depicted as the enemies of the nation. The true nationalist heroes in these popular novels anachronistically denigrate and criticize the legitimacy of the Sultan during the war years. They sublimate the secular national will and openly praise the Republican system in public.

There are also aspects of the Great War that were approved of. Every heroic or glorious event during the war is appropriated as the property of the nation. The Gallipoli defence is emphasized in those novels as a prototype or harbinger of the National Struggle; the brave Turkish army stops the strong European navies and armies with its national faith alone. The German military aid and the existence of German commanders such as Liman von Sanders are not mentioned at all. The true national essence, with Mustafa Kemal as its future leader, is identified as the real agent of this and other glories of the Great War.

The remembrances of and references to the Great War years in Turkish popular novels of the nationalist period are problematic due to their *engagé* approaches. The popular, even trashy, fictions of the nationalist period handle the matter of historical representation as a device to excoriate the old regime and thus to reinforce the new one. They accentuate the continuity between the Great War and the War of Independence to rewrite history in accordance with the new regime's cultural hegemony.

The story is teleological and totalizing. It is a nation's struggle against both the imperialistic external enemies and the internal ones, like non-Turkish minorities and the Sultan's agents. There is a national essence from the outset and its destination is the contemporary Turkish nation-state.

Popular fiction writers of the nationalist period used the Ottoman-Turkish Great War experience divergently to sanction and strengthen the political hegemony of the new regime's political leadership. That selective appropriation of the Great War in popular fiction signifies a cultural project that is concordant with the new regime: the imagination and formation of an ethnic Turkish national identity.

The writers were successful, on the whole. They produced stereotypes, ideological formulae and the components of a nationalist mystique. Through their construction of an illusory "eternal nation", they made a major contribution to the nationalist project of *taming the past and shaping the future.*

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# La «Grande Guerre» Vue Par La Diaspora Turque En Suisse (1918-1923)

*Hans-Lukas Kieser (Université Zurich)*

La Suisse fut une place importante pour les organisations politiques ottomanes et pour leurs activités de publication, non seulement au tournant du siècle comme centre de l'opposition jeune-turque mais aussi durant la Grande Guerre. Elle était alors probablement l'espace de mobilisation le plus important du courant nationaliste turc hors Turquie.[1] Dans la seule Bibliothèque nationale à Berne, on trouve plus d'une vingtaine de livres et de brochures en français, parues à Genève, Lausanne et Berne. Publiés dans les années 1918-1920, ils proviennent des milieux turcs de Suisse romande. Mon étude s'appuie avant tout sur ce corpus de textes.

On pourrait peut-être s'avancer assez loin pour dire que la guerre contre les Arméniens et les Grecs, contemporaine à ces publications, a bien été gagnée sur le plan militaire en Asie-Mineure, mais que, face à une Europe en grave crise d'orientation, la guerre symbolique, dont fait partie la lutte pour le contrôle discursif du passé récent et sa récupération, a été gagnée à Istanbul, Genève et Lausanne. Le triomphe turc à la Conférence de Lausanne en 1922 et 1923 sur les plans diplomatique et médiatique ne représente qu'une dernière étape d'une entreprise menée au dit endroit depuis une décennie.

L'interprétation de la Première Guerre mondiale constitue un aspect capital de ce corpus. Le travail de mémoire et de représentation n'est point uniforme, mais prend dans les années 1919-1920 une dynamique nationaliste prononcée et cohérente qui est en rapport étroit avec les besoins politiques. La vision de la Grande Guerre telle qu'elle est tracée dans ces années fondatrices du nouvel Etat turc reste déterminante pour la suite. C'est un regard à courte distance que les Ottomans tout aussi bien que les Européens jettent dans l'entre-deux-guerres sur les événements. On est loin d'une «juste mémoire» au sens de Paul Ricoeur.[2] Mais tandis qu'en Europe, dans la deuxième moitié du XX$^{e}$ siècle, le traumatisme d'Auschwitz et la nouvelle dynamique de l'Union européenne ont contribué à une distanciation historique substantielle, en Turquie un pareil recul, source d'innovation, n'a pas pu avoir lieu. Une certaine vision à courte distance de la «Guerre générale», du *Harb-i Umumi,* prévaut car il fait implicitement partie du mythe de la création de l'Etat-nation turc. La déconstruction du mythe n'a commencé que récemment dans certains milieux académiques.

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1 Pour un traitement général du sujet de la diaspora ottomane tardive et son rôle pour la conception révolutionnaire d'une «nouvelle Turquie» voir mon livre *Vorkämpfer der «neuen Türkei». Revolutionäre Bildungseliten am Genfersee (1870-1939),* Zürich: Chronos, 2005.

2 Paul Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli,* Paris: Seuil 2000, I.

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Après une brève introduction au sujet de la colonie turque, qui est le milieu de production de la mémoire en question, les aspects suivants de ma recherche seront abordés :

- Introduction au sujet de la colonie turque en Suisse.
- La vision de la Guerre comme opportunité à saisir.
- La guerre comme crime (qui a donc des responsables qu'il faut punir et dont il faut se distancier une fois pour toutes).
- La destruction de la communauté arménienne et la question des minorités.
- La perspective nationaliste à légitimer à travers un travail de mémoire.

## *I. La colonie turque en Suisse*

Le Foyer turc à Lausanne est à l'avant-garde des Foyer turcs, du mouvement national et du "turquisme social" (*içtimâî Türkçülük*) en Europe. Il est fréquenté par la grande majorité des étudiants turcophones sur place. Le *Türk Yurdu* en Europe est en rapport étroit avec le *Türk Ocağ* à Istanbul, fondés tous les deux en 1911,[3] à la veille donc d'une période de guerres et dans un climat interethnique déjà tendu parmi les étudiants ottomans en Europe. En fait la «Grande» guerre commence pour les Turcs en 1911 et se termine seulement en 1922.

Les membres des Foyers turcs d'Europe qui se réunissent en mars 1913 dans un congrès près de Genève exaltent la religion du patriotisme, se promettent de n'épouser que des filles turques et de tuer ceux qui s'opposeraient au progrès national.[4] Ils jurent sollennellement, de rendre l'Asie-Mineure la patrie de la nation turque (au sens ethno-religieux).[5] Les écrits ottomans de ces cercles sont dès le début imbus d'un esprit apocalyptique, social-darwiniste et ethno-nationaliste et se distinguent quelque peu de notre corpus en français à usage externe. Les Foyers turcs en Suisse romande servent pourtant surtout comme clubs. Les nombreux étudiants qu'ils accueillent ne sont politisés qu'au fur et à mesure des événements. Des jeunes hommes aux sensibilités libérales comme Ahmed Bedevi ou Sadri Celâl les fréquentent également.

J'estime à 2000 ou 3000 le nombre de ressortissants de Turquie en Suisse en 1918. 817 résident alors dans le seul petit canton de Genève, toutes ethnies confondues. Il s'y ajoute entre un et deux mille descendus dans les hôtels et pensions de la ville.[6] Au sein de la grande diaspora de l'élite ottomane qui se ras-

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3 *Lozan Türk Yurd'un Beyannamesi*, 1911, cité in Yusuf Sarınay, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihî Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları 1912-1931*, Istanbul: Ötüken 1995, 108. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, vol. 1 (1908-18), Istanbul: İletşim 1998, 441 et 458-60.

4 Yusuf Kemal Tengirşek, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1981, 124.

5 Cf. Kieser, *Vorkämpfer*, 64-70 et 149.

6 Rapports sur la gestion du Conseil d'Etat du Canton de Genève, 1918 (Archives d'Etat de Genève).

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semble depuis 1914 en Suisse, on trouve notamment les dirigeants de l'opposition comme le Prince Sabahaddine, Ahmed Rechid Pacha, Lütfi Fikri Bey et Kemal Midhat Bey (le petit-fils de Midhat Pacha)[7] ainsi que des personnalités comme Süleyman Nazif et le docteur Rıza Nur.

A côté de ceux-ci, la jeune génération est très active. Pendant la Première Guerre mondiale elle crée une société de jeunes du nom de *İsviçre Türk Gençleri Cemiyeti* qui englobe aussi bien les Yurtçular que ceux rassemblés autour des dirigeants de l'opposition. Au sein de cette société une Association pour la protection des intérêts turcs – le *Türk Menfaatlarını Koruma Cemiyeti* qui rappelle fort les *Müdafaa-i Hukuki Milliye Cemiyetleri* en Anatolie – est fondée juste après la prise d'İzmir par l'armée grecque.[8]

Face à la division imminente de l'Empire, une sorte de trêve s'installe dans la colonie turque. Un nationalisme fortement élitiste devient alors le dénominateur commun de l'écrasante majorité. Bien plus rapidement que parmi les différentes fractions turques en Asie-Mineure, la convergence des intérêts semble s'installer dans l'exil. L'idée de la défense des intérêts turcs efface les divisions parmi cette élite en formation, même entre turquistes et libéraux. Au moins une vingtaine de ces jeunes, comme Mahmud Esad Bozkurt, Şükrü Saraçoğlu, Sadri Celâl Cevad, Cemal Hüsnü et Yakup Kadri Osmanoğlu se retrouveront quelques années plus tard nommés à d'importants postes au sein de la République kémaliste.

Au lendemain de la Guerre, le présent et le futur proche priment sur toute chose. Au sein de cette dynamique politique, une interprétation sélective du passé récent se met en place. Il ne peut être question de recul, pourtant nécessaire à toute vision plus ou moins juste et équilibrée du passé. Nous verrons que seuls quelques oppositionnels plus âgés font preuve d'une vision plurielle et pluridimensionnelle. Néanmoins, c'est à un vrai travail de professionnel auquel s'attelle alors la colonie de l'élite turque. Il dépasse de loin les activités des autres communautés ex-ottomanes. Contrairement à ce qu'on pourrait penser, le nombre de publications provenant de la diaspora arménienne, par exemple, reste nettement inférieur à celles des Turcs. Les Arméniens, nombreux à Genève, ne peuvent s'appuyer sur les mêmes structures organisationnelles et sur des ressources étatiques comparables. En revanche, pour le mouvement national turc, colonie, consulat et ambassade travaillent main dans la main, et ceci de manière prononcée depuis l'automne 1918. Seul le représentant de la légation ottomane à Berne, Réchad Halis, installé par le gouvernement Ferid Pacha (4 mars 1919 - 1 octobre

7 Cf. *Tribune de Genève* 3.1.1918 (programme de la ligue «Paix et Libération» et proclamation aux Arméniens), 6.1.1918 (réaction de L. Baronian), 13/14 janvier 1918 (interview par Aly El-Ghaiaty; pour ce journaliste et nationaliste égyptien libéral cf. Marc Trefzger, *Die nationale Bewegung Ägyptens vor 1928 im Spiegel der schweizerischen Öffentlichkeit*, Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn 1970, 109-120.

8 Significativement, cette association porte le titre français *Ligue de défense des droits ottomans* (v. sa publication *Atrocités grecques*, Genève 1919).

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1919), ne fait décidément pas le jeu des ex-Unionistes, mais il est alors trop tard pour démanteler leurs réseaux bien enracinés dans la diaspora.[9]

Un publiciste particulièrement prolixe, et, à sa manière, brillant est Rechid Safvet [Atabinen] qui est alors l'agitateur turc dominant en Suisse. Né en 1884 et formé au lycée Saint-Joseph à Istanbul, puis aux Sciences Po à Paris, il fut employé au ministère des Affaires étrangères sous Abdulhamid. Plus tard il enseigna à l'Ecole supérieure des finances à Istanbul. Il était fonctionnaire au ministère des Finances et probablement membre des services secrets, quand il arriva en automne 1918 à Genève. Ici il devint le plus important des publicistes turcs.[10] Fort en rhétorique, versé en diplomatie et maîtrisant parfaitement le français, il a beaucoup influencé les étudiants turcs et n'a rien négligé pour charmer certains politiciens suisses à qui il se présentait comme conseiller d'ambassade et directeur du cabinet du ministère des Finances.[11] Ce grand bourgeois d'Istanbul, amateur de voitures de luxe, a l'audace de se présenter en février 1919 au Congrès socialiste international de Berne au nom des Turcs d'Europe et en mars, au nom du monde musulman, à la Conférence internationale pour la Société des Nations, également à Berne. A la Conférence de Lausanne en 1922/23, Rechid Safvet est le secrétaire général de la délégation turque. Il deviendra ensuite député d'Ankara et, plus tard membre du *Türk Tarih Kurumu*. Il continuera à écrire, notamment des articles pour le périodique nationaliste *Türk Yurdu*.[12]

Rechid Safvet, Ahmed Cevdet [Oran] du journal İkdam et Mehmed Ali Tevfik, tous les trois des professionnels de la plume et de la politique, proches des Unionistes, sont chargés de former l'opinion aussi bien parmi les nombreux jeunes de leur colonie que vers l'extérieur. Ils collaborent étroitement avec les milieux nationalistes d'Istanbul, y compris étatiques, et, plutôt tardivement, avec le gouvernement d'Ankara.[13] Ils logent dans des hôtels de luxe et, à en croire les

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9 Pourtant il reste encore à sa place jusqu'au novembre 1920, au-delà donc du grand-vizirat d'Ali Rıza (2 octobre 1919-3 mars 1920). Cf. Sinan Kuneralp, *Son dönem Osmanlı erkân ve ricali (1839-1922). Prosopografik Rehber*, Istanbul: Isis 1999, 51. Cf. lettre de Réchad Halis du 9 novembre qui dénonce la présence de onze Unionistes célèbres en Suisse, BAr (Archives Fédérales) E 2001 (B), vol. 5a.

10 Cf. *Tribune de Genève*, 30.1.1919.

11 Cf. Archives d'Etat de Genève, Justice et Police 1919, Rechid Safvet Bey, Dossier 6814. Cf. la dédicace écrite à la main «A Son Excellence Monsieur Ador [Président de la Confédération]. Hommage d'admiration et de respectueux dévouement» (brochure *Les Turcs et la Question d'Arménie*, exemplaire de la Bibliothèque Nationale).

12 En Turquie kémaliste il était député de Kocaeli. Cf. *Türk Ansiklopedisi* et Ali Çankaya, *Mülkiye ve Mülkiyeler*, Ankara: Mars Matbaası 1968-1969, vol. 2, 1064-65. Cf. aussi Yusuf Sarınay, *Türk Ocakları*, 342.

13 En 1922, Rechid Safvet et Mehmed Ali Tevfik ainsi que Ahmed Rechid, Dr. Âkil Muhtar et Yakub Kadri sont membres de la Cemiyet-i Akvam'a Müzaheret Cemiyeti (Société pour le soutien de la Société des Nations), fondée en 1922 à Istanbul sur l'initiative du gouvernement de Tevfik Pacha. Cf. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, t. 2 (1918-22), Istanbul: İletişim 1999, 602.

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rapports de la police genevoise, disposent de sommes d'argent exorbitantes.[14] Les publications du Turc-Yourdou et du Bureau Permanent du Congrès Turc de Lausanne, toutes postérieures à la production de Safvet Bey, me paraissent largement influencé par le travail de ce maître qui n'a alors que 34 ans.

Venons aux éléments constitutifs de la vision de la Guerre dans l'immédiat après-guerre. Je propose de diviser en trois parties notre corpus de textes qui comprend un millier de pages, disponibles à la Bibliothèque Nationale Suisse.

Les écrits des «professionnels» proches du pouvoir, notamment de Mehmed Ali Tevfik et de Kara-Schemsi, alias Rechid Safvet Atabinen.

Les publications des Foyers Turcs en Suisse romande et du Bureau Permanent du Congrès Turc de Lausanne, qui se font sous la direction des professionnels.

Un troisième groupe de textes qui, tout en s'insérant dans le mouvement national turc dans le sens large du terme, se démarque des deux groupes précédents par une approche politiquement libérale et une vision différente de la Grande Guerre.

Pour les besoins de la contextualisation, je me réfèrerai aussi à des textes ottomans ou turcs de représentants de la colonie en Suisse comme le Prince Sabahaddine, Süleyman Nazif ou Ahmed Bedevi Kuran. Le corpus d'un millier de pages environ que la Bibliothèque Nationale Suisse conserve, ne représente d'ailleurs qu'une partie de la grande quantité de publications turques en langues occidentales, produites ces années-là en Suisse. Il y avait un centre d'information (İstihbarat Merkezi), installé à Lausanne, qui publiait en 1921-1922 un journal en anglais nommé *Turkey – Monthly Organ of the Turkish Congress at Lausanne*. Ce dernier ne se trouve pas à la Bibliothèque Nationale.[15]

En venons aux perceptions de la Guerre Mondiale.

## *II. La Guerre comme événement salutaire*

Dans un recueil de conférences d'une centaine de pages qui date d'août 1918, Mehmed Ali Tewfik, fonctionnaire aux affaires étrangères durant la Guerre,[16] nous développe sur une trentaine de pages sa vision positive, pour ne pas dire euphémique, des guerres depuis 1911. Cette publication sur papier de qualité s'adresse à un public étranger et apparaît chez Staempfli & Cie, une maison renommée à Berne. L'auteur affirme s'être «constamment inspiré de la vérité histo-

14 BAr E21-10557, 16. 1. 1919.

15 Il se trouve à la *British Library*. Pour une analyse du journal voir Kieser, *Vorkämpfer*, 95-98; cf. aussi Ahmed Bedevi Kuran, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İnkilâp Hareketleri ve Milli Mücadele*, Istanbul: Celtüt Matbaası 1959, 697.

16 Sur la page de garde il se présente comme rédacteur en chef du journal le *Hilal*. D'après Kuran, qui ne donne pas de date exacte, Mehmed Ali Tewfik avait travaillé aux Affaires étrangères (Ahmed Bedevi Kuran, *İnkılap Tarihimiz ve Jön Türkler*, Istanbul: Kaynak 2000 [1945], 449). Pour plus d'informations sur Tewfik v. Kieser, Vorkämpfer, 80, 91, 93.

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rique» et ne pas avoir fait «un livre de propagande».[17] Pour lui, c'est pendant la guerre de Tripolitaine et la guerre des Balkans que s'est réveillée la conscience nationale de tout un peuple [turc], s'effectuant sous «l'heureuse influence»[18] de la menace extérieure et du travail d'une pléiade d'écrivains patriotes.[19] Dorénavant, je le cite, «la seule pensée qui préoccupe et hante l'esprit de notre peuple» est de «conjurer le terrible danger qui nous menace, pour échapper à la servitude et à la mort qui nous attendent, il faut faire un effort surhumain.» Au lieu commun du danger s'ajoute celui du réveil national : «A partir du moment où le réveil du peuple turc revêt un caractère général, total et définitif [...] il n'y a plus de Vieux ni de Jeunes-Turcs, toute la nation s'anime du même esprit. [...] Tous se réunissent autour d'un même idéal». Cet idéal se résume dans ces mots : être une nation souveraine, civilisée, forte et respectée, «marcher dans la voie de l'éternel progrès» et «s'assurer un brillant avenir».[20]

Mehmed Ali Bey voit toute la nation unie autour de l'idéal sublime et affirme qu'elle «s'est imposée» la «nouvelle et formidable guerre» – c'est ainsi qu'il désigne la Guerre Mondiale – dans cet esprit qui, selon lui, «triomphe dans tous les champs de l'activité nationale.»[21] De nouveau apparaît le thème de la «Turquie nouvelle» : «C'est pour réaliser cet idéal sacré que nos soldats versent depuis quatre ans leurs sang [...] et que l'on travaille avec ardeur dans le pays, que l'armée des législateurs, des écrivains, des instituteurs et de tous ceux qui forment l'élite de la nation accomplit son effort quotidien et fécond.» Mehmed Ali Bey met notamment en relief les 40 sociétés anonymes et le «Crédit National Ottoman» fondés en 1917 et «ayant vraiment un caractère turc».[22]

Dans le même temps, il tait ceux qui ont payé le prix de la campagne de nationalisation forcée (à savoir les chrétiens ottomans qui se voyaient exclus du nationalisme purement musulman tel que les Unionistes le concevaient).[23] Et à l'exception de quelques phrases subordonnées, les horreurs de la guerre sur le front et à l'arrière sont complètement évacuées de ce discours du progrès national.

Pour légitimer l'entrée en Guerre l'auteur recourt au registre du complot. Tout comme l'Empire d'Allemagne, écrit-il, l'Empire ottoman étaient une cible de la part des Alliés, la Russie tendant à anéantir la Turquie depuis Pierre le Grand.[24]

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17 Mehmed Ali Tewfik, *La Turquie et Les Turcs: Trois conférences sur le passé et sur l'état actuel du peuple turc*, Berne: Stæmpfli & Cie 1918, 5

18 *Ibid.*, 74.

19 *Ibid.*, 59.

20 *Ibid.*, 60, 61, 66.

21 *Ibid.*, 61, 66.

22 *Ibid.*, 63.

23 Cf. Erik Jan Zürcher, «Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists: Identity Politics 1908-1838», in: K. Karpat, ed., *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, Leiden: Brill 2000, 158-59.

24 Tewfik, *La Turquie*, 70-73.

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Dans la grammaire discursive de Mehmed Ali Bey, le sujet qui devine le sinistre complot, pressent le partage, se solidarise avec l'Empire allemand, décide l'entrée en guerre et répond avec enthousiasme à la mobilisation de toutes ses forces est le peuple[25] turc. Aux yeux de l'auteur, c'est donc une guerre vraiment nationale et populaire, tout autant que le sera la guerre d'indépendance aux yeux des Kémalistes. En résumé, la «Guerre Générale» est «une lutte libératrice», voire «la plus formidable de toutes celles que le peuple turc ait entreprises», car elle mobilise toute la nation, y compris les femmes, écrit Mehmed Ali Bey en août 1918.[26]

Outre les termes «peuples» et «nation», l'adjectif «surhumain» à connotation positive est fréquent chez cet auteur. Quand ce terme se répète il y a grand risque qu'une déshumanisation de certains «ennemis» s'opère dans de pareils discours. Dans ce livre à destination occidentale l'auteur évite pourtant toute ombre au tableau. Le mot en question apparaît le plus souvent dans l'expression «effort surhumain» effectué en vue de l'idéal national. La défense réussie des Dardanelles en particulier est une bataille qui «dépasse toute imagination et prend [...] le caractère d'une vision surnaturelle, fantastique, incroyable.» Elle est le fruit d'un «effort vraiment surhumain», d'une «incomparable vaillance», d'un «héroïsme surhumain». «Sur cette presqu'île de Gallipoli», dit l'auteur, «notre armée a écrit de son sang la plus belle épopée de notre histoire [...].»[27] Tout en donnant aux alliés de la Turquie une aide salutaire, cette victoire et la guerre dans son ensemble n'ont qu'un seul objectif : la réalisation du grand idéal turc, «d'être le seul maître sur le territoire national» (que l'auteur ne définit point, mais qu'en mars 1913, le congrès des Foyers turcs avait déclaré anatolien) et d'y réaliser «le progrès, la culture et la civilisation».[28]

## *III. La Guerre comme crime*

A l'opposé de Mehmed Ali Bey, pour les libéraux qui se réunissent autour du Prince Sabahaddine et de l'ancien ministre de l'intérieur Ahmed Rechid, la guerre est une mésaventure politique, un désastre et un crime dont sont responsables les dirigeants unionistes. Le salut du pays commande qu'on les punisse et que l'on prenne résolument ses distances avec eux. Sabahaddine, Ahmed Rechid et Lutfi Bey figuraient à la tête du Congrès libéral turc de l'Hôtel Métropole à Genève en janvier 1919.[29]

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25 Parfois: «la nation». *Ibid.*, 70-80.
26 *Ibid.*, 80-81.
27 *Ibid.*, 83.
28 *Ibid.*, 88, 90, 92. En été 1918 Tewfik Bey croit que la Guerre finira très tôt et que, grâce à ses «exploits héroïques» la Turquie sera une fois pour toute à l'abri des «intrigues» et des «convoitises» (p. 87).
29 Kuran, *İnkılap Tarihimiz*, 445; *Tribune de Genève* 18.1. et 23.1.1919.

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Le «gouvernement turc a eu la criminelle folie de partir en guerre», écrit Ahmed Rechid dans un livre paru en 1918 à l'Imprimerie du Journal de Genève.[30] L'intention de ce mémorandum d'une cinquantaine de pages est, comme son titre *Appel à la Justice* l'indique, de défendre le peuple turc contre les préjugés occidentaux et les injustices diplomatiques. Aussi bien chez Mehmed Ali qu'Ahmed Rechid, on trouve une défense de l'image et des intérêts des Turcs, mais leurs visions de la Guerre et du régime de Guerre s'opposent totalement.

Selon Ahmed Rechid et le Prince Sabahaddine, les Turcs s'étaient laissés «mystifier» par la «fable» du complot et d'un ennemi russe séculaire et ont «considéré l'attitude agressive du gouvernement turc comme une défense légitime.»[31] L'argument central du mémorandum est la profonde différence entre les dirigeants unionistes et le peuple. Dans l'introduction de son livre qui date du 25 novembre 1918, Ahmed Rechid parle d'un «peuple [turc] doublement martyr» aussi bien de la part des Unionistes, qui les avaient fait souffrir par une guerre inutile et criminelle, que de la part des Alliés qui se comportent en vainqueurs, non pas en justes arbitres.

Kémal Midhat Bey partage la vision Ahmed Rechid dans une brochure intitulée *La Turquie Nouvelle*, publiée à Genève en 1918. «Comme excuse de leur conduite [politique de guerre]», écrit-il, «les Jeunes Turcs brandissaient l'épouvantail de l'impérialisme russe.»[32] A la différence des deux autres chefs libéraux, mais en accord avec la propagande alliée, Kémal Midhat désigne comme suprême coupable l'Allemagne impérialiste et militariste dont les Unionistes seraient devenus le jouet.[33] Fin 1917, ce petit-fils de Midhat Pacha avait formé à Genève la Ligue ottomane de «Paix et Libération» qui préconisait une paix séparée et invitait tout particulièrement les Arabes et les Arméniens à s'y rallier.[34]

La brochure *Le droit du Turc*, publié à Genève en mai 1919, nous fait entendre la voix plus émotionnelle de la génération estudiantine et post-estudiantine de la colonie turque telle qu'elle s'est organisée dans l'Association pour la protection des intérêts turcs. Nedjat alias Sadri Celâl Bey, son auteur, qui est aussi membre du Türk Yurdu, reprend la distinction libérale entre «honnêtes gens» et «bandits de l'Union et Progrès» ainsi que la thèse de la victimisation du peuple turc par ses dirigeants et par l'Entente. Le terme «peuple martyr» est redondant chez lui.[35]

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30 Ahmed Réchid, *Appel à la justice*, Genève: Imprimerie du Journal de Genève 1918 (Ancien ministre de l'intérieur de Turquie), 33.

31 Ahmed Rechid, *Appel*, 8. Cf. Nezahet Nurettin Ege, *Prens Sabahaddin. Hayatı ve İlmî Müdafaaları*, Istanbul: Fakülteler Matbaası 1977, 408.

32 Kémal Bey Midhat, *Turquie Nouvelle*, Genève : Atar, 1918, 3.

33 *Ibid.*, 6,10.

34 Il dénonce dans son appel aux Arméniens la «lâche extermination de nos frères arméniens que ces bandits [régime unioniste] ont déportés et massacrés par centaines de mille.» Il continue en disant: «Pour justifier ces crimes, le gouvernement a fait publier plus d'une brochure cyniquement mensongère contre les Arméniens.» *Journal de Genève*, 1.1.1918.

35 Nedjat, *Le droit du Turc*, Genève : H. Koch 1919, 5.

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Dans ce même ordre d'idées Nedjat s'est assimilé un argument unioniste fréquent,[36] celui du clivage religieux, ethnique et social entre l'élément turc et l'élément chrétien : les chrétiens constituant, en collaboration avec les étrangers, les capitalistes, opposés aux prolétaires et soldats musulmans. Les Turcs souffriraient donc d'une triple oppression. Dans cette perspective, il annonce la révolution des opprimés.[37]

C'est en usant d'un peu de rhétorique que le jeune Sadri Celâl Bey dénonce le régime de Guerre comme criminel, et presque à contrecoeur qu'il atteste du massacre des Arméniens. Sa vision du passé est dominée par le sentiment de révolte contre l'invasion grecque à Izmir en mai 1919. Les considérations historiques ne sont qu'une introduction à l'exposition du «droit du Turc» (tel est le titre de sa publication) qu'il entreprend avec ferveur et en désignant le plus grand coupable à ses yeux : les vainqueurs de la Guerre qui sont les décideurs du présent, le plus misérable qui soit.

Nedjat s'appuie explicitement sur les publications antérieures de Réchid Safvet. De novembre 1918 à mai 1919, ce dernier n'a publié pas moins de six livres et brochures qui ont livré la base d'arguments aux publications postérieures de la diaspora nationaliste. Les statistiques et les documents que Safvet Bey convoque proviennent en grande partie de l'administration ottomane. Comme toutes les Associations anatoliennes pour la défense des droits musulmans (ou «nationaux», ou «turcs» – ce qui est alors parfaitement synonyme), la diaspora turque politisée en Suisse tend à prouver à l'appui de statistiques démographiques, établies à ce dessein, que le droit de dominer politiquement dans toute l'Asie Mineure reviendrait aux musulmans.[38]

## *IV. La vision des massacres arméniens*

La moitié des textes de Rechid Safvet traitent de la question arménienne. Sa toute première publication en Suisse date de l'automne 1918. Elle s'intitule *Les Turcs et la question d'Arménie* et elle est suivie de *L'extermination des Turcs* et de *Turcs et Arméniens devant l'Histoire*. Ce dernier livre est le plus étoffé de Safvet Bey, il a 123 pages d'une impression serrée.

L'argument de base reste toujours le même et se résume dans cette phrase : «La tragédie turque est bien plus ample et autrement poignante que le drame armé-

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36 Cf. Kara-Schemsi (= Rechid Safvet Atabinen), *Les Turcs et le Panhellénisme*, Genève: P. Richter 1918, 15; idem, *Le prolétariat Turc au Congrès socialiste International de Berne*, Bern 1919, 14 ; Tekin Alp, *Türkismus und Pantürkismus*, Weimar: Gustav Kiepenheuer 1915, 39-40 et 62.

37 Nedjat, *Droit*, 18, cf. 7-8.

38 Cf. Zürcher, *Identity Politics*, 163-65.

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nien.»[39] Oui, il y a eu les massacres d'Arménie, mais les vraies victimes de la Guerre ce sont les Turcs. Conférer aux Arméniens des droits dus à leur qualité de victimes serait faux. Il y en outre un décalage sensible dans les trois textes de Safvet Bey : le premier, datant de l'automne 1918, affirme encore très clairement «les crimes de nos autorités». Il demande la punition des «Unionistes radicaux» et, à cette fin, une «enquête impartiale» par une «commission composée de ressortissants d'Etat neutres», et non par les Puissances.[40] Cet argument s'efface presque complètement dans les deux autres textes. Ceux-ci cultivent l'image des Arméniens comme provocateurs, exploiteurs et traîtres. Toutefois, déjà en automne 1918, il désigne «une trahison arménienne stipendiée par la Russie» comme cause première du grand malheur. Contrairement à l'usage unioniste interne qui, durant la Guerre, désignait par le terme *vatandaş* (compatriote) seulement les musulmans, Savfet appelle dans sa brochure à destination occidentale les Arméniens d'Asie-Mineure «nos malheureux compatriotes chrétiens d'Asie».[41] Comme les Unionistes, les *Müdafaa-i hukuk-i millî cemiyetleri*, y compris leur chef Mustafa Kemal, comprenaient par les termes *vatandaş, millet* et *millî* exclusivement les musulmans.

«Ce qui est criminel, ce que désavoue la conscience turque, ce fut la façon barbare dont cette déportation eut lieu», écrit Safvet Bey en automne 1918.[42] Mais étant lui-même fonctionnaire du régime de Guerre, sa distanciation vis-à-vis des «Unionistes radicaux» reste quelque peu rhétorique. Son argumentaire correspond pour l'essentiel à celui déjà mis au point par la propagande de Guerre. A ses yeux, le grand plan de réformes pour les Provinces orientales de février 1914 n'était, ainsi que Cemal et Talaat Pacha l'écrivent dans leurs autobiographies, qu'un grand complot international au nom des Arméniens dans le but d'une invasion russe et de l'extermination de la majorité musulmane.[43] Dans la même logique l'entrée en Guerre ne fut rien d'autre que la prévention du complot.[44]

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39 Kara-Schemsi, *Les Turcs et la question d'Arménie*, Genève 1918, 3. Cf. par contre p. ex. Talât Pascha, *Talât Paşa'nın hâtıraları*, éd. par A. Kabacalı, Istanbul: İletişim 1994 (1946), 40.

40 Quant au terme «Unionistes radicaux» v. Kara-Schemsi, *Turcs et Arméniens devant l'Histoire*, 1919, 9. Cf. la volonté du Grand vizir Tevfik Pacha, de faire appel à des juges de pays neutres (cf. Şefik Okday, *Der letzte Grosswesir und seine preussischen Söhne*, Göttingen: Muster-Schmidt Verlag 1991, 95). Pour Savet, la complicité des Allemands ne fait pas de doute (Kara-Schemsi, *Question d'Arménie*, 10).

41 Kara-Schemsi, *Question d'Arménie*, 6.

42 *Ibid.*, 8.

43 Kara-Schemsi, *Devant l'Histoire*, 11.

44 Clairvoyant par ailleurs, Safvet considère les Arméniens comme victimes de «la haine des Musulmans solidarisés devant la menace [internationale] commune» (Kara-Schemsi, *Devant l'Histoire*, 10). Il n'a pas non plus tort en traçant certains parallèles entre Unionistes et Dachnak quant à l'idéologie chauviniste et social-darwiniste respective, sans pourtant comprendre la différence entre un mouvement foncièrement de droite (Ittihadisme) et l'opposition arménienne qui, partiellement, s'insère dans le réseau socialiste (Kara-Schemsi, *Devant l'Histoire*, 9-13).

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Est-ce parce que sa vision générale se heurte à d'importants obstacles et à des témoignages importants que le brillant rhéteur et diplomate, qui a encore fréquenté l'école hamidienne, perd de sa contenance? Son discours habituellement bien mesuré et soigneusement argumenté éclate quasiment face au problème arménien. Ses insultes à l'adresse de Henry Morgenthau et d'André N. Mandelstam sont teintées d'antisémitisme.[45] Quiconque ose défendre les droits arméniens est un diplomate ignare, un missionnaire fanatique ou un publiciste vénal. En les qualifiant de fanatiques et sans autre argumentation, il jette à la poubelle le témoignage de tous les missionnaires sur le terrain.[46] Afin de relativiser les massacres de 1915, qu'il avoue pourtant, et de soutenir sa thèse principale, à savoir que les Turcs et musulmans furent de loin les premières victimes de l'histoire moderne et de la «Guerre générale», il résume les pertes subies par l'Empire ottoman et la misère des *muhacir* depuis qu'il y a eu agression et intervention russes, donc depuis le XVIII[e] siècle. Les guerres des Balkans de 1912-1913 figurent à l'apogée de ce récit qui se termine par cette conclusion : «A côté de cette boucherie, les massacres des Arméniens [...] sont des plaisanteries.» Si les Turcs n'étaient pas vraiment tolérants, ils auraient exterminé les Arméniens déjà au XVI[e] siècle ou, au plus tard en 1895, ajoute-t-il ailleurs.[47] Hormis quelques généralités, la narration de Safvet saute curieusement les années 1915-1917. Elle est en revanche très documentée sur les atrocités commises par les milices arméniennes lors de la retraite russe d'Erzurum en 1918.[48]

Le traitement des nombres et des statistiques, très présentes dans tout le corpus en question, manifeste les mêmes raccourcis vis-à-vis des périodes historiques et des catégories. Victimes militaires et *muhacir*, guerres des Balkans et «Guerre générale» toutes confondues, Safvet compte quatre millions de Turcs, déclarés victimes de la trahison arménienne, grecque, balkanique et maronite.[49] Il réduit le nombre des victimes arméniens à 300 000, ce qui serait, selon lui, une plaisanterie par rapport au premier chiffre.

L'intrigue de la libelle *L'extermination des Turcs* ne réside pourtant pas dans ce que je viens de dire, mais dans la déclaration dramatique que, en janvier 1919, 10 millions de Turcs seraient en train d'être exterminés par la politique des Puissances. Cette déclaration – en fin de compte rhétorique, bien sûr – rend en définitive caduque toute considération de la souffrance des Arméniens. Face à l'extermination en cours des Turcs, Safved dénonce comme criminel, raciste et haineux le fait que les Turcs soient accusés d'avoir éliminé les Arméniens. Il y a

45 Kara-Schemsi, *Devant l'Histoire*, 21-22.
46 *Ibid*, 16-17.
47 Kara-Schemsi, *Question d'Arménie*, 5.
48 Et cite largement les mêmes sources que Cemal Pacha dans son autobiographie (Ahmed Pascha Djemal, *Erinnerungen eines türkischen Staatsmannes*, München: Drei Masken Verlag 1922) – peut-être un indice de la bonne communication dans les réseaux ex-Unionistes même en Europe.
49 Kara-Schemsi, *L'extermination des Turcs*, Genève 1919, 1-2.

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par ailleurs une utilisation du pronom «nous» bien significative qui manifeste, à la surface du discours, une vérité qui lui est sous-jacente et que Safved Bey personnifie parfaitement, à savoir l'identification avec l'Etat aussi bien hamidien qu'unioniste qui perdure face au problème arménien et dont le souci primordial est la domination politique turco-sunnite.

Ce mémorandum adressé à Clémenceau, premier Ministre de la France, comporte une surenchère dans les termes qui sont à peine expliqués, comme «extermination», «anéantissement», «assassinat», «croisade» et «exclusion», à quoi se rajoute la menace ouverte de guerres et de révolutions à venir. Malgré des concessions rhétoriques, Safvet Bey est loin du véritable examen historique et de conscience que les libéraux, dont les dirigeants sont nettement plus âgés, posent dans le même temps à Genève comme condition de la constitution d'une nouvelle Turquie. «Si nous avons le courage d'avouer nos fautes et de préciser nos défauts franchement, nous parviendrons à reconstituer un Etat moderne florissant [...]», écrit Kémal Midhat.[50]

Tout comme chez Mehmed Ali Bey, le sujet de la grammaire discursive de Safvet en 1919 sont les «vrais Turcs» innocents, vaillants, martyrs. C'est le même vocabulaire qui s'utilise de manière synchronique durant les congrès des associations pour la défense des droits nationaux.[51] La majorité écrasante étant irréprochable, la cause des méfaits incombe à une toute petite minorité, et, par là, ne peut pas constituer un sujet historique de préoccupation. Je cite : «Volonté du peuple turc de faire disparaître les Arméniens ? Non, mille fois non. [...] si les Arméniens ont souffert d'éléments autres que les agents terroristes de l'Union et Progrès, ça ne peut être que des émigrés albanais, épirotes, saloniciens et autres récemment installés en Asie Mineure [...].»[52]

Après son retour de Suisse, Süleyman Nazif s'exprime pareillement quand, début 1919, il déclare comme seuls responsables de «la déportation et du massacre horrible» au vilayet de Diyarbékir en 1915, le vali et sa bande de tueurs, amenée de l'extérieur. Pourtant il avoue qu'au-delà du vali, il y avait tout un groupe de décideurs qui promouvait la même politique et il les appelle à un examen de conscience.[53]

Lorsqu'en février 1920, peu après son retour de Suisse, dans son *Vicdan-ı Millîye Bir Hitap* le Prince Sabahddine met publiquement en avant l'importance du deuil, la nécessité d'une conscience purifiée et la portée d'une justice à longue

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50 Midhat, *Turquie Nouvelle*, 13.

51 Cf. Zürcher, *Identity Politics*, 165

52 Kara-Schemsi, *Question d'Arménie*, 4 et 11-12.

53 *Hadisat*, 8. 2. 1919, cité in Mehmed Reşid [Şahingiray], *Hayatı ve Hâtıraları*, éd. par N. Bilgi, İzmir: Akademi Kitabevi, 1997, 171. Cf. Mithat Şükrü [Bleda] dans Güngör, Salâhattin, «Bir Canlı Tarih Konuşuyor», *Resimli Tarih* (5. 7. 1953), 2444-45. Fils de Said Pacha, ancien élève de Mizancı Murad, Süleyman Nazif était haut fonctionnaire avant 1914. Après cette date, il exerça surtout les activités de journaliste et d'écrivain.

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durée,[54] il fait partie d'un groupe d'intellectuels dramatiquement réduit qui, tout en montrant la victimisation de nombreux musulmans, n'évacue pas la tragédie des Arméniens et la culpabilité du régime.

## *V. La perspective à légitimer*

Les visions historiques à court terme, que nous venons d'évoquer, sont en grande partie dominés par la perspective politique qui est à légitimer, à savoir le droit du Turc, compris comme musulman d'Asie Mineure. Dans ces années fondatrices, rappelons-le encore une fois, le mouvement national, au registre discursif presque purement religieux, n'est rien d'autre qu'une mobilisation des musulmans d'Anatolie. La rhétorique nationaliste proprement dite qui recourt aux principes du Président Wilson est alors réservée à l'élite et à l'Occident.

Dans notre corpus, les provinces orientales suscitent autant ou plus d'intérêt qu'Izmir. La mention, quelque peu gênée mais inévitable, des Kurdes qui y forment la majorité démographique se fait souvent par le terme «Turco-Kurdes».[55] Trois mois avant le Congrès d'Erzurum, déjà, Safvet Bey appelle, dans sa *Réfutation du Mémoire de la Délégation arménienne*, cette ville millénaire de «berceau et citadelle de notre race [turque]», pour la déclarer possession turque indispensable car forteresse «d'où l'on domine toute l'Asie Mineure».[56] Il ne parle pas de l'application du principe wilsonien aux Kurdes et ne prend pas en considération l'argument que relèvent ses adversaires, à savoir que les Kizilbaches n'étaient pas attachés au gouvernement central.[57] Il va jusqu'à assimiler racialement les Kurdes aux Turcs.[58]

La simplicité rhétorique de catégories comme «Arméno-Russes», «Turco-Kurdes», «ennemis impérialistes» ou «musulmans victimes» répond à un objectif simple et limpide : assurer la domination politique de l'Etat turc dans toute l'Asie Mineure. L'expérience de la Guerre Mondiale sert d'appui à cette perspective : Safvet chante les héros et les martyrs et dénonce les ennemis de cette Guerre tout en menaçant l'Occident avec le spectre d'une révolution musulmane et d'une lutte armée en Anatolie. Comme il croit à la continuation de la guerre, il refuse de mettre en question la Grande Guerre à peine terminée. En surface, il rompt avec les dirigeants unionistes, mais il reprend intégralement leur argumen-

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54 Le *Vicdan-ı Millîye Bir Hitap* réproduit dans Ege, *Prens Sabahaddin*, 399-412. Il est prophétique lorsqu'il dit: «[...] harbden sonraki Rusya il Almanya bazılarımızın zannettikleri gibi yeni doğan bir âlemi değil, bütün mânâsiyle göçen bir cihanı temsil ediyorlar.» (p. 409)

55 Kara-Schemsi, *Devant l'Histoire*, 115-21.

56 *Ibid.*, 120.

57 *Ibid.*, 121.

58 En disant, bien ironiquement d'ailleurs: «[...] le malheur est que, malgré les guerres incessantes et les massacres des Arméno-Russes, cette maudite race turco-kurde, plus prolifique que jamais, détient encore la supériorité du nombre» (Kara-Schemsi, *Devant l'Histoire*, 113).

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taire lors qu'il s'agit de la domination politique en Anatolie. Il se limite toutefois à ce dessein.

C'est cette continuité et cette simplicité, habilement mariées à une rhétorique de diplomate, qui donnent la force et l'unité au discours du fonctionnaire ex-Hamidien et ex-Unioniste Savfet dans les mois suivant l'armistice. Quoique très réducteur du point de vue historiographique, son sens de la realpolitik le fait dominer ses adversaires helléniques et arméniens qui se font entendre à Paris par le recours aux droits de l'homme et, malheureusement, par des postulats nationalistes maximalistes.

Les leaders libéraux en Suisse romande cultivent un discours plus complexe qui se démarque de la vision de Safvet Bey surtout par le regard fondamentalement négatif sur la Guerre Mondiale. Prenant en compte un avenir plus lointain qu'ils pensent dominé par le système anglais et américain, ils troublent l'élite turque par leur exigence de rupture, mais aussi par des contradictions et volte-face qu'on ne leur pardonnera pas.

Il est possible que, suite à des réactions négatives[59] à son appel aux Arméniens (v. supra) de s'unir à l'opposition libérale, fin 1917, Kémal Midhat ait abandonné sa conception chérie d'une Confédération ottomane monarchique. Après les haines nées de cette Guerre, écrit-il fin 1918, sa poursuite est devenue irréaliste et l'indépendance de toute nationalité est à l'ordre du jour. D'ailleurs en parfait accord avec Safvet Bey, il postule la souveraineté turque sur l'Asie Mineure et sacrifie l'idée fédéraliste. «Peut-être plus tard reviendra-t-on», dit-il à la fin de sa brochure, «à ce système de fraternité internationale si heureusement en honneur en Suisse, où les divergences de races et de mentalité sont frappantes.»[60]

Les libéraux convainquent par leur analyse perspicace de la Guerre et du régime de Guerre. Mais ils tardent à formuler une perspective cohérente à court et à moyen terme et sortent donc perdus dans leur rivalité avec les ex-Unionistes et Kémalistes. Cette défaite a également pour conséquence l'effacement de la vision libérale de la Guerre mondiale dans l'historiographie turque, et avec lui l'abandon de l'examen de conscience[61] et de l'enquête impartiale de cette période fondamentale pour la Turquie d'aujourd'hui. C'est une conséquence logique du fait que le parti unioniste a préparé et organisé la lutte nationale après la Guerre Mondiale.

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59 Cf. L. Baronian, «La Turquie libérale et les Arméniens», *Tribune de Genève*, 6 janvier 1918.

60 Midhat, *Turquie Nouvelle*, 15.

61 Quelques auteurs comme Ahmed Bedevi Kuran pourtant en reparleront, étendant leur critique jusqu'en 1908: «İkinci Meşrutiyette yaptığımız en büyük hamle, şövenlik ve Osmanlı unsurlarının Türklüğe karşı husumet izharını tahrik eylemek ve bu suretle dahilî idaredeki tezebzüb ve emniyetsizliği artıkrak olmuştur!...», Kuran, *Milli Mücadele*, 702.

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## *Conclusion*

Au sein de l'élite turque émigrée en 1919, la compréhension de la Guerre Mondiale s'efface derrière la narration du présent. Afin d'interpréter celui-ci et de justifier ses propres perspectives, le passé récent constitue du matériel argumentatif tout comme d'autres époques historiques.[62]

En six mois, les voix libérales, qui sont, jusqu'en automne 1918, prépondérantes dans les communications francophones de la diaspora turque, cèdent en faveur d'un concert nationaliste magistralement dirigé par une génération relativement jeune de professionnels, envoyés en mission par le régime avant sa chute. Le fonctionnaire et publiciste Réchid Safvet (Atabinen) qui réside à Genève en 1918/19, est le plus prolifique parmi eux. Le fait que la vision libérale, pluridimensionnelle et multiethnique perd vite de terrain correspond aux polarisations politiques en Asie Mineure. Les points de départ pour un *mea culpa* ou une distanciation vis-à-vis du régime de Guerre sont alors mis de côté.

En brillant rhéteur, Safvet Bey dénonce en janvier 1919 l'extermination imminente de dix millions de Turcs martyrs, due à la politique des Puissances, dans l'arrière-fond d'une vision analogue de l'histoire qui déclare les minorités traîtres et les Turcs victimes de l'impérialisme européen depuis le 18e siècle (*L'extermination des Turcs*, Genève 1919). Un tel spectre coupe la parole à ceux qui demandent que la lumière soit faite sur le passé récent et la politique du régime. En fait, la politique unioniste de la mise en place d'une nation musulmane en Asie mineure perdure de façon parfaitement cohérente de 1913 à 1923.

La victoire kémaliste remportée contre les Arméniens et les Grecs est mythifiée après 1923. En même temps, la vision de la Guerre mondiale se fige à la mesure des conceptions politico-historiques que prônaient les porte-paroles durant les années fondatrices. Par le fait d'être figé, et faute de perspectives plurielles et de distance, les jalons historiographiques alors posés sont peu solides. Pourtant, une reconsidération systématique et approfondie de l'époque la plus fondatrice de la Turquie moderne n'a pas eu lieu.[63] Il faudra attendre

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62 Ainsi, l'argument d'une population autochtone turque, élément constitutif de la thèse turque de l'Histoire, est déjà présent. «L'Asie Mineure Orientale, avec ses districts d'Arménie et du Kurdistan, fut avant l'ère chrétienne peuplée par la race turque qui, des monts d'Altaï, vint s'y installer.» (Turc-Yourdou de Lausanne, *L'Asie Mineure et ses populations : Pour la défense des droits légitimes de la Nationalité Turque / Dédié à M. Wilson,* Lausanne : A. Bovard-Giddey 1919, 1). Cet argument est développé dans la thèse anthropologique de Afet Inan, *L'Anatolie, le pays de la «race» turque: recherches sur les caractères anthropologiques des populations de la Turquie : (enquête sur 64.000 individus),* préf. de Eugène Pittard, Genève: Georg 1939.

63 Les remaniements auxquels Ahmed Bedevi Kuran soumet dans les années 1950 son livre sur le mouvement jeune turc en sont peut-être un signe : il y ajoute de nombreux arguments apologétiques, mais s'indigne en même temps des éloges décernés par la presse contemporaine à Talat Pacha (c'est probablement une allusion à l'accueil majestueux que la République a donné à la dépouille mortelle de Talaat, transportée de Berlin à Ankara en

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jusqu'à la fin du XXe siècle pour voir émerger des approches libérales et transnationales dans l'historiographie de la Grande Guerre en Asie mineure.

1943 où un grand boulevard au centre de la ville prend alors son nom), Kuran, *Milli Mücadele*, 680. En 1951 paraît le livre d'Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, la bible de la défense turque, écrit par un ancien fonctionnaire du régime de la Grande Guerre. A l'égard des Arméniens durant la Guerre par exemple, beaucoup d'historiens turcs répètent les arguments que proférait déjà Rechid Safvet en fonction d'une histoire à courte distance qu'il déclarait apocalyptique.

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# Individual and Collective Memories of the First World War

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It is the aim of this article to examine the dialectical relationship between individual and collective memories with regard to the First World War in Lebanon and Syria. Since this study is based primarily on the analysis of Arab autobiographies, it will outline the social, or communicative, character of autobiography – which appears to be of equal importance to its role as a genre of narrative individualisation.

The autobiographies under discussion were written for a historiographical purpose, as a contribution to the common recollections of a specific group, community or nation. This discourse on a common history constitutes not only an important framework for individual memories, but a *sine qua non* for their communicability. The following analysis will show that the existence of a "collective memory" – as defined by a corpus of more or less homogenous and equally distributed group memories – is either a politically motivated ideological creation or an academic construct resulting from an unquestioning acceptance of nationalist myths and narratives. The example of the First World War illustrates that what appears to be 'collective memories' are better described as a field of commemoration where different parties and social groups struggle to determine and interpret symbols, ideas and recollections of the past.

## *Individual Memory*

In the last two decades, the Arab world has witnessed a remarkable flood of autobiographies. While the smaller part is written in a literary style similar to novels, the majority of the texts seemingly gives a pure account of the author's biography. This latter impression fits with the prevailing theory of autobiography, which puts the "history of the self" at the centre of the genre. Following Philippe Lejeune, it is the threefold unity of author, narrator and protagonist of the story that constitutes the "autobiographical pact" and makes the text an autobiography.[1]

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1 Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique*, Paris 1975. Cf. Susanne Enderwitz, *Unsere Situation schuf unsere Erinnerungen: palästinensische Autobiographien zwischen 1967 und 2000*, Wiesbaden 2002; Christoph Schumann, *Radikalnationalismus in Syrien und Libanon. Politische Sozialisation und Elitenbildung, 1930-1958* (Schriften des Deutschen Orient-Instituts), Hamburg 2001, 35-48.

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By connecting the text-transcendental (real) person of the author with the text-immanent (narrative) person of the narrator and the protagonist, the autobiography represents the past of the writer and the latter's own interpretation of his or her personality and socialisation. Lejeune defines autobiography as a "retrospective prose story that a real person relates about his or her own existence, in which he or she gives emphasis to his or her individual life and to the history of his or her personality in particular".[2]

This definition brings serious philosophical problems with it. It unwillingly creates a solipsism which mythologises the "self" in two respects: on one hand, it regards the author as an autonomous subject who creates the text almost independently and, on the other hand, it regards the narrative as the authentic representation of his or her inner self. In other words, it side-steps questions concerning the social preconditions of text production (the author's socialisation, for instance), as well as the communicative construction of the "inner self". It is not surprising, therefore, that the mainstream theory on autobiography is unable to integrate reflections like Michel Foucault's "death of the author",[3] Pierre Bourdieu's deconstruction of the notion "biography",[4] or Maurice Halbwachs' theory on the social conditions of the individual's ability to communicate his or her memories.[5]

## *Historiographical Memory*

Leaving these theoretical questions aside for a moment, a look at the forewords of the autobiographies in hand reveals that it is not the writers' primary concern to inform their readers about their particular and incomparable life experiences. Instead, they aim at telling the recent history of their society in a much broader sense. In so doing, they use their own life-stories as narratives and, instead of using historical documents like professional historians, they draw upon their personal experiences and memories. Writing an autobiography thus means communicating upon a commonly experienced past. As with any other work of historiography, it tries to answer existential questions about the past, present and future of the society: Who are we? How did we become what we are? What can we expect from the future and what lessons can we learn from the past?

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2 Robin Ostle et al., eds., *Writing the Self: Autobiographical Writing in Modern Arabic Literature,* London 1998, 20.

3 Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", *Bulletin de la Societé Française de Philosophie* (juillet jusqu' au septembre 1969); idem., *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines,* Paris 1966, esp. chap. 9.

4 Pierre Bourdieu, "L'illusion biographique," *Actes de la récherche en sciences sociales* 62/63 (1986), 69-72.

5 Maurice Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective*, Paris 1950.

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Of course, the individuality of the author is not completely wrapped up in the history of his or her society. The autobiographical narrative is always shaped by the writer's particular perspective, for example. However, the questions driving his inquiry do not concern the autonomy of his or her own personality as much as his or her relationship to society: "What is my position in society?" "To which groups or communities do I belong?" "Why are my social conditions as they are, and what can I expect from the future?"

In her book *Jawlah fī l-dhikrayāt bayna Lubnān wa-Filasṭīn* (*A Journey in the Memories between Lebanon and Palestine*), for example, the Lebanese writer ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī (1896-1986) warns her readers not to regard her book as a diary, a family history or an autobiography:

> "All that I intend by writing these recollections is to give some information to the hands of the coming generation about our generation and about the events and incidents which passed by. No doubt they know much about the political history of the Arab countries, about the major events and the outstanding men. But what I will tell them are minor details from here and there, which contribute to draw a social picture of our country according to its specific character at that time. In our small walk I will try to give a clear idea of the society since the beginning of this century until its last years, like it is required by sequence of the events."[6]

Khālidī aims to describe the history of her "society" in a broad terms. In *Qabla an ansā* (*Before I forget*), on the other hand, the Lebanese writer Anīs Furayḥah (b. 1902) wants to restrict his description mainly to the destitute social milieu in which he grew up. He tells his readers that when his granddaughter asked him why he did not write a book on his memories, he said to himself:

> "Yes, why should I not write [my recollections] down? There is much in them about the history of Lebanon as there is much about how the poor families of the Lebanese villages suffered. Perhaps the grandchildren will like the story of my life, after I have made my last journey. So, I will write them down."[7]

A third striking example is provided by Saʿīd Abū l-Ḥusn's autobiography *Nīrān ʿalā l-qimam* (*Fires on Top of the Hills*). Unlike Anīs Furayḥah, he does not want to depict his family's social background, but rather to assure for his people – the Syrian Druzes – an appropriate place in Syrian historiography, and in future history books. As such, he criticises that the specific contribution of the Syrian Druzes in the national independence struggle was still widely neglected by Arab historians. Therefore, he puts his own experiences during the Great Revolt in the Jebel Druze and his own contribution to the coup d'état, which led to the French withdrawal from the mountain in 1945, at the centre of his autobiography. Ad-

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6 ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī, *Jawlah fī l-dhikrayāt bayna Lubnān wa-Filasṭīn* [1978], 2nd ed., Beirut 1997, 11f.

7 Anīs Furayḥah, *Qabla an ansā*, Beirut 1979, 197.

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dressing his children, he explains his motivation for composing his life-story in a book:

> "I have always observed that these stories about the past have left a deep impression on you. [...] I suggest that the reader's wish to attain this knowledge is not less than yours. Therefore, it seems necessary to me that, in future times, people will find these notes on the life of a people at a specific place of this region. For these reasons, I have decided to give you my story in the form of a book, to print it and to publish it."[8]

It can be said that most authors explain their reasons to write and publish their life-stories with the purpose of making a general contribution to the historiography of their society. Whereas some try to draw a rather general picture, others concentrate on their childhood social milieu, the region of their upbringing, or the history of the political group to which they belonged. Very few declare that they regard their own life as interesting and important enough to present it to the public as a "self-biography".

## *Communicative Memory*

These three quotations also show that the writing of autobiographies is tightly intertwined with everyday communication of biographical experiences. In general, the conversation between persons from several generations, like the grandfather and his grandchildren, is of great importance for the transmission of historical knowledge and experiences from one age group to the next. This kind of knowledge comprises personal encounters and lessons drawn from it, as well as information about far-reaching historical events, like the two World Wars.

The cultural historian Aleida Assmann calls this communication of knowledge about the recent past and its transmission from one generation to the next the "short-term memory of society".[9] She agrees with Maurice Halbwachs that an absolutely solitary human being would probably be incapable of remembering at all. Therefore, social communication of the past must be regarded as the prerequisite of individual memory, rather than its result. Like language, memory grows into the individual consciousness from outside, by means of the process of socialisation.[10]

Yet "published" autobiographies transcend face-to-face communication. For this reason, it was primarily the introduction of print-capitalism which accompanied the emergence and spread of the modern genre of autobiography in the

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8 Sa'īd Abū l-Ḥusn, *Nīrān ʿalā l-qimam: Sīrah dhātiyyah*, Damascus 1994, 5 and 7.

9 Aleida Assmann and Ute Frevert, *Geschichtsvergessenheit – Geschichtsversessenheit: Vom Umgang mit deutschen Vergangenheiten nach 1945*, Stuttgart 1999, 19-147, here 36ff.

10 *Ibid.*

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Middle East.[11] Technical and economic developments enlarged the potential audience for autobiographical narratives from a few listeners to a readership that was, in principal, unlimited. The socio-cultural changes resulting from this revolution in the means of communication are best described in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities.*[12]

According to Anderson, the mass production and distribution of secular texts created, and still creates, imagined communities of readers that are situated in a "synchronous empty time". While the future presents itself as an open horizon, the present is incessantly left behind as an indefinite, and thus meaningless, past. Therefore, all kinds of social communication on "earlier times" try to transform this past into "history" by ordering, interpreting and ascribing meaning to the common experiences and memories.

Therefore the text of a published autobiography must be of general relevance. Either the author is regarded as a figure of national importance, or his life story's literary style is attractive, or – as it is most often the case – the events described constitute part of the society's short-term memory and thus attract public interest. In other words, the personal experiences of the author must be connected to the general history of his or her society to be understandable and relevant for a broader readership.

This is one reason why the First World War plays a role in nearly every autobiography of this period.[13] Moreover, events of this magnitude are often used to structure the narrative. In the table of contents of the books in hand, one often finds the First and Second World War as headings next to "my first school days", "the beginning of my professional career" and the like. The author thereby indicates to his or her readers that the story may be similar to some of their experiences, or the may at least contribute to their general historical knowledge.

In this connection, an autobiographer cannot choose any narrative plot s/he likes, if s/he presents his or her memories as a part of a more general history. Just as a German writer of today could hardly describe the period of the Second World War and the Holocaust as a time of personal joy and luck,[14] an Arab writer would face serious problems if s/he depicted Syria's World War I famine as nothing but a period of luxury and abundance. Similarly, it is almost unthinkable that a Palestinian writer would restrict his or her recollections of the Israeli-

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11 Thomas Philipp, "The Autobiography in Modern Arab Literature and Culture," *Poetics Today* 14 (1993), no. 3, 573-604.

12 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London 1983.

13 Cf. Najwa Al-Qattan: "Safarbarlik: Ottoman Syria and the Great War", in: Thomas Philipp and Christoph Schumann, eds., *From the Syrian Land to the States of Syria and Lebanon* (Beiruter Texte und Studien, vol. 96), Beirut 2004, 163-173.

14 A. Assmann and U. Frevert, *Geschichtsvergessenheit – Geschichtsversessenheit*, 38ff.

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Palestinian war only to his or her private love adventures or other amusing anecdotes, wherever s/he stayed and whatever s/he really did at that time.

Autobiographies apply the same rules that Paul Ricœur and Hayden White showed with respect to historiography. For the description of a certain historical period an author can use only a limited variety of narratives (White), which are regarded as adequate and legitimate by a public readership (Ricœur). The First World War era in Syria and Lebanon, for example, can be told as a drama or a tragedy, but not as a comedy. Here again, the communicative memory of the society comprises and determines the freedom of the individual reminiscences.

## *Connective Memory*

With reference to Friedrich Nietzsche's "Bindungs-Gedächtnis", Jan and Aleida Assmann stress the connective function of the communicative memory. "Like Halbwachs, who showed that the human being needs social ties to develop a memory as well as to be able to remember, Nietzsche showed that a man needs a memory to tie himself to others."[15] For Nietzsche social cohesion is based on man's ability and his will to remember yesterday's promises and agreements. In this sense, communication on the past – or better, on a common history – is also a way of reproducing social relations and structures by calling them back into the general consciousness. The English words "re-collect" and "re-member" express this binding aspect of the social memory very clearly.

ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī's reminiscences of her first fiancé is a simple and clear example of this connective memory.[16] In the year preceding the First World War, Khālidī was about to be engaged with a young Arab man. She initially had no opportunity to meet him, but was intrigued by the stories she heard about his staunch patriotic convictions. Later, in March 1914, she was able to meet him secretly at a friend's house and they began to exchange letters. When he finally asked Khālidī's father for her hand, her family reacted positively. However, the outbreak of the war interrupted further deliberations within the Salām family.

Things took a turn for the worst when her fiancé was imprisoned for his political activities and sentenced to death. He was eventually executed on June 6, 1915. No one in Khālidī's family knew that she had met him personally, and therefore no one understood the deepness of her sorrow. In this sense, her account of these events offers proof that she had met the young man secretly and thus had broken the social conventions of that time. Moreover, she publicly stands by the commitment she had given, which was shattered by Cemal Pasha's oppressive rule.

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15 J. Assmann, *Religion und Gedächtnis*, Munich 2000, 15 (my translation).

16 ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī, *Jawlah fī l-dhikrayāt*, 94-97 and 104f.

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An example of a different kind is Saʿīd Abū l-Ḥusn's description of his memories as a four-year old child in Jabal al-Druze. This picture, which "never left his memory", as he tells his readers at the beginning of his book, comprises a number of black donkeys decorated with leather strings and small white shells standing in the courtyard of his family's house. When Abū l-Ḥusn asked his father about the donkeys, he was told in a way "which was understandable for children" that they belonged to relatives in Lebanon. The reason for their coming, his father told him, was the great famine from which they suffered in their region, the result of the war, the blockade from outside and Ottoman Army confiscations.

Abū l-Ḥusn continues in retrospect,

> "It was as if my life was bound to catastrophes and traces of catastrophes since the beginning. [...] Our existence in this land, and in the Jabal Hawran especially, was partly an exceptional existence. It is explained by this partial migration which I witnessed myself: For this reason, we – with our whole existence – are a result of old catastrophes: wars against looting dynasties, or civil wars, or tribal battles."[17]

The "search for the beginnings" (Stefan Wild),[18] as it is presented here by Abū l-Ḥusn, is far from being the search for the deepest roots of the author's own personality. It rather describes his personal place within a distinct community, namely the Druze. His memories reaffirm the historical existence of this group in the present by referring to its past sufferings. According to this, the general objective of Abū l-Ḥusn's narrative is, as mentioned above, to assure an appropriate place in the Syrian and Arab historiography for his community.

The examples of ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī and Saʿīd Abū l-Ḥusn show how authors use their autobiographies to "re-member" and thus reaffirm their social ties. This form of communication (between writers and readers) on a common past is the basis for the construction of group identities. In this regard, however, we have to distinguish between two kinds of communities: "face-to-face" communities and "imagined" communities. References to face-to-face communities like family, clan, village, labour union, women's club, or party are abundant in all autobiographies. The typical situation in which a grandfather tells his grandchildren about his life is an example of how a group consciousness is transferred from one generation to the next by talking about a common history: "The roots of our family go back to ..." Contrary to this, imagined communities like "our generation", "we intellectuals", "our people" and, most important of course, "our nation" can only become visible and imaginable by texts and narratives, because their size exceeds the extent of face-to-face communities.

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17 Saʿīd Abū l-Ḥusn, *Nīrān ʿalā l-qimam,* 8.

18 Stefan Wild, "Searching for Beginnings in Modern Arabic Autobiography," in: Robin Ostle et al., eds., *Writing the Self: Autobiographical Writing in Modern Arabic Literature*, London 1998, 82-99.

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The way Abū l-Ḥusn depicts his first reminiscences of the famine in Bilād al-Shām, as well as the pivotal role the Druze community plays in his book, offers a striking example of how the ethnic sense of identity in the Druze community is strengthened by secular (his) stories, apart from their traditional religious beliefs.[19] In addition, the feeling of belonging to a distinct "generation" can be found very often in autobiographies. One reason for this is the above-mentioned transfer of historical experience from one generation to the next. Moreover, the idea of belonging to the same generation establishes a discursive framework, in which personal experiences can be conveyed and debated in a meaningful context. In this sense, authors who belong to the same socio-cultural class and who are more or less of the same age tend to use their autobiographies to discuss their common struggles, successes and failures.

The title of Bashīr al-ʿAẓmah's autobiography *Jīl al-hazīmah* (*Generation of Defeat*), for instance,[20] is paradigmatic for the group of well-educated, middle-class nationalists who were politically active between the 1930s and 50s.[21] The same leitmotif can be found in ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī's foreword, where she addresses "the coming generation" from the perspective of "our generation".[22] To define her own position, she tells the reader that the specific, or even constitutive, connection of her generation was "the feeling of failure, from which we suffered in the shadow of colonialist domination and the attack of the occupiers".[23]

The reference to common experiences and memories is a pervasive feature of autobiographies. By this means, the text and its public distribution via print technology contribute to the reproduction and reinforcement of social ties and group feelings. This applies especially to the nation as an imagined community which is, in this context, of highest political and historical importance.

## *Collective Memory*

Ernest Renan defined the nation as a historical and political phenomenon, rejecting all ontological concepts, meta-historical constructions and essentialist attributes. In his concept, the experience of common suffering and their commemoration play a pivotal role:

> "Une nation est une âme, un principe spirituel. Deux choses qui, à vrai dire, n'en font qu'une, constituent cette âme, ce principe spirituel. L'une est dans le passé, l'autre dans le présent. L'une est la possession en commun d'un riche legs de souvenirs; L'autre est le

19 Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986), 2nd ed., Oxford/Cambridge 1994.
20 Bashīr al-ʿAẓmah, *Jīl al-hazīmah. Bayna l-waḥdah wa-l-infiṣāl: Mudhakkirāt*, London 1991.
21 See my "The Generation of Broad Expectations: Nationalism, Education, and Autobiography in Syria and Lebanon, 1930-1958," *Welt des Islams* 41 (2001), no. 2, 174-205.
22 ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī, *Jawlah fī l-dhikrayāt*, 10.
23 *Ibid.*

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> consentement actuel, le désir de vivre ensemble, la volonté de continuer à faire valoir l'héritage qu'on a reçu indivis. [...]
>
> Dans le passé, un héritage de gloire et de regrets à partager, dans l'avenir un même programme à réaliser; avoir souffert, joui, espéré ensemble, voilà ce qui vaut mieux que des douanes communes et des frontières conformes aux idées stratégiques; voilà ce que l'on comprend malgré les diversités de race et de langue. Je disais tout à l'heure: «avoir souffert ensemble»; oui, la souffrance en commun unit plus que la joie. En fait de souvenirs nationaux, les deuils valent mieux que les triomphes, car ils imposent des devoirs, ils commandent l'effort en commun."[24]

From this perspective, Saʿīd Abū l-Ḥusn 's first memories of the famine (mentioned above) appear to be of double importance. On the one hand, he stresses how much he himself was impressed by this specific experience. He says that it "never left his memory" and that it made him understand his own affiliation to the Druze people and their history of suffering and catastrophe. In this sense, this first childhood memory symbolically sealed his self-perceived identity as a Druze.

On the other hand, the narrative of these events gives him the opportunity to present Druze solidarity and their mutual aid during the famine as a model for a greater Arab nation.[25] This fits into the overall leitmotif of his narrative, showing that the Druze are not distant, or even segregated, from the Sunni majority, but rather at the avant-garde of Arab society through their solidarity, their bravery and their sense of responsibility. Thus Abū l-Ḥusn's story of the famine is, from Renan's perspective, a story of affiliations: first, the author's affiliation with the Druze people and, second, the Druze affiliation with the Arab nation.

The nation also plays a pivotal role in the autobiographies of the two female writers ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī and Wadād al-Maqdisī Qurṭās (b. 1908)[26]. Both put their affiliation to the nation and their patriotic convictions at the centre of their narratives.[27] In Wadād Qurṭās's *Dhikrayāt* (*Reminiscences*), the development of her inner self and her personality is marginal compared to her descriptions of the people she met and all the places she saw as "national" or as belonging to the "fatherland". Travelling through the whole region of Bilād al-Shām with her father, she saw the grave of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in Damascus, the birthplace of al-Maʿarrī in Aleppo, the centre of Zanoubia's empire in Tadmur, the "eternal cedar" (*al-arz al-khālid*) in Bsharreh, and the fortress of "our Druze

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24 Ernest Renan, *Oevres complètes*, vol. 1, Paris 1947, 903f.

25 This interpretation fits to the national leitmotif of his book which he indicates in the title, *Fires on Top of the Hills*. The system of communication among the different Druze populations, by lightening fires on the mountains, required, following Abū l-Ḥusn, a highly developed sense of responsibility as well as of "patriotic and nationalist duty", Saʿīd Abū l-Ḥusn, *Nīrān ʿalā l-qimam* , 61.

26 Wadād al-Maqdisī Qurṭās, *Dhikrayāt: 1917-1977*, Beirut 1982.

27 See Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privelege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*, New York 2000.

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brothers" in Hasbayyah. Even abroad, in the United States, she finds the nation again and again while being torn between yearning for her home country and studying Khalīl Jubrān's poetry in the cold, strange city of New York.[28]

Thus all of her described travels, her studies, her cultural discoveries and her personal acquaintances constitute a story of acquiring and internalising the nation intellectually, symbolically and "spiritually" (Renan). Her autobiographical narrative does not try to explain her inner self in the first place. She rather wants to show her readers that she is a legitimate part of the nation. Clearly, the description of the nation's suffering and oppression during the First World War and in the following decades is of great importance in her book, as well as in other autobiographies by females. ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī, for instance, writes:

> "Destitution began to spread step by step as the Turkish rulers pursued their policy of impoverishing the Arab lands, Lebanon and Beirut especially. Death opened his mouth devouring the starving men who were lying on the streets and crying 'I'm hungry! I'm hungry!' (juʿān! juʿān! )."[29]

In these circumstances, ʿAnbarah and her fellow feminists had to put their political claims aside for the time being. Instead, they did what they were expected to do as female citizens, namely charitable work for the suffering nation. For the sake of this superior objective, ʿAnbarah even underwent the pain of meeting the murderer of her fiancé, Cemal Pasha, at an official reception.[30] In a similar way Wadād Qurṭās, who was younger, puts the efforts of her female family members at the centre of her war memories. She tells how she watched her mother providing medical services to the inhabitants of the village, while her grandmother distributed food.[31]

The war memories of Anīs Furayḥah, an uncle of Wadād Qurṭās, albeit from a much poorer social background, are very much different from her descriptions. His family dwelled in a little village in Mount Lebanon where his father owned a small plot of land. They lived from their trees and the vegetables they grew in their small garden. During the famine, for which the author holds Cemal Pasha responsible, he and his family lived on the poverty line. Furayḥah's autobiography attempts to explain to future generations how the rural lower classes lived at that time. By recalling the humble living conditions of the vast majority, he seeks to attain for them an appropriate place in the nation's historiography and memory. His description of the plague of locusts in 1915, for example, is very impressive. In a moving way, he illustrates the existential threat to the village population and, at the same time, underlines the credibility of the oral accounts of the affected population:

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28 W. al-Maqdisī Qurṭās, *Dhikrayāt*, 91ff.
29 ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī, *Jawlah fī l- dhikrayāt*, 106.
30 *Ibid.*, 106ff.
31 W. al- Maqdisī Qurṭās, *Dhikrayāt*, 34ff.

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> "The world darkened. The people began to feel that the ghost of the famine came closer. They fell silent and prayed. Then swarms of locusts attacked us. When people say that the swarms blocked out the sun they speak truly, with no exaggeration. At ten in the morning the locusts flew and covered the sun. And when the swarms descended upon the fields, they stripped them of everything green. Oh Lord, both famine and locusts? The people fell silent and prayed."[32]

On the opposite scale of the social hierarchy stood Salīm ʿAlī Salām (1868-1938), ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī's father and a well-known notable and Beirut politician.[33] In Salām's *Mudhakkirāt* (*Memoirs*), the existence of the nation is a presupposed fact, as well as an indispensable framework for his narrative. It is not necessary for him to argue that he is a part of the nation; his aim is rather to legitimise his social and political status. As a member of the Ottoman parliament in Istanbul, he advocated social and cultural reforms and he pursued this cause at the Paris Conference of 1913. With view to the First World War, he describes at length how he became a victim of political oppression by Cemal Pasha. He recounts his meetings with this hated general, facing him, calm, collected and in an upright posture. Finally, after Cemal Pasha was replaced by a German general in 1917, Salīm Salām lent his voice to the Arab-Syrian nation and articulated its "collective memory" of the recent past vis-à-vis the leader of the Ottoman government, Cevid Pasha:

> "You know what Cemal Pasha did to us in Syria. It was not enough for him to inflict persecutions, imprisonment, and torture on us, but, beyond this, he had sent a great part of our men, women and children to exile in unknown Anatolia. Therefore we hate him, and we hate the memory of him, and we want to take revenge by any possibly opportunity [...]."[34]

Generally speaking, the nation and its "collective memory" plays a pivotal role in the autobiographical texts under consideration. The authors direct their books to a national audience. By so doing, they presuppose and remember the existence of the nation, thus contributing to the connective function of the communicative memory. At the same time, they position themselves within the imagined community by stressing their claim of affiliation to the nation. However, they also try to bring their personal life story and the contemporary history of their society into one comprehensive story. By connecting their personal reminiscences to the general framework of the nation's "collective memories", they make their own story communicable and relevant to a broader public. It is their aim to elaborate neither their particular individuality, nor the uniqueness of their biographies. They rather try to narrate a general story from a particular perspective.

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32 Anīs Furayḥah, *Qabla an ansā* , 48. See also E. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 19.
33 Salīm ʿAlī Salām, *Mudhakkirāt Salīm ʿAlī Salām: 1868-1938*, Beirut 1982.
34 S. Salām, *Mudhakkirāt*, 229.

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## *Divergent Memories: Differences, Distinctions, Struggles*

Thus far, the remarks on the concept of the "collective memory" have already hinted at the inherent differences and contradictions. Renan – quoted above as a theorist of the nation and its ability and necessity to remember its common history – knew the precarious role of history in general, and the specific threat of scientific historiography, with regard to the identity of nations:

> "L'oubli, et je dirai même l'erreur historique, sont un facteur essentiel de la création d'une nation, et c'est ainsi que le progrès des études historiques est souvent pour la nationalité un danger. L'investigation historique, en effet, remet en lumière les faits de violence que se sont passés à l'origine de toutes les formations politiques, même de celles dont les conséquences ont été le plus bienfaisantes."[35]

In this context, of course, Renan alludes primarily to the violent struggles leading the nation's unity. They should be left to "collective oblivion". At this point, it becomes clear how close the interrelation really is between "collective memory" and "national ideology". As soon as history is made the basis of a political order, it tends to become a tool for the creation of legitimacy.[36] Collective memories, for instance, can be used to fight other nations, as well as to suppress diverging claims and stories within the same nation.[37]

Salīm ʿAlī Salām's idea of a nation, for example, is conservative in principle. Although he calls for a shift of political responsibilities from the imperial centre in Istanbul to the Arab provinces, he does not question the internal power relations within the Arab society. By calling for modest reforms in the sense of cultural and benevolent works, he hopes to lessen social differences without turning them upside down. In this sense, his *Mudhakkirāt* (*Memoirs*) are a self-confident reflection of his own elitist position in society. While he hardly mentions the socio-economic problems of the broader population during the First World War, Salām concentrates on Cemal Pasha's political oppression of himself and his peers. In retrospect, he alleges that the Ottoman general wanted to cut off the "thinking heads" (*al-ruʾūs al-mufakkirah*), to get rid of the Arabs political and intellectual elite.[38]

So in the light of his reminiscences, the hated rule of the Young Turks appears to be a conspiracy which was especially directed against the Syrian political elite. In this sense, he describes how he was confronted with allegations of high treason, how he was taken into custody and brought to the Military High Court in

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35 E. Renan, *Oevres complètes*, vol. 1, 891.

36 Terence Ranger and Eric J. Hobsbawm, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1983.

37 The analytical concepts which underlie the following reflections go back to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the "social space" (*espace social*). See: Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction: Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris 1979; idem, *Le sens pratique*, Paris 1980; idem, "Espace social et genèse de 'classe'," *Actes de la récherche en sciences sociales* 52/3 (June 1984).

38 S. Salām, *Mudhakkirāt*, 223.

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ʿAley. Unlike his daughter ʿAnbarah, who tells about the fears she had for her father (and her fiancé), Salām states in his Memoirs that he feared "nothing except God."[39]

Disregarding the reproaches and persecutions Salām had to face in Lebanon, his political observations on the First World War (*al-ḥarb al-ʿumūmiyyah* in his words) are written from the perspective of someone whose position was at the political centre of the events. He says that he had expected war as soon as the Dardanelles were closed. After the Ottoman Empire entered the war, he questioned the government rather critically about joining the German-Austrian coalition. This political involvement and Salām's knowledge of the current affairs stand in a remarkable contrast to other autobiographers. Anīs Furayḥah, for instance, was a young boy at that time and lived in a mainly illiterate environment. He remembers how the First World War – or rather "the war of the horrible famine" (*ḥarb al-majʿah al-murawwiʿah*), in his words – started as a very distant event which, at first, was regarded as neither very important nor easily understood:

> "The news of the war did not interest [the inhabitants of the village] at all and I cannot remember that I heard anyone speaking about it. The [common] talk revolved around daily problems. Nevertheless they were awaiting the coming of Naʿūm Effendī with his news about the battles, the victories and the defeats. Most of all, they were interested in the victory of Russia, but not one of them knew that Russia withdrew from the war in 1917 and that the Communist Revolution had taken place. Communism? No one had heard of this word before."[40]

The social positions of Salīm Salām and Anīs Furayḥah mark two extremes of one scale: the first is well informed and rather close to the centres of decision-making. The second lives at Syria's rural periphery, where the people have only vague ideas about what is going on in world politics. So they became victims of a war they hardly understood, while being far from able to make their own voices heard politically.

This disparity of political influence and powerlessness is also evident in social differences. The famine, for example, is mentioned in most autobiographies, though not all authors experienced this catastrophe equally. Wadād Qurṭās' reminiscences, for instance, are typical of someone from the urban middle class:

> "The years of the First World War were hard and painful for the inhabitants of Lebanon, because they experienced hunger, sickness and misery in its worst forms during this period. In our specific surroundings, however, we had great luck because of our father's connection to the [American] university and the durability of his employment."[41]

In other accounts, however, the social difference is not always as clearly described as in these two sentences. It becomes especially blurred whenever the au-

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39 S. Salām, *Mudhakkirāt*, 210.
40 Anīs Furayḥah, *Qabla an ansā*, 45.
41 W. al-Maqdisī Qurṭās, *Dhikrayāt*, 34.

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thor tries to describe how much s/he was himself or herself shocked by what s/he saw and heard. Halide Edib Ad var, for example, a Turkish feminist who ran orphanages in Lebanon in 1916, was obviously deeply affected by the social conditions in Beirut.[42] Her own situation was rather different, as the following incident shows:

> "The first time I heard the cry it echoed and echoed through my brain and heart. It was after a concert [!] in the American College, where I had gone with some teachers, and I had given myself up to the bliss of music. I was driving home through the streets of Beirut back to Der-Nassira when I heard it: 'Dju–an!' (I'm hungry). It was a solitary cry piercing and insistent and cutting the air like a knife. I have heard that 'Dju–an' so often since."[43]

There is little doubt that the famine was one of the most important topoi in the "collective memory" of that time. Its effects were perceptible everywhere in Bilād al-Shām. Beyond this, the population seems to have shared a broad "national" consensus to hold Cemal Pasha and the "Turks" responsible for what happened because of their military confiscations – or their "policy of starvation" (ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī), as it was known. Other factors, such as the blockade by the Western powers or ecological reasons, were mentioned much less frequently. The famine, from which only a certain part of the population suffered, was thus transformed into a national myth in which everyone could take a part in his or her personal memories. In other words, this specific experience of those who were close to starvation was appropriated by the nation, integrated into its history, and thus opened to the emotional participation of all.

Similarly, gender differences are superseded, but not eradicated, by the "collective memory". A remarkable example of this is the way in which Cemal Pasha is described in the texts. As mentioned above, Salīm Salām faced the Ottoman general as a political antagonist of equal social rank. According to Salām, their struggle took place in several direct confrontations and was led by words and gestures of strength. In the reminiscences of ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī, by contrast, Cemal Pasha appears more schematically as a "criminal," a "murderer" (she always calls him Jamāl Bāshā al-Saffāḥ) and a "tyrant". In her view, the rule of "monkeys" would have been better than his "despotic rule."[44] In addition to this, she presents him in her description of his appearance as an animal-like foreigner:

> "I faced him like a wild beast. In fact, his physical build was short and stout. Because of his thick, black beard and his piercing eyes he had something that made him similar to wild beasts."[45]

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42 E. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 20.

43 Halide Edib Ad var, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib*, New York 1926, 451. Quote from E. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 20.

44 ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī, *Jawlah fī l-dhikrayāt*, 107.

45 *Ibid.*, 110.

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It is not surprising that ʿAnbarah's encounter with Cemal Pasha differed considerably from the meetings which her father describes in his Memoirs. While he used every opportunity to put in a good word for his fellow compatriots, ʿAnbarah had to be convinced by her friends and relatives to attend the reception at all. However the possibility of helping her country's relief effort finally convinced her to put aside her hate for her fiancé's murderer. After she had given a short address, which she had written at home with a "trembling hand," Cemal Pasha went outside to the drawing room and called her for a private conversation. ʿAnbarah's description of her fears at her meeting with this man under such unequal circumstances is impressive, while the affiliation of both of them to the ruling upper class is apparently of no relevance:

> "And now, what should I do? I made the first step [by giving the address], so was it possible to retreat now? And what would be my excuse? How could I flee from this painful situation? How could I meet this man (*hādhā l-rajul*) when my heart is still bleeding? I felt like a bird which was caught in the net of the huntsman, while it struggles, but doesn't know where to escape to. I thanked God this once in my life for the veil which prevented him seeing my face, which was full of hatred and great pains."[46]

The gender difference, however, was not only relevant in the contacts between the men and women of the ruling elite, but also limited the women's ability to pursue their charitable works. When ʿAnbarah and her sisters heard the shouts "I'm hungry" through the windows of their house, they could not simply go out on the streets and help the people there, because they were girls. Instead, "we rushed to the windows and balconies and called to those who were still able to walk and to pick up the food which was thrown at them (*mā yurmā ilayhim min al-ghidāʾ*), or we sent something to eat and drink to those who were sitting, thus saving their lives."[47] ʿAnbarah knew that particularly poor women were in a very precarious situation. Even though they wore thin clothes, she tells her readers, their shame hindered them in asking for help. However, as the burden became heavier, they knew no other solution than to stretch out their hands.

> "Some even lost their honour to an arrogant Turkish (!) officer and with it they lost the most beloved they possessed (*aʿazz mā tamlik*) for nourishing their children who were harmed by the hunger [...]."[48]

Nevertheless, the female autobiographers agreed that this crucial situation warranted not a political answer (as it was discussed in the clandestine nationalist male groups), but first of all relief work. Of course, the women hoped that this benevolent engagement would open the way to equal political and social rights in the long run. The emphasis in their autobiographies on the common hardship of the nation, and their own participation in relieving the worst effects, is there-

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46 *Ibid.*, 109f.
47 *Ibid.*, 106.
48 *Ibid.*, 106.

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fore also a means to recall their principal claim to equal citizenship. Here the reference to the nation includes a limited criticism of its present condition: of course, the women's patriotic loyalty was unquestioned, but it was connected to a call for future reforms. Thus the imagined community of the nation became an objective for the projection of their hopes and wishes for future changes.

Saʿīd Abū l-Ḥusn, a man much younger than ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī, did not content himself with hopes and wishes. The famine in Jabal al-Druze belongs to his first memories and this experience was reinforced by the events of the Great Revolt of 1925, which he witnessed as a young boy. For this reason he admired the famous Arab leaders like King Fayṣal and Sulṭān al-Aṭrash. But when he grew up and became involved politically in the League of National Action, while a student at the Université St. Joseph, he learned that political leadership was a question of neither personal aptitude nor sincere nationalist convictions. He wanted to work as an lawyer but found his upward political and professional mobility blocked. All the important positions were still occupied by members of the traditional elite. When he was still studying at the university he tried to convince his friends that it was now time for a radical change. In his argument the national symbols, myths and memories are fundamentally reinterpreted according to needs of the rising elite:

> "I made it clear to my fellow students that it would be best to convince those who returned now [from their exiles, like Sulṭān al-Aṭrash] to respect our way of thinking and to accept that it is we who are the new educated generation (al-jīl al-muthaqqaf al-jadīd). We have to assume the banner and fulfil our role with respect to fact that their role as revolutionaries ended with their return. [...] In the end, my explanation turned out to be right. The following parts [of my book] will show how our new generation really took over the banner and expelled the French from our country [i.e. the Jabal al-Druze]. By this, our operation of 1945 completed the revolution of 1925 [...]."[49]

However, the formation of a new middle class and the emergence of new radical nationalist organisations in Syria and Lebanon was only the beginning of a long struggle on the reinterpretation of the nation's history and its "collective memory".

## *Conclusion*

Neither autobiography, nor "collective memory" are what they seem at first glance.

Modern printed autobiographies reflect primarily the effort of a society to order and interpret a common past. The authors try to contribute their own experiences to this public discourse on history. By bringing their own life stories and their particular interpretation of the nation's history into one comprehensive

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49 Saʿīd Abū l-Ḥusn, *Nīrān ʿalā l-qimam,* 218f.

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narrative, they reproduce and reaffirm their own social ties and, simultaneously, define their own position within this social texture. To make their own stories relevant and interesting to a wider audience, they refer to well-known events like the First World War. In so doing, they imbue the common reminiscences of this period with their particular personal, social and gender perspective.

On the other hand, there obviously exists a set of narrative topoi, myths and symbols which can be called a "collective memory". Renan already showed that such a sense of common history constitutes the necessary basis for the existence of a nation in the sense of an "imagined community". One way or another, all autobiographers refer to the comprehensive events of this collective memory to show their own affiliation to the nation or, rather, to define their own social positions within this framework.

A closer look at the autobiographical material, however, shows that collective myths of a common history supersede, but do not eradicate, underlying sociocultural differences. The description given by Salīm Salām of his meetings with Cemal Pasha in Beirut during the First World War, for example, differs in several aspects from the account his own daughter, ʿAnbarah Salām al-Khālidī, gives of her conversation with this "Turkish oppressor." These two descriptions, however, have little in common with the memories of those who went through hunger and destitution in rural Lebanon and Syria.

It can be said, then, that the public communication of the past rather clearly reveals existing social differences and cleavages within a society. The existence of certain topoi, symbols and myths of collective memory does not prove that the "nation" really has a strong and pervasive will to face a common future – as is shown by the last decades of Lebanese history. The collective memory rather appears to be a battleground for incessant struggle concerning the appropriation and reinterpretation of a common history according to one's own desires, needs and future hopes.

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# A First-Person Account of the First World War in Greater Syria

*Nicola Ziadeh (American University of Beirut)*

I would like to refer to two incidents that took place in Syria, long before the First World War. Both have a bearing on the things I'm going to talk to you about tonight.

After Lebanon's 1860 massacres, a number of religious establishments from Europe and the United States began to found institutions – schools, clinics and the like – in the region. It so happens that a German religious community founded one of these institutions, the Syrian Orphanage, in Jerusalem in 1862.

The other event of significance to our story was the plan of building the Hijaz Railway early in the twentieth century. Sultan Abdul-Hamid[1] – the sponsor of the railway and the sovereign under whom I was born – wanted the Hijaz Railway to be built from Damascus to the south in order to expedite the mobilisation of troops to such turbulent places as Hijaz and Yemen.

He did not want his intentions known, however, so he announced that the Hijaz Railway would be built for the benefit of pilgrims, and that it would be completely funded by contributions from various parts of the Muslim world. To make a long story short, he first proclaimed his intention to build the railway in September 1900, and in September 1908 the first train left Damascus for Medina carrying a large number of pilgrims.

Because my father had been educated at Jerusalem's German Syrian Orphanage, he knew German. As he was also educated as a draftsman, he found work with the Hijaz Railway, which was being built at that time by a German company with its base in Damascus. When company officials discovered that my father spoke German, they transferred him from his foreman's post on the line in Palestine to the headquarters in Damascus.

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1 Abdul-Hamid II, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire (1876-1909), sat on a tottering throne. He tried to steady it through the fact that he was the Caliph, thus he appealed to Muslims at large. One of his plans was to build a railway from Damascus to Yemen, via al-Hijaz, both areas had caused Turkey serious efforts to put down their tribal agitations and risings. Abdul-Hamid conceived of the building of the railway as a means of sending troops there. His treasures could not afford such expense and a railway meant to help Muslim pilgrim can not be given a foreign company. So he declared, in September 1900, that the railway will be a Muslim project and will become a Muslim *waqf*, i.e. a Muslim trust, owned by Muslims all over the world. He invited Muslims, rich and poor, to contribute to the project. His appeal was generously responded, and finally the railway was built. The first train left Damascus for Medina, in the Hijaz, in September 1908. Thus because Damascus was the headquarter of the works, and as my father worked there, I was born in Damascus.

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This is why I was accidentally born in Damascus on 2 December, 1907. My father worked for some time with the Hijaz Railway. Then, in the summer of 1914, the First World War broke out and people's lives were changed in a number of ways. My father, for instance, was conscripted into the Turkish Army, which was being prepared by Jamal Pasha[2], the Governor-General of Syria and the Commander-in-Chief of the army for the campaign, that was to be sent to capture the Suez Canal. This was the beginning of my troubles, for until then I had had quite a good childhood, happy with my two brothers and sister, my father earning good money and living fairly comfortably.

As a child in Damascus, I was sent to three different schools for my elementary education, depending on the areas in which we lived. The first school I attended, probably at about the age of four or five, was a "Frères School" in the neighbourhood of al-Midan al-Tahtani – the Lower Midan. Later we had to live in the company, in houses which the company built for its employees. Therefore I had to go to another school, this time it was a Protestant one. When later on we returned to the Midan, I went to another Frères School, so within about three years I changed schools three different times.

The first thing I remember about the First World War in Damascus, which must have been about 1915, was the scarcity of so many commodities in the markets. We could not get any sugar, coffee, rice, or tea. The reason for this was that, as Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany, the British fleet off the Syrian coast intercepted all the ships carrying commodities imported from Egypt and other places. Perhaps richer people could afford these commodities but we happened to be a fairly poor family, especially after my father's conscription, so we could not afford to buy any of these costly things.

Now the trouble began for me personally at the age of eight when my father – who, with all the other conscripts, had been crowded into various mosques ... and other places in Damascus, instead of being trained to fight – was taken ill. Now, because my father was in a mosque, my mother could not go visit him. So I, at the age of eight, went to see him once a week.

One day, it must have been some time in late September or early October, I went and my father was not there. He had not been taken to the front, but to a hospital. "Why?" I asked. "He was sick," they told me. "We sent him to a hospital." "Which hospital?" I asked. Nobody could tell. Nobody knew. This is how

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2 Jamal Pasha was a member of the triumvirate which controlled the affairs of Turkey in the very early twenties of the 20th century, the two others were Talat and Anwar, both Pashas. When Turkey joined the German side in the World War I, in 1914, Jamal was appointed to be the Governor-General of Syria at large and Commander of the Fourth Brigade. His rule was harsh, even beastly at times. He conscripted the young men, hence my father was conscripted. But he also confiscated the animals for army use and the best wheat for the same purpose. There is where I got my experience of hard times I referred above.

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the trouble began. As my youngest brother was only a few months old, my mother and I had to go in turn and visit all the military hospitals in Damascus to find this Abdo Ziadeh.

You couldn't get anything from the records. Sometimes somebody would open a register and simply say, "We don't have this name. That's it." Because we had to go on different days, I was taken inside every room in every hospital and looked at every face in order to recognise my father.

I didn't find my father. My experience of those days, which lasted for more than three weeks – seeing all those people, sick, neglected, abandoned, and the smell – made a lasting impression upon me. The rooms were dirty. The treatment was bad. Most of the nurses had never received proper training.

One evening, my mother returned from her search, carrying a bag. She came in our room and said, "Nicola, your father is dead. These are his clothes." This is all that she could get back of my father, these clothes. My mother told me she'd asked the men in the hospital, "Where did you bury him?" One of them asked, "Keristian?" – This being the Turkish word for Christian. She answered yes, and the man replied, "He's in the St. Georges." Every Christian soldier that had died, or would die, in those hospitals was sent to *Maqbara Mar Juriyyas*, the Cemetery of St. Georges.

We appealed to the good offices of Patriarch Gregorius Haddad, the Orthodox Patriarch in Damascus, to help us locate my father's grave. It was impossible. We turned to Patriarch Haddad because my maternal uncle was at that time the Bishop of Tyre and Sidon in Lebanon, which is an episcopate of the Patriarchate of Antioch, so we were on more or less friendly terms. After my mother told me that my father was dead, and that we could only recover his clothes, she opened the seam of the mattress. Now this is something that needs a little explanation.

If people like ourselves had a few pounds – at that time still gold coins – they would open the seam of the mattress and place the coins inside. So my mother opened the mattress and produced one Turkish gold pound and said, "Nicola, this is all that we have." Shortly before the beginning of the First World War, the Ottoman Government introduced paper currency. State regulations had it that government officials would receive half of their salary in gold or silver currencies and the other half in paper currency.

This reminds me of an incident that took place when I must have been about five. A neighbour of ours in Damascus used to buy his pots of *samneh*, cooking butter, from a man named Fursan from the Hauran. ... I was standing there one day when this Fursan told our neighbour: "The cost of this is two pounds." So, following the government order, the customer produced one gold pound and one pound note and gave it to him. The man wrapped the golden coin in the note, put it in his pocket and said, "When shall I come for the second pound?" He answered, "I gave you this." "Don't joke, please," he answered, "I've got some business to do." He didn't realise that the pound note was currency too, and it

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took the customer some time to convince him that what he'd given him was really two pounds, according to the government instructions.

Now, at that time, that pound that we had could not last long, but we had help. We were a foreign family in Damascus with no relatives. Our nearest relative was in Nazareth, our hometown. By that time a letter had gone from Damascus to Nazareth and my maternal uncle would take leave from his job and come. But that would take some time. I had no paternal uncles. One uncle, who had gone to Germany and stayed there, I would visit in 1936.

In any case, we needed a little more than a pound. So just as I was in my eighth year, I went to the Patriarch, Patriarch Gregorius Haddad[3], who had known me all my life. He was told, "There is a boy who wants to see you and he says he is the nephew of one of the Bishops." Haddad came out to meet me outside his office. I told him the story. "Yes," he said. "We know the story, because we tried to locate the grave of your father." "Sir," I said, "we have only one hundred piasters at home in paper money. This is a pound but in paper money. And it may be some time before my uncle can come to help us." He opened his drawer and produced 150 pounds in paper currency. He opened my coat-pocket, put the money into it, pinned it, buttoned my coat and said: "This is all I can give you now. If you need any more, please come."

We didn't. My maternal uncle came and I went with him to the Patriarch to thank him.

Now, on one occasion, my mother said: "Go and bring some molasses from the shop." There was no sugar, so we had to make use of various kinds of molasses. She gave me 100 piasters in paper currency.

I went to the shopkeeper and asked him for the molasses and said: "Give me the change." Now the change would be in coins and coins were more seriously looked-after than currency notes.

He said: "Listen, my boy. This is the name of the family of Abdo Ziadeh. Paid: 100 piasters. Molasses: 3 piasters. Your account here is 97 piasters." So any time we needed to buy something, we had to go to him [...]

Of all the awful things I saw when I visited those hospitals looking for my father, there is one incident that I can never forget. I wasn't the only one looking for relatives there. On one occasion, the man responsible said, "Look, we have some corpses, down there on the pavement. We keep them there with cold water, until someone comes to identify them. Would you like to go and look for your father there?" So I walked down with the others. It doesn't do to describe how they were shaped or looked – you can imagine that – with the cold water running over them.

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3 Gregorius Haddad, Patriarch of Diocese of Antioch, came from Aby, in Central Lebanon. He was not the only distinguished person in his family, but his philantrophic works during the war and the help he extended to the people of Damascus, irrespective of faith or creed, gave a halo of a hero in need.

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One elderly gentleman was there looking for his son. When he saw those corpses, this old man said, "*Asharat bi-ashara ya kusa.*" Now in Damascus in that time, and perhaps in Aleppo as well, the best way to keep *kusa* – squash – for stuffing during the winter was to keep them in salt water. And during the winter men would sell them on the street, saying: "*Asharat bi-ashara ya kusa!*" Ten for ten, ten squashes, for ten *baras*. The *bara* was 1/40th of a Turkish piaster.

So this man, following the example of those people, and seeing those people like the old squash in the salty water, could only say, "*Asharat bi-ashara ya kusa.*" I can never forget that. I was in my eighth year. After this, the old man couldn't carry on looking for his son, and he just left. I left with him, I don't know, I don't remember what the others did or whether they left with us.

These were the things the terrified city experienced. At the end we had difficulty even finding molasses in the shops. Sugar disappeared completely and rice, which came from Egypt. Historians of Jamal Pasha claim, or claim to have proven, that he aimed to create a province for himself in Syria, following the example of Muhammad Ali Pasha in Egypt in the previous century. I have no comment on these claims, but if he tried to get people to support his efforts, it didn't work. So Jamal Pasha started confiscating wheat, so that people had no wheat for their bread-making, animals and so on. When people could manage to get some wheat, in order to make bread to eat, they were happy, for otherwise maize and barley were used.

I don't want to talk about things I have not seen, but I'm sure many of you will discuss the situation in Lebanon during the First World War, which was the worst of the whole area.

Now eventually, in 1916, my uncle and aunt came to help my mother, who had contracted typhus from visiting the hospitals, and took us all to Nazareth. We stayed with my maternal grandfather. He was an ordinary person of simple means and keeping us under his wing. We were five people, added to the burden of a man of 72-73 years, and he had no source of income for the new guests. [...]

What was scarce in Damascus was even worse in Nazareth and other parts of the region. At least in Damascus there was quite a lot of molasses made of grapes. Grapes in the Nazareth area were not good for molasses. They were not even good for *araq*, as they are in Lebanon.

In any case, my grandfather kept us for a little while. I had a maternal aunt Sofia who worked as a nurse at the British Hospital in Nazareth.[4] My maternal uncle worked for the Hijaz Railway in Tulkarem in Palestine. So, my uncle told my mother, "Nicola will be my concern. I will look after him." My aunt Sofia said, "Alfred", my younger brother, "will be my concern." And my grandfather

4 In the 19th century numerous missionary organizations opened schools, hospitals etc. in the area. There was a division of labour, American missionaries devotes their work to Lebanon and Syria, while Palestine was left for the British to attend to. Nazareth had a good hospital and there were one or two schools.

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and grandmother said, "Alright, Mary", the sister, "will be our concern. Now, you, Ellen, look after your youngest one", who was sick at that time. But it would happen, that within a year both, my uncle and aunt died and the burden again fell on my mother.

My mother was semi-literate. She could read something in the Bible, as people could. I would say that she could occasionally read newspapers, but there were no newspapers to be read at that time. In any case, attending to the education of four children was a problem. We stayed a little while in Nazareth. When I lived with my uncle, I attended the forth school of my elementary education in Tulkarem – a name which, like Jenin, is very familiar now. When my uncle died, I returned to Nazareth, my only prospect being luck. A little luck did smile on me when my mother got a job with the German military hospital in Jenin.

Somebody arranged for her to look after the hospital laundry. She had a very good salary, we had rations, believe it or not even chocolate and biscuits, from the hospital. So we moved to Jenin, though my sister remained with my grandparents. Now the trouble in Jenin, for me personally, was that there was no school. There was a very nice school building just outside the town but the government decided to close the school and give the building to the non-commissioned air-officers, whose air unit was stationed in the area.

So my fifth school was really just the various alleys and streets in Jenin and picnics in the area, a situation that continued for two years.

The first two years in Jenin were the last two years of the war and the good situation we had ended with the end of the war. Because the hospital was closed, the Germans left Palestine and Syria. Then, we used ordinary lamps with olive oil, because kerosene had become absolutely unobtainable. We heard sometimes that people had loaves of bread made of wheat. I saw such bread at the houses of some rather rich people. But I did not see it in our place, where we used maize for our bread.

I think most of the people in Jenin at that time did the same. It was a treat for us when some of our friends would take us to a village, because there we might get a fried egg for our lunch. A fried egg. There were some olives, but the better olives were taken for the army and only tiny little ones remained for the people. At that time it worried me a lot that there was no school. I had, as a result of being in four schools, learned to read Arabic. But who had books in Jenin? There were 4,000 people, of whom only 43 were Christians. I knew them by name, all of them, and I still remember the names of some of them. A shop, to sell books? People could hardly sell olive oil! I was really miserable because I knew I could not read books.

But I was fortunate enough to have a neighbour who'd heard that I was interested in reading books. He called me to his home and said, "Listen, young boy, I have some books. I'm prepared to lend them to you but I want to be sure that you will take care of. I'll give you this one now and if you look after it and return it in time I'll give you other books."

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The first book was volume one of *One Thousand and One Nights*, *Alf laila wa laila*. I read the first volume, the second, the third and the forth in the old Bulaq Edition – if anybody knows what that means – which set everything as frankly as you can imagine. The next was the story of Malik Saif Ibn Dhi Yazan of Yemen. The third was about Bani Hilal and their travels in North Africa. It was all interesting.[5] It gave me language. At that time my reading gave me a breadth of imagination that I don't think many boys and girls of my age could have had.

In 1918 the war came to an end; the British completed the occupation of Palestine, which had been stopped for some time at Gaza in the south. It's always Gaza. On the occasion of the withdrawal of the German forces from Palestine, I was in Nazareth visiting my grandfather. It was the night of 22 September, 1918, and who would have just left with his German troops? Otto Liman von Sanders, whose headquarters were at that time in Nazareth. So I witnessed the withdrawal of those Turkish troops the Germans leaving in this area and the advance of the British force's Australian Regiment.

People who were used to seeing Turkish soldiers every day woke up in the morning to the sight of those big, broad Australians with heavy horses moving around the town. People stared and talked, stared and talked.

Now I come to another part of my story, which is really connected with the aftermath of the First World War. Although my mother finished her work in the German hospital, she found some other jobs so we remained in Jenin. The first change we noticed after the war ended was that we could buy flour, wheat flour, in the shops. It was not, however, the flour of Palestine wheat, but was brought from Australia. At first people were not used to this Australian wheat, and it took them some time to learn how to cope with it in turning it into loaves of bread.

Then I heard that somebody had bought some rice in a shop. When I told my mother this she said: "Go and try!" I could buy about half a kilo of rice, not more than that, but it was not the Egyptian rice we had been used to but Indian rice. The grains were smaller in size, and usually broken, but people were happy and celebrated the fact that they could now again cook with rice. This was important because, as many of you know, there are many local dishes that use rice. Again they could stuff their squash with rice. And they could cook meat with *laban* with rice – dishes they had not been able to prepare properly for about three years at least.

Another thing that came out of the British occupation was that a number of those who had been employed by the Turkish Administration in Jenin and Nazareth to look after various aspects of setting, sanitation and administration and

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5 These are stories of heroes of exceptional force and thus they performed many imagined battles and heroic victories. They are held in a special position by historians of Arabic letters. They were at my time the very things read in cafés, in the evening especially in Ramadan.

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so on, were kept in their positions. They served the newly established Military Administration, which lasted until 1920, when Sir Herbert Samuel was appointed Britain's first High Commissioner for Palestine (1920-1925).

So Hassan al-Katib, who had been the Ottoman police chief in Jenin – and, my God, didn't he frighten us all, grown-ups and young alike – became the chief of police in Jenin under the British. Somehow, though, he lost his status and people did not fear him as much as they did before. He had represented the Sultan, the Ottoman Empire. These new rulers, the English, they didn't instil the same sense of fear.

Another very important change in the lives of many people was the availability of kerosene for our lamps. Then we started seeing cars. The first automobile I ever saw in my life was in Damascus. It was the car of Jamal Pasha and it must have been about 1915. I had seen German military cars in Jenin as well, but after the war we saw civilian cars. We could, in fact, hire a seat in a car and be driven from place to place. Then came the next surprise. The school was opened, so I could return to my schooling for two years and complete my elementary education. This meant, really, that I had developed my elementary education in six schools, one of which happened to be the streets of Jenin, and the books that our neighbour loaned me.

Now, a new problem arose. What happened to the conscripts from the area – Nazareth, Jenin, Damascus, etc.? They had started returning but in small groups, because when the Ottomans lost the war, they had no time to demobilise their troops. The conscripts were left with their lives and had to work their way back home from Anatolia.

It took them about four months to reach Jenin. I remember very well the celebrations in the quarters of Jenin when a conscript from there came back. It was not that the family celebrated: the whole quarter was celebrating, just as when they celebrated weddings in those quarters. These childhood memories were a part of my life. To describe them to you is not as easy as to remember them, but I hope I have managed to convey some sense of how it was.

The school was re-opened and, as would happen after years of closure, the school was hell. There were all kinds of pupils and, worse, all kinds of teachers.

Let me give you an example of one of my teachers. He was teaching us history. And he came to tell us, in notes that he had prepared himself, about two battles in the Greek-Persian Wars. "Ya *Muallimi*," I asked him, "how does it happen, that the second battle comes after the first one, because it has a smaller number of years?" "They started preparing for the second battle before the first one was fought," he replied.

About a year later, another teacher told me that this was BC and the other was AD. My teacher did not know the difference between BC and AD. Another teacher had been the headmaster of the Ottoman school before its closure, so he must have been able to teach. When he was appointed to the school, however,

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they found out, that he could not teach anything. He was a principal, an administrator.

I did learn one thing from him though – he was very careful about handwriting and penmanship and I enjoyed that and learnt it well. Up to the present, in fact, I still use my pen to write and the writing remains absolutely clear to anybody. At one time, a publisher said to me, "I don't have that chapter typed. It's easier and better to set it directly from your handwriting." So – a principal of this type of school was called a *Zaki Bey* – but it wasn't enough to teach us penmanship alone, so he would teach us, as he called it, "engineering drawing". What he taught us was to draw a triangle or a circle. In any case I benefited from him.

One teacher who did leave a real impression on me was Shaykh Sa'id Miri. Shaykh Sa'id taught religion. I had heard him read the Qur'an in my street days as he was the imam responsible for the great mosque in Jenin. When Shaykh Sa'id made the call to dawn prayer, I don't think a single window in Jenin remained closed because he had such a beautiful voice. Shaykh Sa'id came to teach us Islamic religion and Arabic, but it was mostly Islamic religion. I stayed in the class, and I was the only Christian there. He asked, "Anybody who is not Muslim here?" I said, "Yes, I am." "You may go out." "But I don't want to go out. I want to learn like my friends." He said: "Has your father approved of this?" I said: "Of course, yes", though my father died long before, but he would have wanted him to approve it.

So for the two solid years that I was in that school, I attended this class. I learned quite a number of the short *suras* of the Qur'an, and about the beliefs and other aspects of Islamic practice. One time he asked a question about ablutions [...] As you know, in Islam before you pray, you make your ablutions. Now, he asked, what would spoil the ablution? Not a single pupil in the class answered the question fully, except myself.

The shaykh got angry, saying: "*Shu? Antu ma ta'arifu, hada ...*[6] *byarif?*"

"You Muslims, you don't know. Yet this ..." We remained good friends, because after two years in Jenin I went to a Training College in Jerusalem.

Now, interestingly enough, many weddings took place in Jenin and area after the war. These weddings were not just quiet affairs, because people could buy sweets and nice things for the groom and the bridegroom. In those days you didn't receive invitations by card. The *munadi*, was the person who goes through the town crying orders of state and invitations to public events including weddings.

"You people who hear the voice, my voice, say prayers to the prophet," he would go. "On such-and-such a day, on such-and-such an evening, so-and-so is getting married." So there would be three nights of celebrations, all the people of the quarter were invited. If the wedding happened to be hosted by one of our neighbours, all the people of Jenin were invited. It's always an open-air affair

6 *kafir*

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with people dancing, men, dancing, singing etc. It was during such occasions that I learnt some of the songs of that time.

The administration of Jenin, which remained in place from the old British occupation to July 1920, was a military one in the sense that the governor of Jenin was not referred to as *qa'imaqam* because it's not a military rank. The governor, Major MacLerin, came to the office in his uniform, he was saluted as he entered the Serail, the Government House, by two-to-four men-at-arms.

When the civil administration succeeded Palestine's military administration, Major MacLerin remained on as Jenin's *qa'imaqam*, rather than its governor. He also took off his uniform, donned an ordinary British-made suit, and was referred to as Mr. MacLerin, though people who had known him or worked with him never ceased in calling him Major MacLerin. For the general population another change took place with the arrival of this civil administration. To MacLerin an assistant was appointed to aid him in his administration of the district. The aide was Arif al-Arif, later he become one of the leading politicians and later mayor of Jerusalem. I mention Arif al-Arif not only to invoke his ghost, but because I had some trouble at that time that was solved by the *mukhtar* of the western quarter of Jenin where we and Arif al-Arif lived.

It was announced early in 1921 that there would be an entrance examination for the Men's Training College in Jerusalem. Candidates for the examination, however, had to be at least 15 years old. I was far from that so I went to the *mukhtar*, Hajj Hassan, and said to him, "I want a service from you." Now Hajj Hassan had heard from somebody, much earlier, that I was a good pupil in school. News travelled easily in a place like that. So he would ask me anytime I passed by the place, "Are you still a good boy at school? Are you still doing well?" "Yes, 'Ammi Hajj Hasan," I'd answer.

So, I went to him and said: "I am about 13 years and a few months. And I want a certificate saying that I am 15 years old. I was born in 1907. I want a certificate that I was born in 1905." "What for?" He asked. "I am applying for an entrance examination for the Men's Training College in Jerusalem," I answered. "And I want a certificate." "You deserve it," he said. "Come here my boy." He took a piece of paper and wrote that I was born in Jenin, to make sure they knew that I'm Palestinian. "Give me the date!" "2.12.1905" "Is there anything else I can do for you?" "No, that's enough." But that was not enough, because there should be an approval of the *mukhtar*'s signature, by somebody in authority.

Arif al-Arif had visited the school, and I thought he probably might remember an intelligent pupil in that class. Well, he did. I went to his office and told him the story. He said: "What do you expect from me?" "Nothing, I said. "Just state that this is the signature of the *mukhtar*. You are not responsible for the content." He asked his chief clerk to register my request coming in, signed the piece of paper and registered it going out to make it official. Then I had a paper in my hand that made me fifteen and a half years old.

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When I sat for the examination, there were 78 candidates for 30 seats. The students there had come from High Schools, Secondary Schools and I had just come from forth elementary. I think it was forcibly called forth elementary, just to upgrade the school. Anyway, so I forced my way into that school. I passed the medical test, and I was accepted. That same day, when they gave us the results, I was – in all honesty, and I'm not ashamed to say it – I was jumping for joy about it. For a little boy to be admitted to this school would mean a guarantee of a job later. This is the most important thing for my mother and me. Then the principal of the Training College, who had examined us, came to tell me, "Look, you are not fifteen years old. Never mind that paper you brought to us. You don't look it. But, we had to accept you."

Now please excuse me for telling you this, because it's just part of the game. I wondered why should he tell me "We were forced to accept you." "You are the first among the 78 candidates," he said, "but before you come back –" that was the end of the summer examinations, "– you have three months and you must grow at least this much (about 25 centimetres), otherwise I'll send you out of the school."

My first impression of the peace, after the occupation, was limited to Jenin. They had suffered numerous problems there – the conscription of the men and the confiscation of all kinds of animals, donkeys, horses, and what have you. Secondly, there was a great deal of cruelty on the part of the Turkish soldiers who were responsible for the security of the towns.

They wouldn't hesitate to go into a house and say: "Let's find out how much money you have." When this happened to us, my mother told them, "I won't ..." During the olive season in the village of Yamoun, for example, the people were very happy at the time to harvest the olives for that year. They collected the harvest and sorted the good olives from the bad ones. Then a squad of troops came and took all the good olives for themselves." We need this. We are fighting a war! We are fighting a war in Palestine." There was no war in Palestine. Yet people were afraid.

When the Ottomans left and the British came in their place, people appreciated whatever the occupying forces could help them get for their households. Yet, there was one thing that people did not appreciate.

Sometime around 1921/1922, we were having a school picnic outside the town. And there was an ordinary farmer, riding his donkey. We had a conversation with him, as we always picked up conversations with people. One of the teachers asked him, "Which do you think is better, Turkish rule or English rule?" He answered by quoting an Arabic proverb. "Whoever takes my mother is my stepfather." "*Illi biyakhud immi huwe 'amni.*" Then he bolted and said: "But you know, Sir, it's a question of religious feeling. The Turks were Muslims. Those [who rule us now] are not Muslims."

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This was the thinking of an ordinary man. It just happened that the person who asked him, our teacher, was a Muslim. He asked him, "What does that mean to you?" He said: "Nothing, but we had a Turkish Sultan, who was a Muslim. We felt that somebody protected Islam. Now we're afraid ..." This was the thinking of an ordinary person about these things. So, people were a little cautious.

As a matter of fact I think that, for many people, it was hard to believe that four years of war were suddenly over; in Jenin in any case, on the 22nd of September, 1918. It's true that the British Army had already occupied Southern Palestine and entered Jerusalem. But people did not know these things. Now I shall remind you, because I'm sure so many people forget this fact, I am talking about a period when the only way of transmitting information was either by word of mouth or by newspaper. Now Jenin had no newspapers. The nearest was in Haifa, where "al-Karmel" was published, and then Jaffa, where "Filastin" was published. There was one subscriber to "al-Karmel" in Jenin, who received it usually four or five days after it was printed. It came by train and so forth.

So people didn't know what was happening, actually. They didn't really understand the change from military to civil administration at first. They understood it eventually, of course. Once in Jenin, Qasim Abd-al-Hadi received a cable from Jerusalem that his son had been appointed assistant governor of Jerusalem. Then, when people heard about this, it was understood that there was a change – that there was no more Turkish Army.

I don't know to what extent I've been able to convey to you my impressions, the impressions I still remember, of those old days. But I hope I have managed to give you a picture, one with some lines at least, if not full of detail.

I would like to add two things that happened to me in Jenin under the British Administration. As I told you, the job of my mother ended with the war, because it was a German Military Hospital. I was around 12 or something about that. We had just begun school and I thought to myself, "Why shouldn't I work and help my mother? I'm the eldest in the family after her, so I must help her."

I heard that a post as a telephone operator had opened. The telephone at that time was run by the Military Administration. So I went to the person responsible, and said, "Employ me as a telephone operator!" He said, "We have to have a test." And the test was in English. Well I had learned by that time a few words in English from my time in Nazareth. The bell would ring, I was to answer and I'll ask, "What number, Sir?" He would give me the number and I was to pass it on. So I passed the test. But then the person responsible in the area asked, "What's the age of this man?" "Twelve and a half years," he was told. "We can't take him. We can't rely on him, supervising the telephone during the night." So I lost that job.

My mother didn't know anything about this matter, it was all done behind her backdoors. Then the job of postal carrier for Jenin was made available. So I went to the postmaster and asked him to interview me for this job. He said, "I

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can't interview you. I can't even think of taking you." Mail came to Jenin by rail, and there was 2 ½ kilometre distance between the station and the town. So the mail was brought from the station to the town, and vice versa, carried on a donkey. He said to me: "If the donkey runs away with the mail, what can you do?" "I can't do anything," I said. "Go away!"

One of my classmates, who was about 16 years old, got that job. That was around 1920/21. In 1948, I visited Jenin and tried to locate some of the people who had been at school with me there. I found that Ahmad Muharram, who had taken the job, had eventually been promoted to be the postmaster of Jenin.

Eventually my mother heard about my attempts to get a job and she gave me a good talking-to. "This is not your responsibility," she said. "Your work is to learn at school. You're too young for work. I'll be responsible for that. It's not your work."

So, well, fortunately I went to school, graduated in 1924 as a teacher, and taught for 11 years before, at the age of 28, I received a government scholarship to go to London to get my BA. I then returned to Palestine, taught for 8 more years in Jerusalem, then, in 1947, I got another scholarship to get my doctorate. Eventually I got my doctorate when I was 43 years old. Before I made it to university I'd attended seven schools to receive my elementary education, spent three years in the training college in Jerusalem, and 11 years teaching and self-educating.

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# The First World War as Represented in Autobiographies in Contemporary Damascus

*Khairia Kasmieh (Damascus University)*

This study focuses on parts of autobiographies written by Damascus residents, which include their personal experiences during the First World War. Almost members of distinguished Damascene families, the authors nevertheless were neither isolated from the daily life of their communities, nor ignorant of the problems of the poor. However, their social positions, political beliefs, loyalties and cultural backgrounds fundamentally affected their writings.

Their writings reveal a humanistic analysis and convey the suffering and pain of their society. These autobiographies cannot be considered a scientific or methodical writing of history, given the personal judgements and impressions included in their recounting of daily events. Still, they are an important historical source for scholars interested in studying the events of the First World War from different perspectives.

## *1. News from the battlefield*

Scattered throughout these biographies is information regarding various events taking place in different fronts of the war.

Son of a prominent family of Damascene aʿyān , the son of Muḥammad Fawzī al-ʿAẓm, then Minister of Awqāf, Khālid al-ʿAẓm includes in his memoirs news of the war as his family was told by visiting guests, or as it was published in the only official newspaper in Damascus, *Al-Sharq*. About Sefer Birlik, he writes:

> "By the order of Military Headquarters, Syrian soldiers were taken to faraway fronts such as Sinai, the Dardanelles or the Caucasus. Many of these young men lost their lives, were wounded or sent to captivity. The number of those who went into hiding to avoid service outnumbered those who joined the military service."[1]

Tripoli's Fawzī al-Kawuqjī, who had recently graduated from the military academy in Istanbul, shows in his memoirs that he was a determined and loyal fighter in the Ottoman Army, which stationed him in Iraq and later transferred him to the front in Southern Palestine.[2] His memoirs are filled with accounts of the battles on all the fronts in Bilād al-Shām in which he took part, effectively up to the time of the Ottoman retreat.

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1 Khālid al-ʿAẓm, *Mudhakkirāt (Memoirs)*, Beirut 1972, vol. 1, 75.

2 See Fawzī Kawuqjī, *Mudhakkirāt 1914-1932 (Memoirs 1914-1932)*, Beirut 1975, 26-55.

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Nabīḥ al-ʿAẓmah, from a well-known Damascene family who served in the Department of Supply, describes in his memoirs his important role in providing the army with basic necessities and equipment, such as fuel, food and water.[3] He claims to have been courageous, especially during the Ottoman withdrawal from the Syrian front; he continued to support the retreating soldiers up to the final episodes of the war.

Another Damascene aristocrat, Fakhrī al-Barūdī, was mainly interested in art and literature. He graduated as a reserve officer, however, and joined the Ottoman Army, along with other Syrian officers, with whom he later confronted the British in Beer Sheba. His poems describe the difficult desert conditions during the engagement, and discuss his later capture by the British. In 1917, he joined the Arab Revolt.

Fāris al-Khūrī, a man of law and Damascus' deputy at the Ottoman Parliament in Istanbul, mentions in his private papers that his brother Fayz had been a law student in Istanbul when he was called upon to serve in the Caucasus – regarded as one of the most dangerous postings.[4] Thereupon, Fāris intervened on behalf of his brother, along with other Arab representatives seeking favours from the Minister of Interior, Ṭaʿlat Pasha. As a result of this intercession, Fayz was transferred to the Fourth Army to serve in the district of Aleppo.

## *2. General feelings toward the war*

The limited news arriving from the Dardanelles front caused profound concern among the people of Syria. As described by Khālid al-ʿAẓm, people were mostly worried about the fate of the "great Ottoman capital" Istanbul and the destiny of the "great Khalif," threatened by continuing waves of enemy attacks.[5]

People were haunted by the fear that the enemy wanted to convert the "great city" to its previous (Christian Byzantine) status. However, al-ʿAẓm declares that neither this feeling, nor the Ottoman Sultan's declaration of "holy war" prevented the eruption of the Arab Revolt and its alliance with the enemy, the British.

In his opinion, the military establishment's deceptive glorification and exaggerations concerning the progress of the war backfired and created widespread distrust amongst the people. Moreover, al-ʿAẓm predicts that this undertaking led the people to expect that a defeat was unavoidable.

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3 See Nabīḥ al-ʿAẓamah, *Rijāl al-rail al-awwal [Men of the first Generation]*, London 1991, 29.
4 See Fāris al-Khūrī, *Awrāq (Papers)*, ed. Kūlīt Khūrī, Damascus 1989, 143.
5 See al-Aẓm, *Mudhakkirāt*, 40 and 65.

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## 3. *The Miserable Conditions of the People*

Two fundamental factors convinced Khālid al-ʿAẓm that the general climate of war was deeply felt among the people of Damascus. First, the city was deprived of its most important young men – who either joined the service or went into hiding to avoid it; then there was the high cost of basic commodities.[6] Both contributed to the existing misery of the people. Imported goods, such as rice, coffee, sugar, fuel, etc., were not available to everyone and were very expensive. Local businessmen could not import them without difficulties, due to the blockade imposed upon the country. The locally produced wheat was very expensive, too, as it was monopolised by the state and was only available on the black market.

Badr al-Dīn al-Shallah was the youngest son of a famous trading family. His father, along with other Damascene contractors, was responsible for supplying the Ottoman Army with *qamar al-dīn* and *nuqūʿ* (dried apricots). According to Shallah, the price of these commodities became very high as people began to consume them instead of bread, which was not readily available.[7]

Khalīl al-Sakākīnī, a pioneer in the fields of culture and education, originally from Jerusalem, was brought to Damascus as prisoner of war at the end of 1917. He was released in early 1918 and spent the last year of the war there. In his diaries, Damascus is described as a "besieged city", full of refugees, immigrants and exiles from various provinces. He thought this contributed to the rising prices and made it difficult to find a furnished room. He continues to explain that one could witness misery, poverty and suffering everywhere. These were part of the daily life, exempting no one. It wasn't unusual that people would simply starve to death, or, in his own words:

> "On the streets hoards of screaming women and children were in miserable conditions, begging for food and help. People would pass indifferently, not feeling any pity or sympathy, as if their hearts had turned to stone. The harsh living and the skyrocketing prices left children with no other choice but to plunder the bakeries and restaurants. I personally would have participated if I had been a child facing these conditions."[8]

In his view, the existing indifference was a clear sign of the stagnation of the nation. The bitter poverty of the people was also mentioned by Shallah, who says that no one would have dared to carry a loaf of bread in public, as it would have provoked the hungry to lunge upon it.[9] Nobody had the luxury of peeling an orange in the street, as it would have caused a starving crowd to gather, to fight over it.

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6 See al-Aẓm, *Mudhakkirāt,* 74.

7 Badr al-Dīn al-Shallah, *Li-l-tarīkh wa–l-dhikrah (For History and Remembrance)*, Damascus 1990, 13-14.

8 Khalīl al-Sakākīnī, *Kadha ana yā dunyā (Such am I O' World)*, Jerusalem 1955, 138.

9 See al-Shallah, *Li-l-tarīkh wa–l-dhikrah,* 13-14.

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Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, a journalist and a man of letters, states in his memoirs that the Ottoman leadership should be held responsible for the suffering of the people in Damascus and elsewhere in the empire.[10] He claims that while people were not able to consume sugar during the four long years of the war, Anwār Bāshā and his comrades of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) were enriching themselves, profiting through their monopoly over the trade in sugar and other basic necessities.

Fāris al-Khūrī agrees with ʿAlī's charges that the Ottoman establishment failed in its responsibilities to its people.[11] He writes that the authorities imposed a law upon the peasants of Ḥawrān, forcing them to sell their crops to the state, especially wheat, at cheap prices.

## *4. Suffering was not shared by all:*

Sakākīnī points out that a luxurious lifestyle did not fully disappear, and was pursued in parallel to the miserable conditions. While speaking about the difficult life in Damascus during the last year of the war, he explains that a certain class continued to enjoy all aspects of pleasure – organising elaborate trips, private parties and dances, and special games.[12]

Khālid al-ʿAẓm elaborates on al-Sakākīnī's picture, describing a feast that his father organised in honour of Jamāl Bāshā, upon his request in the summer of 1916.[13] Prominent officials and local celebrities participated in this event. Al-ʿAzm witnessed such excesses on several occasions in Lebanon, while spending his traditional summer vacation there. He describes a wedding, which took place in Sūq al-Ġarb in the summer of 1917, where the guests were served a gourmet feast while most of the people in the country were suffering immensely.

## *5. The Era of Terror:*

Fāris al-Khūrī writes extensively about the political terror that reigned under the regime of Jamāl Bāshā. Three waves of trials against accused nationalists led to the sentencing and death of most of them. Khūrī was among those accused in the last trial, which took place in the Khān al-Bāshā, and suffered torture and abuse. Jamāl Bāshā continued his campaign against the nationalists despite the broad intervention of Arab and Turkish representatives in Istanbul trying to prevent his political terror. Khūrī insists that the documents used to condemn the accused had no legal basis. However, he does not hesitate to criticise those na-

10 Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, *al-Mudhakkirāt (The Memoirs)*, Damascus 1948, 72-73.
11 al-Khūrī, *Awrāq*, 169.
12 al-Sakākīnī, *Kadha ana*, 99, 133, 142, 145, 147, 149, 150-51.
13 al-ʿAẓm, *Mudhakkirāt*, 72, 73.

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tionalists living in exile for not being foresighted enough when corresponding with their comrades in Bilād al-Shām. In his view, these letters caused political problems and caused the activists to suffer at the hand of Jamāl, who used their correspondence as an excuse for his terror.[14]

Even those close to him did not agree with Jamāl's acts of terror. However, they did not dare to openly express their discontent.

Khālid al-ʿAẓm explains how his father felt with regard to Jamāl's repression. Nevertheless, his father could not show his pain and bitterness because he was afraid of Jamāl's outrage. In al-ʿAẓm's words: "My father tried his best to lessen the condemnation imposed upon the rest in order to save them from the same destiny of their comrades."[15]

For his part, Kurd ʿAlī claims to have intervened personally in an attempt to save the lives of the Arab political prisoners, all in vain. Despite his proximity to the establishment, he believes that the accusations were based on misinformation.[16] However, the writings of this contemporary historian condemning Jamāl's regime were not typical of the views of the people, and of the people of Damascus, in particular.

Khālid al-ʿAẓm argues that when people of different social status participated in state-sponsored functions, it was not necessarily because of their support for the Ottoman ruling class, nor because of their political convictions.[17] He insists, rather, that they participated as bystanders, or out of curiosity. He associates their behaviour to old traditions of hospitality, which was provided to friend and enemy alike, and which was inherited by new generations from their ancestors.

Al-ʿAzm's analysis mirrored that of Kurd ʿAlī.[18] Based on his own personal experience, Kurd ʿAlī believes that Jamāl Bāshā had a positive side, too. Jamāl Bāshā appreciated Kurd ʿAlī's intelligence, wisdom and academic capabilities, and allowed him to become the editor-in-chief of the only newspaper published at that time, (the voice of the German-Turkish ruling establishment).

Kurd ʿAlī writes that there were some who became jealous of his good relations with Jamāl Bāshā. They tried to distort his image to Jamāl, claiming that Kurd ʿAlī was against Pan-Ottomanism. According to Kurd ʿAlī, Jamāl Bāshā's reply had been: "I intended to have you hanged, but I admire your intelligence."[19]

Kurd ʿAlī added that Jamāl Bāshā was eager to provide him with every comfort after he was convinced of Kurd ʿAlī's loyalty and his good services to the Ottoman State during the war.

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14 Khūrī, *Awrāq*, 119-122.
15 *Ibid.*, 67 and 68.
16 Kurd ʿAlī, *al-Mudhakkirāt*, 154-55.
17 See al-Aẓm, *Mudhakkirāt*, 70-71.
18 Kurd ʿAlī, *al-Mudhakkirāt*, 80, 98, 103, 107-108, 115.
19 *Ibid.*, 41, 79.

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## 6. *Loyal tendencies toward the Ottoman state amongst Damascenes*

Khālid al-ʿAzm gives a lengthy account of the reasons underlying the loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. He writes that his father was loyal to the Ottoman state, believing it was the representative of Islam in the world.[20] Moreover, his father hated the French and the British, who had ambitions towards the Empire's land and had declared their animosity to Islam. ʿAzm demonstrates that his father, like many others who remained loyal to the Ottoman state, felt confusion in choosing between his religious conviction (which demanded support for the Ottoman state as an Islamic polity) and his Arab national feeling, his ethnic origin.

Nabiḥ al-ʿAẓmah continued to support Ottoman policies despite the state's shortcomings, and believed in Islamic unity, which was seen as an important force linking Arabs and Turks.[21]

He and his family were profoundly convinced of the importance of Arab-Turkish solidarity if it was in good hands. This, in their opinion, could contribute to the progress and well-being of the world.

Kurd ʿAlī wrote extensively about his reasons for defending the Ottoman Empire and his disapproval of the leaders of the Arab nationalist movement.[22] He opposed them for seeking an alliance with the British, whom he suspected of having no good intentions toward the Arabs in general, and Syria in particular. In response to the proposal that Jamāl Bāshā be assassinated for the sake of independence, he said: "Do you kill a Muslim man who came to keep the enemy away from our land?"

However, Kurd ʿAlī's loyalty wasn't without reservation. His memoirs revealed that he was aware of the fact that the Ottoman state had been interested in people like himself for its own benefits. The following statement clarifies:

> "When Jamāl Bāshā al-Mersine, the successor of Jamāl Bāshā, asked me to continue my duties at the newspaper, I refused. I told him that it wasn't an issue of gold or silver but that I was once enslaved in my life and I don't want this to be repeated. I permitted Jamāl Bāshā to make a slave out of me because he protected me from the conspirators and I hate all forms of slavery."[23]

Such loyalty did not prevail among his contemporaries. Khalīl Sakākīn was a sharp critic of Ottoman supporters and enthusiastically defended the Arab Revolt.[24] Nabiḥ al-ʿAẓmah reached the same conclusions. Despite his family's traditional loyalty to Istanbul, he lost hope of reviving the Ottoman state.[25]

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20 al-ʿAẓm, *Mudhakkirāt*, 67.
21 al-ʿAẓmah, *Rijāl*, 20.
22 Kurd ʿAlī, *al-Mudhakkirāt*, 111, 112-113, 142.
23 *Ibid.*, 161.
24 al-Sakākīnī, *Kadha ana*, 155.
25 al-ʿAẓmah, *Rijāl*, 20.

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## *7. The last days of the Ottoman presence in Damascus*

The autobiographers depicted the final days of Ottoman Damascus from different angles:

Nabīḥ al-ᶜAẓmah witnessed the defeated Ottoman Army retreat in disarray.[26] He considered the attacks and looting of the Turkish soldiers as an expression of the Arab yearning for freedom. Although his father, as a minister, retreated from Damascus with the other officials and soldiers, Khālid al-ᶜAẓm's family was excited at the prospect of the demise of state in their city.[27]

The Ottoman effort to build a defensive front in Damascus failed, leaving the inhabitants of Damascus in anxiety and disorder. Kawuqjī, an officer in the Ottoman army, describes in details his own adventure during these crucial days.[28]

He was surprised to see Arab flags waving everywhere and the speakers heralding the advance of the army of the Arab Revolt. Kawuqjī unsuccessfully tried to follow the Ottoman Army as it retreated north. General Muṣṭafā Kamāl, in the midst of reorganising the army, convinced Kawuqjī with other Arab officers to return to their local residences.

Fāris al-Khūrī, who witnessed these decisive moments was a prominent figure among those who declared the Arab Government 30/9/1918.[29]

## *Conclusion*

Thus the years of the war with its events elapsed. Damascus with the rest of Bilad al-Sham merged from the war, building a barrier with the past under the Ottomans, facing the unkown future under the tutelage of another "Master".

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26 See *ibid.*, 26.
27 See *ibid.*, 80-82.
28 Kawuqjī, *Mudhakkirāt*, 56.
29 al-Khūrī, *Awrāq*, 250.

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# Immediate Recollections of the First World War: Two Ottoman Travel Accounts of Europe

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Travel accounts, memoirs and autobiographies are an invaluable source for piecing together and understanding past events. Furthermore, these sources allow us to enter the mindset of the writer and to experience the unfolding events from their "subjective" point of view. Unlike memoirs and autobiographies, however, travel accounts tend to have greater immediacy. This is due to the simple fact that travel writers usually record their thoughts during their journey, or shortly after their return. Therefore, unlike autobiographers – who usually set out to recollect their personal past at an advanced age – travel writers describe an event from closer proximity. This supplies the reader with a more detailed version of events, recorded while still fresh in the author's mind. Proximity also effects the author's perception: things that can seem irrelevant at the time come to seem relevant some time later, and vice-versa.

This paper examines two travel accounts of Europe written during the First World War, by two Ottoman-Turkish authors – Cenāb Şehābeddīn (1872-1934) and Aḥmed Rāsim (1865-1932). Unlike most Ottoman memoirs of the First World War, these two travel pieces present contemporary accounts of the war. Written and sent as literary letters to *Taṣvīr-i Efkār*, one of Istanbul's most influential newspapers, they were published upon their arrival to the Ottoman capital, and both were later compiled into a book.[1] Cenāb Şehābeddīn, wrote his "Avrūpā Mektūbları" ("Letters from Europe") during his two journeys to Europe in 1915-1916. Aḥmed Rāsim wrote his "Romānyā Mektūbları" ("Letters from Romania") during his trip to Bulgaria and Romania, on which he embarked during the winter of 1916-1917.

This paper addresses the question of how these two authors perceived what they saw and experienced on their journeys. In addition to their unique perspec-

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1 Cenāb Şehābeddīn, *Avrūpā Mektūbları*. İstānbūl: Maṭbaʿa-ı ʿĀmire 1335 H. [1916]; Aḥmed Rāsim, *Romānyā Mektūbları*, İstānbūl: Aḥmed İḥsān ve Şürekāsı 1333 R. [1917]. The printing year of the *Avrūpā Mektūbları* was mistaken by Sadettin Nüzhet Ergun, who wrote a book on Cenāb Şehābeddīn in 1934, as a Rūmī year, so that he dated the letters as written in 1918-1919 (Sadettin Nüzhet [Ergun], *Cenap Şehabettin*, [İstanbul]: Yeni Şark Kütüphanesi 1934, p. 68). This caused a long series of wrong datings of the book, which even Zeynep Uluant, who transcribed the *Avrūpā Mektūbları* into Latin script in 1997 (*Cenab Şahabeddin'in Avrupa Mektupları*, hazırlayan Zeynep Uluant, İzmir: Akademi Kitabevi 1997) was not able to correct. In fact, the first of Cenāb Şehābeddīn's letters which was published in Taşvīr-i Efkār is dated as "Sofya, August 23nd, Rūmī (1331)", that means September 5th 1915, and was published in the 1560. number of Taşvīr-i Efkār on September 11, 1915 (or August, 29, 1331 (Rūmī)).

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tives as correspondents, both Cenāb Şehābeddīn and Aḥmed Rāsim, provide an interesting picture of the war since, unlike other Turkish authors who published memoirs of the war, they were not soldiers. Even though Cenāb Şehābeddīn had attended two different military schools during his childhood, he later took a degree in medicine and became a member of the state medical service. Even before he embarked on his wartime trip to Europe, he had already retired from medicine and was earning a living as an author and a teacher of Turkish literature at Istanbul's Dār-ül-Fünūn University. During his lifetime he contributed a great deal to the Turkish language, publishing poetry, literary essays and travel accounts; moreover, he was famous as one of the most influential authors of a literary movement known as *Edebiyāt-ı Cedīde* (New Literature).

Aḥmed Rāsim, on the other hand, was a popular author of many short stories, novels, histories, memoirs and travel accounts. Despite his training in the state civil service, at a very young age Aḥmed Rāsim dedicated his full energy to a career in journalism and writing.[2]

As previously mentioned, the newspaper Taṣvīr-i Efkār dispatched Cenāb Şehābeddīn to Europe to report on the general situation there, with a special focus on the Ottomans' close ally Germany. According to Taṣvīr-i Efkār, he was sent to "travel to places which are useful to see and to depict during this universal war of Europe ... and to investigate the secret reasons for Germany's success and the reasons for its might and majesty, which impresses the eyes of the world with its extraordinary qualities..."[3]

By way of contrast, the Committee of the Ottoman Press (*Maṭbūʿāt-ı ʿOs̱mānīye Hey'eti*) chose Aḥmed Rāsim to donate parcels of tobacco to the Ottoman troops on the Galician and Romanian fronts as a reward for their military merit. Unlike Cenāb Şehābeddīn, who only came face-to-face with the social aspects of the war, Aḥmed Rāsim accompanied the Ottoman troops for several days, and witnessed two battles between a joint Ottoman/German battalion and Russian troops in the surrounding area of Braila (Dobrudja). These two authors' narratives of the war differ considerably. However, the subtexts of their travel accounts resemble each other in terms of their pessimistic view of the Ottoman Empire and its future.

## *Cenāb Şehābeddīn: A Cosmopolitan in Disguise*

Cenāb Şehābeddīn's account started in Sofia, Bulgaria on September 5th, 1915. From there, he travelled to Germany via Bucharest, Budapest and Vienna. Cenāb

2 Atilla Özkırımlı, *Türk Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1, 4th. ed., İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi 1987, 279-280.

3 "Cenāb Şehābeddīn Beyiŋ *Avrūpā Mektūbları*". Taṣvīr-i Efkār No. 1559, 10.9.1915 (August, 28, 1331 (Rūmī). Translations are mine.

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Şehābeddīn's first trip lasted approximately three months. Some confusion arises from his inconsistent dating of letters. The dispatches that appeared in Taṣvīr-i Efkār, have their dates of their publication. However, the last five letters in the book version were not published in Taṣvīr-i Efkār, thus making it difficult to pinpoint the exact date that they were written. It is possible to conclude that these 5 letters, which focused on Viennese life, were written on his second trip during the fall of 1916, as there are references to the Viennese harvest, and to the death of the Kaiser Franz Josef I.[4]

Following his trip to Europe, there was a marked change in Cenāb's attitude toward the war. For example, during the first three years of the war he was a member of the literary committee of the Turkish-German Society in Istanbul,[5] and openly supported the war – editorialising in different publications.[6] Experiencing the war up close seems to have changed his opinion. In his "Letters from Europe", Cenāb Şehābeddīn took a much more conciliatory stance and gave a realistic account of the war. Here, we encounter him as a cosmopolitan poet, for whom the war must have been a tragedy, as it was in direct contrast with his ideal of a universal world civilisation.

An author who had studied for several years in Paris (1890-1893) and whose literary career was deeply influenced by French literature, Cenāb Şehābeddīn had obvious difficulties in orientating his interests towards the sober-spirited German "Kaiserreich". Reason, not cordial interests, shaped his perception of the Ottoman Empire's war allies, as expressed in his travel account. Bulgarian society, for instance, provided a role model in its new economic and educational policies (second letter), but the rural character of this society did not evoke his sympathy.

The Bulgarians lacked the sense of "chic" and the "finesse" that he believed was essential for European civilisation. Bulgarians, he said, do not feel obliged to bring Western civilisation into accord with their own cultural values, but accept Western values without caring whether "the hat fits or not". This is why they stay at the edge of Europe and never really enter the circle. "Thus they make their way to civilisation, while their eyes remain shaded by their hats".[7]

Cenāb Şehābeddīn felt more at ease in the Romanian capital of Bucharest, which the Ottomans would occupy just one year later. Here he found all the European cultural ingredients that the Bulgarian society lacked: *stil, rafinesse, chic.*

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4 21.11.1916; *Avrūpā Mektūbları*, 265.

5 The commitee was founded to select the books which should be translated from German into Turkish, See *Tätigkeitsbericht der Türkisch-Deutschen Vereinigung in Konstantinopel: für die Zeit von ihrer Gründung bis Ende 1917,* Konstantinopel 1917, 13.

6 See f.e. Cenāb Şehābeddīn's pro-war comments in his book *Neşr-i Ḥarb, Neşr-i Ṣulḥ ve Tiryākī Sözleri,* Dersaʿādet: Ḳanāʿat Maṭbaʿası 1334 [1917], 5. In the preface of the book, the editor remarks proudly that his printing house was able to print the book despite of the difficult situation after three years of war, with paper prices ten times higher than usual. Ibid., 3.

7 *Avrūpā Mektūbları,* 30.

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In his sixth letter he mentioned that while the Romanians could become good soldiers after two years of military training in Germany, it would only take 20 months in Paris to turn a Romanian into a true Frenchman.[8] Due to their European outlook, Romanians despise "people like us, who come from the East".[9] He went on to declare that this feeling could be excused since Romania is a very young country.

In contrast to this unmistakable tolerance and sympathy for the modernizing Romanian society, his experiences in Germany, as described in his letters, were "shaped by reason". Germans, as he characterised them, are hard-working and effective, as well as dangerous and calculating. They are frightening, and uncanny, because of their inhuman sense of duty. They are also exemplary, because they have managed to promote industry and militarism in a similar manner. Where in the 18th century Germans were "poets and thinkers", since the early 19th century they have become expansionist-minded, with the intent of establishing European hegemony. For Cenāb Şehābeddīn, the underlying message of his text is that the Ottomans simply have no choice but to be dependent on these machines of industrialism and militarism.

The power of the Germans, Cenāb Şehābeddīn notes, originates in their sticking together – "like a huge river they'd drown everyone who stands in their way."[10] Germany is described in this text as the country of discipline, Kantian rationalism and, above all, prohibitions, humourlessness and an incredibly economising outlook on life. For Cenāb Şehābeddīn, these traits were foreign and appeared to him quite comical.[11] Furthermore, as he had earlier said about the Bulgarians, Germans are not *chic*, since they have no sense of the intricacies of fashion.[12]

Cenāb Şehābeddīn had little sympathy for the Germans. However, for him, the war was one more in a long sequence of Ottoman wars that began with the 19th-century Balkan crisis. The Ottomans, in his opinion, only had one choice left: to fight on the side of the Germans or to perish. This negative perception of the Ottomans forced Cenāb Şehābeddīn to accept and sometimes propagate an ideology that contrasted with his more cosmopolitan spirit, which he represented both before and after the war.[13] On the other hand, even in these years of na-

8 Ibid., 70.
9 Ibid., 71.
10 Ibid., 109.
11 When Germans go to a winehouse, he writes for instance, they'd invite other people to come with them, but they'd pay only for themselves. And when a German enters a shop, he'd put his cigarette somewhere at the entrance, and smoke the rest of the cigarette after leaving... (Ibid., 157)
12 Ibid., 157.
13 On Cenāb Şehābeddīn's cosmopolitan character and anti-nationalist stand during the time of the Independance War, see the memoirs of his contemporary Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Gençlik ve Edebiyat Hatıraları*, baskıya hazırlayan Atilla Özkırımlı, 2. baskı, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları 1990 (1969), 158-160.

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tionalist conviction, Cenāb Şehābeddīn's stance on nationalism and militarism, as depicted in his travel account, remains contradictory: When he speaks about Bulgarian society, for instance, he notes that:

> "... although the Bulgarians have propagated nationalism for thirty years now, they have in fact worked to get rid of their being Bulgarian. If the Bulgarians had stayed Bulgarians they wouldn't have been able to make any civilising progress. As it is necessary when trading goods, it is also a necessity for a civilisation to change the abilities and disabilities of its own race for the disabilities and abilities of civilised peoples. What a great difference, my Lord, between the Bulgarians that I came to know thirty years earlier, and the (Bulgarians) of today!"[14]

Another somewhat contradictory attitude can be found in his statements on war. The experience of a sequence of disastrous wars since the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78 – as he mentions in his third letter – was traumatic for the young Cenāb Şehābeddīn, whose father fought in this war and died in Plevna, Bulgaria.[15] Thus, upon seeing trains full of German and Austrian soldiers going to the front, Cenāb Şehābeddīn wrote a long passage, in which he describes the ambivalent feelings war evokes from the perspective of a civilian sending a relative to the front.[16]

In summary, Cenāb Şehābeddīn's vision of the war is clearly marked by the propagandistic aim of drawing a positive picture of the war for his Ottoman readers. It is important to point out that while Cenāb Şehābeddīn was writing his letters (September 1915-February 1916), the defeat of the Central Powers could not have been foreseen. In accordance with this the cosmopolitan Cenāb Şehābeddīn tried to balance Turkish nationalist and Allied propaganda with the propagation of his universalistic ideals, with dubious success.

## *Aḥmed Rāsim: the war reporter at the front*

Aḥmed Rāsim offers a different view of the war. His letters were written almost a year after Cenāb Şehābeddīn made his journey, and they had a much more immediate perspective on the actual fighting. While Cenāb Şehābeddīn was sent to Europe on a cultural mission, Aḥmed Rāsim's duty was to report back about the situation on the Romanian front. He began his journey in December 1916 and his first letter – dated "Sofya, 9 Kanun-i Evvel 1332" (21.12.1916) – appeared in Taṣvīr-i Efkār on December, 27th, 1916. His account consists of 21 letters, written

14 *Avrūpā Mektūbları*, 28: "Īcāb-ı ticāret mübādele-i emtiʿa olduğu gibi, lāzıme-i medenīyet de kendi ʿırḳına maḫṣūṣ fażāḳil ve neḳāyişi aḳvām-ı mütemeddeneniŋ neḳāyiş ve feżāḳili ile değişdirmektir. Yiğirmi, otuz sene evvel ṭanıdığımız Bulġārlarla bugünkiler arasında, yā Rabbī, ne büyük farḳ var! ..."

15 Ibid., 32.

16 Ibid., 98-104.

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from Sofia, Varna, Medjidia, Braila and finally Bucharest between December 1916 and January 1917.

Aḥmed Rāsim draws a lively picture of the situation in Bulgaria and Romania, areas which had already been seriously scarred by the war. For example, he reports back about the food restrictions, the unpredictable monetary system (which was constantly fluctuating), beggars and wounded soldiers on the train. He also described the situation for travellers as being particularly difficult: crowded trains that arrived after great delay, difficulties with passport formalities at the Bulgarian border and a general state of confusion.

During his journey, Aḥmed Rāsim was under the protection of the Ottoman military, who provided him with accommodations and helped him follow the tracks of the 25th Ottoman corps that he was planning to visit. As he finally discovered, the corps had been joined with the Bulgarian Third Army for some time and then decamped to join the German Danube Army in the area of Walachia. In Medjidia he almost caught up with them. After staying there for a day and visiting a military hospital founded by an Ottoman doctor, he continued by automobile with a disoriented German driver to a village close to the Danube River. While travelling they were attacked by a group of Romanian snipers, but escaped injury.

After having passed a destroyed village, they came to the Dobrudja region, where the 25th corps was engaged with Russian troops, who remained even after the Romanians had left. Aḥmed Rāsim witnessed a battle between German-Ottoman and Russian troops in the area surrounding Braila. His report of what he saw during this battle, however, is extremely vague and short. This is most likely because he found himself in a dangerous position. As he witnessed the battle at the village of Silistraol with an Ottoman officer in a military car, they had become a target and had to leave hastily.

The second battle Aḥmed Rāsim witnessed took place in the port city of Braila, the last strategic place the Central Powers occupied in Romania. The battle, which occurred in Vadeni, a village close to the Danube River, took place on January 11th, 1917. Aḥmed Rāsim watched the battle from an empty farmhouse on a nearby hill. This time the description of the actual battle is more detailed and he sketches an interesting picture of war psychology. Being at a safe-distance, out of reach from the hostilities Aḥmed Rāsim witnessed the battle with troop commander Ḥamīd Faḥrī Bey, and a retinue of Ottoman and German officers.

As the Ottoman-German troops attacked the village from three different positions, the Russian troops were unable to locate the hostile fire and were finally forced to flee toward the river. Aḥmed Rāsim's vantage point was also the commanders' communication hub. As the battle intensified, the commanders and soldiers involved, as well as Aḥmed Rāsim, stayed in close contact, cheering each other on in order to bring themselves into a state of rage and aggression. He wit-

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nessed the sounds of the battle – the loud reports of cannons and guns, the crash of collapsing houses and the excited shouting of soldiers. He witnessed the huge clouds of smoke that rose over the rooftops of Vadeni.

In this passage, Aḥmed Rāsim's writings were clearly directed by his witnessing the war. The author's immediate reactions to the events were feelings of fear and insecurity, excitement and aggression, which were documented almost simultaneously. This becomes clear in the text, through the changes of tenses from perfect to present, and through the excited author's addressing his reader directly:

> "I looked around... Yes, I see it ... There they go ... There ... Oh! ... I see it ... Now I see and hear it ... It's such an organised attack ... One thinks immediately that it's a machine gun ... What a strange spectacle! ... People go ahead in waves ... How weak now is the feeling of security! Look ... Look ... One squad tries to enter the village of Vadeni from the left ... They go backward and f orward ... Oh no! ... They moved back completely! ... Oh no! ... Retreat? ... Definitely not! ... Four or five soldiers attacked the village ... Do they also drag the others behind them? What are they doing? They returned ... Now! They entered ... Those who rush in the direction of the village became more numerous ... There seems to be some confusion in the back of the village ... Oh my God! ..."[17]

As the author seems to be recording these incidents almost concurrently, it is impossible for him to maintain a sense of distance.

There is also another dimension in Rāsim's text that is more removed. In Bulgaria and Romania, his perception of what he saw was essentially formed by his consciousness of the last centuries of the imperial past, a time when these countries were Ottoman provinces. Remnants of the Balkans' Ottoman past, mosques and wooden Turkish houses, or details of how the population dressed, are included in his account.

The author sees the end of Ottoman rule over the Balkans as a disaster: The countries of the Balkans, which have been troublemakers ever since, he writes, had some comparatively peaceful centuries thanks to the Ottoman state. Now, since they have broken away from the Ottoman fold, they carry the responsibility for causing this Great War, and their present policies have been to the detriment of Ottoman interests.[18] He concludes with the thought that the Balkan states will get their just deserts for having betrayed the Ottomans and cultivating ties to the European-Christian powers.[19]

On every stage of his journey Aḥmed Rāsim finds traces of the Ottoman past. During his stay in Medjidia, for instance, he notes:

> "When I thought of the 500 years of history, it was difficult for me to be strolling through this huge area, which had fallen into the hands of the brave Bayezid II after the Battle of Niğbolu in 898 (1396), without being able to do anything. Yes, five centuries

17 *Romānyā Mektūbları*, 143-144. Translations are mine.
18 Ibid., 9 f.
19 Ibid., 11-13.

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> ago the fanatic Christian spirit of Europe had got out of control, and a huge army of crusaders with knights even from far away France had come to drive the Turks out of Europe.
>
> But this time, history starts from the south. Turks, Germans, Austrians and Bulgarians attack the Romanians and Russians – that is, the Easterners – and fight them back from these countries which once the Romans were not able to enter ..."[20]

Like Cenāb Şehābeddīn, Aḥmed Rāsim perceived the First World War as part of a series of disastrous wars, starting with the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877-78. The present successes on the Romanian Front were a kind of compensation for the embarrassing defeats of the recent past:

> "What a great desire is it for someone like me, who witnessed the tragedy of the war of 93 (the Ottoman-Russian war 1877-78) and the scandalous Balkan War, to be able to see at least one time this heroic (Ottoman) army ... which proceeds step by step, from victory to victory ..."[21]

Nevertheless, the remembrance of almost half a century of disastrous wars left Aḥmed Rāsim unable to think of a future for his country:

> "My restless brain still wants to investigate the past ... It doesn't find a way to go forward ... Everything is past ... Everything is past! ... Although I knew that if we worship the past like this, we will not be able to better our terrible present situation or have our future in view, I still moved back to the past ..."[22]

## *Conclusion*

Despite the different characters of both texts, both these authors can be compared in terms of the great discrepancies in their perceptions of different eras. While their immediate responses to the present were shaped by their missions as official war reporters – who had to sketch a positive picture of the war situation for the Ottoman-German allies – their long-term perspective was rather pessimistic. In the subtexts of their reports, both authors suggest that they regard the Ottoman state and society to be inferior to those of other countries.

The First World War was, for them, the latest in a long series of disastrous Ottoman wars that had begun in the second part of the 19th century. While Cenāb Şehābeddīn saw the alliance with Germany as a way out of this situation – which conflicted with his ideal of a universal civilisation – Aḥmed Rāsim took refuge in the remembrance of the glorious Ottoman past. For him, Ottoman history ended with this war.

Aḥmed Rāsim perceived the war as a turning point in Ottoman history, after which nothing would be as it was before. In a sense this was the case for Cenāb

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20 Ibid., 60. Translations are mine.
21 Ibid., 70-71. Translations are mine.
22 Ibid., 33. Translations are mine.

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Şehābeddīn as well, who, in order to give the Ottomans a "last chance", forced himself to believe in the superiority of a militaristic and nationalist Germany. A result of his war experiences is the disillusionment of this post-war remark: "I returned from my last journey to Europe with the following conviction: The General War, apart from machines, hasn't left any traces of civilisation ..."[23]

23 Cenab Şehabeddin, *Tiryaki Sözleri*, hazırlayanlar Orhan F. Köprülü – Reyhan Erben, İstanbul: Tercüman 1978, 53. This book is the publication of a collection of notes of Cenāb Şehābeddīn which remained unpublished until his death, plus the transcription of the "Tiryākī Sözleri" part of the *Neşr-i Ḥarb, Neşr-i Ṣulḥ ve Tiryākī Sözleri* book. See the preface by the editor of the book, Orhan F. Köprülü, 7-9.

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# Monumentalism versus Realism: Aspects of the First World War in Turkish Literature*

*Martin Strohmeier (University of Cyprus, Nicosia)*

And when the war reached its final spring
With no hint of a pause for breath
The soldier did the logical thing
And died a hero's death.

The war however was far from done
And the Kaiser thought it a crime
That his soldier should be dead and gone
Before the proper time.[1]

In European memory, the First World War was called "The Great War" for good reason. It was seen as a watershed, as a break from the past. Because it was thought to be unique (at least until the Second World War), it inspired many writers to deal with it and thereby gained a seminal importance in European cultural history, becoming the "great *imaginative* event".[2] For the Turks, though, one might argue that the "decisive imaginative event" of the 20th century was the War of Independence (1919-1922).

While nations such as Britain, France and Germany fought "only" one war, between 1912 and 1922 the Ottoman Empire was almost continually at war – the War of Independence was preceded by the First World War, preceded by the

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* After completion of this article the two following books relevant to the topic appeared: Erol Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914-1918). Propagandadan Millî Kimlik İnşâsına.* Istanbul: İletişim 2004; Mürşit Balabanlılar (ed.), Türk Romanında Kurtuluş Savaşı. Istanbul: Mas 2003 (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Genel Yayın 753, Edebiyat Dizisi 330).

1 Bertolt Brecht, from "The legend of the dead soldier" (1918), translated by Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning. The Great War in European cultural history*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000, 209. The German original runs as follows:

Und als der Krieg im vierten Lenz
Keinen Ausblick auf Frieden bot
Da zog der Soldat seine Konsequenz
Und starb den Heldentod

Der Krieg war aber noch nicht gar
Drum tat es dem Kaiser leid
Dass sein Soldat gestorben war:
Es schien ihm noch vor der Zeit.

2 Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined*, New York 1991, XI. In Russian literature, on the other hand, e.g. Mikhail Sholokhov's *Tikhy Don* ("And quite flows the Don", 1928-1940), the First World War was second in importance to the October Revolution.

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Balkan Wars (1912-13). Judging from the number and significance of writings that it produced in Turkish literature, the First World War carved itself less upon the memory of the Turks than the War of Independence. In fact, the First World War and the War of Independence can hardly be separated from each other. The War of Independence secured a nation-state for the Turks of Anatolia and liberated them from occupying powers. Retrospective views of the First World War, on the other hand, represent it as an ill-fated venture initiated by an adventurous clique of officers-cum-politicians, legitimised by the Ottoman dynasty. A victorious and more justifiable war such as the War of Independence was more likely to be commemorated than a lost one.[3]

This chapter will focus on one of the rare authentic wartime experiences in Turkish literature, the fictive autobiography of Şevket Süreyya Aydemir entitled *Suyu Arayan Adam* ("The man in search of water").[4] It will place Aydemir in the context of the anti-war and pro-war (or monumentalist) literature of the time and occasionally refer to other writings employing the realistic perspective to varying degrees, such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's novel *Yaban*, and Faik Tonguç's memoirs of the First World War.

## *Anti-War Literature*

Bertolt Brecht, whose military service in the First World War turned him into a pacifist, published the above-mentioned lines from "The legend of the dead soldier" in 1918.[5] In French literature, it was Henri Barbusse (1873-1935) who unmasked the reality of war, and tried to organise ex-soldiers into a united, international, socialist anti-militaristic front.[6] He participated in the war as a volunteer, driven by French Republican nationalism as well as humanism and the conviction that this was a social conflict fought to overcome the old order, the crown and the *Kaiser*.[7] But his experience quickly changed his stance and led to his

3 Erik Jan Zürcher, "Between Death and Desertion. The Experience of the Ottoman Soldier in World War I", *Turcica* 28 (1996), 235-258, here: 257, argues that due to the large-scale desertion of Turkish soldiers in the First World War there were enough soldiers alive who were able to fight in another war, the War of Independence, "when it really mattered". This does not, however, mean that people who had fought in the First World War were generally eager to return to the battlefield, at least at the outset of the War of Independence. Mehmet Ali (who had fought at the Dardanelles), the orderly of the reserve officer Ahmet Celal, the fictive narrator of Yaban, says: "God grant that they do not draft us again, Sir", Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban*, 44th ed. Istanbul: İletişim 2003 (Bütün Eserleri 1), 27.

4 Istanbul: Remzi 1965 (first published 1961). The title refers to a piece of wisdom of Rama Krishna which the author used as a motto for his book.

5 According to Winter, *Sites*, the poem was published in 1920.

6 The author of the novel *Le Feu* (1916) was also known as the "Zola of the trenches", because his description of trench warfare was very similar to Zola's account of a pit disaster: Winter, *Sites*, 178.

7 Winter, *Sites*, 178-179.

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strong condemnation of war. *Le Feu* became a best seller and won the *Prix Goncourt*, awarded to outstanding works of French literature. Barbusse's achievement consisted in his breaking with nationalist feelings and describing the reality of a *poislu* that he had experienced personally.[8]

In British literature, George Bernard Shaw castigated the "Pharisaism of patriots" (1919),[9] while Siegfried Sassoon's poem "The Hero" deconstructs the heroic poetry that the title alludes to.[10] In his post-war prose *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930), he portrays the effects of trench warfare, patrols, cold, hunger and despair on a young man. In the following poem he lashes out against all those who cheer the soldiers from a secure distance:[11]

You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.

Writers openly criticising or condemning the war were, at least in wartime proper, in a minority. This also holds true for Turkish literature, perhaps even more so than for the literature of England, France, and Germany. One of the few Turkish critics of the war was ʿOthmān Fakhrī.[12] Born 1890, committing suicide in 1920, Fakhrī was the half-brother of Cenāb Şehābeddīn, who, as we will see below, was among the war's glorifiers. Often referred to as the "Turkish Apollinaire",[13] he expressed his opposition to war in many poems, some of them bearing the title *Ḥarb* or *Ḥarbe qarşı*.[14] For ʿOthmān Fakhrī war is, in principle, evil. Battlefields are not the fields of honour referred to by so many of his contemporary writers. On the contrary, they are places of death and ruin, strewn with broken weapons. War brings only the "ruins of civilisation" (*kharābe-i medeniyet*) and a "ruined generation" (*nesl-i kharāb*):

When finally the head of the goddess of war has been ripped off
What is the booty of fire, what sign is left to remind us of war?
What will crown all these evils?
– five or ten cracked lances!
The moans of dearth and famine, everywhere

8 Winter, *Sites*, 181.
9 Winter, *Sites*, 195.
10 It is a poem about the insincere and inhuman attitude of an officer who informs a mother about the alleged heroic death of her son: Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 25th ed. New York: Oxford University Press 2000, 7.
11 Fussell, *Great War*, 283.
12 If there are others, they are not known to me.
13 The epithet was given to him because of a head wound which he had inflicted on himself by a pistol shot, Klaus-Detlev Wannig: "Osman Fahri und sein Platz in der türkischen Lyrik", *Istanbuler Almanach* 4/2000, 32-43, here: 32.
14 The fact that these poems were printed seems to indicate that military censorship was not absolute.

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The usurpation of life:
That is victory! Alas![15]

These lines are – to the best of my knowledge – almost solitary in Turkish war literature. Given the prevailing kind of war literature at the time, it is no wonder that ʿOthmān Fakhrī was forgotten or hushed up.

## *Literature glorifying the war*

The bulk of wartime literature is affirmative, glorifying war and sacrifice, celebrating death and the fallen, blending patriotism and religion. With its nationalist emotionalism it serves to arouse support for the governments; this holds true for Turkish literature as well as for Western literature. Maurice Barrès is a typical representative of that genre. In his *Debout, les morts* ("Dead man arise"), referring to one of France's patriotic myths of the First World War, he exhorts the dead to stand up and fight on.[16]

The glorification of war was not limited to non-combatants. In 1920 Ernst Jünger, a highly decorated soldier, wrote his experiences of death and hardship in diary form (*In Stahlgewittern*, "Storms of Steel"). As the title suggests, these are viewed merely as natural phenomena. Rupert Brooke ("...the English equivalent of Barrès, though at least he had served")[17], using the "high" diction of war glorification, compares the blood of young men to "the red/Sweet wine of youth".[18]

The mainstream of Turkish wartime literature – most often verse – is dominated by a hollow pathos, blood-and-soil ideology, and the romanticisation of battle. It is full of patriotic and sentimental appeals intended to boost the morale of the soldiers in the field and to honour the memory of the fallen. Many of these writers were not combatants, because they were too old to fight[19] or for other reasons. Perhaps it was thought that they could do better service for the fatherland in their positions as teachers and journalists, or by producing a literature to motivate the soldiers' bravery and sacrifice. One of the key means to arouse these emotions was to promote the national heritage that the soldiers were protecting.

ʿÖmer Seyfeddīn's stories dealt with themes taken from Ottoman history. Victories of the ancestors are depicted as the result of endurance, discipline, loyalty

15 From the poem afer ("Victory", 1916), published by Zeynep Kerman, *Osman Fahri. Hayatı ve Şiirleri*, Ankara 1988, 107, quoted by Wannig, "Osman Fahri", 33.
16 Winter, *Sites*, 205-207.
17 Winter, *Sites*, 209.
18 Fussell, *Great War*, 22.
19 Usually men between 20 and 45 were sent to war: Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam*, Istanbul: Remzi 1965, 67. Erik Jan Zürcher, "Between Death", 242, writes that for mobilization males between 19 and 45 were called up; later the age limit was extended between 15 and 55.

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and obedience to the commander, the very characteristics that were needed now.[20] Another example is the rhymed address *ʿIrāq ordusuna khitāb*[21] composed as a rallying call by Ḥaydarīzāde İbrāhīm Efendi (1864-1933)[22] in August 1917 (i.e. after the conquest of Baghdad by British forces in March 1917).

Wartime poetry strives to erect a poetic monument to the fallen. A good example is the much-quoted poem "For the Martyrs at the Dardanelles" (sometimes it is referred to as *Çanakkale Savaşı*), an excerpt from Meḥmed ʿĀqıf Ersoy's work *ʿĀṣım*[23]:

If I could set up the Kaʿba at the head of your pit
And carve on it the inspiration that stirs my spirit;
If I could seize the firmament with all the stars within,
And then lay it as a pall over your still bleeding coffin;
If I could hitch spring clouds as ceiling for your open tomb,
Hang the Pleiades' seven lamps in your mausoleum,
As you lie drenched in your own blood under the chandelier;
If I could drag the moonlight out of night into your bier
To stand guard by you as custodian until Doomsday;
If I could fill your chandelier with dawn's eternal ray,
And wrap your wound at dusk with the sunset's silken glory –
I still cannot say I have done something for your memory.[24]

A frequent topos of this genre is the contrast between the alleged shortcomings and unworthiness of the poet compared to the grandeur of the soldiers' sacrifice. Authors, seeking to commemorate, wrote that their verses were inadequate vis-à-vis the sacrifice of the fallen: *Mortui viventes obligant*. "Are my sinful tears worthy of you?", worries Enis Behiç Koryürek (1892-1949) at the monument of Çanakkale.[25] Is this a feeling of guilt that the author did not participate in the

20 Kemal Karpat, "Social Environment and Literature: The Reflection of the Young Turk Era (1908-1918) in the Literary Work of Ömer Seyfeddin (1884-1920)", in: *An Anthology of Turkish Literature*, ed. Kemal Silay, Bloomington 1996 (Indiana University Turkish Studies&Turkish Ministry of Culture Joint Series, XV), 280-294, here: 288.

21 Istanbul 1335/1916-17.

22 *Yaşamları ve Yapıtlarıyla Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi*, vol. I, Istanbul: Yapı Kredi 1999, 621-622.

23 Translated by Talat Sait Halman in: *Anthology*, ed. Silay, 267. Turkish text in: Seyit Kemal Karaalioğlu, *Resimli Motifli Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, vol. III: Cumhuriyet Edebiyatı. 2nd ed. Istanbul: İnkılap 1985, 611-612.

24 The verses themselves are less offensive than their continuing use in education. Tarlan (1898-1978), one of the most influential historians of Turkish literature, comments upon the poem in this way: "O martyrs of the Dardanelles! The divine light descending on your graves could not celebrate your memory more fittingly. Until the day God Himself hands you your rewards, may your souls rest content with this paradise of eloquence ... Yes, there are God's poets as well as martyrs. When martyrs witness the laments of M. Akıf they admit that they had never suffered to such a degree, and such intense pain even they could not have withstood": Ali Nihat Tarlan, *Mehmet Akıf. His Life and Works*, Ankara: 1986 (Publication of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism: 704), 75-77, with a foreword by the then Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mesut Yılmaz.

25 Hüseyin Tuncer, *Meşrutiyet devri Türk edebiyatı*, İzmir: Akademi Kitabevi, 829.

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war? Are these poems compensation for having stayed at home, while others risked their lives? Others, like Süleymān Naẓīf (1869-1927), maintained that they would have liked to participate in combat. In *Āsitān-i Tārīkhde*[26] ("At the Threshold of History") Naẓīf declared: "I would have liked to be involved in the battles at the Dardanelles and in Galicia, I would have liked to hear the *Allāhu Akbar*-shouts rising over the bayonets, gleaming in the noise of exploding shells". In his *Baṭarya ile ateş*[27] ("Battery: Fire!"), in a letter written at the "Ruins of Ninive" in February 1914, we read these lines:

> "Turkish mothers, giving birth on the crying soil of the Ottoman fatherland, shall tell their children the stories of national tragedies. Rocking their babies in their cradles, they shall compose lullabies with the last breaths of our fallen who remained on the mountains of the Caucasus, in the valleys of the Danube, in the deserts of Tripoli and Benghazi, on the banks of the Maritza and on the shores of the Adriatic."[28]

With his writings, Naẓīf diverged from the path taken by Henri Barbusse, whom he had known during his stay in Paris.[29] Unlike Naẓīf, Barbusse, having experienced the horrors of war, became a leftist pacifist.

During the war, Yūsuf Żiyā Ortaç (1895-1967) published several collections of poems, among them "Horizons of Combat" (*Cenk ufuqları*). One of the poems is entitled "To those who remained in the Caucasus" (i.e., who died there during the campaigns in the First World War):

O heroes who have fallen into eternal sleep at the snowy bosom of high mountains!
O heroes on whose graves without a crown, without a sign burn lamps from the stars!

As long as we remember you with an orphaned love
Our heart shivers with sobs
We long for your illusion
Still in an enormous bitterness

What does the wind of the fatherland tell you?
Does it not give you news from your beloved one?
Are they cold, the snowy mountains of the Caucasus?
There are ones who still expect letters from you!

Have you met your forefathers
Who once took those regions in the name of Islam?
When I remember you, I don't know why,
A pride inflames my wretched soul.

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26 Birinci defter: *Ghaliçya*, Istanbul: Maṭbaʿa-i Āmire 1335/1916-17, 12.

27 Istanbul 1916. I have used the edition by Sabahaddin Arıç, Istanbul: Kervan 1978 (Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser), 91.

28 Martin Hartmann, *Dichter der neuen Türkei*, Berlin 1919, 44-45, called these lines "... ein Denkmal der Wut und des Hasses ... eines beschränkten religiösen und nationalen Fanatismus".

29 Şuayb Karakaş, *Süleyman Nazif*, Ankara 1988 (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları: 968; Kültür Eserler Dizisi: 122), 72.

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You were the heroes whom the world admires
You have followed the most bloody and terrifying paths
Today you have given value to the myth
We kneel down and pray for you.[30]

Many years later, Ortaç confessed that he hated those poems. Alluding to the infamous war profiteers he stated quite candidly: "I was probably the first war profiteer. When I left the War Ministry (after having delivered the poems) I had 220 pounds in my pocket. At that time a four room house could be bought with that sum".[31] Another writer who was liberally reimbursed for "commissioned war literature" was Cenāb Şehābeddīn.[32] In his *Nethr-i ḥarb, nethr-i ṣulḥ ve tiryakī sözleri*[33] he praised Turkish soldiers for their courage in tiresome variations[34] and devoted an article to disabled soldiers.[35] Aḥmet Refiq (Altınay) published a series entitled *Ḥarb Edebiyatı ve eski şāʿirlerimiz*[36] ("War literature and our old poets"), in which he argued that Ottoman culture was mostly based on war and that this was reflected in its literature, with the result that the Ottomans had a veritable "war literature" (*savaş edebiyatı*).[37]

Many of these works, such as ʿAlī Ekrem Bolayır's (1867-1937) *ʿAskere,* address soldiers with the aim of arousing their fighting spirit:

"Soldier, soldier know that you are God's most beloved slave; know that you are part of the greatest community of the Prophet of God; know that Islam lives with you, and that the Turks world-wide take strength from you! Soldier, know that the spot on which you step becomes paradise, and that the sky at which you look turns into the highest heaven! Know that the formula 'There is no god but God' comes from your heart ... As long as you exist, we live as well; if you are not there the Muslims are dead as well. Run, run: The divine perfection is for you; the intercession of Muhammad is for you; the angels are for you; Paradise is for you!

Our prophet, the dear and great messenger of God, waits for you at the door of Paradise! ...Know, soldier, if we eliminate the enemy today, this world and the other world, Paradise, Muhammad and God will be yours tomorrow.

Soldier, Turkish son, great Turkish soldier! Conquer, strike, crush, kill, finish.[38] Mountains, oceans, skies may tremble at your assault! ...

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30 Istanbul 1917, 15-16; quoted by Tuncer, *Meşrutiyet devri Türk edebiyatı*, 851.

31 Yusuf Ziya Ortaç, *Bizim Yokuş*, Istanbul 1966, 41-45, quoted by Şükran Kurdakul, *Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatı.*1. *Meşrutiyet Dönemi*,1, Ankara: Bilgi, 3rd enlarged printing 1992, 118.

32 Kurdakul, *Çağdaş*, 118.

33 Derseʿādet 1334/1918.

34 Ibid., 26 sqq.

35 Ibid., 73-74: "Yarım şehīdler": "It is more glorious to be a crippled lion than a cat which has all its limbs".

36 Ḥarb Mecmūʿası II (21 Aghustos 1333/1917).

37 Muzaffer Gökman, *Tarihi sevdiren adam: Ahmed Refik Altınay*, Istanbul: Baha 1978 (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları Genel No. 186, Ünlü Kişiler Dizisi 8), 196. Cf. also the entry *Harb* in *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi* 4, Istanbul: Dergah 1980, 103-105.

38 Cf. the famous verses in the poem "Vur" by Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, dedicated to the "National Army".

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Know that God, Muhammad, Islam, the nation, the Turks, the fatherland survive, only if you march on! Great soldier, soldier of Islam, Turkish soldier, hundred thousands of greetings to you!"[39]

In a poem entitled *Başlangıç* Bolayır speaks to his soldier-reader much like an officer would speak with his subordinates: "... there was not such a book worthy of you in our country; when the army ordered it I wrote it; read it and learn it by heart".[40]

One might ask if war poetry really had any influence at all, because, as we will hear below, soldiers were fatalistic or indifferent towards their fate. Nevertheless, in 1915 and 1917 the government found it useful to incite the patriotic zeal and boost the morale of the soldiers. The pro-government newspaper Ṭanīn remarked that in France and Germany literature was used to stimulate the readiness of citizens to make sacrifices, and that Turkish writers were not aware of this use of literature.[41]

İbrāhīm ʿAlaeddīn Gövsa (1889-1949), who was in his mid-twenties during the war and obviously did not serve after his return from his studies in Geneva in 1916, wrote a poem entitled "Letter from the trench" (*Siperden mektub*). In this poem the central theme is the imminent loss of the fatherland due to the aggression of the enemy and the hope that the soldiers' death may protect the fatherland. Private worries, such as the loss of his sweetheart, also find their way into trench-life:

Pray to God, mother, that the scythe of the enemy may not tear out the state tree
Beneath it the blood of your son may be shed
The rose-pink colour of the flag must not fade, mother.

Someone from the village came to our battalion
The marriage contract of the mukhtar's daughter was said to have been signed
At night I looked at the stars wishing for something to turn out
Tell me, mother, that this may not happen.

Don't be sad if the postman comes empty-handed
Tomorrow there is an advance from the trench
Be content with fate, waiting for the long roads the letter has to go
Your eyes should not be filled with tears, mother.[42]

Whereas Gövsa lets the soldier write to his mother and concludes with the request she should not become disheartened, Meḥmed Emīn Yurdakul (1869-1944) focuses on the self-sacrificing and patriotic mother who calls on her son to "Become a ghazi or a martyr":

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39 *Ordunuñ Defteri*, Istanbul 1336/1916-1917, 31-32, quoted by İsmail Parlatır: Ali Ekrem Bolayır (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları: 818, Türk Büyükleri Dizisi: 46), 146.

40 *Ordunuñ Defteri*, 5; quoted by Parlatır, Ali Ekrem Bolayır, 46.

41 Karpat, "Social Environment...", 288, footnote 16.

42 Seyit Kemal Karaalioğlu, *Resimli Motifli Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, vol. IV: *Cumhuriyetten Günümüze*, Istanbul: İnkılap ve Aka 1982, 148-149.

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Go my child, I have given birth to you for today,[43]
I have kneaded your dough with the yeast of heroism.
A Turk is one who, knowing that the soil is the honour of his mother,
does not allow the foot of a foreigner to step on it;
he does not permit a foreign flag to be hung up where the call to prayer is heard.

Go my son, I'll be without a son for many years;
I will bear my suffering with great patience
Go, my son, go
Become a ghazi or a martyr!

Say good-bye, my son, to your village and your bride
Sacrifice your plough, your fields, everything;
Take that weapon because on such a day a man does not think of anything other than this consecrated iron.
A wrist that holds this weapon
Can never be placed in the unfortunate chains of slavery.

[refrain, repeat of the second stanza]

Go my son, let me tell you: 'Become a hero';
Bring strength to the corps of the ghazis where you grew up
Win the battles so that your name 'great Turk' becomes famous everywhere.
Take revenge on your five hundred years old ancestors whose bones shiver in their graves.

[repeat, refrain of the second stanza][44]

Although poetry appears to lend itself more readily to glorification and emotion, prose, too, is used. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu ventured to characterise the Turkish soldier with these words: "In this air which smells of blood and gunpowder I become slowly aware of the extraordinary human being called the Turkish private. In his soul I discover an endless universe..."[45]

Relatives also responded to the letters the soldiers wrote. Few such responses were published, however, suggesting either that their number may have been very small due to the illiteracy or perhaps that they were thought to be of a private nature. A rare example is the published "Letter of a Turkish soldier's wife"; it appeals to the courage and endurance of the soldier, introduces the themes of patriotism and religion and imagines war scenes (in dreams). Be it authentic or fictitious, the letter was considered useful in the efforts of the government to appeal to the endurance of the soldiers.[46]

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43 One of the participants in the battles at Gallipoli recalls an officer addressing soldiers before an attack with the words: "Your mothers gave birth to you for today", Necati İnceoğlu, *Siper mektupları*, 2nd ed. Istanbul: Remzi 2001, 85.

44 Seyit Kemal Karaalioğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, vol. III, 590-591.

45 In a text entitled Türk Eri ("The Turkish private"), quoted by Karaalioğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, vol. III, 428.

46 Published in al-Sharq, a newspaper founded at the initiative of Cemāl Pasha and published in Damascus. There is only little information available on this important paper, Yaʿqūb Yahūshuʿa, *Tārīkh al-ṣiḥāfa al-ʿarabiyya fī Filasṭīn fī-l-ʿahd al-ʿuthmānī (1908-1918)*, Al-Quds

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## *Realistic descriptions and authentic experiences of the First World War in Turkish literature*

Literature glorifying war evokes images of the past rather than relating individual and authentic experiences of the war. In order to find the latter one must turn to other writings that constitute the memory of the war. There is a vast literature on the First World War in the Turkish language. Historiographical works on military, diplomatic and economic aspects of the war and memoirs of high-ranking soldiers and politicians, many of them reflecting the official perspective (often quoting from orders) and the top-down view, have contributed to the collective memory of the war. However, these writings have hardly enriched our knowledge of the life of the private soldier and the psychological effects of the war on individuals. Generals are busy describing their plans, tactics and strategies – why should they deal with the miserable situation of the soldiers in the trenches for whom they were responsible? Politicians were even more distant from the everyday lives of privates whose suffering might have concerned them in an abstract way.

In the search for authentic war experiences we have to turn to memoirs of literate combatants, but at the same time did not belong to the higher echelons of the military hierarchy – who would not normally have referred to the suffering of the ordinary soldier. One might even argue that the higher the rank of the author, the more distant his report.[47] Students of wartime literature are particularly interested in the relationship between truth and fiction. While memoirs are not free from fictitious elements, works of fiction do not necessarily lack authentic or truthful descriptions (e.g., Karaosmanoğlu's *Yaban*). Both genres incorporate elements of the authentic and the fictive, the documentary and the imaginative.[48]

Unfortunately, descriptions of the experiences of the common soldier, the *Mehmetçik*, are more or less missing, mainly because most of these soldiers were illiterate and therefore not able to write diaries or letters home (in the Western armies the illiteracy rate was much lower).[49] Those letters we do have are often letters prepared by the army for the soldiers' use. Such letters followed certain conventions, e.g. inquiries about the well-being of family members, expressions

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1974, 142-143; the letter was translated into German in the *N.O. Korrespondenzblatt der Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient* 2/42 (11. August 1916), 263.

47 From this point of view, the claim of Ali İhsan Sabis, the commander of the Sixth Army in World War I, seems questionable: "In general, the value of memoirs depends on the rank of their authors. In fact, the memoirs of men who served in high positions and commands are more valuable", Ali İhsan Sabis, *Harp hatıralarım: Birinci Dünya Harbi*, cilt 1. Istanbul: Nehir 1991, 17.

48 Thomas F. Schneider, "Zur deutschen Kriegsliteratur im Ersten Weltkrieg", in: *Kriegserlebnis und Legendenbildung. Das Bild des 'modernen' Krieges in Literatur, Theater, Photographie und Film*, ed. Thomas F. Schneider. Osnabrück 1999, 101-114 (= Krieg und Literatur, Bd. 1).

49 Zürcher, "Between Death", 235-258.

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of pride about the soldier's self-sacrifice on behalf of the country, and requests to send regards to relatives and friends.[50] Comparing letters written by British and Australian soldiers at Gallipoli with the letters of Turkish soldiers, İnceoğlu finds that the former were more "rationalistic" and "realistic" in their views of the war. They wrote about being lice-ridden, sickness, freezing cold, exploding missiles and lost comrades. Turkish soldiers – maybe due to a more intense censorship or a self-restraint in expressing feelings, or the wish to not worry relatives – were hardly ever frank in what they wrote.[51] Therefore, sources that are more likely to reflect soldiers' authentic experiences are diaries and interviews conducted with veterans decades after the war.[52] Another interesting category of war literature is the descriptions, mainly from memoirs, of captivity, which cannot be examined here.

Finally, we have to take into consideration historical distance. The "Monumentalists", writing at a time when the cannons were speaking, were emotionally involved in the conflict as citizens who were concerned about their compatriots in the field and as individuals who were worried about the fate of loved ones. As authors, the war provided the opportunity to make a living from patriotic writings. Authors such as Aydemir and Tonguç who will be dealt with below, wrote after some time had elapsed since the end of the war. Thus they were able to distance themselves from the events and take a more critical stance towards those responsible for the war.

In his novel *Yaban*, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu oscillates between fact and fiction. Whereas the quote mentioned earlier represents the "high diction" of war glorification, in a short story called *Ḥijāb* ("Shame"),[53] authenticity prevails. The war's losers – beaten soldiers, violated women and war-disabled persons – meet in a café in Istanbul. The message is that war produces no heroes, only victims.

In his fictive autobiography entitled *Suyu Arayan Adam* ("The man in search of water"), Şevket Süreyya Aydemir "dared" to tell the "truth" about the First World War, though after more than 40 years had elapsed. In his memoirs we do not find the lofty language of the "Monumentalists", the glorifications and the praise of the fallen. Instead he provides his thoughts on war, information about personal and group experiences, ideas and ideologies. The ugly face of war dominates.[54]

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50 Examples of these ready-made letters can be found in the book of Necati İnceoğlu, *Siper mektupları*, 2nd ed. Istanbul: Remzi 2001, 78.

51 İnceoglu, *Siper*, 79, suspects: "Perhaps the greatest censorship was applied by the writers of the letters themselves".

52 E.g., C. Önder, *Atatürk'ün Silah Arkadaşları – Yaşayan Çanakkale Muharipleri*, Istanbul: Yazır 1981; quoted by İnceoğlu, *Siper*, 77-80.

53 Included in a collection of short stories entitled *Raḥmet*, sec. ed. Istanbul 1923.

54 It should be noted that the most interesting and vivid chapters in Aydemir's autobiography are those concerned with his childhood and youth, as well as his stay in Azerbaijan

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Aydemir was born near Edirne in 1897 and had just completed his education as a teacher when he was sent as a reserve officer to the Caucasian battlefields. Here, the Ottoman Third Army under Enver Pasha had experienced disaster in late 1914 and early 1915 at Sarıkamış, with tens of thousands of soldiers losing their lives, among them Aydemir's older brother. After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire Şevket Süreyya went to Russian Azerbaijan, where he briefly worked as a teacher, and from there to Moscow. He studied economy and social sciences and became a Marxist. Upon his return to Turkey (where he served a short jail sentence because of alleged subversive activities in 1925/26) Aydemir became a Kemalist and acquired some fame as one of the editors of the influential periodical *Kadro* in 1932.[55] His writings include the authoritative biographies of Atatürk (*Tek Adam*), İsmet İnönü (*İkinci Adam*), and Enver Pasha (*Üçüncü Adam*). Aydemir then worked as director of the College of Commerce in Ankara and held high governmental posts until his retirement in 1950. He died in 1976.[56]

## *Old War – new War*

Aydemir devoted a lengthy chapter[57] to his wartime experiences, although he claimed to have devoted as little space as possible to the war. Looking back, he describes war as an old acquaintance. He contends that the history of war has ceased to be of any interest for his contemporaries because mankind in the 20th century has lived at war permanently. It has become an all-embracing feature of everyday life. Apart from that, the history of war, as Aydemir sees it, is no longer the history of human beings. It has been depersonalised. In the second half of the 20th century (Aydemir is writing after another World War and in the era of the "Cold War") war is no longer dominated by individuals, but rather by technology.[58] He speaks uneasily of the "brute forces" which man has created, but is no longer able to control; he presents man both as master and as prisoner of technology – very much the Faustian apprentice unable to exorcise the very

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and Moscow. After having turned into an ardent supporter and leading theoretician of Kemalism, he uses his autobiography merely to legitimise his political orientation: "Seine Diktion verändert sich, er theoretisiert, anstatt zu erzählen, die Sprache wird blasser, die Erzählperspektive enger ... Die Memoiren Şevket Süreyya Aydemirs sind eines von zahlreichen Beispielen, bei denen Facettenreichtum und Dichte umso größer sind, je weiter die erzählte von der Erzählzeit entfernt liegt ...", Elisabeth Siedel, "Die türkische Autobiographie – Versuch einer Problematisierung", *Die Welt des Islams* XXXI (1991), 246-254, here: 252-253.

55 Another famed editor was Karaosmanoğlu.

56 *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi* I, 240.

57 Entitled *Şu bilinen hikaye*, *Suyu*, 99-122.

58 Cf. Fussell, *Great War*, 24: "Out of the world of summer, 1914, marched a unique generation. It believed in Progress and Art and in no way doubted the benignity even of technology. The word machine was not yet invariably coupled with the word gun".

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powers he had summoned.[59] The "old war", as he puts it, gave "our people" the opportunity to get to know themselves, as well as one another.[60]

## *The journey to the front: "That Unknown Anatolia"*[61]

At the end of 1915, after finishing his studies, Aydemir completed the six-month training to be a reserve officer. The farewell speech of the commander contained a tragi-comical exhortation to the soldiers to make sacrifices for the fatherland: "You will all die! We will all die! But the fatherland will be saved!"[62]

Together with Aydemir there were more than 400 officer cadets leaving Haydarpaşa by train.[63] In 40 days they crossed Anatolia.[64] In Ulukışla their ways parted: those soldiers who were to join the armies in the Caucasus headed north-east; the ones attached to the troops fighting in Syria and the Arabian Peninsula left for the south-east. At this junction Aydemir reflected: "I felt alone and abandoned".[65] From there, together with a handful of comrades, he made his way, mostly on foot, through Kayseri to the front (a distance of approximately 800 kilometres), the mountain range called Allahuakbar, west of the embattled city of Kars.

The journey to the front confronted the author with the "unknown Anatolia". In contrast to what he had been told at school and read in poems, the Anatolia he saw was not the land of a rich cultural heritage and glorious past, but rather "... a long dead part of the bark of the world ...", with villages resembling "hollows".[66] It was like another "planet".[67] He describes that experience as a maturing process. When he and his comrades set out on the journey to the front they had been children. By the time they arrived, they had grown into young men. Whereas they had been delicate plants raised until then in a protected greenhouse (by this he alluded to the "artificial atmosphere of our schools"), the Anatolian reality put them to the trial and turned them into "hard" young men who began to live in the present.[68]

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59 *Suyu*, 99.
60 Ibid.
61 This is the title of the chapter Şu bilinmeyen Anadolu, *Suyu*, 73-95 which precedes the chapter containing the wartime experiences proper.
62 Ibid., 76.
63 Ibid., 77: The relatives who saw the soldiers off at the station "... undoubtedly knew what the places they headed for and the war were like. Certainly they knew that many would not return and that this farewell for some of them was the last time they would see their children. But there were neither lament nor sobs ...".
64 Ibid., 95.
65 Ibid., 80.
66 Ibid., 79.
67 Ibid., 82.
68 Ibid., 101.

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Faik Tonguç had very much the same impressions on his way (Istanbul – Konya – Ulukışla – Kayseri – Sivas – Zara – Refahiye – Erzincan – Erzurum) to the Allahuakbar Mountains hardly a year before Aydemir went there. Although at first the youths had enjoyed the trip "with lots of laughter and jokes", they became increasingly dismayed at the "neglect and wretchedness" of the population. This was not only true for the countryside, but also for cities such as Kayseri, which looked like a "ruin from the Middle Ages".[69] On the way to Erzurum, Tonguç's party encountered thousands of sick and wounded soldiers who had survived Sarıkamış; the ones who had succumbed to their injuries lay on the roadside.[70] At some places pits had been dug to bury the bodies. Soldiers who had fallen ill with typhus and typhoid infected the civilians, mainly in the villages, where they went looking for food and accomodation.[71]

## *The front, the space and the enemy*

The Ottoman Army was already in retreat when Aydemir arrived at the front, a result of the Sarıkamış offensive, which he refers to as a "crazy adventure".[72] Although the Sarıkamış disaster had "almost swallowed" a whole army of 90,000 men, there were some soldiers in his regiment who had survived the battles. But when those "veterans" related what they had seen, the snowstorms and thousands of frozen soldiers, they were frightened by the silence of their listeners and stopped midstream.[73]

The Allahuakbar mountain range had a special meaning for Aydemir because it was there that his brother, "a religious person", had died: "He praised martyrdom and longed for it. And he got what he had praised and longed for". The news of his death and of his promotion to captain had arrived simultaneously.[74] Aydemir wonders where exactly his brother was buried: "I only reluctantly stepped on the soil where my brother had fallen". The writer reminds himself: "Had I not come to this section of the front of my own free will in order to take the place of my fallen brother?" Aydemir is excited by the thought that his brother would fight side by side with him in combat.[75]

Aydemir portrays the geographical space of the mountains in two ways. On the one hand it is a hostile and inhospitable landscape of snow, ice and brutal

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69 Faik Tonguç, *Bir yedek subayın anıları*, 2nd ed. Istanbul: Şefik 1999 (Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları), 22-23.

70 Ibid., 71; Tonguç stresses that the Russians did not leave their fallen on the battle field whereas the Turks sometimes failed to recover and bury their dead.

71 Ibid., 26-30, in the chapter "Face to face with the terrible reality" (25-52).

72 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 100. Of the 90.000 men of the Third Army "... only 12.000 survived into spring", Zürcher, "Between death", 243.

73 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 100. Cf. Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 26.

74 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 100-101.

75 Ibid., 133.

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cold, deep cut valleys and rocks.[76] On the other hand, comparing the sublime and majestic spectacle of nature, the sun and clouds to warfare, Aydemir found the latter to be insignificant.[77] This experience of nature, as he puts it, "pervaded our souls".[78]

Upon his arrival, Aydemir is plainly told by his company commander about the Russian method of fighting. They preferred to attack at night, superior in number, and not man against man. In this way, the commander insinuates the insidiousness of the Russians and contrasts it with the way the Turks fought: "The darkness is their [the Russian's] biggest friend. They do not like to fight bayonet against bayonet".[79]

## *The first battle: Baptism of fire*

Soon Aydemir found himself in his first battle. During the day the enemy had reconnoitred the targets; the night started with artillery fire. One could hear rifle and machine-gun fire gradually spreading across the entire front. Next came the tracer bullets, rising steeply in the sky, describing a trajectory and flashing in all sorts of colours until they fell to the ground. Finally, the first bombs exploded a few steps in front of Aydemir's position.

The experience of battle engendered a further, even more difficult and dangerous, maturing process than the one he had undergone during his journey through Anatolia. After the first bombardment the author feels as if he has suddenly aged ten years and become a serious-minded and mature man.[80] Having faced death, run through the enemy's fire and killed, he is now distinguished from his peers who had not gone through this trial. He experiences a wide range of emotions in his first combat encounters. First, at the outset of battle, he is excited, even frightened. But then fear gives way to relief. And ultimately the elements of a new identity, as Aydemir calls it, develop: shoot, cut and kill – a veritable baptism of fire.[81] When, after the nocturnal battle, a new morning breaks,

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76 As Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 50, remarks they had to fight not only against the enemy but also against the adversities of the weather.

77 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 104.

78 Ibid., 121.

79 Ibid., 102.

80 Ageing in battle is occasionally mentioned: "I was 21, but my hair and my beard had turned white. My facial hair began to go gray. My face became wrinkled and my body infirm": Murat Çulcu, *Kanlısırt Günlüğü – Mehmet Fasih Bey'in Anıları*, Istanbul: Arba 1997, 140, quoted by İnceoğlu, *Siper*, 138-139.

81 Cf. Fussell, *Great War*, 115. – Not every soldier was able to cope with the new situation as easily as Aydemir. According to Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 63, at the beginning of a battle young soldiers who had arrived from the training camp of Sivas the day before and had never heard the sound of weapons and did not know how to use them, started to cry. See also Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban*, 144, about the horror aroused by the rumbling of guns: "I had heard the rumbling of artillery fire from close by. I had seen the cannons themselves. I

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he finds that he lost his childhood, and his innocence.[82] He felt a new responsibility: "I now protected a section of the border of the fatherland. The fatherland now had placed a hand on my shoulder". In the service of the nation he, too, had become one of those ghazis mentioned in the legends and epics. Pride came over him: "How moved my dead mother and my fallen brothers would have been if they had seen me in the trenches at the head of my soldiers? Would not my father ... if he had seen me at that night have shed tears of joy?"[83]

This was not the kind of war that the author and his generation had imagined in their childhood. As children they had been told and read the legends and epics of heroic fighters, mainly in the Ottoman past. In these stories there was always a leader who mounted his horse, drew his sword and rode at the head of his soldiers into battle, shouting Allahu akbar, waving green flags, accompanied to the music of military bands. In combat the sun was not visible because of the gleaming of the swords.[84] When the children played these war scenes they fixed the flag in front of the fortress of the enemy who had surrendered and asked for mercy. This 'open' and 'heroic' warfare did not correspond to the way they had to dig themselves in now, to hide and to keep quiet in order not to reveal their numbers to the enemy. The only thing that the imagined war of childhood and the real war had in common were the tracer bullets, reminding Aydemir of fireworks on the holidays of his childhood.[85]

## *Nation and religion: Coming to terms with reality*

Life at the front did not consist only of fighting. The war was an opportunity to become acquainted with one's compatriots, the "soul" and the "character" of the nation. War promoted a sense of community that, according to Aydemir, could not be found in books or taught on the parade grounds. Here the educated came into contact for the first time with the "essential element" of the nation, the Anatolian peasant, thereby becoming aware of divisions in society. It was this "brotherhood in blood and arms" which planted the first seeds for the unity of

know how each time when they fired from the other side of the trenches their black, long necks went down and up again. I know, too, the sound they produce; it sounds as if a huge piece of calico was being torn. It is true that my right arm had been amputated after being hit by a bullet. How many times grenades had whistled over my head, right and left of me; how often had I been under shrapnel fire. But none of these had horrified and agitated me like this very distant rumbling from far away."

82 War leading to manhood, a frequent theme in war literature, cf. Ernst Loewy, ed., *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz. Das Dritte Reich und seine Dichtung. Eine Dokumentation*, Frankfurt/M.: Fischer 1969, 153-174. Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 49-52, describes a battle in which half of the 80 soldiers of his company died within a few hours.

83 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 106.

84 Cf. the texts mentioned above, esp. the one of Süleymān Naẓīf: the jingoists used these very 'infantile' elements when describing warfare.

85 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 104-105.

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the nation, which later ripened in the War of Independence. The image Aydemir invokes is of a nation forged in war.[86]

But much to Aydemir's disappointment and amazement, he found among his comrades little knowledge of or interest in the nation. When he realised that in his company nobody except the sergeant major was able to read or write, he decided to offer lessons. Many privates did not know to which nation they belonged, nor the name of the state, the name of the *padishah*, or the capital of the state. Some soldiers even refused to be called Turks because for them a Turk was a *kızılbaş* (*Alevi*), and although they did not know what exactly it meant, they thought it to be something bad.

Aydemir observed the same ignorance concerning religion. He had anticipated that all of his men, when questioned about their religion, would answer unanimously: "Elhamdullilah, we are Muslims".[87] But he was utterly wrong. Soldiers did not identify themselves as Muslims but rather as followers of the religion of the *imām-i aʿẓam* (i.e., Abū Ḥanīfa, the founder of the Hanafite *madhhab*), or of the caliph ʿAlī.[88] Some had not even heard of the name of the prophet, and one of the soldiers maintained that Enver Pasha, the minister of war and supreme commander, was the prophet. Others did not know to which creed they belonged. Asked if the prophet was alive or dead, they were divided: some said he was alive, others believed him to be dead. When had he died? Some thought a hundred years ago, some said a thousand years ago. And if he was alive, where did he live? The answers were Istanbul, Damascus, Mecca. Nobody knew the principles of their religion; hardly anyone knew how to perform the prayer correctly.[89] Aydemir was shocked. Like other intellectuals, he had been certain that the Anatolian villagers were religious, even fanatic. However, all he saw was that they were ignorant. He concluded that a group of such ignorant people could neither desire, nor identify with, such a war; nor could people who did not know why war was waged constitute the material with which to build a new society.[90]

His findings led Aydemir to the conclusion that these ignorant peasants were hardly responsible for the condition in which they were living. The state had not provided them with roads, schools, teachers or doctors; neither had it fought diseases or big landowners. It had been content with levying taxes. Being busy with fantasies such as building Turan, the intellectuals were not even able to un-

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86 Ibid., 107-108.

87 Ibid., 110.

88 According to Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 136-137, Alevi soldiers did not have the slightest idea about Islam (what Tonguç probably implies, is that they did not know anything about Sunni Islam).

89 Cf. Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban*, 150: "They (i.e. the villagers) have no idea either of the caliph or the prophet," complains the narrator of the diary, Ahmet Celal.

90 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 110-113. Cf. Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban*, 153: "Where is the nation? It does not exist yet and it will be necessary to create it again with these Bekir Çavuş, Salih Ağa, Zeynep Kadın, İsmails and Süleymans (sc.: ignorant peasants)".

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derstand the situation of Turkey and its people. His insights created a closeness with these soldiers: "These people seemed to be closer to me, their faces softer. In each of them I perceived endearing qualities and characteristics". They were not to blame for their situation, it was the ruling and educated elite, which was "...guilty and they had to forgive us".[91]

## *The individual: deprivation, desertion, despair and death*

The sense of community, however, was delicate, limited and not without disillusionment. Under the conditions of positional warfare in the mountains of the Transcaucasus, more than 3,000 metres above sea-level, life was boring and monotonous. At times feelings of loneliness, alienation and deprivation prevailed.[92] People became withdrawn, and this led to melancholy and depression: "What a private found when he became introverted was his physical and brutal personality".[93] The soldiers lived in hollows carved in the soil.[94] Firewood for heating and paraffin for lamps and food were scarce. Therefore the common soldiers, writes Aydemir, were overcome first by hunger,[95] followed by sexual desire in that world without women.[96] The way to the villages where their wives and fiancées lived were often journeys of many weeks.[97] Because the concepts of space and time had become confused and their need for affection was overpowering, sol-

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91 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 114-115.

92 Cf. Fussell, *Great War*, 272.

93 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 116. Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban*, 127: "Among them (sc. soldiers fleeing from the advancing Greek army) are also some distraught soldiers. They appear to me as people who have lost their humanity, whose eyes have lost their sparkle and who long since have become primitive".

94 Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 36, explains these as "underground shelters" which he likens to small rooms covered with tent canvas or wooden branches.

95 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 116. Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 47, notes that there were times when food supply was more of a problem than the enemy; at times not even a loaf of bread (approx. one pound) was given to privates, whereas officers would receive, additionally, hard biscuits and, very rarely, a bit of meat. At times soldiers were forced to eat grass because no other foodstuffs were available. When, as an exception, food was plentiful, it was seldom stockpiled, but devoured greedily: "I shovelled the white beans which were left over from yesterday into my stomach quickly as into a machine, telling myself: 'If I die, I do not want to die hungry', Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 115.

96 Another important desire was sleep, cf. Fussell, *Great War*, 125-126: "In Cloete's [a South African novelist, who in his autobiography A Victorian Son touched upon the War, MS] mind 'the sequence of desires' in those just relieved from the front was also triadic: 'First sleep...Then food. And only then a woman – when they had been rested and fed. That was something the bloody civilians never knew. The sequence'". Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 58, complains about the lack of cleanliness, the ubiquitous dirt and mud: When he was taken to hospital he was able to sleep without trousers and jacket for the first time since his arrival at the front five months ago. He had not changed his underwear for three months.

97 On the other hand, at Gallipoli, soldiers whose families lived nearby were visited by their fathers: İnceoğlu, *Siper*, 93.

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diers believed they had only to cross the mountain in order to reach their villages. In this way quite a few soldiers deserted.[98] When they got caught they admitted they had done something stupid.

The soldiers, writes Aydemir, far from being courageous were "indifferent" and "ignorant" vis-à-vis death. They saw death, like life, as something "simple" and "natural".[99] In mortal agony, danger or fear of death soldiers, notes Karaosmanoğlu, were transformed into children calling for their mother: "How often I saw in the eyes of experienced and tough soldiers with long beards and unkempt hair the look of a frightened child. Hit, falling to the ground, the voice of an undeveloped, immature boy cried: 'O dearest mother'!"[100]

## *Groups of soldiers and their strategies of survival*

However, Aydemir also stresses that the soldiers were a community, rather than individuals. If only one person in the group made a false move, the group as a whole was immediately jeopardised. Moreover, they were always in need of a leader, someone to follow. A group of soldiers who had lost their sergeant or their officer could be dispersed. A soldier who had to fend for himself could easily lose his way. Soldiers on watch constituted a special danger. There was no use trying to keep soldiers from falling asleep by stressing the possible consequences to themselves and their comrades. The notion of danger had no place in their perception.[101]

The General Staff knew that, under adverse circumstances, sooner or later the morale of the soldiers would suffer. This was perceived as a potential danger because, especially in positional warfare, the victory always belonged to the side that was last to lose its energy. Therefore, special activities were undertaken to boost morale, musical activities were organised, books of poetry sent, news of victory at other fronts was celebrated. Announcement of such news had to be de-

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98 After the defeat of the Third Army its troops dispersed, with a very high number of deserters: Zürcher, "Between Death", 244.

99 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 109. Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban*, 39: "I hear the voice of the Mehmetçik who quietly talks to himself in the trench: 'Why should I be afraid, everyday there is shooting, but nobody hits'. While he talks in this way, enemy planes drone surely in the air over his head". – War led to a deadening of the senses: "We had got so used to the dead that it seemed natural to us that somebody right next to us should die", quoted by İnceoğlu, *Siper*, 85.

100 Karaosmanoğlu, *Yaban*, 199. Ibid., 179: On the face of dead soldiers "... I had observed this peace, this sweet peace. Instead of a grimace there was a quiet smile on their lips, the smile of someone lost in a beautiful dream". İnceoğlu, *Siper*, 65, quoting the memory of a soldier at the campaign at the Dardanelles: "One evening a soldier came to Soğandere, he faded away until the morning ... I never heard anyone say 'my father'. Everybody moaned: 'My dear mother'". Aydemir, *Suyu*, 128, notes that when soldiers died, especially from freezing, during their last hours they talked about early childhood.

101 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 108-109.

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livered in a way that would not lead the soldiers to believe the end of the war and demobilisation were in sight in order to avoid disappointment and frustration. When the War Ministry communicated that a revolution in Russia had broken out and the czar had been dethroned, Aydemir suggests some soldiers understood this to mean the end of the war.[102]

Unlike the troops, the regular officers were not much impressed by the hardship of positional warfare; this life was their business, they had been trained for it. They were busy transforming the trenches into garrisons and improving the dugouts.[103]

A third group of soldiers were the reserve officers like Aydemir, educated men of various backgrounds, many of them supporters of Turanism. They were preoccupied with their anxieties and worries and longed for another life.[104] They found relief in reading, which helped them to distance themselves, however briefly, from the concerns of the front. For Aydemir, books were like a weapon he would not relinquish. Hospitalized after being wounded, he read the novel *Aydemir*, which impressed him so much that he later chose Aydemir as his family name.[105] The novel reflected the dreams and fantasies of many of Aydemir's generation: the liberation of "enslaved" Turkic peoples, the founding of new Turkish states, the impetus of a new culture. But Aydemir is not uncritical of Turanism as propagated by Gökalp and others. Now, through his acquaintance with simple Turkish people, he becomes aware that the followers of Turanism wanted to establish Turan not realising that they did not even have the support of the Anatolian peasants. Enver's order for a cease-fire finds Aydemir, who had seen his comrades shed blood for the promised final victory, disappointed. The Turanian dream was over.[106]

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[102] Ibid., 118-120. He explains that even among the educated soldiers nobody would have known the implications of the revolution in Russia because by revolution they understood "the proclamation of freedom in Monastir in 1908". Regarding world politics, their understanding was similarly limited; the world was simply divided into the Central Powers and the Entente.

[103] Ibid., 117. The closest Russian trenches in the battles around Sarıkamış were just 350 meters away from the Turkish trenches: Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 49. Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 35, remarks that no information was given during training about trenches.

[104] Aydemir, *Suyu*, 118.

[105] Ibid., 136-140. This utopian novel by Müfide Ferid Tek, published in 1918, is about a charismatic young leader who sacrificed his love for a girl to follow a Turanist mission, see Erika Glassen: "Nationale Utopien in Romanen von Halide Edib, Müfide Ferid and Yakub Kadri", *Istanbuler Almanach* 4/2000, 44-56; "Tek, Müfide Ferid", in: *Yaşamları ve Yapıtlarıyla Osmanlılar Ansiklopedisi* II, Istanbul 1999, 614-15.

[106] Aydemir, *Suyu*, 144.

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## *Consolation, friendship and hostility*

Dreams had been destroyed, hopes shattered and brothers lost; yet, there were also traces of consolation. During the dissolution of the Russian Army in the wake of the October Revolution, Aydemir happened to be on lookout duty. He became aware of a sudden movement in the Russian lines, just a few hundred metres away. Soldiers who were shouting and waving, perhaps even singing, left their trenches unarmed and began to walk towards the Turkish trenches. At first they moved slowly and hesitantly. When they saw that the Turks were not going to open fire, they became more courageous and walked faster. The thought that the soldiers would get into the minefields, which extended in front of the Turkish lines, frightened Aydemir. He immediately reported to his superiors, but without obtaining a clear order. The situation called for an instant decision. To Aydemir, this was a de facto armistice. He jumped out of the trench and ran towards the Russian soldiers to prevent them from entering the minefield. Just short of the minefield he met the group. At their head was an elderly blond, blue-eyed soldier who carried a huge loaf of bread in his arms. When he got closer to Aydemir, he broke off a piece of the bread, sprinkled it with salt and offered it to Aydemir with a smile. Aydemir knew that this was a custom in the Balkans and among the Slavic peoples, a symbol for friendship and peace.[107]

Tonguç's initial contacts with the Russians were equally positive, despite the fact that he was taken prisoner after his unit surrendered:

> "The first enemy soldier I met was a very young, pleasant, flat-nosed, blonde man with little blue eyes, in a word, a typical Russian. The behaviour of the soldier had given me the sense of security... At this moment a tall, dark-skinned, big and burly Armenian arrived, cursing and swearing, and angrily raising his bayonet. He threatened to thrust it into me."

But the Russian soldier saved Tonguç from this assault. On the other hand, there were Russian soldiers, too, who tried to beat up Tonguç's comrades because the Turks had inflicted many losses on the Russians.[108] Tonguç assumed: "The anger and hatred that we felt against the Russians, the feelings of hostility, were not reciprocated by the Russians. I had known beforehand that the strongest hostility against us in the Russian Army came from the Armenians". In another incident an Armenian asked him with an apparent homosexual innuendo: "Which handsome soldier took you here alive?" The Armenian was immediately repelled by a Russian soldier. This soldier "... made it very clear, using gestures, that we [the Turks] had killed Armenians and they would do the same to us".[109]

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[107] Ibid., 120-122.
[108] Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 169-170.
[109] Ibid., 175.

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## *Memory and oblivion*

The war had not used up its store of horrors. After the Russian Revolution and the armistice, Armenian units took over the positions of the Russian Army. Aydemir remarks that the war had ceased to be a war that conformed with specific laws and rules: "... it was a blind and merciless slaughter".[110] He describes the cruelties of Armenian nationalists (*Dashnaktsutiun*) to Turkish civilians. He argues that the mutual slaughter and revenge of Turks and Armenians is a page in the history of mankind which should better be forgotten.[111] Is this an appeal to forget rather than remember painful events which constitute an unbearable burden? As much as Aydemir's memoirs aid the memorising of various elements of the First World War, he is ambivalent about recalling certain things.

Whereas Aydemir seems to vacillate between memorisation and oblivion, Tonguç argues in favour of recording events and using them as lessons for future generations:

> "I do not know what my comrades felt at the sight of these piles of corpses of unfortunate young Anatolian soldiers. I am sorry that I am not able to relate these scenes as they happened. A strong writer could have produced several volumes inspired by these scenes. It is an epic tale that must be written and handed down to future Turkish generations, because the world had never before seen such a tragedy. Among the commanders and officers who experienced these disasters and tragic events there are doubtless some who write well and will leave valuable works which will be a lesson to future generations."[113]

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110 Aydemir, *Suyu*, 125.

111 Ibid., 129-130.

113 Tonguç, *Bir yedek*, 32. Tonguç mentions in a footnote to these lines that (by the time of his writing, i.e. in the beginning of the 1960's) he had hardly come across a critical book describing these events; most probably Aydemir's book had not yet been published. Tonguç would likely have characterised Aydemir as a "strong writer". It is generally agreed that Aydemir's prose is "beautifully written in a clear, descriptive style", *An Anthology*, ed. Silay, 309, note 1.

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**Cephe Dönüşü 1918**

Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam*, İstanbul: Remzi 1965. Between pp. 112-113.

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# The First World War as a Time of Moral Failure: Its Reflection in Turkish Novels

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Attilâ İlhan, an eminent Turkish writer of the second half of the twentieth century, deals in one of his essays with the importance the Turkish War of Independence (1919 to 1922) has for the literary assessment of Turkish society. According to İlhan, the characteristics of Turkish society and its members can only be explained in the light of the movement for national independence. He remarks that in his early novels, many of the *personae* did not have a past reaching back to this time or even further. Only later on he had realized how important this era was for the understanding of the present time. Consequently, since his *Kurtlar Sofrası* (*The Table of the Wolves*, 1963-64), he created persons with roots in the late Ottoman period and the following era of the War of Independence.[1]

Attilâ İlhan has been writing this from a Marxist perspective. His aim was to identify the Kemalist movement as what he calls the "national democratic revolution," and to understand the Republic of Turkey as a pre-socialist national stage of society. *Mutatis mutandis,* however, his line of thinking has been shared by quite a few Turkish authors of fiction with an interest in social and historical matters, whether they politically support nationalism, Marxism, political Islam, or something else. It is almost shared wisdom: The foundation of the Republic is crucial for the understanding of present-day Turkey, and the late Ottoman period is a prehistory to the foundation of the Republic.

In this perspective, the time of the First World War more often than not becomes not only secondary to that of the War of Independence, but tertiary: The Young Turkish revolution of 1908, the constitutionalism, the Balkan Wars and the variety of ideological and social experiments until 1914 appear to be of greater explanatory value than the time of the Great War. This period was one of military operations, war-economy and the rather hopeless struggle against the combined forces of imperialist powers and oppositional independence movements. Therefore, little could apparently be learned that the lessons of the time since 1908 had not demonstrated better.

It is open to speculation which factors contributed most to this relative negligence: The traumatic experience of the defeat, the taboo connected with the extermination of the Anatolian Armenians, the disappointment with the Arabs' struggle for their own independence, the relative lack of easily available sources, the wish to portray the War of Independence as a discontinuous break with its

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1 Attilâ İlhan, *Hangi Edebiyat*, Ankara/İstanbul: Bilgi 1993, 158-63. The essay quoted here was written in 1976.

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immediate past or simply the fact that the Great War did not take place in Istanbul or any major urban centre in Anatolia. In geographical terms, the First World War took place in a geographical region much more remote from the Turkish intellectual heartland than the preceding or following historical developments.

Only two episodes belong to the stock of active historical, and consequently of the active literary memory: The successful defensive battle at the Dardanelles, and the catastrophic outcome of the Caucasus campaign at Sarıkamış in Eastern Anatolia.[2] Both have to be seen in conjunction: the Dardanelles are also Mustafa Kemal's victory, Sarıkamış is the failure of his counter-figure Enver. With respect to these two events, again, the Great War serves as a prelude to the "War of Salvation," as the War of Independence is officially called now for a number of decades.

It is before this background that the weight given to the period of the First World War in Mithat Cemal Kutay's *Üç İstanbul* (1938) needs too be appraised. The "Three Istanbuls" of the title are the times of the Abdulhamidian regime up to 1908, the Young Turkish era 1908 to 1918, and the so-called period of the armistice *(mütareke dönemi)* when allied forces occupied Istanbul. Common to the treatment of all three periods is the moral and social decadence the then capital Istanbul is suffering. The well-known literary critic Fethi Naci has remarked that in Kutay's novel "There are no three Istanbuls, in reality, they are one: the rotting, decaying Istanbul."[3]

The book describes in an epic setting the life of Adnan, a lawyer with literary ambitions. The narrative revolves around a few dozen persons, men and women of different social strata. They make up the Istanbul of this novel. Many of them conspicuously gain or loose status. Adnan is no exception to this kind of social up and down: The story is largely the one of his rise and fall.

The book begins with his arrival in Istanbul as a child and refugee of the 1877 war and ends with his death in the early days of the republic. During Abd ül-Hamid's II reign he is a poor, idealistic minor oppositional figure who is not able to make a living out of his profession as a lawyer or his literary ambitions. He is compelled to give private lessons in the grand mansions of the administrative elite. With the revolution of 1908, his fortune turns: As one of the earliest members of the Committee of Union and Progress, he rapidly gains social and professional influence. Rejecting Süheyla, the virtuous daughter of one of the

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2 Since this article has been written, the annihilation of the Anatolian Armenians has become a matter of heated public debate in Turkey.

3 Fethi Naci, *40 Yılda 40 Roman*, İstanbul: Oğlak 1994, 29-39, n.b. p. 29. This essay was first written in 1970. It is also published as part of the same author's *100 Soruda Türkiye'de Roman ve Toplumsal Değişme*, İstanbul: Gerçek 1981, 103-12. See also *Kindlers Neues Literatur-Lexikon* (henceforth *KNNL*), vol. 9, München: Kindler 1988-92, 860-1 (s.q. "Mithat Cemal Kuntay, Üç İstanbul" – Bedriye Atsız).

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few pashas who had not been corrupt under the old regime, he marries another one of his rich and beautiful private students, the arrogant but fascinating Belkıs.

During the time of the First World War Adnan is at the peek of his social success, being a rich and politically extremely influential lawyer. But the corruption of the time is affecting him, and he turns into a negative hero. The ideals of the Young Turkish Revolution are forgotten; he and his environment have turned into a new political class as despicable as the one of Abd ül-Hamid's period. The wartime is described as part of a long sliding down of Ottoman society.

Its catastrophic end brings Adnan financial ruin; his wife leaves him immediately. The rest of his life is rendered against the backdrop of the total devastation of some, a successful process of catharsis of other persons (very few in number) belonging to the set of the novel. Adnan himself remains undecided until his death. Süheyla marries him as a consequence of the strange hate-love she has developed against him. She helps to arrange his last professional success: In the only case he can get during this period he manages to get a former servant of his household to get convicted for the murder of Ahmet Cevat, Belkıs' depraved cousin, who had formerly done everything to harm Adnan and his marriage. Only after the sentencing does Adnan realize that the servant is most probably his own illegitimate (and only) son.

Kuntay's extensive use of historical narratives and his critical approach to Turkish history of the early twentieth century secured his work an important place in Turkish literary history. He combines rather advanced literary techniques such as changing perspectives and inner monologues with colportage elements such as explicit depictions of carnal love every fifty-odd pages, something that has given his novel positive acceptance both among highbrow intellectuals and the popular readership.

The period of the Great War covers 92 out of 577 pages in the novel.[4] The war is depicted exclusively from the Istanbul viewpoint: all the suffering, including that of the starved poor population of Anatolia is mediated by dialogue staged in Istanbul rather than portrayed directly.

The first chapter describing the time of the war serves well as an example of the narrative technique employed by Kuntay: It first shows how Adnan defends the persecution of the Armenians against the protests of his elder friend Hidayet, a homosexual aristocrat who had served Abd ül-Hamid II as informer while posing as an oppositional in his showy town house. Then Kuntay describes how Adnan denounces Hidayet to the minister of the interior by phone, finally leaving the phone to Belkıs who has a nervous breakdown about a dress of hers, because her tailor has sold a similar one also to another woman of the Istanbul society.[5]

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4 324-416. I use the fourth edition, edited by Raşit İavaş, İstanbul: Oğlak 1998.

5 *Ibid.*, 324-30.

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Other political issues are likewise reported indirectly: In an anonymous letter, Süheyla describes the suffering of those wounded at Çanakkale and of all those dying. She asks Adnan to reject accusations of belonging to those who accept all the horrors of war as long as they themselves can profit from it – something he does not answer to.[6] And the catastrophic defeat at Sarıkamış, with much emphasis placed on the irresponsible role Enver Pasha played in this military catastrophe, is reported to a gathering in Adnan's house by an officer returning from there.[7]

The bulk of the text is formed by the conspicuous life of those profiteering from the war: Adnan and Belkıs, Adnan's old friend Moiz, who has risen to great riches but simultaneously lost all his honour and idealism, Naşit, an acquaintance from Hidayet's old circle who now earns money behind Adnan's back by using his connections, Ahmet (alias Alfred) Cevat, Belkıs' utterly wicked cousin, who had lost all his money in the brothels of Paris, then fought against the Ottomans and has now taken refuge in Adnan's home. They lead a life of splendour, but they are not happy: Adnan's marriage to Belkıs is suffering severely from her condescendence towards him: In her eyes, he lacks style. He in his turn has an extended affair with the beautiful Raşel, Moiz' wife, but neither of them finds happiness in that, either. In Adnan's house, the intrigues of his majordomo Süleyman, another man from Hidayet's circle, and Ahmet Cevat turn life into hell. In Moiz' home, all the display of riches cannot hide the emptiness of the inhabitants' lives.

Kuntay makes a point in transferring an "oriental room," a showpiece from Hidayet's mansion, to Moiz' house after Hidayet has died. Moiz and Raşel, in an attempt to further embellish this room, turn parts of their household into a masquerade, often without understanding how to use the garments or tools involved. The use of orientalist methods in order to invent a past for oneself becomes indicative of the lack of roots characteristic of his Istanbul elites.[8] Moiz takes Hidayet's place, but it is significant that Adnan had also attempted to purchase the interior of the oriental room from Hidayet's effects.

In this presentation, the First World War becomes a moral problem. The suffering of people such as Dağıstanlı Hoca, Adnan's old mentor whose son has perished at Sarıkamış, is not so much caused by Ottoman economic and social inferiority, military mistakes, the inhumanity of war in general or the ferocity of

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6 *Ibid.*, 334-36.

7 *Ibid.*, 381-86.

8 Herkül Millas, *Türk Romanı ve "Öteki": Ulusal Kimlikte Yunan İmajı*, İstanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi 2000, 62-63, stresses the anti-cosmopolitan tendency of the novel that leads to the Non-Muslim Istanbulites' otherisation. This applies especially to female sexuality: debauchement and promiscuity are associated with Non-Muslim origins (Belkıs' grandfather turns out to have been a Greek-Orthodox). On the other hand, it needs to be pointed out that Kuntay's treatment of cosmopolitan Turks such as Hidayet or the later Adnan and their retinue is equally negative.

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this specific one. To the best of my knowledge, the notion that the First World War created a new dimension of human suffering is absent from Turkish literature. Such a statement is certainly not Kuntay's concern, either. Instead, the human suffering of the World War is meaningless because it is connected to defeat, and defeat is caused by the irresponsible elite. The First World War was not lost by Ottoman Turkish soldiers; it was lost in the mansions of Istanbul, at the tables and in the beds of the war profiteers.

Istanbul's problem is moral deprivation, and this decadence is firmly based on history prior to 1908. It had been easy to corrupt Adnan. As the poet Raif, one of Adnan's old friends, tells the Dağıstanlı Hoca after Sarıkamış: "Don't go, Hoca! You won't find Adnan. He died on July 10th [the day of the Young Turkish revolution]!"[9] Kuntay's book therefore can be read as another justification for the break the Turkish republic presumed (or pretended) to have achieved with the Ottoman past.

This paper contends that this treatment of the Great War has had numerous advocates in Turkish prose, and that the image of wartime conveyed by *Üç İstanbul* became very influential. This influence was also facilitated by Turkish literature's neglect of the topic. The cursory treatment of the First World War makes it easier to draw on the picture created by Mithat Cemal. Two examples show how closely connected later novels are to *Üç İstanbul* in this respect.

The first example is Attilâ İlhan's *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları* (*Calls to the Morning Prayer at the Abode of Felicity*). The book is part of İlhan's cycle of novels *Aynanın İçindekiler* (*Those in the Mirror*) that spans from the Young Turkish Revolution until the 1970s.

Published as late as 1981,[10] this text shares many technical and conceptual features with *Üç İstanbul.* The crowded personnel of the novel, the change of narrative perspective, the use of historical sources (even more evident with İlhan), the long period of time covered by the text. However, some differences are equally obvious. Whereas *Üç İstanbul* narrates without much interruption the time from about 1900 to 1922, *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları* is confined to the years 1919 and 1920 on the one hand, and on the years of 1909 and 1910 on the other. The narrative of those earlier year has been inserted in the middle of the text concerning 1919 and 1920, the period of the armistice. Again, the Great War gets a short shrift as only an object of recollection by the personae of the text.

The central figure of the novel is Abdi Bey, a Turkish politician of Rumelian background and in many respects a figure very much resembling the negative hero Adnan in *Üç İstanbul.* Corrupt, adulterous, of weak will power, Abdi is much less scrupulous than Adnan ever could be. Conversely his wife, Neveser, is more sympathetic, less presumptive than Belkıs. Neveser has spent the better

9 *Ibid.*, 383.

10 I use the second edition, Ankara/İstanbul: Bilgi 1981.

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part of the war years in a Swiss sanatorium,[11] whereas Gastein had remained an unfulfilled holiday dream for Belkıs.

Given Attilâ İlhan's interest in eroticism, it is not astonishing that Abdi spends a good part of his time in bed with different women. Most prominent, and in this respect the parallel with Adnan becomes all too obvious, among his lovers are two rich Jewish women: Rosa Mizrahi and her daughter Raşel.[12] The same decadence that rules *Üç İstanbul* can be observed in *Dersaadet:* When Neveser finally spends a night with the love of her youth, Münif Sabri, they get a room in the Pera Palace only thanks to the intervention of the *maître d'hotel*, an Armenian who in this way shows his gratitude that Münif had helped his family during the "time of the deportation."[13]

Atillâ İlhan presents the Great War more briefly but in the same framework as Mithat Cemal had done: As a moral problem of the leading Young Turkish elite. His perspective is the perspective of the capital and that of the upper echelons of society.

Kemal Tahir [Demir]'s famous novel *Yorgun Savaşçı* (*The Exhausted Fighter*) is another example of authors following Kuntay in his assessment of the Great War. The book was written in 1965.[14] It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss Kemal Tahir's place in Turkish intellectual history. Today, he seems to be held in lesser esteem than during his lifetime (he died in 1971) and until the 1980's. Still, his books are always in print, and there is no doubt that his combination of socialist and nationalist ideas is perhaps a quixotic mixture but simultaneously one of the most original, independent and creative contributions of a Turkish intellectual to the understanding of the country's history.

It is not surprising that such an author does not write literature with primarily aesthetic considerations in mind. *Yorgun Savaşçı* is the story of the Turkish resurgence after the defeat in the First World War.[15] Centring his narrative on the army captain Cemil, Kemal Tahir discusses in the first part of his novel a wide range of military, historical and social issues in order to analyse the situation in 1918.[16] In the second part, he describes how the Turks are cowed and overwhelmed by the situation,[17] while in the third the resistance against occupation slowly gains momentum.[18]

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11 *Ibid.*, 105, 297.

12 *Ibid.*, 273-75. The parallels with Kuntay's account of the sexuality of Non-Muslim women is apparent. Cf. Millas, *Türk Romanı ve 'Öteki"*, 65-67.

13 *Dersaadet*, 36.

14 I use the ninth imprint, İstanbul: Tekin 1986.

15 Naci, *40 Roman*, 131-40 (written 1981); Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış*, vol. 2; *Sabahattin Ali'den Yusuf Atılgan'a*, İstanbul: İletişim 1990, 130-40; *KNNL* 9: 301 (s.q. "Kemal Tahir, Yorgun Savaşçı" – Bedriye Atsız).

16 "*Von Kres Paşa'nın Dürbünü*", 5-210.

17 "*Karanlığın Dibinde*", 211-374.

18 "*Dönemeç*", 375-480.

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The First World War is a matter of retrospective. The book is largely a *roman à thèse* and contains much more direct analysis than Mithat Cemal's novel. Repeatedly, Kemal Tahir takes up topics introduced in *Üç İstanbul.* The sexual promiscuity that figures quite prominently in Kuntay's novel is toned down in *Yorgun Savaşçı,* but still described as a characteristic feature of the time.[19] The Young Turkish elite is described in moral terms and in a very unfavourable way.[20]

In other instances, Kemal Tahir appears to take issue with Mithat Cemal. In both texts, German archaeologists have some part to play. In *Üç İstanbul,* this is the unflattering portrait of a man who under Abd ül-Hamid's rule had transported the findings of the excavation in Pergamon to Berlin. He has now, in the time of the Young Turkish regiment, been given the rank of major in order to work freely where ever he wishes to do so.[21] In *Yorgun Savaşçı,* however, the German Karlos Çorbacı[22] explains conclusively why Anatolia needs an overwhelmingly strong state that is not bridled by norms valid in other regions. This man gives a succinct outline of some aspects of the Asian mode of production, a concept embraced by Kemal Tahir.[23]

The most obvious challenge of established views that can be found in *Yorgun Savaşçı* is the description of the battle at Sarıkamış. It is given as a heroic and tragic tale, and Enver is portrayed as a courageous, and charismatic commander, who lacks, however, any sense of responsibility.[24]

Nevertheless, it should be apparent that even such an extraordinary figure as Kemal Tahir had to deal with the image transported and partly created by *Üç İstanbul.* In the final analysis, Kemal Tahir's understanding is not too different from Mithat Cemal's: The problem is that of defeat, and the responsibility lies with cadres that govern the state. Again, their failure is basically a moral one,

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19 pp. 179-84, 441-42.

20 pp. 129-30 (with a discussion pp. 131-32).

21 The archaeologist in question is no portrait of a historical person but rather a collage that contains elements of Carl Humann and Wilhelm Dörpfeld. Wolfgang Radt, "Pergamon: Eine antike Metropole in der westlichen Türkei: Geschichte, Ausgrabung, Wiederaufbau", in: Fatma Türe, ed., *Kayıp Zamanların Peşinde: Alman Arkeoloji Enstitüsü Anadolu Kazaları,* İstanbul: Yapı Kredi 1999, 129-39.

22 Maybe a partly portrait of Robert Koldewey who directed the excavations in Babylon for 20 years. Hinrich R. Reinstrom, "The Visitors' Book of the Hotel Palmyra", in: Hélène Sader et al., ed., *Baalbek: Image and Monument, 1898-1998,* Beirut: Orient-Institut 1998, 209. On this passage cf. also Millas, *Türk Romanı ve 'Öteki',* 133.

23 *Yorgun Savaşçı,* 143-48. Kemal Tahir developed his thoughts on the Asiatic mode of production in his novel *Devlet Ana,* which was published in 1967. It is remarkable that in Turkey the discussion of this theoretical feature in fictional literature preceded that in historiography. The latter dates back to the publication of Sencer Divitçioğlu, *Asya Üretim Tarzı ve Osmanlı Toplumu,* İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi 1967. On *Devlet Ana* cf. *KNNL* 9: 296-97 (s.q. "Kemal Tahir, Devlet Ana" – Ulrich Wolfart); Murat Belge, "Devlet Ana", *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar: İnceleme,* İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları 1994, 162-67 (this article was first published in *Yeni Dergi,* 1968); Moran, *Eleştirel Bir Bakış,* 2: 158-81.

24 *Yorgun Savaşçı,* 204-9.

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even if sexual destitution and financial corruption are not the aspects Kemal Tahir stresses most.

The image of the First World War created by Mithat Cemal has found so wide a reception that today one encounters it at rather improbable places. The sophisticated parody and satirical novel *Gaib Romans* by Ümit Kıvanç[25] aims at the complex labelled as "official history": The War of Independence, Atatürk veneration, Turkish nationalism. In a well-balanced twist that furthermore protected the author from prosecution, all names are distorted: Turkey becomes "Tarkanya," Atatürk "Ulutarkan," Istanbul "Orostopolis." In a very funny, sometimes rather bitter text, Kıvanç tells the story of two fictional comrades of Atatürk/Ulutarkan: One of them turns into an unscrupulous secret agent, the other one is hanged after an unsuccessful attempt at Ulutarkan's life in which he, however, had not been involved. Interspersed are many parodies of nationalist historiography, memoirs of Ulutarkan's friends and ideological texts.

Only a few references to the Great War are made in this book, but those that exist are either connected to the battle of Çanakkale[26] or share motives with *Üç İstanbul.*[27] The following quotation is from a longish comparison between Anakara and Orostopolis justifying the choice of the first as the new capital:

> "Anakara meant us, Orostopolis meant the sultan; Anakara was order, Orostopolis was chaos; ... Anakara meant that the principles of moral, of virtue and of truth had found their material expression in a town with stones, buildings, and streets; Orostopolis was the gathering-place of the mob that leads everybody astray under the influence of the darkest parts of human intelligence; ... Anakara was modest, innocent, pure and trustworthy, Orostopolis was rascal and promiscuous; ... Anakara was pacifying, Orostopolis exciting; in Anakara were, after a refreshing night, motivated and resolute people eagerly expecting the sun of the morning, in Orostopolis were drunken and dim-looking dissolutes trying to prevent the moon from setting..."

Turkish literature may not have created a discourse on the atrocities of the Great War and its place in human history. It has allotted it a place that has the function to highlight the contrast with the Turkish War of Independence, thus entirely disregarding the continuities between the two. As Kıvanç's text demonstrates, however, it has also developed the dynamic to undermine this image.

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25 İstanbul: İletişim 1992.
26 *Ibid.*, 153-54.
27 *Ibid.*, 268-72.

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# B:
# War Memories of Ottoman Army Officers from Different Ethnic Backgrounds. The Influence of Origin, Military Education and Common War Experience

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# Divergent Loyalties and Their Memory: How Three Albanians Shaped Their Histories of the Great War[1]

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> Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date ... All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary.
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> George Orwell, 1984.

## *Introduction*

World War I (including the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913) has been widely remembered in terms of the social, institutional and economic transformations it engendered on those societies that participated in it. For a number of reasons only partially germane to this article, Albanian-speakers have generally been left out of this memory.[2] The reasons behind this are largely representative of an academic fixation on the emergence of the nation-state, from which process Albanians emerged relatively late. As a consequence, histories of the region that include Albania focus only on events that specifically lead to the formal declaration of independence on November 28, 1912, and overlook important events that do not immediately pertain to issues of Albanian nationhood.[3] Failure to move conceptually beyond the 1913 Albanian state has resulted in some telling omissions of the historical experiences of more than half the world's Albanian-speakers, specifically those who were to find themselves outside "Albanian" frontiers in 1913.

That we are dealing with a territorial, and thus historiographical, fissure of this magnitude goes a long way in explaining why there is a need to expand our appreciation for how the history of the Great War is written. In order to strategi-

1 I would like to thank the organizers of this conference and SSRC IDRF, which funded much of the research that went into this article. I would also like to thank the staffs of the Başbakanlik Arşivi in Istanbul (*BBA*), the Haus, Hof und Staatsarchiv (*HHStA*) in Vienna and the Public Record Office at Kew Garden in London (*PRO*) for their help throughout the years.

2 For the remainder of this article I will use "Albanian" and "Albania" to characterize the people and state to which they would be normally associated due to their linguistic and cultural heritage. They do not, however, assert fixed identities.

3 For how the Ottoman state interpreted the independence declaration see *BBA*: BEO Irade Harbiye 309255.

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cally "outflank" a historiography that actively "silences" Albanians or others deemed "outside" the confines of state institutions, which have monopolized the memory of the war, it is useful to rethink how we interpret the role of historical actors contemporary to the events themselves. Of the several ways to approach the issue of omission, I believe this angle is both the least studied and the most fruitful to making my broader point. By inspecting the direct input that individuals have into how we remember their world, we are exposed to an interesting aspect of the shifting pressures on historical memory and how they represent individual and collective identities.[4]

To demonstrate how this process takes place and how historians may interpret it, I look at three Albanian men who played significant but unappreciated roles in the events that have survived the screening process of Albania's wartime history. We start with the most conspicuous figure of the period, Ahmed Izzet Pasha (1864-1937) of Korça (Gorice) in Southeast Albania, a respected commander of the Ottoman Second Army, and later the entire Caucasus force during the Great War. In Ahmet Izzet Pasha, we have someone who actively sought to dictate the terms of his role in his involvement in Ottoman politics by adding his memoirs to a national history that was still in the process of being composed in Turkey. Following Izzet Pasha, we look at the infamous Isa Boletini (1864-1916) whose exploits as both imperial agent and rebel demonstrates the multifaceted roles that otherwise marginal individuals can commandeer in history. In Boletini, who was functionally illiterate, we have a good case of how individuals can intercede in crucial historical moments to control their legacy, using their immediate ability to effect change in current events. Finally, the case of the much-maligned Esat Pasha Toptani (1863-1920) will demonstrate the operational strategies of historical figures who create their own place in a society's present, and the seemingly counter-intuitive "rationale" that historical actors maintain in times of transition. Toptani's actions thus fuse a notion of subjectivity that all three men sustain but at the same time demonstrate how actors can approach their intervention into history in distinct ways.

Beyond the issue of contemporaries actively engaging in making-out their own historical space, there is also the social and political context in which the post-War historiography has been written.[5] Political theorist Michael Shapiro has raised some important questions about the nature of writing a history of war, theorizing the role state institutions play in codifying collective identities through the active exclusion of others:

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4 Martin Rosenberg's work on Napoleon's efforts to control how history would remember him, namely through the commissioning, assembling and controlling of art and architecture, is pertinent to my argument. Martin Rosenberg, "Raphael's Transfiguration and Napoleon's Cultural Politics," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 19, no. 2 (1985-86), 180-205.

5 For an excellent, critical study of how memory operates in post-conflict settings, see Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past*, Minneapolis 1993.

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> "... the process of fixing stories of past violent encounters plays a role in shaping the spaces and events that constitute the basis for being a 'people'. Those histories that manage to attain a level of dominance and stability create the imaginary boundaries that contain a people; they exert an influence on the self-interpretations and modes of inclusion and exclusion of the people who embrace them."[6]

I would add to this that in the case of Albanians, the key dynamic to consider is the political realm of possibilities that influences the kinds of exclusions and inclusions taking place at the time of remembering. In other words, the actors involved in conceiving and shaping historical events and the constitution of its memory prove to be active agents in the process of history-writing as well as reflections of the institutionalized and sociological limitations which contain them. These actors' political, social and institutional affiliations must be brought into consideration, therefore, but in a manner that recognizes the fluidity of those affiliations.[7]

## *Ahmet Izzet Pasha*

In many ways Ahmet Izzet Pasha lived the classic Ottoman success story.[8] Of humble beginnings, the man's life was predicated on being a career officer in every sense of the word.[9] In fact, stressing his reputation as a loyal soldier is the prominent theme in Izzet Pasha's autobiographical works. I would suggest that because he spends so much time emphasizing his loyalty, we might speculate that his life in Atatürk's Turkey might have been far more unsettled than his polished vitae would suggest.[10] We must remember that Izzet Pasha had a central role in the Ottoman army during the war. He was also Grand Vizier in 1918 and, in 1921, the Minister of War in a post-war regime that would be the focus of Republican derision later on in the 1920s. In Izzet Pasha, therefore, we have a man who clearly sought to convince his readership in post-imperial Turkey that he was a marginal player in events that were deemed problematic in the Republican era. While time did not permit me to expand this portion of my research, there

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6 Michael Shapiro, *Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War*, Minneapolis 1997, 138.

7 I have partially dealt with these issues elsewhere. Isa Blumi, "Outside the Foreseeable Future: The Tyranny of Ethnicity Politics in Kosova," *The Anthropology of East Europe Review* 19/1 (2001), 109-127.

8 There are numerous sources on Ahmet Izzet Pasha, many of which are autobiographical. The following have been consulted: Ahmet Izzet Pasha, *Feryadim I/II*, İstanbul 1992/1993; Metin Ayisigi: *Mareşal Ahmet Izzet Paşa (Askeri ve Siyasi Hayati)*, İstanbul 1997; and Karl Klinghard: *Die Denkwürdigkeiten des Marschalls Ahmet Izzet Pascha*, Leipzig 1927.

9 A contemporary of Izzet Pasha during the 1897 Greek war provides a most evocative description of Izzet's "heroism" during the war. See Suleyman Tawfik, *Devlet-I Aliyye-I Osmaniyye ve Yunan Muharbiyesi 1314*, İstanbul 1315/1898, 200-244.

10 The key document out of which I analyze Izzet Pasha's recalcitrance is his 1928 serial autobiography published in a popular journal of the time. Ahmet Izzet Pasha, "Harb-i Umumi'nin Vuku ve Ziya'nda Mes'uller ve Mes'uliyetler," *Akşam*, İstanbul 1928.

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is no doubt that Izzet Pasha made some very powerful enemies over time and that he was eager to protect himself against attack during this period of transition from empire to nation-state. In addition to this potentially dangerous past as per his service in the pre-Republican state, I also suspect that Izzet Pasha was deeply involved in domestic Albanian politics in the period after his return from Yemen in early 1913, a period which takes up much space in his memoirs.[11]

The need to publish memoirs always raises interesting questions about those who take part in the exercise of self-promotion. Certainly in Izzet Pasha's case, the early post-Ottoman era saw an explosion in the genre of autobiography. By the time he published his first memoirs in 1928, many of his contemporaries had either finished or were busy completing memoirs of their own. The "founder" of the modern Albanian state, Ismail Kemal Bey (1844-1919), for example, demonstrated his eagerness to shape his place in Albanian history; Ibrahim Temo (*Akşam* top CUP ideologue), and even prominent elements of the defunct Ottoman military serving in Albania at the time of the war, would also write memoirs.[12] Izzet Pasha probably felt that he was in a race against time in order to solidify his reputation of lifetime service. The political and cultural context is thus a key element in appreciating the dynamic of retrofitting an individual's historical place, whether at the time of the event or, as in Izzet Pasha's case, a decade later.

My suspicions of Izzet Pasha's hand in Albanian affairs, at least until 1914, are partially based on his vehement denial that he was interested in the politics of his homeland.[13] One reason I cannot take him at his word is that Izzet Pasha maintained close ties with many of the Young Turk military men who became leaders of the country after 1910.[14] Clearly the Young Turk regime trusted Izzet Pasha. He himself notes in his memoirs that there were many who believed that he was directly in charge of policies pertaining to Albania due to this indisputable trust. In addition to his political alliances, there remains the role played in Albania during the crucial 1912-1914 period. For Istanbul's policy makers, Albania was the key to preserving a place for itself in the Balkans. Therefore, aside from using weapons to wrest power and legitimacy from Ismail Kemal Bey's fledgling government,[15] Izzet Pasha (or those who were his direct superiors) also actively lobbied Europe for a continuing diplomatic role in Albania. That Izzet Pasha was involved in the process becomes evident when exploring an all but

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11 Izzet Pasha recollects this period in the May 1, May 12, and May 13 issues of *Akşam*, 1928.

12 See for instance Sommerville Story, ed., *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, London 1920; Ibrahim Temo, *Ittihad ve Terakki Anılar*, İstanbul 1987; Süleyman Külçe, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Arnavutluk*, İzmir 1944 and Abdurrahman Nafiz, *Iskodra Müdafaası*, İstanbul 1933.

13 *Akşam*, May 14, 1928.

14 Karl Klinghard, *Die Denkwürdigkeiten*, 226-227.

15 On the uprising led by a Turkish officer named Bekir Grebene, see Ekrem Bey (Vlora), *Lebenserinnerungen (1885 bis 1925)*, Band II, München 1973, 47 and *Ikdam*, 7 Kanun-i sani 1329/1914.

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forgotten episode in Albanian history. Some European powers, in search of stability in Albania, advocated appointing a member of European royalty to rule Albania, much as done with King Otto a century earlier in Greece. Istanbul, eager to maintain some influence in the region, circulated Ahmet Izzet Pasha's name as a possible Muslim alternative to Europe's Christian candidates. Among the many newspapers circulating Ahmet Izzet Pasha's name was the official *Tasvir-i Efkar*, which at one point even printed photographs of the two contenders for the crown.[16]

Istanbul's proposal was eventually dropped, largely because the Germans and Austrians backed the appointment of Prussian Prince, Wilhelm von Wied (1876-1945).[17] Ten years later, in his conversation with Karl Klinghard on the topic, Izzet Pasha claimed to be completely uninterested in the idea and suggested that his expressed indifference was the real reason for the idea being dropped by all parties involved.[18] That said, Austrian officials based in Istanbul at the time claimed that he was not stepping away from the proposal. On the contrary, he was sending out signals that he was willing to talk about a future role as Albania's king.[19] Elsewhere, Izzet Pasha somewhat further complicates his post-war claims by adding that Ismail Kemal Pasha, the founder of an independent Albania, "never asked" him to take the place of Albania's king, suggesting that there were interactions between Istanbul's arch-nemesis Ismail Kemal and Izzet Pasha.[20]

Although there is reason to believe there is more to his story than he would admit in 1928, as far as Turkish historians are concerned, Ahmet Izzet Pasha *was* the quintessential Ottoman solider. They have exonerated him from any role in the Empire's failures. In the end, therefore, Izzet Pasha successfully secured himself a place in history as someone who did not compromise his loyalty to what translated in the post-War era as Kemal Mustapha Atatürk's new Turkish state. Ahmet Izzet Pasha's act of self-preservation has thus successfully obscured the ambitions and strategies that had important consequences to the final resolution to the Albanian question. It is noteworthy, however, that his intervention does not negate the value of these texts in appreciating his denied role in the period. It only requires that we take a more careful look into the context in which his memoirs are written and factor in pressures that had little to do with his evident deeper role in Albanian affairs during the first three years of war in the region. This methodological concern is of equal value in appreciating the next two men who did not write memoirs but left a considerable documentary legacy among

16 Much of this discussion may be found in *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 30 Kanun-i evvel 1329/1914, 964; *Ikdam*, 8 Kanun-i sani 1329/1914, 6062, among other sources.

17 For Austria's policy on the issue see *HHStA* Politisches Archiv (PA) XII/418.

18 See Karl Klinghard, *Die Denkwürdigkeiten*, 232.

19 See *HHStA* PA XIV/66 Liasee 28-29, telegram number 1293 sent from Markgraf Pallavicini, Jenikoy to Vienna, 15 July, 1914.

20 See Mahmut Kemal Inal, *Osmanli Devrinde Son Sadrazamlar*, İstanbul 1953, 1979.

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Ottoman and European consular reports. As when reading Izzet Pasha's memoirs, we must be careful to recognize the active engagement of these two men in how they are ultimately represented in historical documents.

## *Isa Boletini*

Izzet Pasha was successful in shedding his past through the practice of actively writing memoirs that helped his readers forget. Isa Boletini, on the other hand, proved successful in controlling how contemporaries would remember his contribution to mainly Kosovar-Albanian history. Until the 1960s, Albanians in Kosova remembered Boletini exclusively through oral transmission. By the end of the 1960s, when Albanians were given some cultural freedom in Kosova, Belgrade-trained Albanian historians translated these oral myths onto a political setting that shared many parallels with the post-Ottoman Kosova. While the historical record on Boletini's so-called resistance of Ottoman rule is far from clear cut, the real function of Boletini's legacy in Kosova today is that he represents a direct link to the emotional traumas of Serbian colonialism in the post-World War I period. In the process, historians made Isa Boletini into a paradigmatic figure for what Shapiro calls a "people's memoryscape" in which the boundaries of identity are forged. That Boletini has best symbolized Albanians' struggles in the face of both Ottoman (historical) then Serb (actual) occupation specifically pinpoints the larger context through which each new generation reads and remembers history: Locals see Boletini's story as Kosova's story.

It is interesting in this context to then study how Boletini himself may have seen his place in Kosova and the region as a whole. Many secondary and primary sources reflect Boletini's persistent, life-long efforts to embellish past deeds with distortions after the fact.[21] This was quite necessary, as without such a personal intervention Boletini could have very easily become but a footnote in the history of Kosova, nothing but a small-time power broker in the "ethnically-mixed" Mitrovica part of Kosova. Fortune would have it that, after the Berlin Congress of 1878, his little corner of the world became the center of Great Power rivalries.[22] Isa Boletini thus learned at an early age to make himself relevant to the powers engaged in Mitrovica, ultimately earning himself a key place in the politics of the region, which often went far beyond the confines of northeast Kosova.

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21 One fine example of this is the Kosovar historian, Fehmi Pushkolli's calling Boletini "General" on grounds that Boletini once boasted to English journalists that he had been appointed one by the Sultan. Fehmi Pushkolli, *Arti Ushtarak I Gjeneral Boletinit*, Prishtinë 1996.

22 I describe this as "the possibilities of identity" in the post-Berlin Congress Balkans, Isa Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malësore, 1878-1912," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (35/2), May 2003, 237-256.

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His active role in instigating violent and bloody "moments of history" in the 1880s was the first indicator of Boletini's appreciation for how the larger world operated. One can read in the subsequent years, a long string of communications between Boletini and key European and Ottoman figures that reveal a shrewd regional player whose ambitions were to play the various interests off each other in order to enhance his prestige and influence. While space does not permit any detailed analysis of this evolving, well-documented persona, it is clear that Boletini was not only playing one power off the other to strengthen his own local power. Boletini is also consciously communicating to a *process* that would have far reaching consequences upon how his actions were being actively recorded for posterity.

Surprisingly, perhaps, Boletini initially built his local power base not by winning the loyalty of fellow Albanians, but of local Serbs.[23] The strategy immediately earned him a lucrative piece of the smuggling business (mainly guns and wheat) that emerged with the creation of international frontiers between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire. At the turn of the century, he would use the human and material resources at his disposal to actively protect both local Christians and Muslims from unruly Ottoman troops who were sent to secure the frontiers.[24] His reputation as a defender of local rights extended to actively organizing opposition to Hamidian tax collectors and, later, the bullying tactics of Serb nationalists seeking ways to instigate inter-communal violence in the Mitrovica area.[25] Boletini demonstrated that, far from being the propagator of a chauvinistic conceptualization of Kosova, he operated within a local code of values that meant protecting kin and both Albanian and Serb-speaking neighbors. In the context of Mitrovica's highly charged place in international politics, this translated into a number of opportunities that transcended any ethnic or confessional barriers. In time, these opportunities involved far greater possibilities of self-assertion. Already seen as a social force that could not be controlled, for instance, Russia and its allies often demanded Ottoman action to bring Boletini to heel. This attention only enhanced Boletini's value as a local power broker to any number of powers, especially Austria and the Ottomans themselves.[26]

As a result of his subsequent "house arrest" in Istanbul, Isa Boletini maneuvered his way into becoming the key component to Abdül-Hamid's efforts to placate demands throughout Kosova and temper a region that had for many years

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23 For various documents on Austrian impressions of Boletini's relations with local Serbs at the time, see *HHStA* PA XXXVIII/398 folios 24r-54v.

24 *HHStA* PA XII/449, various documents on Serb and Albanian relations along the frontier zone.

25 *HHStA* PA XXXVIII/387 for consular reports on Serbian and Russian efforts to infiltrate Kosova's domestic cultural scene using pan-Slavic symbols.

26 On the incidents that led to the murder of Russian consul in Mitrovica and the subsequent diplomatic scandal, see *BBA* YA.HUS 436/6, From Sublime Porte to Ministry of War, 1 Cemaziyelahir, 1320/5 November, 1902.

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been in a state of low-intensity war with Istanbul. Boletini actively boasted about this role to diplomats and European journalists. Perhaps persuaded by his bluster, it is clear that several European powers were now quite keen on winning the loyalty of the man responsible for instigating such diplomatic trouble.[27] These examples are important since they make clear that Boletini himself was actively engaged in creating the rhetorical limits of how the world around him understood his place in the events that would lead to the Balkan and First World Wars.

Some ten years after promoting himself as Sultan Abdül-Hamid's intermediary, subsequent events represented another shift in the political environment that would displace Boletini from his center of power and thrust him into a global arena. Boletini's conversion into, first, arch-enemy of the "infidel," post 1908 Young Turk regime, then Albanian nationalist provides another example of how changing external conditions had an impact upon local decisions and subsequent loyalties.[28] As before 1908, during the second constitutional period Boletini proved adept at self-promotion and asserting his role as the engine driving events. Unfortunately for him, the local revolts that he led against Istanbul ultimately translated into massive counter measures by the Ottoman state.[29] The consequence of Boletini's actions, largely ignored by Kosovar historians, was that state repression left Kosovars and Albanians in general no longer able to defend themselves. The results of this shift in the balance of power were evident in the swift capture of Kosova by Serbian and Montenegrin troops in 1912 and the brutal, final annexation of more than half the Albanian lands by Slav states. It is this chain of events that ultimately led to Austria's declaration of war on Serbia in 1914, the fall of the Ottoman Empire and, ironically, Boletini's own downfall.

While Boletini proved adept at promoting himself and shaping local events to substantiate his public assertions of being a key player of the time, the occupation of Kosova by Serbia created a new set of conditions that would ultimately drive Boletini out of Kosova altogether. By the end of 1913, with Serbia's claims on Kosova more or less solidified by Great Power diplomacy, Boletini was at the doorstep of a different universe, one that provided challenges but also opportunities to step beyond his parochial role as regional "warlord" to someone of international stature.

Here the politics of present memory are especially clear. No longer able to play one state off the other along frontier zones, Boletini began to try selling himself as a diplomat, a man on whom the European powers can rely, both as an

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27 *PRO* FO 109/2407.4322, 20 August, 1912.

28 On a number of local alliances in the post-1908 period established by Isa Boletini, which clearly concerned authorities in Kosova, see *BBA* TFR.1.KV 151/15031, Kosova Vali to Interior Minister, 26 July, 1904.

29 The journalist for the Young Turk daily *Tanin*, Ahmet Serif, provides an invaluable source on the extent of destruction this campaign levied on Albania. See for instance, Ahmet Serif, "Ipek'den Mitroviça'ya," *Tanin* 650, 16 Cemaziyelahir 1328/23 June 1910.

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Albanian who would never go back on his word and an urbane, sophisticated fellow European. In other words, Boletini was making an effort to impose his relevance to a larger diplomatic issue that centered on an independent Albania, and not a region under Serbian occupation. Unfortunately for Boletini and his entourage, that meant negotiating a distribution of future power with such shrewd politicians as Ismail Kemal Bey who, in the end, demonstrated that he would do everything he could to clip Boletini's wings. For those Southern Albanians in Vlora preparing the grounds for an independent Albania, Boletini was deemed an outsider whose potential strengths as military commander also made him a threat to them. As a result, Ismail Kemal Bey hastily made the famous declaration of independence before Boletini and "the Kosovars" could reach Vlora effectively excluding him from the Albanian state's history.[30]

For Kosovar historians today, the snub has been conveniently forgotten and Isa Boletini has retained a seat as a founding father of all Albania. Post World War II Albanian historians, on the other hand, unrepentantly seek to maintain Boletini's exclusion from any claim to historical significance. Isa Boletini's success/failure in remaining a founding father of the nation, while not important to my general concern in this article, nevertheless demonstrates how he was actively engaging the resources available at the time to mobilize perceptions of himself. The consequences of being able to control or not control the process of engaging in image maintenance is particularly clear if we follow Boletini's career to his murder in 1916.

After several less-than-successful attempts to assert himself in this new Albanian context, one which largely saw Kosova as a marginal, lost cause, Boletini found himself at the losing end of the diplomatic games in which he eagerly sought to engage. Once his value to allied forces was deemed superfluous, indeed counterproductive (Austrian forces were sweeping through the Balkans at the time), his attempts to assert his place in the new world order of Albanian nationalism were effectively ended. His murder on a bridge outside of Podgoriza Montenegro in 1916 speaks volumes about his (and Kosovars') diminished place in the region's political events by the end of the Balkan Wars. The French who were supposedly protecting him, and the Montenegrin authorities who were to secure his safe passage out of Montenegro, joined forces to eliminate a fallen, but still potentially dangerous man.[31] That his murder was a necessary act of betrayal signifies that there was symbolic capital to be made from his murder, but it also demonstrated that he had outlasted his importance to his former allies.

Boletini's case provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate the remarkable agency that individuals mobilized during the War to intentionally shape how the

30 *HHStA* PA XII/421 on Ismail Kemal's tactics to consolidate control of the government.

31 Isa's nephew, Tafil Boletini has provided the first eyewitness account of Isa's life, resulting in a remarkable narrative that clearly has its own agenda in protecting the family's claim to Albanian history. Tafil Boletini, *Pranë Isa Boletinit*, Tetovë 1996.

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outside world remembered them. That his legacy has been refitted to serve postwar interests is only natural when considering that his notoriety while alive preceded him to the highest chambers of European power. He engaged the process of securing a place for himself in the memory of the war but, unlike Esat Pasha Toptani, he failed to adequately adjust to the shifts of regional power and ultimately was gunned down by those who once depended on him.

## *Esat Pasha Toptani*

Esat Pasha Toptani came from a powerful regional family whose landholdings in the middle of the 19th century translated into influence in Istanbul. Esat Pasha's formative years, therefore, were characterised by a considerable amount of privilege within Ottoman society that provided him latitude unavailable to my other two subjects. For this reason alone, postwar historians have fitted Esat Pasha Toptani into a rubric of analysis that interprets his actions on the basis of such supposedly determinative factors as class.[32] I would suggest this is a mistake, for while Toptani was part of an elite element in the Ottoman power structure, he nevertheless had to constantly intervene on his own behalf in order to secure whatever privilege he enjoyed. Esat Pasha Toptani's whole career, therefore, is one in which we observe him actively strengthening his power in Albania by at times joining forces with interests that would initially seem contradictory to his own, be they Slavs or landless peasants.[33]

As already suggested, simply being a member of government or of a landholding family does not necessarily translate into a successful political career. It is interesting that while he exhibited a strong ability to operate in his home districts, when he was elected to the reestablished Parliament on December 17, 1908 Toptani proved less successful in Istanbul.[34] After more than three years of being marginal in Istanbul the political vacuum and the specter of war, caused in part by Young Turk repression in the area, offered a golden opportunity for Toptani to resurrect his political fortunes. This geographical disparity is important, I believe, to better appreciate historical figures such as Toptani and the foundations of their power.

Toptani's timing was impeccable. Neighboring Balkan states were in the throes of building an alliance, which planned to divide Albanian lands among themselves. In addition, the Young Turk regime was in the middle of a bloody cam-

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32 The emphasis on someone's elite status in order to generalize his political actions, and indeed, understand his possibilities proves to be flawed at best. For an unhelpful example of this method of Marxist analysis see Gazmend Shpuza, *Kryengritja Fshatre e Shqipërisë së Mesme, 1914-1915*, Tiranë 1986, 22-32.

33 *HHStA* PA XII/423 Liasse XIV provides extensive intelligence on Esat Pasha Toptani's political efforts.

34 For a list of the Albanian deputies see *Leka* IX (28 November 1937), 363.

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paign in the region at the same time that the Great Powers were beginning to imagine a post-Ottoman world. Toptani returned home just in time to take advantage of all the political opportunities such a situation offered. He dedicated most of his efforts to solidifying his influence along the Northern frontiers. The northern Albanian city of Scrutari (Ishkodra/Shkodër) was the center of much of the period's intrigue as it was the key to the region's economic and cultural lifelines. It was clear to him that the Ottoman Empire's control over the region would evolve, at the very least, and he – much like Isa Boletini and Izzet Pasha perhaps – wanted to dictate the terms of these future, as yet unclear, changes. Controlling Shkodër would be key to his securing a key role in future events.

By mid-1912, Toptani maneuvered himself into the position of commander of all Albanian forces in the north.[35] At the same time, he busied himself consolidating his influence among the many communities in the region that he would rely on for manpower and supplies. As a consequence of his active lobbying, by the start of the siege of Shkodër Toptani had strong control over a region that had traditionally been fragmented, where loyalties to any one faction were rare and localism was the rule of the day. How he secured the temporary loyalty of locals was a direct result of his diplomatic efforts with outside powers. Toptani – in as yet unstudied negotiations with all the powers involved – secured Serb, Russian, Montenegrin, Austrian and Ottoman money to provide the essential glue he needed to secure the temporary allegiance of many of the Northern Albanian communities. In less than four months Toptani maneuvered himself into the position of central intermediary between the locals and the rest of the world.

Toptani had ambitions that went beyond the North of Albania, however. After successfully securing his place as a viable player in Northern Albania, he would challenge the Vlora-based government of Ismail Kemal Bey for the right to represent "Albania" in negotiations over its future frontiers. His challenge to the Vlora government during the first half of 1913 resulted in an intense ideological battle that ultimately manifested itself in armed conflict between Toptani's loyalists and men like Isa Boletini, who was used by Southern Albanians to fight their local war. Of course, Toptani's place in regional politics, much like that of his primary adversary, Ismail Kemal Bey, depended as much on the outside support noted above as on his ability to generate local legitimacy. It is here that Toptani differs from his contemporaries. Toptani was capable of playing both sides during the Great War, while Boletini and Izzet Pasha had limited options. The fact, that he was able to secure Austria's support from day one, despite his clear cooperation with Serbia and Montenegro (Austria's arch enemies) reveals his political and diplomatic sophistication during a time when such skills were in short supply in the Balkans.

35 Genelkurmay, *Iskodra Savunmasi ve Hasan Riza Paşa*, Ankara 1987.

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This forces the historian to remember the fluid context within which Toptani and his adversaries were operating. The conditions of the day were such that unmitigated loyalty to any one state – even individual leaders – was not expected, and ideological beliefs were far too abstract and rigid for the region's politics. The key was the perception of success, often expressed by one's capacity to generate money and weapons to placate those allies who would fight and die for factional leaders such as Boletini, Toptani or the Ottoman State. This explains Toptani's apparent willingness to deal with Russia and Serbia, despite their clear-cut territorial ambitions for Albania. Put differently, it was not the ideals of nationalism that animated Albanian politics at the time; such ambitions were a luxury no one on the ground could afford. I suggest Toptani's case is emblematic of the need to avoid using such broad and largely inapplicable terms in attempting to remember the Balkans prior to 1920. The current situation in Afghanistan, a wonderful cognate for the fragile political balance in Northern Albania was at the time, suggests that the so-called post-war world is not entirely immune from other kinds of concerns, which look beyond state or ideological principles. For someone to persistently engage and win the temporary support of such a range of states and actors suggests a great deal of image-management – necessary to secure the confidence of a number of parties – that translated into a complex historical actor that historians today have, for ideological reasons, failed to recognize.[36]

## *Conclusion*

It may be wise to revisit our memories of the Great War and ask new questions about the ambitions and concerns of those who fought in it. The three Albanian men studied here demonstrate that we are dealing with people with divergent loyalties who were capable of adapting any number of positions to secure their locally conceived ambitions. These three men also demonstrate how many diversions an individual's path may follow over the course of a lifetime. The manner in which they became major players in the events of the wars in the Balkans suggest that we should broaden our appreciation of how historical actors interact with the world around them.

While theorists have acknowledged this process of interaction, they have generally ignored the role the historical agent himself plays in initiating the remembering and forgetting of his actions. Rather than simply relying on general categories to situate individuals within grand sociological schemes, a more useful way of appreciating memory and the events that shape them is to recognize the

[36] Tahir Kolgjini, a native of Shkodër and member of the Albanian diaspora in Turkey has provided a wonderful critique of Communist-era historians who attack Esat Pasha Toptani's role in Albanian history. *Esat Pashë Toptani dhe Akuzat, Qi Bahen*, İstanbul 1977.

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direct input individuals have into how we remember their world. Ethnic-national identities, in particular, prove problematic in the study of the Balkans during the war. While these three men all came from "Albania", the very paths they took, as well as how they actively sought to engage the events around them, requires a far more detailed study of their actions.

In the end, the biographies of three men demonstrates that, no matter how many historical events we incorporate into our composite narrative of the war, the events themselves prove inadequate in illuminating the deeply personal impact such events have on human beings. In turn, this study also demonstrated how these same human beings are engaged in the events that shape their lives in far more complicated and seemingly contradictory ways.

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# West and East as Analysed by a Disappointed Arab Officer and First World War Veteran

*Mahmoud Haddad (University of Balamand, Lebanon)*

Muḥammad Sharīf al-Farūqī (d. 1920) was an Arab infantry officer in the Ottoman Army in the First World War. He was born in the Iraqi city of Mosul in either 1891 or 1894 where he had his elementary studies. After he graduated from a junior secondary (*idādī*) school, his father sent him to the military school in Baghdad where he studied for four years after which the Ottoman government chose him to study in the military academy in Istanbul and he graduated as a Second Lieutenant in the Ottoman infantry forces. He became associated with the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and supported this revolutionary group of Ottoman officers even when he was stationed in his home city, Mosul, apparently after Sultan ʿAbdul-Ḥamīd II was deposed in 1909 and after the death of his father. He served in the Balkans and returned to Mosul after the war was over in 1913 and became an instructor in the military school there and was promoted to the rank of First lieutenant. However, his Arab identity was rekindled when he discovered that the CUP was anti-Arab in its orientations and he started supporting the liberal opposition party of "al-Ḥurriyyah wa-l-Iʾtilāf". He then became a member in a number of Arab nationalist societies in Istanbul and Mosul, the most notable of which was "al-ʿAhd" which was a secret society composed mainly of Arab, especially Iraqi army officers in the Ottoman army.[1] After the Ottoman Empire entered World War I and at the end of 1915, he defected to the British side during the battle of Gallipoli. Al-Farūqī considered himself an Arab nationalist, and apparently believed that an Arab-British alliance during the war would free the Arabs from the Turkish yoke, bringing independence and considerable benefits to the Arab cause. In 1916 al-Farūqī became Sharīf Ḥussayn's representative in Egypt, but he was dismissed a year later. In 1920 he was assassinated during the Iraqi revolt against the British after his return to his home country.[2]

While in Damascus at the beginning of 1919, about a year before his assassination, he wrote a pamphlet entitled "Political Opinions and Experiences: General and Concise". It seems he sent the manuscript to Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935), who was then publishing his Islamic and Arab affairs periodical "al-Manār" in Cairo. This pamphlet, which I found in Riḍā's private papers, was

1 Muḥammad Ḥussayn al-Zubaydī, *Mawlūd Mukhlis Shāh wa dawruhu fi-l-thawra al-ʿarabiyyah al-kubrāh wa fī tārīkh al-ʿirāq al-muʿāsir 1885-1951*, Baghdād: n.p 1989, 32-38; Sulaymān Mūsā, *al-Ḥarakah al-ʿarabiyyah al-kubrāh*, Beirut: Dār al-Nahār 1970, fn. 1, 164.

2 Ibid.

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never published.[3] It is of some historical interest, nevertheless, because it reveals one Arab nationalist's changed perceptions of the British – indeed of most European countries – their policies vis-à-vis their colonial possessions, and in particular their methods for subduing them. It also provides a window onto one nationalist's understanding of the evolution of the European state and party system and his analysis of the Arab predicament.

Among the many issues discussed in al-Farūqī's text are his observations about Europe and its foreign policies, its policies during the ongoing war, its policies in the East, the American President Woodrow Wilson's thoughts and aspirations, the Arabs of Egypt, and the 1919 Egyptian revolution. Here, however, we shall confine ourselves to a translation of al-Farūqī's firsthand perceptions of "Europe's Foreign Policy" during the war, and his thoughts about Wilson's policy of "self determination".

## *Mohammed Sharīf Bey al-Farūqī's Memorandum to Rashīd Riḍā. "Experiences and Political Opinions: General and Concise"*

Before discussing the consequences of events, it is necessary to consider the causes, the circumstances that have led us to our current situation. To address our current political situation, then, we require complete knowledge of the various facets of our condition, as well as knowledge of our enemies' situation. In this way accurate conclusions can be reached. We divided the discussion here into two parts: the introduction and the plan. Let us begin, first, with the important part of the introduction, that is, the political situation in Europe. What we write now are merely short observations about Europe and its foreign policy – both during the ongoing war and in the East; about Doctor [President] Wilson – his thoughts and aspirations; the American people; and then Europe's internal politics and political parties – the Conservative Party, the Conservative Liberal "Constitutional" Party, the Liberal Republican Party, the Radical Democratic Party, the Catholic Party, the Socialist Party, and the Anarchist Party. We will also discuss Europe's progress and greatness, present a general picture of the individual European person, our situation as Arab Muslims, a general picture of our principles, the Turks, the Arabs of Egypt as well as Egypt, the [1919] revolution and its demonstrations, the end and the means to reach it.

## *The plan: "The First section: Europe's Foreign policy"*

European policy has not taken any steps toward the achievement of justice and fairness for humanity for a very long time. On the contrary, whenever civilisa-

[3] This pamphlet or memorandum seems to have been written in Damascus on April 10, 1919, four months before handing it to Riḍā.

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tion showed any signs of improvement, European policy was determined to acquire more national benefits and employed every means, "even the worst of evils", to do so. Its true intentions were revealed in this century – made evident as sunshine in the midst of day – and made especially evident during the general war. There is no disputing that the basis of this policy is strength, blood, and iron. This policy had appeared before, in the policy of Prince Bismarck, which enabled him to complete the unification of Germany, and the policy of Cavour, who unified Italy. [It is said that] 'it is certain that those politicians were able to unify political parties, as well as the nation, in accordance with their aims. Toward that end, it was enough for them to announce that the country is in danger', even though they were the ones who were the cause of this danger. Napoleon III and France made the mistake of not engaging in such a policy, 'the policy of violating everything to attain a certain goal, the policy of blood and iron', and they paid the price. With the help of Napoleon III – or his silence, which implied his preference for foreign adventures – the unification of Italy was accomplished and the unity of Germany was fulfilled. Although he was inclined by nature to national perfection, his policy brought some major damage upon France, as became evident in the Seven Years' War, the Conference of Vienna, and the 'armed peace' that followed.

Thus, the great politician is the one who can help benefit his nation and fulfil its hopes for a long period of time, on condition that the end should justify the means. The status of this politician advances according to the benefits he achieves for his nation, but also according to its duration, as well as the sacrifices, i.e. the means. It is not possible to detail here the civilised means that were adopted by the European countries to achieve their goals, and which they tried their utmost to keep secret. Toward this end Europe prepared its politicians in special schools of politics before providing them with practical experience and the like until, today, European politics reached the pinnacle of success.

Should we succeed one day and become aware of the formations of the ministries of foreign affairs in Europe, we will realise the greatness of such a kind of politics, as well as the importance of its several branches. Foreign ministers in most of the nations are not held responsible before parliament, in spite of all the efforts [to achieve this]. It is enough to say that the foreign policy of Europe in the past was as we mentioned above, and is still similar today. Anyone who had the opportunity to learn about the history of the ongoing war and its secrets will be aware of the high degree of barbarity, oppression, treason, infidelity, harshness, theft, lying, cheating and contemptible practice committed by the [European] governments in a systematic manner. If one person had committed one-tenth of these evils, the judges would have been at a loss as to the kind of punishment to inflict on him, and the manner in which to treat him. Yet, amazingly, these governments perpetrated those atrocities in the name of fairness and justice and in the name of God Almighty! This was supported by all [European] nations

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and their parties, and they differentiated fully among those who perfected such evils. Those whose actions served the above-mentioned governments were placed among their eternal heroes.

The basis of European foreign policy is, as we mentioned before, the acquisition of benefits and the securing of national hopes and interests. European nations are nearly equal in ability and power – both because of the common endeavours of its individuals, who are able to strengthen themselves, as well as political agreements and treaties. As such, none of the European nations are interested in controlling others' status anymore, with the exception of certain places like the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. No nation has dared to get greedy or to dominate the other, unless it was greatly superior to its opponent and was confident of winning and conquering.

This kind of greed requires great effort and struggle. Since African nations and other uncivilised and barbaric countries were taken over by a group of European countries that agreed, openly and officially, to divide them among each other – although each conspires against the other politically and economically – there remains no feasible space to fulfil the interests of rapidly growing European nations, except in the East and Asia.

Based upon the above, Asia is easy prey because it is part of the East – and the East, according to the division of the experts on international rights – is divided into two parts: the uncivilised and the barbaric. It is up to the race of human beings which they call the civilised, and which includes Europe, America and – lately – Japan, to do whatever it wishes with the other two parts: the uncivilised and the barbaric. Yet, in order for one of these countries to catch its prey, it has to be careful not to anger the other nations that have political interests in the same area.

It follows, then, that the greedy [colonial] countries either agree with the other countries and compensate them in some other geographical area at the expense of the East, or they postpone their moves and wait until an opportunity presents itself that enables them to force the other [European] countries not to challenge their interests. This shows that no matter how greatly the interests of the European countries clash, and however much their goals are opposed, they agree in the end, at our expense, and they settle their differences among each other without including us in any agreement. However, if the interest of one [European] country requires that we are not overtaken by another country, it will help and assist us until it succeeds in pushing away the danger of the other [European] countries. However, in the end it returns to control and [the desire to] swallow us, and to use us as a tool to achieve its goals. Those matters mentioned above are real, and there is no need to argue about them. In some case there were [able Arab] politicians who knew how to take advantage of the differences among the European states and worked to strengthen themselves through these differences, but

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the efforts of these politicians alone are not enough here. This shows that there is no escape from the European countries taking over the rest of the East.

To clarify matters even more we say:

In order for the prey to be easily caught by the occupier, the East must remain in continued decadence. And because general decadence is vastly spread when the souls are degraded and honour is gone and pride is forgotten, there will be no work for Europe, which is interested in possessing us – except to humiliate us. And Europe will then continue to humiliate all, whether material or moral, until this flood of humiliation overtakes all levels of society, while ignoring the varied degrees of decadence that we now see in the Eastern countries. For instance, Algeria may be in a state of more visible decadence than Egypt, but the British state is not concerned with this, as when Egypt is compared with Britain, the difference is so obvious that it guarantees the comfort of Britain. This is the secret of why some colonial countries help in spreading certain sciences and permitting some civilised advances in a few colonies.

There remains for us to know the ways that they use to humiliate the East. The tools that are used by the Europeans are various and numerous. The occupied countries contain many files about the traditions and morals of the country that they occupy. These files are detailed in a wonderful manner – they contain everything that one needs to know. In order to prove this we will reveal what was exposed to us by chance: in Egypt there is a special administration called the intelligence administration which, alone, occupies a whole floor of the Great Savoy Hotel, where the headquarters of the British Army is located. This administration is highly connected to a traditional regime in the British intelligence, located in the Egyptian Ministry of War, which is credited with knowing everything, however small or detailed, that takes place inside the country and along its four borders. It also completely controls all decisions in Egypt and all the ministries submit to it, plus it is always in contact with the British headquarters, and with its branches in Khartoum, Suez, and Alexandria. Additionally, it has authority to contact the British Foreign Office when necessary, and it writes weekly reports, urgent and ordinary, as well as monthly and annual reports. The latter are printed secretly in Egypt and distributed to the minister of India, the [king's representative] in Egypt, and the ministers of the colonies in Canada and Australia, and then they are kept in the [British] Foreign Office.

The section located in the Savoy Hotel, along with its connection with Egyptian section, it is in constant contact with the Foreign Office in London. It has a special and an important branch that works exclusively on Arab affairs, and another branch specialised in Turkish affairs, and a third section for Zionist affairs. The affairs of the latter are intertwined with those of the other two.

The branch that is concerned with Arab affairs is divided into sub-branches, each of which operates on a special area like Syria, Iraq and al-Ḥijāz and others. The members who work in these branches meet secretly every day, in what is

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called the daily conference, which convenes from 9:00 to 10:30 am. There is also another meeting, held every Tuesday of each week at the British headquarters (Dar al-Ḥimāyah), to deal with the problems or to study in length the measures that should be taken in those countries. The branch of al-Ḥussayn headed shortly after its establishment by Captain Cornwallis, holds several files on the Sharīf [Ḥussayn] discussing his morals, his true character, his political as well as personal ability, and the reality of his condition and of his hopes, all in full details. Similar files focus on each one of his children, as well as on the eldest of the notables of el-Ḥijāz and its functionaries and on the people of al-Ḥijāz. The files contain the degree of their financial and moral advancement, the extent of their ambitions, and everything that is related to al-Ḥijāz and its people from the moral, military, economic, and other aspects. I learned from one of the Syrian employees, who was used by the British for translation purposes in this section, that in this section of al-Ḥijāz there is a large, typed book which contains vast information. It compiles the names of those who worked in Arab affairs or had a connection with it, from the Sharīf Ḥussayn to the most junior individual. All the names are written in alphabetical order and in front of each name there are explanations about each person's condition, from his family affairs, to his past, to his morals, his knowledge, his patriotism, and a summary of everything that is necessary to know this person. During my work in Arab affairs I met an elderly English general who, as I was informed by one Syrian employee, was specialised in knowing the Arab youth and their tribes from [looking at their] faces. He also had knowledge of their dialects, and had worked on these matters since he was a young man himself. The Syrian who gave me this information spends most of his time in investigating the origins of families and their relations. The Europeans have many people who specialise in things like this. Thus, we conclude that the Europeans fully investigate the conditions of various countries and they study – in detail, with the help of spies from the people of those countries – their points of strength as well as their points of weakness. Those despicable villains are present in numerous numbers in our miserable East, and they give a perfect example of the decadence of the East and its control by the Europeans. Unfortunately, the administration of the Ottoman Empire, the epitome of honour for several centuries, has lead the people of the East to their great downfall, and this stupid administration has brought them to the lowest levels of decadence until it made them an easy prey for the Europeans, with the exception of few individuals …

Returning to the Europeans, it is easy for them, after the above-mentioned study of the conditions of the countries they intend to occupy, to begin effective preparation for anything that they intend to do. If they plan to control public opinion, the Sultan and the important leaders will be at their mercy, either by bribes or threats or by bestowing titles on them or by other means – depending on the willingness of the people and the varying degrees of their high or low morals. They name the individual they plan to use a Sultan or an Amīr or the

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honourable, and then they rule the country using his name. But the undoubted truth is that the Sultan or the Amīr or the carrier of this elusive honour is nothing but a servant to the most insignificant member of the occupying foreigners, and he is the hand of European colonisation that stabs the very heart of his nation.

When his majesty the King of al-Ḥijāz wants to telephone Colonel Wilson, the British commissioner in Jeddah, his majesty is obliged to wait several minutes on the phone, as the colonel completes the regime of humiliation that will enable them to occupy the country fully. Wilson has a translator who belongs to the Babylonian sect, who was pulled out from the depths of moral and financial degradation. This villain with all his evil is the true ruler in this blessed country that is honoured by 350 million Muslims. The King is under his control, and public affairs are ruled by his wishes. He deals with them as he is ordered by the Colonel – in a secret transaction not known except by a very few who know the reality of things in Jeddah.

The subject is broad and what is said about Umm al-qurā [Mecca] and about al-Ḥussayn b. ʿAlī is also said about al-Kinānah [Egypt] and about the children of Ismāʿīl. The same theory is applied in principle and in effect to everyone who is promised the illusion of an emirate [sic] in Syria or Iraq. British politicians wish to preserve the illusion of the Emirates and the fables of the Sultans. But the degree of these things varies, according to politics, to the personality of the King or the Amīr, and according to the personality of the occupier. In some cases, if there are people who are of some importance other than the Sultan, the British force them to submit to their authority under the orders of the Sultan and through his connections. But if there is a group of patriots – and they are few everywhere – that has a certain degree of power and influence, then they can be a threat and a source of trouble for the occupier. In this case, the occupier does his best to humiliate them, either by bringing them to his side, or by making their own people rebel against them. The occupier has an army of spies, both male and female, and he has everything necessary to perfect his spying. This makes it easy for them to enter each place and to know the secrets of homes and families. With these means and others they do whatever they please, and they benefit from the old animosities between the individuals and families, as well as from ideas that either support or oppose them, or that even only agree temporarily with their policy based on certain circumstances and conditions. After the occupiers are helped to establish a firm presence, they deal with people using a special kind of treatment and methods based on what was mentioned above. They aim, by this, to break what is left of the pride of the people with the appearances of greatness, justice and love of discipline.

Among their main policies is that of not sacrificing any of their members, no matter how many dreadful and unacceptable things he had committed. They support one another without any differentiation according to status or position. If one of them commits a terrible thing that makes him notorious among the

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people of the nation and negatively affects their reputation, they make this person resign from governmental service. At the same time, however, they announce their regret that the country should be deprived of his valuable services, and, on top of this, they bestow on him high rewards from the treasury of the occupied country as payment for the important deeds he did for the welfare of the country.

In this way they destroy the pride of the people at the beginning of the occupation until they become used to humility and are tamed into slaves, so the value of each member of the occupying country is magnified several times in their minds. This is how people forget the most valuable thing that they have in life – and that is the pride that is given to them by the divine power that elevates man to the highest degrees of eminence. Instead, the people turn their minds to other matters that the occupying authority does not object their being concerned with. Among these matters are various kinds of atrocities, like allowing all kinds of flagrant things and permitting adultery. The government protects this kind of abominable behaviour in the name of individual freedom – which leads to the corruption of the morality of the nation – and affects males as well as females, and spreads with the growth of evil. Thus material comfort evaporates with the loss of what had remained of inherited ethical principles, then the people become unable to hear the cries of those who are candid and true-hearted. If such cries reach their ears, they do not go through to the hearts. The nation in its entirety becomes unable to imitate the occupier, or anyone else, in any of his serious matters or his morals or his deeds. But it will act like him, or anybody else, in the ugliest of evils, and in this way it adds to its old and new evils others distinct from those of the West. The occupier spreads some of these Western evils on purpose, and some others are special to him and his traditions. The result is that the evil will increase and the good will decrease, until the nation reaches the levels of sickness and then death and there is the eternal extinction.

At that point the nation's extravagance becomes converted to extreme poverty, while lacking sufficient educational or material means to deal with the poverty of the future generation which did not, except through huge effort, get an education that could enable them to occupy even the most insignificant of positions. The government closes its doors in their faces, so that any hope in the future, or in life in general, wanes, and despair prevails instead. This is why marriages become fewer and children are raised under poor conditions, becoming weak, and they have a worse future than that of their fathers and grandfathers. Things go on like this until the prominent personalities of the nation vanish.

These means vary in degree depending on the situation (...). If the occupied country has a large elite population that strives to protect their language, religion and tradition, then they will do their best that their nation does not submit to complete deterioration. But these people are rare in the Eastern countries, in general, and the Muslims countries, in particular.

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This is a summary of Europe's real politics toward us. If Europe is beautiful, then this beauty does not belong to us. If the men of the French Revolution and the major activists in the other revolutions belong to the Western nations where they shed blood until they turned the world upside down to reveal, secure and protect human rights, and to establish justice, equality and fraternity, then, again, these results do not belong to us. We are not placed in any of their primary pictures. Moreover, if the democrats in Europe work daily to spread the essence of their democracy, this also belongs to them. No matter how democratic they are with respect to each other, with respect to us they are all aristocrats. [Emphasis added]

## *Doctor Wilson*

I am not able to be absolutely certain of anything concerning Doctor Wilson, the president of the United States of America, because of the [lack of sufficient introductions]. But it is possible to analyse matters through general politics. Doctor Wilson wants to establish justice for all nations and to guarantee the independence of weak nations. But aren't the Eastern colonies and nations part of the nations created by God and which feel and perceive the condition of the world? Isn't it the right of Egypt to obtain its independence? And is it possible for England, France and Italy – these countries strengthened by colonisation – to give up their colonies? Or does Doctor Wilson mean by "nations" only the Western nations and their people so that they can unite the Alsace and Lorraine to France, and Triste and Tranito [sic] to Italy, and so they can establish the Polish government, and so on?

Wilson talks about freedom of the seas, while England, in its entirety from the biggest to the smallest figure in government as well as in the nation, determines this freedom as it pleases – and then is supported by Japan and the Allied countries. We accept the possibility of ending the war among human beings, but did we ever see in the history of this world and its strange happenings anything that developed but gradually? Did the scientists invent all that they invented all at one time? Were the railways already in use when the steam engine was invented? Did nations accept the idea of democracy at the time it was developed?

What does Wilson say about the recent past of Europe's politics? – i.e. what does he say about yesterday's Europe? Isn't revolution impossible, especially in this nation [the great generation] that demands the greatest number of victims known since the discovery of the world? Is it possible for the wolf to give up his nature in a couple of days, following the advice of Doctor Wilson, and to live in peace and security with the sheep? How does the one who is oppressed forget his oppressor? How does the one who is humiliated and enslaved, and the one whose natural rights have been raped, forget his rapist? If Doctor Wilson is honest about his intentions and about his actions, and if he thinks that Germany is

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the guilty party, then why didn't he declare war in the beginning? And why did he and his people keep their silence when Germany benefited considerably, as I recall, from America during the war at the time when the submarines were waging their fiercest attacks on commercial ships? It is possible that Doctor Wilson is honest in his intentions, but is cheated and misled. However, it is also possible that he is not truthful in what he says and does, and acts only to guarantee and guard the interests of the American nation (...).

It could be that Doctor Wilson wants to establish in the present a basis for the future, and intends to take the first step in this direction – but in which period did he act? Had Doctor Wilson announced his ideas at the time, he could have forced the two fighting parties to take wider steps toward the achievement of his goals than what he now hopes they will take! On what does he really achieve his principles, on the strength of America or on what they call public opinion? And now, with what he is doing, isn't he bringing the hostility and anger of a great number of people against him and abandoning them?

If Doctor Wilson does not succeed in applying his principles and in establishing an immediate strong basis to guarantee progress in the future, then failure will be the result of unfaithfulness, and he will have become the most cunning and dishonest politician. His work will be the most deceitful in the world up until now. Then he will have the right to be called the greatest politician in the world. However, if he succeeds in what he is doing, then there is no doubt that his work will be superior to everything that was done by all the prophets who preceded him.

It is also possible that the principles of Doctor Wilson may become a new tool or a nice curtain that covers the interests and greed of the strong nations toward the weak ones. In essence, the principles of Doctor Wilson may become an invention that changes the word, but not the meaning, of colonisation or slavery – which had been used exhaustibly and therefore needs to be changed. There is no doubt that the American people are not experienced with European politics and are not exposed to it, which makes it easier for the cunning Europeans to do with them whatever they please.

## *The Internal Politics in Europe*

### *The Political Parties*

The people of the East frequently praise the political parties of Europe, their principles, and their strong opposition to the existing governments. But we often make comparisons between those parties and us, we the oppressed, without having any knowledge of these parties and about the reality of their activities.

The establishment of those parties goes back to the year 1814, when most European governments were under the grip of royal families that were supported

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by the aristocracy. The European governments were operating under the influence of "Metternich", maintaining the existing situation without making any changes in property and social structure, and keeping in place the system of internal governments. On the other side of the picture there was a group that did not approve of the existing conditions. This group consisted of the middle class in all these nations, of school students, of owners of newspapers and their editors, and all the patriots whose countries were under foreign occupation. But this group of people was not supported by any power. This situation lasted [in Europe] for nearly half a century. However, the revolutions that took place over there left a permanent mark (...)

Because of the above-described situation through all of Europe, the structure of the political parties resemble one another in nearly all of the European countries.

First - The Conservative Party: This is constituted of high-ranking employees like ministers, leaders, directors, and others. It also includes the nobility and the gentry. The aim of this party was to preserve absolute governments, to maintain the rule of the church, and to practice censorship on the press.

Second - The Conservative or the "Constitutional" Party: Its divisions are ... on the right and it is composed of the notables of the middle class and of the liberal employees. Its demands are supervision by the Majlis al-Shūrā (al-Mabʿūthān) [the Parliament] on the formation of the government and its Treasury, and also to establish a royal character in a parliament that is made of two parts: the nobility and the voters. According to this party Parliament has the right to reject the annual budget, but it leaves to the King the right to choose his cabinet and to direct general politics. Although they do not declare their demand for it, they think that freedom of the press should be confined to the rich class.

Third - The Liberal Party, or "the Parliamentary Party," is located in the North. It is constituted of the middle class, which is not satisfied with only the right to supervise the activities of the elected government, but also ask for ... which is done by Parliament on the King, on the ministry and on the senate. Their aim is a liberal parliamentary government. The ministry will be composed of the majority of the parliament that rules in the name of the King, but on the condition that it rules according to the wishes of the above-mentioned Parliament. That is, they demand a constitution that recognises the right of the nation to rule, as well as its right to succeed. It should also recognise political freedom, freedom of the press, freedom of meetings and... absolute religious freedom, and finally the formation of a national guard from the middle class to defend these rights.

Fourth - The Democratic Party, "The Radical Party": This party is composed of workers, lawyers, and editors. It demands to rule the nation and to establish political equality. In addition to the demands of the Liberal Party, this party asks for general elections, the nullification of all political privileges that are based on

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wealth, and the separation of the church from the state. Its aim is the establishment of a democratic republican government.

Later on, two parties were formed, the Catholic Party and the Socialist Party. These two parties had an international membership:

1 - The aim of the Catholic Party is to reassert the power of the church. It is constituted of the conservatives (...)
2 - The Socialist Party, or the Socialists, base their party on securing the right of each individual to live with everything that he needs, and guaranteeing for each individual the right to work and succeed. Each individual is rewarded according to his work. Socialism established these rules based on the needs of people of the lower classes, mainly the masses of workers and all those who are at this level. Their objections were built on: the severity of the human race on the miserable people, which causes the wretchedness that they face during every day of their lives and, second, the small, insignificant, and unstable subsistence of this class of people.

The Socialists criticise the working hours of the labourers and the slavery that is practised on the workers by the proprietors of real estate and capital. They claim that the houses that the workers live in are small and shabby, and that their life is painful and bitter. It is property and inheritance, and their owners, which unjustly divides the people into different classes. The worker is the one who works to increase the wealth of the proprietor of capital, while the latter does not pay him a proper salary, considering the amount of wealth that he accumulated for him. The Socialists tried hard to establish an international socialist party, but they did not succeed and they were forced in the end to accept the Socialist Party as merely a national party like the rest of the political parties. The Socialist Party was established for the first time in Germany as a national political party with a set program, and then it was followed by all the Socialist parties in the rest of the nations.

*The Program of the Socialists*

General elections for all aged 21 and over, the cancellation of all privileges, of the classification of people of inherited (...) and the implementation of obligatory elementary education. Other demands included: freedom of the press, [freedom] of association and [unreadable word]; limited working hours, reduced hours of work for women and the introduction of a law to protect labourers; public health control and the establishment of healthcare institutions; and specifying the responsibilities of capitalists and the owners of businesses.

The forms of governments had changed [in Europe] either via revolutions or coups d'états, and they continued to change until absolute rule was abolished in most European governments. The agreement that was introduced by Metternich

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to protect the internal regimes of European governments did not last because of the clash between different international interests. Whenever a revolution occurred, and in order to avoid a coup d'état in their own country, the political regimes changed their form from constitutional to parliamentary government [sic]. However, coups d'états often took place in spite of their efforts to prevent them. Things carried on in this manner until there were only a few European regimes that maintained absolute rule.

Then democracy began spreading. Western Europe was, at the time, a centre for civilised and liberal political parties, with Central Europe the centre for totalitarian rule. However, the governments gradually integrated according to the wishes of the above-mentioned political parties, and one-man rule disintegrated in Central Europe until the only trace of it was found in Eastern Europe and in the East in general [sic]. The governments of Western Europe were also moving gradually toward perfecting their forms from civilised to more civilised, until the rule came to [what] is the natural rule in Europe i.e. a parliamentary, democratic rule in the West, and a constitutional rule in Central Europe.

When Europe reached this level of refinement in rule and administrative forms, the Democratic Party re-established itself. In France it operated under the name of "The Radical Republican Party", in Italy [under] "The Radical Party", in Germany it took the name of "The Socialist Party", and in the Scandinavian countries "The [unreadable word] Party". From that time on, Catholic and Socialist parties began appearing in the arena of political debate. The Catholic Party relied on the Pope and his objections against liberal rule, but it had no influence except in Belgium. However, this party was perfect in its organisation and order. As for the Socialist Party, it was established, as was mentioned before, for the first time in Germany as a "nationalist socialist democratic" party.

After the war of the 1870s, the forces of the occupying countries increased in number and their armies became more organised, meaning the political parties were unable to cause big revolutions. This is why they maintained their same forms, parliamentary in the West and conditional in the Centre (constitutional), with the exception of France, which had the last form of a republican government. However the passage of time left its mark of development and progress on these general ideas, which slowly transformed until the weak parties were integrated into the nationalistic parties. These parties developed mainly into two groups: the conservative and the democratic. The difference between them and the space of disagreement became narrower, as a result of the integration of the parties.

The Catholic Party and the Socialist Party were established in their final forms, the Conservative Party, with the Catholic Party, worked continuously to restore the power of the church, and socialist ideas were introduced into the Democratic Party. In this manner all parties attempted to unite with either the Conservative or the Democratic Party. This was the result of the Catholic and the Socialist Parties, which employed politics as merely a means, integrating into these two par-

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ties. However, the practical outlook of political life remained in the hands of the middle parties, i.e. the Parliamentary or the Liberal Conservative Parties.

*The Anarchist Party*

Its aim is to establish a basis for the participation of volunteers, workers, and farmers without a government. Their goal is to forcibly destroy everything that is included in the public regime. They call for a general revolution across the universe; they urge social, philosophical, economic, and political revolutions; and they aim to abolish all governments and churches, with all of their political, religious, economic, judicial, monetary, organisational (police) and social teachings. The means that they suggest, in order to achieve those goals, are mainly oppression and terrorism. The members of this party are few in number and they do not have an independent party. Because of their nature, they do not participate in the parliamentary parties which limit their power to small groups.

As to the past secret societies like (the Carbonari and Modern Europe) and other similar ones, there is no need to discuss them here.

Let us take a short look now at the progress of Europe, as we did at its internal and external politics, and carefully examine its industrial, commercial and agricultural developments. We will also look at its military and transportation revolutions, its advancement in natural sciences and philosophical studies with all its branches, economics, ... literature, fine arts like painting, music and poetry, natural history, and other similar means which constitute the moral and financial power of the nation. If one of those sciences – that are the power of the nation – is lacking, this affects the total strength of the nation. If we think about the long years that it took Europe to reach this level – and if we see that it did not achieve this except by virtue of its men who learned the value of specialisation and its benefits, with each of them specialising in one of the branches of science to study it (...) – then we can realise the status that Europe reached and imagine the greatness of its power and its growth and its causes [sic].

To complete the discussion here we mention some of the attributes of the European person:

The European is above all a nationalist, because he drank the milk of patriotism from his mother's breast and learned the love of his country from the songs she sang to him while he was still in his crib. He is educated according to what he needs to learn. He is economical, but in a useful manner. He is active with the utmost vigour, organised in his work, and serious in his deeds. He is gentle in his dealings, keeps his word, and follows the idealistic way in marriage. An athlete with all the good qualities of sportsmanship, he is also sensitive and nice, a spirit which was born in him first by nature and second by the influence of fine arts like music.

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He also enjoys material things, and is materialistic more than he is moral. He is, in general, less interested with virtue than the Eastern person, and he acts very arrogantly (in the East) because he is a European who holds on to his religion on the outside and despises every Eastern person in general and every Muslim in particular. He regards the East as a meal for him to eat, but, at the same time, he thinks of it as a kind of worry to him. He is full of politeness. He is vicious and sly. He specialises in one job and he is not interested except in what concerns him, although he learns about public affairs. It is a must for him that he should drink alcohol. His morals and principles are built on what is beneficial for him – far from what we, the Arabs, pride ourselves on, like the virtuous morals of faithfulness, chivalry and generosity.

Any European who is known for these attributes is considered an outstanding person, whom they respect and to whom they attribute the title of nobility. They take whatever possible from good as well as evil things, for the sake of their country and the benefit of the nation. Moreover, the European is not very kind or merciful, although he learns most of the principles of healthcare. He also follows the best methods for raising children, and on the whole he is well equipped with all the means that help him fight and struggle in life. This is because of the law of natural existence, "the law of growth and development," and the survival of the fittest in the universe.

If we add to these attributes the distinguishing features of each European nation, then Europe will be revealed to us. If we realise that civilisation has been rooted in these European nations for centuries, and if we look at the powers the governments of Europe own, contrary to what exists in the nation itself (sic), and again if we study carefully the manner in which these countries increase their power to fight everything that could harm them, it is then that the European reality will be clear to us in the utmost. Let us now turn to:

## *Who are We and What are We with Respect to Europe*

### *Our Identity, We the Muslim Arabs*

If the intellectual takes one glance at the map of the Islamic world, and if he looks at the area extending between India and the far West, he will see different nations with different people that follow mostly one religion. He will also see that misery has spread its wings over those nations and made them overshadowed by sadness. After loosing their past glory, those nations became used to slavery and submission until the dust of humiliation thickened on them and ignorance pulled them down to its lowest levels of deterioration and ignobility. The viewer will see that those nations knelt, with all their millions, before the monstrous European existence and had put their lives in service.

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This group of different people and nations are called Muslims: Arabs, Turks, Persians, Indians and others. It is not our purpose to discuss the causes that led to the disappearance of the past glory and the outstanding civilisation that once belonged to those Muslim nations – even though it is everyone's duty to restore the glory of those nations and to study, in detail, what delayed our knowing the truth of Islamic history. We must be like the doctor who asks his patient about what he had done before getting sick, to recognise the disease and prescribe the proper medication. Instead, we talk about the features of those nations and their special characteristics in our present situation [sic]. Then, later on, we move to discuss the necessary details and talk about the level to which our education had reached, because we had not previously studied the principles and characteristics of all the Eastern nations.

The Eastern individual is characterised by absolute ignorance, bad morals and a departure from Islamic and Arab manners. He is attracted to some of the low and harmful European traditions and likes inactivity. He has little or no pride left, having become accustomed to humility. He is satisfied by appearances and does not search for the reality of things. He is far from knowing even the principles of elementary healthcare and does not like to think about things. He lacks moral courage, likes laziness, adulation and lying, and has a weak conscience, as well as a weak will. He hates team work, and is inclined toward superficial snobbery and false pride. He is weak, undisciplined and likes disorder in life. He has no family life, no organised married life, his children do not get raised under his tutelage, and he is content with his condition and accepts life as it is.

The intelligent, broad-minded person of Eastern extraction is, generally, short-sighted. Among them there are those who maintain their inherited good principles, but poverty and the departure from real religious values is wide-spread. Among those who possess these good principles there are some who are educated and who work for their nation's progress. But many who acquire some knowledge become arrogant, and tend to think that they are capable of doing anything, and so rarely find the right path to promote their nation.

When the Europeans learn about the existence of such people, they put obstacles in their way and in the end they will rule all of the Eastern nations, after having trained the people to be their helpful servants.

Let us mention now some of that group of people that tried to regain the glory of the past by achieving independence in their countries.

The Turks – I will leave the subject of the Turks because we, and everyone exposed to the affairs of the East, know them (...). However, I think that they are stronger than the rest of the Muslims. Were it not for their recent major political mistakes, resulting from a lack of experience and practise, they would have travelled down the road of progress and achieved independence. But having committed such major mistakes they faced their defeat. Their fate was either death at the hands of the European monster – and their regression as a part of their pun-

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ishment – or being caught by a monster, not having any door open for them to escape through. Then they will become the lovers of Tauran [pan-Tauranians], and they will [regress to] become equal to those who were once proud to be their neighbours, like the Persians and the Indians. So there is nobody in nature who goes unpunished.

*[The hope that is Egypt]*

The Arabs of Egypt and the Egyptians – They were able, by using old and modern means, to plant the seeds of hatred for foreigners in their hearts until they grew and became natural to them. Their souls appear to be, truthfully, aimed at independence, liberation and regaining the past glory and the previous religious pride.

The Egyptian nation, which counts more than 15 million people, is divided into two parts: Muslims and Copts. The Muslims are divided into Arabs and non-Arabs, and the latter include a mixture of Caucasians, Turks, Kurds and other Muslims. However, wealth, true moral power and superior numbers are with the Arabs. The majority of people of Turkish origin live by job employment, with the help of *awqāf* [religious or family endowments] or other sources of inheritance. The Copts realised that they could not live in peace unless they had full agreement with the Arabs – in spite of the plots of foreigners, which were foiled by patriots.

Before the loss of its last independence Egypt was the strongest of the Islamic nations. It had a great army that had defeated the Turks several times, a strong navy and a vast amount of wealth. Egypt had teachers from Europe, it had sent students to the schools of Europe and its industrial, commercial and agricultural powers were superior to those of all the other Eastern countries. Moreover, it had people possessing full knowledge of the situation in Europe and of the European people, because of its location near the European continent. But it also had a certain adherence to Islam, and a certain amount of interest in Arabic. But in spite of all these things, it was swallowed by the Europeans with such an ease that does not even warrant mentioning.

Modern Egypt, the daughter of that recent past, suffers today from severe pain and a sickness that is about to kill her, and it does not have any solace in this world except to wish for its recovery from all its diseases through the achievement of full independence. But this Egypt has not yet found the right path to lead her to her lost goal. It places all its hopes and aspirations in anyone it thinks acts with goodwill, and expects to find salvation from him. The heat of Africa makes its people lack patience and persistence, and makes them very passionate. The permission of dissipation and the freedom of indecencies has corrupted its morals and caused it to get struck, either intentionally or through infection, by all the immoralities of Europe, which had a significant effect on its people.

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Foreign pressure took away some of its people's self pride, as it did to the rest of the Eastern people in a similar position. But this was more evident in Egypt than all the others, making it a perfect example. For Egypt encompasses its hopes, its hatred of foreign rule and its love of independence, as well as its financial struggle for independence.

The tale of Egypt also includes a time of an organised, stable government, its experience with foreigners, its growing natural wealth, and its constant struggle for development. But because Egypt guarded its language and history, and held on to its religion, because of all these qualities, it is more advanced than the rest of the Arab nations and all the Eastern ones. It deserves to be the place of hope for those who are hopeful and those who are ready to travel the road to this divine goal.

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# Marshal Fevzi Çakmak's Diaries: Records of the First World War

*Nilüfer Hatemi (Yeditepe University, Istanbul)*

Mustafa Fevzi Çakmak (1876-1950) was born in Cihangir, Istanbul, to a traditional family.[1] He received a strong military education and served in the Ottoman Army, being stationed in the Balkans between 1899 and 1913.[2] He fought in the Balkan Wars, led troops in the First World War[3] and in the War of Independence. He was Chief of the Ottoman General Staff, and later Minister of War, before he joined the Ankara Government in April 1920.[4] He participated actively in all stages of the creation of the Turkish Republic, serving as the Minister of National Defense, Head of the Council of Ministers, and as the first Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Republic (1923-1944).[5] After his retirement he entered the political arena in 1946, first as an independent candidate for the

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1 Nilüfer Hatemi, *Mareşal Fevzi Çakmak ve Günlükleri*, 2 vols., Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2002, vol. 1, 39. The earliest information about the exact day of Fevzi Çakmak's birth is given in a document dated December 2, 1943 when the date of his birthday was of major importance in determining the date of his prospective retirement and the uncertainty caused misunderstandings. This was solved when Çakmak himself gave 12 Kânûn-ı sânî 1876 as his date of birth. ATASE (Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies of the General Staff; Ankara, Turkey), Barış Faaliyeti Dosyası, Arşiv no.: 1-228, Klasör no. 316, Dosya no.: 3 (37), Fihrist no.: 9, 9-1, 9-2, 9-3. See also, the Cihangir State Registers, Beyoğlu Nüfus Müdürlüğü (Istanbul İli, Beyoğlu İlçesi, Cihangir Mahallesi, cilt: 008/01, sayfa: 3, kütük sıra no.: 11).

2 Hatemi, *Mareşal Fevzi Çakmak ve Günlükleri*, vol. 1, 40-95. Fevzi Çakmak graduated from the School of General Staff in late 1898 in the fifth place; "Mekteb-i Fünûn-ı Harbiye-i Şâhâne Elli Birinci Erkân-ı Harbiye Sınıfı, Erkân-ı Harbiye Üçüncü Sene Şâkirdânı", *Mekâtib-i Harbiye-i Şâhâne Şâkirdânının İmtihân-ı 'Umûmî Cedvelidir [1316 Ders Yılı]* , İstanbul 1316 [1898-1899]. For Fevzi Efendi's graduation date, 13 Kânûn-ı evvel 1314, (December 25, 1898) see P[eyami] S[afa], *Mübeccel Serdarımız Fevzi Paşa*, Istanbul: Orhaniye n.d., 14; Nusret Baycan, "Mareşal Fevzi Çakmak", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi* VI 16 (1989), 179; T.C. Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih and Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı, *Türk İstiklal Harbi'ne Katılan Tümen ve Daha Üst Kademelerdeki Komutanların Biyografileri*, 2nd. ed., Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi 1989, 55, and "T.B.M.M Azasının Tercümeihal Kağıdı Örneği", T.B.M.M Arşivi, Ankara.

3 He was the commander of the Second Army (July-October 1917) and the Seventh Army (October 1917-August 1918).

4 Çakmak left Istanbul on April 18, 1920 and reached Ankara on April 27, 1920. He served as the Ottoman Chief of Staff between December 24, 1918 and May 14, 1919. He later served as Ottoman Minister of War between February 3 and April 5, 1920.

5 In Ankara, he became Minister of National Defense (May 3, 1920-August 5, 1920); Prime Minister (January 24, 1921-July 9, 1922); and Chief of General Staff (July 12, 1921-January 12, 1944).

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Democratic Party, later becoming one of the founders of the National Party, which he supported till his death.[6]

Marshal Çakmak kept records during most of his life. Today, as far as we know, there are only six diaries in his family's possession.[7] These notebooks were made available thanks to the generosity of his grandson Professor Ahmet Çakmak. The bulk of these writings covers a period of eleven years, namely 1911-1921, and the three months before his death in 1950. Three of Fevzi Çakmak's diaries, the ones numbered II, III, and IV, are the most valuable as far as acquiring a view of the First World War is concerned.

Notebook Nr. II starts in July 26, 1913 and ends in August 13, 1915, offering information on the situation after the Balkan Wars, and the outbreak of the First World War, as well as its consequences. In the 172 pages of daily entries, we witness many of the events of the period through the eyes of an officer and commander who served in different parts of the Empire: first in Istanbul and Ankara, later in Gallipoli.

The 202-page Notebook Nr. III covers August 14, 1915, to July 31, 1918. It provides very detailed information about the major incidents of the First World War and enables us to follow Çakmak and his troops on various fronts: Gallipoli, the Eastern Front (mainly Bayburt, Suşehri and Diyarbekir), as well as Syria-Palestine (Kudüs, Halilürrahman and Nablus). Although there are various

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6 Nusret Baycan, "Mareşal Fevzi Çakmak", 205-206; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 2 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 2: 403-404. See also, Süleyman Külçe, *Mareşal Fevzi Çakmak* , 2 vols., 2nd. ed., Istanbul: Cumhuriyet 1953.

7 Unfortunately, the diaries covering the period from 1922 to 1950 remain unfound. Fevzi Çakmak's wife Fitnat Çakmak (1891-1969) stated in an interview that her husband had started to keep a diary when he was 12 years old and that he continued until his death in April 1950. She added that a major portion of Marshal Fevzi Çakmak's writings were in her possession and that the rest were in the hands of Şefik Paşa [Şefik Çakmak, (1892 - 1966)], her son-in-law. This interview "Mareşal'in Refikası Anlatıyor" was published in a weekly magazine called *Çakmak Dergisi* on February 16, 1957, 6-7. When I consulted with Mr. Başkaner, Şefik Paşa's nephew who had lived with him during his last years, he informed me that there were, unfortunately, no notebooks of any kind left by his late uncle; Ankara, May 25, 1999. If we accept as evidence the small note attached to the second diary (Notebook Nr. II), at one time Çakmak left several other notebooks and documents. This note is written in Ottoman script, has no date, no information about its writer and reads:

NUMBER- 6: Items in this package:
1- 4 memoirs-notebooks in an unbleached muslin cover
2- 3 memoirs-notebooks in an unbleached muslin cover
3- Some documents and letters in an envelope
4- A small notebook (names of officers)
5- Two red notebooks
   i- Memoirs recorded between January-March 23, 1950
   ii- March 23-April 2, 1950 memoirs recorded in the hospital (last)
6- The book *Şeyh Vefa Takdimi* that he liked very much
7- Some important documents (including the list)

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entries recording political and social subjects, the entries in this notebook deal mainly with military matters.

Notebook Nr. IV starts in Nablus, Palestine in August 1, 1918 and ends in December 31, 1921 in Ankara. This diary consists of 153 pages, beginning near the end of the war and covering the period during which Çakmak served the Ottoman government, first as Chief of General Staff and later as Minister of War, before he secretly fled from Istanbul to Ankara, where he joined the newly opened Grand National Assembly. The major part of this notebook is involved with issues after the end of the First World War, and the Turkish War of Independence.

More than 300 pages in these three diaries are concerned with the period dealt with in this study, namely the years between 1914 and 1918. Although seen principally from a military perspective, Çakmak kept a record of a variety of subjects: social and economic matters, health issues, weather (meteorology), living conditions among both soldiers and civilians, his military accomplishments in different theatres, along with political circumstances. For the most part he took notes on a daily basis. Çakmak's diaries address such a wide range of subjects that all ought to be dealt with in detail. My aim is to present a picture of the First World War according to his own notes as recorded in different cities, fronts and garrisons.

During the First World War, Çakmak's military assignments and promotions were recorded in his diaries, and they are as follows:[8]

| | |
|---|---|
| November 16, 1913 | assigned to Command of the Second Division and promoted to the rank of Colonel |
| December 1914 | granted a two years' addition to his seniority |
| Late-December, 1914 | appointed Commander of the Fifth Army Corps |
| March 1915 | promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General |
| July 1915 | awarded the Medal of War |
| September 1915 | awarded the Silver Medal of Honour |
| October 1915 | awarded the Iron Cross of the Second Degree |
| Early-December, 1915 | assigned to Command the Anafartalar Group |
| Late-December, 1915 | appointed to the Second Army |
| November 1916 | received the Golden Medal of Honour |
| July 1917 | assigned to the Commandership of the Second Army |
| October 1917 | appointed Commander of the Seventh Army |
| November 1917 | received the Croix de Fer Medal |
| January 1918 | awarded the *Mecidi* Decoration |
| July 1918 | promoted to the rank of Major-General |
| August 1918 | returned to the capital on sick-leave |
| December 1918 | appointed Head of the General Staff Department, Istanbul |

8 For the exact dates and details refer to Hatemi, *Mareşal Fevzi Çakmak ve Günlükleri.*

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In his diaries, Çakmak recorded a great number of both army and civilian losses. We read about the casualties, the sick and the wounded, the captives and those missing in action. These figures not only represent a simple schematic overview of wartime human destruction, but also reveal the importance he attached to actual causes of casualties: bombs, artillery, firearms, disease or natural causes. It is interesting to learn about different epidemics, the preventive measures and precautions taken – like inoculations and quarantines – the number of patients in hospitals, the result of adverse weather conditions and the death toll due to certain natural disasters. Çakmak, also noted the percentage of war-weary soldiers and even the condition of the animals used during military campaigns. He seems truly concerned about each and every element affecting the competence and potential of the army. Civilian casualties, especially women and children, are also noted and sometimes referred to as martyrs:

**September 14, 1914** – Küçükhalkalı Military Camp:
During the two days march, 156 soldiers (1, 1 %), 36 animals (1, 2 %) are sick, weak or afflicted with mange.

**September 27, 1914** – Ayamama Military Camp:
I was vaccinated against typhoid fever for the last (third) time.

**September 4, 1915** – in the environs of the Ali Bey Farm:
The enemy continued to harass the front lines and [our] artillery with bombs and gunners ... More than three thousand shells and almost five hundred bombs [were thrown].

**October 16, 1915** – in the environs of the Ali Bey Farm:
A German officer of lesser rank was killed, our engineer officer was wounded. A number of soldiers lost consciousness because of the gunpowder gases.

**December 17, 1915** – Çamteke:
In Kayacıkağılı the enemy blew three mines. A monitor [warship with heavy armour] shelled Yalova causing heavy losses in a hospital. A German woman was killed, too.

**April 19, 1916** – Bayburt:
In Akçakale, west of Polathane, the enemy bombed the convoys of refugees. Twenty people, women and children, died as martyrs.

**July 24, 1916** – Şiran:
Six incidents of cholera appeared in Şiran.

**January 28, 1917** – Kelvaris:
12 soldiers of the 52th Division were buried by an avalanche in Manadur. (...)
A hut collapsed. An infantry soldier died, 7 others were wounded.

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**July 13, 1918** – Nablus:
The temperature in Tel Nimrin is 68.

Çakmak also clearly emphasizes the need for accurate information. He is quite sceptical of data acquired from uncertain sources and enters such questionable information as "rumour" (*şayi'a*) and he never quotes them as facts. He also never seemed to fully trust the words of the captives, refugees or villagers but he did not totally disregard them either, especially on the Eastern and the Palestinian Fronts where a number of enemy soldiers changed sides for certain political or religious reasons.

**July 17, 1915** – Salim Bey Farm:
The map (sketch) of the army is incorrect.

**May 14, 1916** – Bayburt:
Two German and two Russian soldiers who took refuge with the Karasu Group informed us that the Russians will attack.

**March 16, 1917** – Kelvaris:
The enemy dropped announcements about the fall of Baghdad and Kermanşah [to] Seki.

**November 9, 1917** – Halilürrahman:
The 8th Army is retreating behind the Kasr River ... Believing that the enemy was approaching, a panic occurred in the 8th Army Garrison and the situation worsened. The Al-Tine train station was burnt down in the midst of this chaos, although the enemy was nowhere in sight.

**January 25, 1918** – Nablus:
According to the villagers' statements [account], the British soldiers were said to have been given a three-month rest period.

**January 29, 1918** – Nablus:
According to accounts of the Der Nizam villagers, fifty thousand Muslim Tunisian soldiers in Lud refused to fight against Muslims and rebelled.

Çakmak's precision is easily seen by the vocabulary he used to describe his various adversaries. Most of the time, they are referred to as *düşman* [enemy] but there are also instances where the combatants are given various names like *eşirra* [insurgents], *'usat* [rebels] and *eşkiya* [brigands]. The word "enemy" is generally used where the nationality of the soldiers in the battlefield is uncertain. For example, there were Anzacs, Gurkhas, Indians, Tunisians and Arabs fighting for the Great Powers against Ottoman Armies. However, when he clearly knew who they were, Çakmak referred to the enemy by its nationality – i.e. the British, the Russians, the French, the Greeks etc. – but when confronted by irregular forces like guerrillas, bands of rebels or brigands, he uses words like *eşirra* or *eşkiya*. It is also

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important to note that when Fevzi Çakmak had doubts as to the culprit of a criminal activity, he recorded his reservations:

**May 10, 1916** – Bayburt:
Our scouting patrol of seven persons was found murdered on the Meryem Ana bridge. The *Rums* [i.e.: Greeks holding Turkish citizenship] are suspected.

**June 21, 1917** – Suşehri:
June 20/21, 9.20 pm. - 1.30 a.m., the enemy on the right side of the 36th Division used flares and fired guns. It is probably a Kurdish assault.

**December 12, 1917** – Nablus:
On [the night of] December 11-12th, the information about the enemy's disembarking at Nehr Iskenderun (west of Tul Kerem) was incorrect – stemming from erroneous instruction and practice. The inaccuracy of this information was discerned as the squad guarding our headquarters was ready to mobilise!!!

**April 28, 1918** – Nablus:
... The hill, on the west of Hırbet el Dir, was recaptured [by us]. Here the attackers are Indians.

In the diaries, the front lines seem to have served as bridges of communication between the combatants. Çakmak usually quoted the exclamations exchanged on the borders, especially on the Eastern Front, and made note of the language spoken by the enemy. This is important as it shows Çakmak's eagerness to record the various alliances composing, or supporting, the rival armies. For example in the fall of 1915 while fighting in Gallipoli, Çakmak wrote that the enemy was heard speaking in Greek and, in another instance, shouting in Arabic. The emphasis on the languages used by the foe is common during the First World War period since spoken language offered clues to the religion and nationality of the combatants, but not necessarily of their citizenship.

**September 17, 1915** – in the environs of the Ali Bey Farm:
The enemy is heard speaking Greek in conversation.

**October 15, 1915** – in the environs of the Ali Bey Farm:
... one of our scouting patrols captured the enemy blockhouse. While running away, the ones inside shouted "Ebu-Cehl" [Arabic, meaning Father of Ignorance, a nickname given by the Prophet Mohammed to one of his greatest enemies], a rifle was seized.

**May 22, 1916** – Bayburt:
The attackers, Armenians, were heard shouting ("Ahmed don't shoot") in Turkish.

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**May 3, 1917** – Samsun:
In the west of the 37th Division's centre, the Russians shouted: "We will make peace with the Turks and the Germans".

**May 21, 1917** – Kemah:
Russians shouted: "Be aware of our artillery but we, the infantry, will not shoot [at you]".

**August 7, 1917** – Diyarbekir:
40 Russian soldiers advancing towards Muş were forced to retreat because of the fire of our watch on the Çeriş Hill. There are Armenians among these Russians on the Soluk Bridge.

**April 16, 1918** – Nablus:
The enemy is heard talking in Arabic.

In many ways, Marshal Çakmak's diaries prove him a methodical and disciplined officer. He established a system for his entries and followed it without any changes, namely: date, month, year, day of the week, location, and weather. When travelling he wrote the names of the places he passed through and stayed in overnight, including information on the means of transportation used. Sometimes he added the distances covered and how many hours these journeys took. If the road conditions were extraordinarily bad or if some kind of an accident occurred, this was also recorded:

**February 3, 1915** – Göztepe:
The camels came from Paşabağçe to Dudullu in (11-12) hours and the ox-carts in eighteen. The distance of 20 kilometres was covered under these circumstances.

**November 18, 1915** – Keşan:
At one o'clock, I went towards of Kiliseli (Süleymanlı) to inspect the 10th Division. Since the car broke down we continued in an ambulance to the environs of Turhan, where we got our car back, and arrived at Keşan after midnight – after two hours.

**March 7, 1916** – Konya:
We arrived in Konya at 2.50 a.m. In the area called (Mahal) before Konya, the locomotive was unable to pull the forty carriages and slipped ... We wasted six hours. We departed from Konya at 6.00 a.m. and reached Karaman at 9.00 a.m., arriving at Ereğli at 12.50 p.m. We waited there for exactly 24 hours under the pretext that there was no coal.

**March 11, 1916** – Sivas:
At 8.30, having siphoned gas out from the baggage vehicles and repaired the car with silver solder at Zara, we passed Kösedağ. Near the Kurbağa police sta-

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tion we were snowbound for six hours. Pulled by oxen, at (10.30), we arrived in Şerefiye.

**August 20, 1918** – on the train between Aleppo and Adana:
... It took us 17 minutes to pass trough the Islahiye tunnel and I suffered greatly from the intensity of the heat and the jolting of the train.

In the notebooks, there is much information on the battles and wars in which Çakmak took part. However, he does not dwell pretentiously on his own role. Facts are recorded in an informative manner and there are no further descriptions. He recorded the military actions in which he was involved, or even led, in the first person plural form. This style suggests the importance he attributed to solidarity and teamwork rather than what might wrongly be ascribed to false modesty. When he personally prepared a map, wrote a report, carried out a military inspection, or when he gave a certain order, he did not use the plural form of the verb since these actions were executed solely under his orders or accomplished by a single person. He always stood by his decisions and actions, unhesitatingly taking full responsibility, whether it was to organize a necessary retreat or order a death sentence:

**September 7, 1914** – Ayamama Farm:
I inspected the military headquarters of the Fifth and Sixth Regiments.

**March 10, 1916** – Kayseri:
I gave the order for the execution of the death sentence against the soldier – from the 60th Regiment, 1st Battalion – who had killed his commanding officer on the way to Kayseri.

**September 9, 1916** – Kelvaris:
After the court decision, I ordered the execution by hanging of the 3 Rums who had hidden arms in the Village of Anastos.

**December 8, 1917** – Nablus:
Although the enemy assaults at El Burc were stopped by infantry combat, and arrested on other fronts by the artillery and infantry, I decided to act upon Fuad Pasha's opinion that no defence was possible and ordered the evacuation of Jerusalem.

Although not as frequent as his observations on military matters, social and economic matters also appear in Fevzi Çakmak's diaries:

**September 8, 1914** – Ayamama Military Camp:
Imperial decree about the abolition of the Capitulations dating August 26, 1330/ 17 Şevval 1332.

**February 28, 1915** – Göztepe:
The appearance of the Armenian rebels/brigands in Bitlis.

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**March 18, 1916** – Erzincan:
The Dersim people cut the Kemah pass and killed 3 gendarmes. In the area of Mans and Başköy too, there are bands of 200 rebels, Kurdish.

**April 22, 1916** – Bayburt:
The enemy fleet called upon Büyük Liman to surrender. The inhabitants, holding white flags, are getting ready to surrender.

**May 12, 1916** – Bayburt:
The Rums who took refuge in the Konağa Cave surrendered.

**April 26, 1918** – Nablus:
In the vicinity of Madaba an English reconnaissance column suffered losses and was driven away at the hands of the Bedouins.

**July 1, 1918** – Nablus:
Due to a disagreement about the managing of the tithe revenues, the governors of Beirut, Syria and Aleppo resigned.

**August 5, 1918** – Nablus:
The internal-loan debt mounted to 18 million Liras.

His diary entries also contain notes on prominent personalities. There is a wide variety of comment on Ottoman military and administrative personnel, guerrillas, agents, insurgents, politicians, foreign officers in the Ottoman Army, Muslim and non-Muslim religious leaders, the Sultans and their heirs, members of the European dynasties and the like. Among these are:

**December 12, 1914** – Şehzadebaşı:
Marshal Goltz came [to Istanbul] at 11 o'clock at night. We welcomed him at Sirkeci [train station].

**December 19, 1914** – Beykoz:
Sünusi [Sheikh Ahmet Senussi; sometimes rendered "Sunusi"] crossed the Egyptian border.

**March 5, 1915** – Göztepe:
I have had the uniforms transformed into Major Brigadier-General uniforms at the tailor's, and at the *Selamlık* procession I received the honour of standing before his Excellency the Sultan. His Majesty said: "I have not spent my time frivolously. I have read a lot of history [books]. Therefore I know very well that the enemy fleet will not be able to pass through the Dardanelles". Afterwards, we went to see His Excellency [the Heir to the Throne] Yusuf Izzeddin Efendi and in the afternoon I arrived at Beykoz.

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**October 11, 1917** – Diyarbekir:
Mustafa Kemal Pasha demanded:
1) that the [Army] not enter into direct contact with the [Bedouin] Arab [groups] in the Euphrates area etc.
2) since the two armies would not be able to be brought up to the Gaza-Beersheba Front, which is of 50 kilometres in length, Kress Pasha should be placed under his command
3) in order to obtain a definite line of war, he expects the troops – whichever these are – to be confirmed and appointed henceforth.

As his request was not well-received and delayed with futile pretexts, he resigned.

**October 13, 1917** – on the train:
I arrived at Aleppo at noon and met [Marshal] Falkenhayn. I understood that Mustafa Kemal Pasha had resigned after having argued about the Bedouin Arabs who were in the desert, not being put under his command by the Germans and about the impossibility of inserting two armies into the Sinai Front.

**October 14, 1917** – Aleppo:
Cemal Pasha came, we talked. He, too, was complaining about the conduct of the Germans. Falkenhayn invited me to dinner. I met the Chief of General Staff, von Dommes.

**May 2, 1918** – Nablus:
Sherif Hüseyin [of Mecca] apparently no longer continues his sermons delivered in the name of the Caliph Mehmed Reşad in the mosques.

**August 16, 1918** – Nablus:
At 12 o'clock noon, I departed from Nablus by train. Having arrived in Afula at 6.30, I went to Nazareth and bid farewell to Liman [von Sanders] Pasha. He wished me a swift return.

**August 24, 1918** – Afyonkarahisarı:
Departure at 4.30 a.m. Arrival at Eskişehir at 1.00 p.m. At the train station, I received Enver Pasha's telegram dated August 17, and learned about Mustafa Kemal Pasha's appointment to the 7th Army.

A substantial portion of the information in these notebooks can be assembled from a number of other sources; i.e.: public and private documents, archives, encyclopaedias, surveys, journals and newspapers. However, Çakmak's diaries also offer information that has never been made into books. Firstly, his personal experiences and reflections are to be found only in his writings: each diary is as unique as the individual writing it. Secondly, war conditions restricted the circulation of some information but certain occurrences often appeared in private memoirs and diaries. Çakmak's diaries, too, reflect such valuable data and in-

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formation about the wars, politics, society, culture and daily events. There is no doubt that further study of these diaries and prospective research based on Çakmak's notes will provide more information and much more insight into this period, his personality and life.

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# 'Sherifian' Officers in Interwar Iraq and 'Germanophilia' – A Heritage of the German-Ottoman Military Partnership? The Case of Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī*

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In his memoirs[1] the former Arab Ottoman officer Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī (1885-1936) refers to the Germany of the First World War and stresses that "... there is no need to mention what kind of prestige rested upon the German army among the armies of the world during this time."[2] ʿAskarī had first-hand experience with this army. In 1910 the young, Baghdad-born officer and graduate from Istanbul's Harbiye military academy joined an Ottoman military mission to Germany. When the Kingdom of Iraq came into being after the First World War, ʿAskarī became a very influential political figure and so-called "Father of the Iraqi Army".[3] ʿAskarī's example exemplifies how former Arab Ottoman officers carried Germanophile tendencies into Iraq's nationalist discourse.

Admiration for the German military was one of the various images of Germany referred to in interwar Iraqi nationalist discourse. This image was inherited from the experience of Arab Ottoman officers in the German-Ottoman partnership before and during the First World War. Historians, however, often fail to differentiate between a 'traditional' pro-German attitude of former Ottoman officers, and the 'fascistic' tendencies of Arab nationalism. Some authors simply attest to Arab nationalism's ideological affinities with Germany's National Socialist regime.[4] In the case of Iraq, they do not differentiate between several strains of pro-German sentiment – as if all of them were only a unified pretext for the short-lived German-Iraqi alliance during a month of war between Britain and

* I am most grateful to Jessamine Price for her comments on this paper.

1 The distinction between the terms 'memoirs' and 'autobiography' and how they fit for Arab authors are discussed by Susanne Enderwitz, "Public Role and Private Self", in: Robin Ostle, Ed de Moor, and Stefan Wild, eds., *Writing the Self: Autobiographical Writing in Modern Arabic Literature*, London 1998, 75-81, here 76f. I prefer the term 'memoirs' in Jaʿfar's case because his text remained unfinished and did not have the chance to become a comprehensive 'interpretation of the self', the latter term borrowed from a recent work on 'pre-modern' (i.e. before 20th century) Arabic autobiography: Dwight F. Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, Berkeley et al. 2001.

2 Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī, *Mudhakkirāt*, ed. by Najdah Fatḥī Ṣafwah, London 1988, 33.

3 Eliezer Beʿeri, *Army Officers in Arab Politics and Society*, New York et al. 1969, 17.

4 Respective critcism in review articles by Basheer M. Nafi, "The Arabs and the Axis: 1933-1940", *Arab Studies Quarterly* 19.2 (1997), 1-24; Rashid Khalidi, "Arab Nationalism: Historical Problems in the Literature", *American Historical Review* 96.5 (December 1991), 1363-1373, here 1366.

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Iraq in May 1941.[5] This article aims to challenge this view by presenting perceptions of imperial Germany in the memoirs of two Iraqi Arab leaders – an image that served as a militarist model for the integration of the Kingdom of Iraq according to an Arab nationalist agenda.

The use of memoirs and autobiographies as historical sources does require a few critical remarks, however. It is self-evident that personal memories cannot be taken at face value. Literary studies distinguish clearly between author, narrator and subject of narration. The author and reader enter a pact to provide the illusion of confidence in the information given.[6] Hence autobiography, and less obviously memoirs, remain a construct. They are essentially narratives with no direct claim to 'truth'. Every statement by an autobiographer is made in a framework of contemporary discourse and has to be interpreted in the light of the social and political circumstances of its surroundings.

Many factors – such as age, new experiences and the confrontation with new socio-political demands – make the individual filter, re-assemble and adapt remembered images according to 'present' requirements. Memories serve to explain the course of events up to the 'present', in an apologetic or affirming manner. Shared memories create identities. Adopted identities shape, if not create, memories. As far as individual memories of incidents are concerned, they demonstrate the quality of experience more than they supply facts. The emphasis laid on specific topics, the narrative structure, the occurrence of allusions and associations: all give hints to the perceived importance of the impression left by a certain experience at a certain time – but in the light of what happened afterwards, not what happened at the time. Hence the single account is only to be seen in the mirror of the whole. Furthermore, autobiographers can follow a didactical intention, implicit in the process of singling out one's life to be worth public inspection, worthy of setting of an example.[7]

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5 Elie Kedourie, "The Kingdom of Iraq: a Retrospect", in: idem., ed., *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle-Eastern Studies*, London 1970, 263-282, here 275; Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East. A Brief History of the Last 2000 Years*, New York 1996, 348; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, London: Boulder 1985, 76; Reeva S. Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars. The Creation and Implementation of a Nationalist Ideology*, New York 1986, chapter 2.

6 Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique*, Paris 1975, 35ff.

7 Susanne Enderwitz, "The Mission of the Palestinian Autobiographer", in: Stephan Guth, Priska Furrer, and Johann Christoph Bürgel, eds., *Conscious Voices: Concepts of Writing in the Middle East. Proceedings of the Berne Symposium July 1997*, Beirut 1999, 29-50, here 30; Benjamin C. Fortna, "Education and Autobiography at the End of the Ottoman Empire", *Die Welt des Islams* 41 (2001), 1-31, here 7; Thomas Philipp, "The Autobiography in Modern Arab Literature and Culture", *Poetics Today* 14:3 (1993), 573-604, here 576-579; Christoph Schumann, "The Generation of Broad Expectations: Nationalism, Education and Autobiography in Syria and Lebanon, 1930-1958", *Die Welt des Islams* 41 (2001), 174-205, here 176ff; idem., *Radikalnationalismus in Syrien und Libanon: Politische Sozialisation und Elitenbildung 1930-1958*, Hamburg 2001, 35ff.

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## *Background*

'Germanophilia' was widespread in the inter-war Arab world. During the Nazi period, especially during the Second World War, it was obvious for Arab nationalists to seek support from a powerful Germany that had challenged Britain and France. It was popular among Arab nationalists to claim that Arabs and Germans had a common fate, as both felt betrayed by Britain and France in the peace treaties that concluded the First World War. There was also admiration for German and Italian national strength and recovery after The First World War. Both countries' apparent discipline and efficiency figured prominently in such admiration. There were superficially pro-NS parties and organisations, such as the Syrian Social Nationalist Party and the Katā'ib in Lebanon. Most obviously pro-fascist and National-Socialist in sympathy were youth movements such as Miṣr al-Fatāt in Egypt.

These movements offered a sense of community, fierce nationalism and paramilitary training. From European fascists members borrowed the fashion of wearing shirts of a distinctive colour. Generally, however, the ideological approach of these youth movements was very superficial.[8] Hence being pro-German was more a matter of fashion than a serious approach to fascism. The movements were 'fascistic', rather than 'fascist' per se.[9] The nationalists of the 1930s used many images of Germany in their nationalist discourse, and only a few of them were pro-fascist. Perceptions were various, and not as homogeneous as claimed.[10]

Arab Ottoman officers' 'Germanophilia' originated in their experiences with the strength of German militarism as a vehicle for nationalism, witnessed during their studies at Istanbul's "Harbiye" military college or during visits to Germany. When Iraq became an Arab state in 1921 under the rule of King Fayṣal I (1885-1933) and an elite of pan-Arab nationalist officers, the new rulers thought the spread of Arab nationalism crucial for the integration of the state and stabilisation of Hashemite rule. They propagated Arab nationalism against British mandatory control and despite the fact that the new elite, imposed on Iraq by the

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8 Elsa Marston, "Fascist Tendencies in Pre-War Arab Politics. A Study of Three Arab Political Movements", *Middle East Forum* 35.5 (1959), 19-22, 33-35; Francis Nicosia, "Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany, 1933 - 1939: Ideological and Strategic Incompatibility", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12 (1980), 351-372; Stefan Wild, "National Socialism in the Arab Near East Between 1933 and 1939", *Die Welt des Islams* 25 (1985), 126-173.

9 Fritz Steppat, "Das Jahr 1933 und seine Folgen für die arabischen Länder des Vorderen Orients", in: Gerhard Schulz, ed., *Die Große Krise der dreißiger Jahre. Vom Niedergang der Weltwirtschaft zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Göttingen 1985, 261-278, here 272; Gerhard Höpp, "Araber im Zweiten Weltkrieg – Kollaboration oder Patriotismus?" in: Wolfgang Schwanitz, ed., *Jenseits der Legenden. Araber, Juden, Deutsche*, Berlin 1994, 91.

10 Compare Israel Gershoni, "Egyptian Liberalism in an Age of 'Crisis of Orientation': Al-Risāla's Reaction to Fascism and Nazism, 1933-39", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999), 551-576.

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British, was hardly acceptable to the divergent interests within Iraqi society. For the officers, militarism provided a viable concept of nationalist integration. Thus the German model earned a specific attractiveness. Arab nationalists in Iraq wanted to turn the kingdom into a "Prussia of the Arabs". Iraq should be the nucleus of an Arab unification, just as Prussia had been for Germany in 1871.[11]

Fayṣal I's reputation and religious legitimacy as a Hashemite was meant to be a unifying umbrella to balance the centrifugal social forces in Iraq.[12] The ensuing fractures within Iraqi society sprang from the British having artificially constructed Iraq out of the former Ottoman vilayets of Mosul, Baghdad and Basra. The social structure of the country was extremely heterogeneous, divided vertically along confessional and ethnic lines between Shi'ites, Sunni Arabs and Sunni Kurds, and between urban and rural (mostly tribal) areas, and horizontally between large landholders and peasants, as well as craftsmen in the cities.[13]

Fayṣal had been a loyal wartime ally of the British. He brought along an equally loyal and ready-formed elite who had fought under his command in the Arab Revolt, the so-called Sherifian Officers. As former Ottoman officers of Iraqi origin, they had received a high level of military education at the Ottoman Staff College in Istanbul, and had learned Western languages. Their experience of contact with Westerners was crucial in dealing with the Mandate power and provided them with a certain advantage over most Iraqis. The Sherifians regarded themselves as an elite of pan-Arab nationalism. The common Military College education and activities in secret nationalist societies, as well as combat in Fayṣal's army, shaped their esprit de corps and their elitesensibility.[14] This linked their Arab nationalism to militarism and elitism.

The Sherifians assumed crucial government posts – but the position of this new ruling elite was by no means assured. The tribal component of Iraqi society was very strong. In the 1920s tribes ruled the greater part of the country through military power. A system of interdependence among shaykh, tribesman and peasant guaranteed the strong link of tribal adherence. For the first decade of Iraq's existence this system prevailed, not least because the British rulers limited

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11 Paul P.J. Hemphill, "The Formation of the Iraqi Army, 1921-1933", in: Abbas Kelidar, ed., *The Integration of Modern Iraq*, London 1979, 88-111, here 92; Marr, *Modern History*, 67; Simon, *Iraq between*, 67; idem., "The Teaching of History in Iraq Before the Rashid Ali Coup of 1941", *Middle Eastern Studies* 22 (1986), 37-51, here 45.

12 Mohammad A. Tarbush, *The Role of the Military in Politics. A Case Study of Iraq to 1941*, 2nd. ed., London 1983, 36-38.

13 Hanna Batatu, *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 1978, 16-22.

14 Batatu, *Social Classes*, 319f; Hemphill, "Formation", 91f; David Pool, "From Elite to Class: The Transformation of Iraqi Political Leadership", in: Kelidar, *Integration*, 63-87, here 64ff; Simon, *Iraq between*, 15-16; Tarbush, *Military in Politics*, 71. The trend continued in the 1930s among a second generation of army officers: Ahmad Abdul Razzaq Shikara, *Iraqi Politics 1921-41. The Interaction Between Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy*, London 1987, 111.

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the size of the Iraqi army. In the 1930s this pattern of power-sharing was undermined by the emergence of a landholding class. Politics, and Iraq's integration within the international economic system, caused the rural shaykhs to have more common interests with traditional urban landlords than with their kin. As members of the new ruling elite, the Sherifian officers had managed to enter the old urban landholding elite through shady administrative means; both the old and the new urban landlords dominated society. New laws favoured land acquisition, and the flawed parliamentary system provided the possibility to create a clientele among traditional notables and tribal shaykhs. The urban elites controlled politics, and the shaykhs contented themselves with their economic well-being.[15]

The new Iraqi army was central for the Sherifians' Arab nationalist ethos. In the eyes of the officer-politicians, the army was a vehicle of nationalism to discipline the people and thus to integrate the kingdom's divergent ethnic and religious interests.[16] Nationalism was itself a Western concept, as was "modernisation", but Iraq's Arab nationalists acknowledged the Western concepts and used them to strengthen the nation against imperialism. They blamed the British mandatory power for preventing Iraq's modernisation and liberalisation according to the "European Enlightenment Project". For them the British were exploiters who wanted to keep Iraq subordinate in order to control its resources. When nationalists emphasised modernisation as an aim of nationalism in Iraq, they actually "affirmed the legitimacy of the colonial project itself."[17]

In "Colonising Egypt" Timothy Mithchell described this ironic predicament in the context of 19th-century Egypt: not force, but rather interior shaping and transformation through "continuous instruction, inspection, and control" was meant to change society from within, "...not by restricting individuals and their actions but by producing them."[18] Rearrangement of society thus aimed at rendering it more efficient through the creation of new institutions such as armies and state education, and by detaching the disciplined individual from traditional safeguards of family, quarter, profession, tribe, ethnicity or religion. Institutions of colonial discipline provided the colonised with the capacity to be rid of the coloniser, even though they were introduced by a colonising power, or at least appropriated by it. Western institutions were adopted to serve as cores of anti-colonial movements.

If we apply this concept to the case of inter-war Iraq, we see that the conscription army, the nationalist school education and the institutionalised youth movements served as disciplining institutions to foster national spirit and, thereby, independence.[19] It is debatable, however, to what extent these institu-

15 Batatu, *Social Classes*, 6-8, 11-14, 46-47, 319f; Tarbush, *Military in Politics*, 28-30, 41-44.
16 Hemphill, "Formation", passim.
17 Samira Haj, *The Making of Iraq, 1900-1963. Capital, Power and Ideology*, Albany 1997, 83f.
18 Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1991, XI.
19 Compare the currents in Syria: Schumann, "Broad Expectations", 174ff.

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tions were genuine adaptations from the West, and how much they drew from the modernising disputes of the late Ottoman period.[20] Nevertheless, as this paper will show, pro-German models of authority and militarism served as a disciplinary model in nationalist discourse. British advisers in Iraqi ministries during the 1930s witnessed that the increasing militarism and the introduction of disciplined youth organisations went along with an increase of anti-British tendencies among the public. Flawed parliamentary and colonial rule gave way to an increasing role of militarism and authoritarian tendencies in the political and public life of the urban centres. In fact, many nationalists considered authoritarian models more suitable for Iraq than parliamentarian models of modernisation, as had been imposed under the mandate regime. Two European models of organisation of society were in competition.

Officer education was an important transmitter of Germanophilia. The education at the Istanbul Staff College had been modelled on German staff training, organised and partly carried out by Germans.[21] This tradition was transferred via the first generation of Iraqi officers' education of military cadets and young officers in Mandate and independent Iraq.[22] Civil education had the same bias as a modernising institution. Education was at the very core of nationalist discourse early in the 1920s. Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥusrī and his successors made reference to Germany as a model of national recovery.[23]

From the beginning of the Iraqi state Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī and his comrades, along with the king, had tried to establish conscription, because "[c]onscription was an article of faith for the Sherifian officers ...".[24] In the constituent assembly of 1924, ʿAskarī and his comrades demanded that an article be included into the constitution about defence: "The defence of the kingdom of Iraq is a common duty to all the sons of the country ..."[25] However, it was impossible to enforce conscription before the mid 1930s due to the political independence gained in 1932, but also because the army's suppression of sectarian and tribal upheaval. By 1932 tribal power had decreased, and there were the first hints at a generational change in leadership structures. All in all the integration of the nation had made progress, at least among the emerging urban middle classes.[26]

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20 Compare recent re-assessments of the Ottoman reforms: Fortna, "Education and Autobiography", 1ff; Selçuk Akşın Somel: *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline* (The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage: Politics, Society and Economy 22), Leiden et al. 2001, 1ff. Compare also Hemphill, "Formation", 93.

21 Simon, *Iraq between*, 9-27.

22 Ibid., 124f.

23 Ibid., 95-107; idem., "Teaching of History", 38; Hemphill, "Formation", 92f.

24 Tarbush, *Military in Politics*, 86; Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, Cambridge 2002, 61.

25 ʿAl Jawdat: *Dhikrayāt 1900-1958*, Beirut 1968, 175.

26 Only in the 1930s a 'New Middle Class' or 'New Effendiyya' of educated members of state related professions such as lawyers, teachers as well as doctors emerged. Batatu, *Social Classes*, 28f; Michael Eppel, "The Elite, the *Effendiyya*, and the Growth of Nationalism and

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## *Reflections in memory*

The Sherifians referred to their German experience with specific aims and connected it to a political agenda of militarism – common topics were the proper performance of a nationalist officer or the benefits of general military service. The two memoirs of Nājī Shawkat and Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī contain such references from two different perspectives in time: the former wrote in the 1970s, whereas the latter worked on his memoirs in the early 1930s. Although he was not a typical Sherifian in his military education, Shawkat's accounts present the persevering influence of The First World War until well past the Second World War. ʿAskarī's views, on the other hand, are informative of his political viewpoint of the early '30s – resulting from the didactic structure of his account. I argue that he implicitly contrasts the state of the Iraqi military in the early 1930s with the state of the imperial German army before The First World War.

During the 1930s and early '40s Nājī Shawkat (1893-1980) was several times a cabinet minister and once prime minister. In his memoirs he recounts how he was transferred to the command of the German airforce in Baghdad as an adjutant in 1916. There he met Captain von Aulock, commander of the airforce unit dispatched to Mesopotamia. Aulock was of noble origin and treated Shawkat like a brother during his ten-month stay. According to Shawkat, he had a strong character, deserving attention, but modest. He did not have the arrogance of the Turkish officers, and did not miss an invitation to have Baghdadi food in Shawkat's home.[27]

Shawkat stresses the virtues of the German officer as a comrade during The First World War, in contrast to the arrogant behaviour of the Turkish leadership. He applies the narrative of the Sherifian officers from a perspective of someone who took part in the Arab Revolt. Shawkat hardly met any German soldiers, but he presents them remarkably differently from the Turks, to whom he avoids making personal reference. It is interesting that Shawkat never visited the Istanbul Staff College, instead studying law in Baghdad and Istanbul. When war broke out he was back in Baghdad and entered a school for reserve officers there. After the fall of Baghdad in 1917 he joined the Sherifian army in the Hejaz.[28] As a consequence he adopted the common narrative of the Sherifians.

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Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 30 (1998), 227-250, here 232ff; Majid Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World. The Role of Ideas and Ideals in Politics*, Baltimore/London 1970, 129f; Shikara, *Iraqi Politics*, 112.

27 Nājī Shawkat, *Sīrah wa-dhikrayāt thamānīn ʿāman, 1894-1974*, 2nd. ed., Beirut 1975, 37. There are two Arabic transcriptions given for the leader of the German airforce unit: on p. 37 it is "Ādlūgh", whereas on p. 39 it is "Awlūgh". It is evident, however, that both transcriptions refer to Aulock who is pointed out as the commander of the unit in Hans Werner Neulen, *Feldgrau in Jerusalem: Das Levantekorps des kaiserlichen Deutschland*, München 1991, 154.

28 Shawkat, *Sīrah*, 22 and 29; Mīr Baṣrī, *Iʿām as-siyāsah fi-l-ʿIrāq al-ḥadīth*, London 1987, 141.

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Shawkat points to atrocities committed earlier in the war by Ottoman troops under the command of Raʾūf Bey against the inhabitants of an Iranian village. While these war crimes happened, Shawkat's unit of Arab soldiers was left behind in a fortress. He mentions that there were rumours in his unit that they were placed under Raʾūf's command to be got rid of on a dangerous mission via Iran and Afghanistan to India – because they were Arabs.[29] From the perspective of a man in his eighties, Nājī distinguishes between Ottoman – i.e. supposedly Turkish – troops and Arabs. Thus he anticipates the confrontation between the two during the Arab Revolt in hindsight.

Later in the account, the German officer Aulock becomes sort of a co-conspirator when he warns Shawkat that the Ottoman breakdown is imminent. Aulock tells him to conceal in Baghdad that he was an Arab, not a Turk.[30] So the German officer seems to be on the Arab side, and although the Turks are his allies, he wants to protect his Arab friend against them. On the other hand, Shawkat does not fail to mention that "...the leadership of the Turkish army was potent and courageous..." and that "...its soldiers were brave in spite of their bad feeding and supply." However, he points out that the same army only managed to defeat General Townshend's expeditionary force in the Mesopotamian provinces in 1916 when German generals took the helm.[31]

Thus Nājī Shawkat's account confirms the positive image of a superior military prowess of the German army, when compared to the Ottomans. However, Shawkat wrote in the 1970s, thus his memoirs bear less significance in regard to the present inquiry than the memoirs of Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī and his reflections on the time he spent in Germany as a young officer.

If we subscribe to the principle that memoirs are a contemporary document of their time of composition, rather than a record of the time remembered, Jaʿfar then writes about the state of the Iraqi army around 1930 when he refers to the period of the German-Ottoman partnership. 'German virtues' are meant to serve as an example for a proud national officer corps in Iraq. Even though the text is not dated and was not published during Jaʿfar's lifetime, there are clear hints that the memoirs were written in the early 1930s. Jaʿfar refers to Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934) as president of the German Republic (1925-1934) and mentions speculations about his succession. According to ʿAskarī, the then-retired Chef der Heeresleitung (Chief of the Army Command) Hans von Seeckt (1866-1936) was among the possible candidates. Therefore it seems Jaʿfar wrote his memoirs when Hindenburg was president for some time. ʿAskarī met von Seeckt before The First World War during a stay in Karlsruhe, when the latter was dispatched to his regiment as a staff officer.[32]

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29 Ibid., 30f.
30 Ibid., 40.
31 Ibid., 32f.
32 ʿAskarī, *Mudhakkirāt*, 38.

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ʿAskarī was born in Baghdad in 1885. He graduated from Istanbul's Harbiye Military School in 1904 as second lieutenant. In the course of efforts to improve the state of the Ottoman army, ʿAskarī joined a military mission to Germany and spent 1910 to 1912 in Berlin, spending most of that period in a Grenadier Regiment in Karlsruhe.[33] After his return, Jaʿfar fought in the Balkan War, and then entered the Istanbul Staff College. In 1915 he was sent to Libya to lead Sanussi forces to war. He was captured by the British but released, in order to join Fayṣal's army in the Hejaz. ʿAskarī became commander of its regular forces. In 1921 he took part in the Cairo Conference, which created the Kingdom of Iraq. In the government of the newly founded state, he was several times minister of defence and twice prime minister. He was murdered during Iraq's first military coup in 1936. Among the Sherifian officers he was the most prominent figure next to Nūrī as-Saʿīd (1888-1958) and a close adviser to the king.[34]

Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī's reminiscence of his German experience allows us to draw conclusions about two issues: his views on the enhancement of an officer elite, and on rendering the military as a vehicle of nationalist affection in Iraq.

The military life that Jaʿfar experienced in Karlsruhe was very different from what he was used to in the Ottoman army. When he first arrived at the base he was told his military and social duties and received a printed list with rules for officers. The young Arab was obviously very impressed when he was briefed how to treat the women living in Karlsruhe. He was even advised to pay them visits. ʿAskarī was introduced to the regiment's commander Colonel von Altrock, whom he described as a tall and learned man. He was sent to the 6th company under the command of Captain von Rettberg.[35]

Like Nājī Shawkat, ʿAskarī points out the noble-mindedness of German officers. He admired Colonel von Altrock as a good leader who gave friendly advice and let his juniors profit from his military knowledge. He was a Staff College graduate and an excellent writer of military history. His lectures to the officers were apparently remarkable when he talked about airforce and its role in future warfare.[36] Here Jaʿfar underlines three virtues of the German officer: the comradeship to juniors, intellectual brilliance and professional excellence that is passed on in instruction. These virtues contrast with Shawkat's categorisation of the Ottoman officer as "arrogant".

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33 According to the information provided by ʿAskarī it was probably the "1. Badisches Leib-Grenadier-Regiment Nr. 109" of the "55. Infanterie-Brigade" which belonged to the "28. Division" of the "XIV. Armeekorps (Badisches)".

34 ʿAskarī, *Mudhakkirāt*, 6ff (introduction by Najdah Fatḥī Ṣafwah); Tarbush, *Military in Politics*, 74f; Marr, *Modern History*, 36.

35 ʿAskarī, *Mudhakkirāt*, 35. The Arabic transcription for Altrock is "Altrūk", for Rettberg "Rutbirk". Compare *Rangliste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und des XIII. (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps für 1911. Mit den Dienstalterslisten der Generale und der Stabsoffiziere.* Berlin [1911], 264f.

36 ʿAskarī, *Mudhakkirāt*, 35.

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For ʿAskarī, life in the barracks was like that of a big family. There was strong affection between the officers, and it was important to have meals together in the casino. He describes the casino as the communal centre of the regiment. Numerous rooms served for special occasions such as dancing and for banquets and leisure. There was a library on military and science issues, as well as newspapers. Married officers had the duty to appear for dinner parties on Saturdays, sometimes with families and relatives. The parties attracted officers from other units of the garrison as well.[37] Here, too, ʿAskarī points out the cultivated and well-educated outlook of the German officer and his elevated position in society.

ʿAskarī goes on to point to the sacredness of military service in Germany. In 1920's Iraq the 'nobility' of the tribes regarded plans of conscription with high suspicion. It was attributed to the Ottoman system, which had forced the tribes to pay high taxes to exempt their men from military service. Moreover, the service could be extended to up to 20 years.[38] Therefore ʿAskarī's account of the Germans' attitude to their army and its service reads like an appeal: In Germany military service was regarded as among the most sacred of services – "*min aqdas al-khidmāt fi-Almānīyā*" – especially among the aristocracy. Such regard did not spring only from love and defence of the fatherland, but also from the care and respect that officers received from the people. ʿAskarī recalls the manoeuvres and mentions the gentle people that affectionately loved their army and women standing along the streets offering food to the soldiers during marches. He also emphasises the reception and honourable treatment received during manoeuvres in the villages and castles of the aristocracy in the countryside.[39]

ʿAskarī himself does not explicitly link the German attitude from before the World War with his contemporary Iraqi situation. However, the contrast is significant. In the early 1930s Iraqi tribesmen still found it unacceptable to release their sons from kin service and put them instead under a collective and abstract state command.[40] For the Ottoman Arab officers a staff career had been the means to break through impermeable social hierarchies and to enable them to rise from their modest family backgrounds.[41] Hence the deep impression the 'nobility' of the German officer corps and the nationalist integration of different classes in the ranks of the army had upon ʿAskarī.

He makes further allusions to the role of the monarch in the militarist state. The monarchy's centrality in Iraq is mirrored in his remarks upon the Kaiser's task to serve as a model of leadership. In the framework of the Sherifian system, King Fayṣal's legitimacy came not only from his Hashemite background, but also from his military command of the Arab Revolt. According to ʿAskarī, control

37 Ibid., 36.
38 Tarbush, *Military in Politics*, 87.
39 ʿAskarī, *Mudhakkirāt*, 36ff.
40 Marr, *Modern History*, 63.
41 Batatu, *Social Classes*, 319-322; Hemphill, "Formation", 91.

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and system ("*al-ḍabṭ wa-l-niẓām*") achieved their goals in Germany to such an extent that the slightest incorrectness or insignificant movement against the system stood out in the most ugly way, disturbing the community and provoking immediate consequences. To that end, the control and authority of the Kaiser were enormous. He took part in manoeuvres without exception, mingled with the soldiers, showed himself to the army on every possible occasion and took over command during manoeuvres.[42] ʿAskarī provides a functional picture of the Kaiser: a representative leader where all threads of system and control cross. Personal features of the Kaiser are not of interest. Thus he creates a parallel of function in the monarchic claim to leadership in both Germany and Iraq. Had the memoirs been written after King Fayṣal's death in early 1933, ʿAskarī might have also contrasted the Kaiser's appearance with young King Ghāzī (1912-1939), who showed little responsibility in performing his task.

In general, ʿAskarī's text makes a clear distinction between general perceptions of the German army and his personal remembrances. Personal accounts alternate with assessments of German spirit and efficiency. Even negative experiences, as shown below, do not interfere with his admiration of the German army.

One day during training he was entrusted with the command of a platoon, and he failed to take advantage of a hill to cover the platoon during an advance. After a heavy attack the commander of the 28th Division, Lieutenant General von Krosigk, criticised him with strong words, stating that in Europe one would not move like this. If this were an Arab habit, then one was not in the desert at this moment, the General added. ʿAskarī became very angry because he was shown that he was a stranger in spite of his wearing the Kaiser's uniform and having sworn an oath not to do any damage and harm to the German army for the period of his stay. After the training, however, nobody complained about Krosigk's behaviour or even mentioned it because it was deemed normal. Later on, Krosigk himself cheerfully told ʿAskarī that he was grateful for his bad move, because it made the officers go back to their books and read more on advancing manoeuvres in combat.[43]

ʿAskarī puts much emphasis on the rude tone during army training. However, he does not explicitly contrast it with the comradeship and the very cultivated exchange among the officers. Right after his account on the events during the manoeuvre, he describes a most joyful night together with his comrades in the casino: "The behaviour of the officers during this memorable night was a hint at the nicety of their company and their affection in private life."[44] Even though it seems that ʿAskarī had difficulties in coming to terms with the harsh treatment during professional hours, he avoids contrasting it to the conduct during leisure

42 ʿAskarī, *Mudhakkirāt*, 36.

43 Ibid., 39f. The Arabic transcription for Krosigk is "Krūzig". Compare Rangliste der Königlich Preußischen Armee, 92.

44 ʿAskarī, *Mudhakkirāt*, 41.

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time. This avoidance emphasises that he did not intend to criticise, but rather glorify, his experiences to present an example of both professionalism and nobility. Thus, the clear distinction between general and personal reflections adds a certain didactic tone to his writing, which relates them to current issues reflected in the memories.

## *Conclusion*

In his memoirs, Jaʿfar al-ʿAskarī remembers the Germany of the First World War to set an example for his colleagues. This was possible because – though laden with contemporary issues – Germanophilia was a structural heritage in Iraq from the First World War and the Istanbul-trained officer corps. The deeply rooted Ottoman heritage of the Iraqi officer corps facilitated leading officers' association with pro-German circles, which took place during the political turmoil of the late 1930s.

Germanophilia was a formative element of elite awareness. It rested upon shared and exclusive experiences. Like the Arab Revolt, the German experience thus became one of the components of elite awareness and added to the habitus of the military and political elite. Thus it was projected onto Arab nationalism and the idea of a nationalist society in an Arab state. Therefore the outlook of the state had to be, among other things, militarist. Conscription was consequently regarded as a matter of survival for the nation. In the eyes of a Sherifian officer, Germany was the ideal exemplar.

In the 1930s this type of militarism – rather than the often-assumed pro-fascist tendencies of the elite and the public – was behind the institution of paramilitary youth-organisations. The pro-German prerogatives of the Iraqi elite, however, often provided researchers with the means to re-interpret Germanophilia as National Socialist sympathies. Furthermore, issues such as the enhancement of education and military conscription were not a mere invention of inter-war 'Germanophiles,' but rooted in the modernising disputes of the late Ottoman Empire. Scholarly analysis of the socio-political circumstances of 1930s' Iraq often tended to exaggerate the influence of the German model, as it generally overestimated state power and the impact of 'Westernisation'. The tendencies outlined in this study refer to the ideas of a core only, consisting of a relatively small group of elite politicians, administrators and an urban public of limited development. The impact on society as a whole is a different question, one that demands "... distinguishing intention from results."[45]

Previous research on Iraq has often failed to take this into account, as it has not distinguished between traditional 'Germanophilia' and pragmatic attitudes expressed in local adages such as 'my enemy's enemy is my friend'. The latter

45 Fortna, "Education and Autobiography", 5.

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were generally rampant among peoples under colonial rule during the inter-war period. During the late 1930s, and especially during the Second World War, both strains coincided to create a pro-German attitude in the Iraqi political sphere.

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# C:
# Ideological Reasoning of War Participation, and the Creation of Myths, Legends and Heroic Figures

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# The Role of Islam in German Propaganda in the Arab East during the First World War: Aims, Means, Results and Local Reactions

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Shortly after the outbreak of the First World War, the war was given an "Islamic" character when the Ottoman Sultan proclaimed a Holy War (*jihād*) against the Christian (Entente) Powers: France, England and Russia. For the first time in Islamic history three versions of *jihād* co-existed simultaneously. An Ottoman *jihād* supported Germany and her Christian allies; an Arab "counter *jihād*" announced by Ḥussayn bin ʿAlī, the Sharīf of Mecca (1854-1931), fought on the side of the British; a "Shiite" *jihād* incited by the Germans and announced by the leading *mujtahids* in Najaf and Karbalāʾ was launched against the British. In Morocco, moreover, a *fatwah* was issued by the *ʿulamāʾ* for the creation of an Islamic Caliphate represented by Sultan Yūsuf. This *fatwah* claimed legitimacy based on Sultan Yūsuf's ancestors, intended to compete with the Ottoman Sultan.[1]

All these issues are directly related to the topic of this paper. Ottoman participation in the war with Germany, the proclamation of the *jihād* against her enemies and the Islamic policy of Germany – based on exploiting the *jihād* for its own interests – created the understanding that the Ottoman *jihād*[2] and the Shiite *jihād* were both made in Germany, whereas the Arabic *jihād* was made by Britain.

This paper investigates the methods by which Germany used Islam, the *jihād* and the concept of Pan-Islamism for its own intrigues. The goal of these campaigns was to agitate the Arab and Muslim world against Germany's enemies – the kinds of activities and operations for which German propagandists became famous will be summarised. Finally, the paper will show how the Arabs in the

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1 Concerning the calling of Muslims for *jihād* by Sharīf Ḥussayn, refer to: Zayn Nūr-ad-Dīn Zayn, "Asbāb al-thawrah al-ʿarabiyyah al-kubrah", *Dirāsāt fi-l-thawarah al-ʿarabiyyah al-kubrah*, ʿAmmān n.d., 38, and compare with: William L. Cleveland, "The Role of Islam as Political Ideology in the First World War", in: ed. Edward Ingram, *National and International Politics in the Middle East. Essays in Honour of Elie Kedourie*, London 1986, 86. With respect to the *fatwahs* issued by the religious *mujtahids* in Najaf, refer to Martin Hartmann, "Islampolitik", *Koloniale Rundschau* 11-12 (1914), 596. With respect to the *fatwah* of the Moroccan *ʿulamāʾ*, refer to: Edmund Burke, "Moroccan Resistance, Pan-Islam and German War Strategy, 1914-1918", *Francia* (München) 3 (1975), 456-457. With respect to the problematic concerning the appointment of either the Moroccan Sultan or the Sharīf of Mecca as Caliph for the Muslims, refer to: Wajīh Kawtharānī, "al-Abʿād al-jio-sīyāsiyyah li-taqsīm al-ʿālam al-islāmī", *Risālat al-Jihād* (Malta) 101 (1991), 96-105.

2 Among the principal propagandists for the thesis of "Holy War made in Germany" is the Dutch orientalist Snouck Hurgronje. Refer to his famous article: Snouck C. Hurgronje, *Versprijde Geschriften*, Vol. 3: *The Holy War Made in Germany*, 1915.

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Near East received and reacted to this propaganda, and examine why German propaganda was unable to realise its goals. According to our thesis this happened by two reasons:

First, the propaganda was based on the idea of Pan-Islam, and the idea that Muslims must obey the Sultan-Caliph, in a time when the Arabs' national feelings had surpassed this kind of religious unity and political loyalty. Secondly, Britain was able to counter all of Germany's plans and propaganda and sideline the German-Ottoman alliance through a series of agreements or promises with the Arabs.

## *1. Islam in the German strategic war*

Beginning with Emperor William II's reign in 1888, German policy focused on preserving the Ottoman Empire and keeping the status quo in the Near East – effectively preventing any country from solving the Eastern Question individually. As such, Germany opposed two propositions in 1895 and 1912, one British and the other international, for the partition of the Ottoman Empire.[3] Germany based its policy on economic considerations. A special German committee concluded 1894 that:

> "The acquisitive possibilities within Asia Minor for capital, industry and German commerce are still open through railway projects, utilisation of underground wealth and agricultural growth. The best solution for the continuity of a policy of peaceful German involvement cannot be the solution of the Eastern Question, but the preservation of the existing status quo."[4]

The Orientalist Max von Oppenheim was one of the prominent German figures calling attention to the economic importance of the Ottoman Empire for Germany, and to the possibility of using Pan-Islamism, *jihād* and the role of the Ottoman ruler as Sultan-Caliph for the benefit of Germany.[5] Oppenheim was able to gain the German emperor's trust as an expert in conditions of the Islamic World, acquiring the titles "The Holy Father of Islamic *jihād*", and "Lawrence of

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3 Concerning Germany's policy of preserving the Ottoman Empire, refer to ʿAbd-al-Raʾūf Sinnū, "Almāniyah wa sīyāsat al-indifāʿ naḥwa al-sharq. Al-ʿAlāqāt al-almāniyyah al-ʿuthmāniyyah min 1871 ilā 1918", *Dirāsāt Islāmiyyah* (Beirut), 3 (1989/1990), 273-281.

4 Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts in Bonn (=PAAA)/Türkei, 189, Sicherstellung der deutschen Interessen für den Fall der Lösung der Dardanellenfrage, Referent L. R. Rauffauf, II 17207, Berlin, July 19, 1894, 8-12.

5 With respect to German economic penetration, refer to: Oppenheim's report: Max Freiherr von Oppenheim, Die Nachrichtensaal-Organisation und die wirtschaftliche Propaganda in der Türkei, ihre Übernahme durch den Deutschen Überseedienst, streng vertraulich, Berlin 1917. With respect to Oppenheim's policy in exploiting Pan-Islamism and the role of the Ottoman ruler as sultan-caliph in the German imperial plans before the war, refer to his reports in: PAAA: Orientalia Generalia 9, No. 1, Berichte Oppenheim, 12 vols. 1896-1909.

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the Emperor". British and French circles described him as "The spy of the German *Kaiser*".[6]

Oppenheim was also the inspiration behind the Emperor William II's famous 1898 speech in Damascus, in which he expressed his friendship towards Muslims and their Sultan-Caliph ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd II (1876-1909).[7] As a result of this speech, the feeling predominated in the Arab countries that it was possible for the German Emperor and his people to convert to Islam and consequently strengthen Islamic politics toward the imperial countries threatening Muslims.[8] In 1905, a photo of a crescent with the head of the German Emperor in the centre was distributed in Beirut, indicating the place Germany aimed to occupy within the Islamic world – imposing its custody on it.[9]

When the war broke out, Oppenheim realised the need to establishing an organisation of German propaganda for Arabs and Muslims. He presented two memoranda to the German Prime Minister Bethmann Hollweg (1909-1917) on 18 August 1914 and another at the beginning of October discussing the importance of inciting the Muslims to revolt in regions occupied by Germany's enemies. According to these memoranda, the first step Germany should take was to enrage the Islamic world against her enemies under the patronage of the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph – a task should be accomplished by a specific propaganda organisation.[10]

Moreover, Oppenheim urged that the Ottoman Empire, Persia and Afghanistan be gathered into one alliance that would see Afghanistan attack India and force Britain's evacuation. Persia, Oppenheim argued, would be the bridge over which Ottoman forces could cross into Afghanistan – "and that is because" Oppenheim concluded, "the land route across these countries is the only safe communication with India, to facilitate Afghanistan's fighting Britain in India".[11] Moreover, Oppenheim predicted that Muslims under Russian rule would revolt as soon as the Russian fleet was defeated in the Black Sea. He also argued it

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6 With respect to these expressions, refer to: Gottfried Hagen, *Die Türkei im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Frankfurt a. M. 1990, 30. Also refer to: Roger Faligot and Remi Kauffer, *Le croissant et la croix gammée. Les secret de l'alliance entre l'Islam et le nazism d'Hitler à nos jour*, Paris 1990, 19. Also refer to: ʿAbd-al-Raʾūf Sinnū, "al-Maṣāliḥ al-almāniyyah fi Lubnān 1831-1918", *Feuilles Universitaires* (Beirut) 2 (1993), 232-233.

7 Hagen, *Die Türkei im Ersten Weltkrieg*; Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht. Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland 1914/1918*, 4th ed., Düsseldorf 1971, 142.

8 With respect to the idea of the German Emperor and the German people becoming Muslims, refer to my article: ʿAbd-al-Raʾūf Sinnū, "al-Daʿwa ilā al-Islām wa-l-ʿalāqāt al-dawliyyah: Qirāʾa fi-l-waʿī al-sīyāsī fi maṭlaʿ al-qarn al-ʿishrīn", *al-Ijtihād* (Beirut), 45/46 (2000), 241-274; summerized German version, see: *Beiruter Blätter* 8-9 (200-2001), 64-72.

9 PAAA/Orientalia Generalia, Vol. 3, Oppenheim to Bülow, No. 325, A 2970, Cairo, Feb. 14, 1907, Supl. 1 Photography.

10 PAAA/Der Weltkrieg (WK), No. 11, R 20936, Akten betreffend den Krieg 1914, Unternehmungen und Aufwiegelungen gegen unsre Feinde. Allgemeines, Vol. 1, Oppenheim an Bethman Hollweg, A17811, No. 2, Berlin, 18.8.1914.

11 PAAA/WK, No. 11, R 20937, Vol. 2, Denkschrift Oppenheim, 93-94.

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would be easy to provoke Moroccan Muslims against France because of its repressive policies there.

Oppenheim specified the central aim of his country in war as using Islam as a weapon to serve German interests. He said, "Islam is going to be our most important weapon in the obligatory struggle which we have to face against England, because we have to undertake this with the knife". He added that Germany could pave the way for a general Islamic revolution. The German Emperor, he said, "... has realised at first glance the importance of this moment through which it is possible to benefit from the Islamic people, after he has proven his appreciation for the Muslims and has shown his love and help for the followers of this religion". He continued, "living for twenty years in the East makes me believe that His Majesty the Emperor can win deep-hearted appreciation and respect of the entire Islamic World".[12]

The importance of the Ottoman Empire to German strategy is shown through the German Emperor's conversations and his interactions with officials in charge of those affairs. When the German Emperor was asked between 1904 and 1914 about his predictions of what could happen, he referred to the severe competition with Britain, and argued that Germany should not start a war before signing an alliance with the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the British would have to be made to understand that war with Germany meant the loss of India.[13]

Helmuth von Moltke, the Generaloberst (Commander in Chief) of the German Army (1906-1916), realised the importance of the Ottoman Empire as a state nurturing Pan-Islamism. He wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 2 August 1914 saying:

> "Incidents of rejection in India and Egypt, as well as in the Caucasus are of great importance. Through making a treaty with the Ottoman Empire as an ally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now capable of making these ideas come true and instigating the fanatic Islamic States."[14]

The discussion of the German leadership reflected a strategic aim – that of exploiting the Ottoman Empire and Islam to fight the Entente.[15]

The German plans were directed to fight the British in Egypt. Syria and Palestine played here a strategic role in the preparations to attack the Suez Canal. Between the declaration of war in August 1914, and the Ottoman Empire's joining

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12 PAAA/WK, No. 11, R 2093, Vol. 2, Denkschrift Oppenheim, 125.

13 Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, 139; Wilhelm von Kampen, *Studien zur deutschen Türkenpolitik in der Zeit Wilhelms II.*, Kiel 1968, 66.

14 Ibid., 146-148; with respect to the importance of Persia, Afghanistan and Pan-Islamism refer to: Ulrich Gehrke, *Persien in der deutschen Orientpolitik während des Ersten Weltkrieges*, vol. 1, 1, Stuttgart n.d., 54-56; Hagen, *Die Türkei im ersten Weltkrieg*, 37f; Faligot/Kauffer, *Le croissant et la croix gammée*, 29-30; George Lenceowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, Ithaca 1952, 39; Ulrich Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire 1914-1918*, Princeton 1968, 117.

15 Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, 140-141.

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the war that November, Germany readied for the Ottoman attack of the Suez Canal by sending ammunition and weapons to Ghazza and Jaffa on German ships, which docked in Beirut.[16] Iraq was also extremely important to Germany as an area of competition with the British, because of its geo-political location on the Arab Gulf. Iraq stood between Britain and her strategic communication with India, and Germany had wide investment in Mesopotamia.[17] German propaganda was also activated to acquire the sympathy of the Zionist movement, again for the advantage of the Central Powers.[18]

Germany's position of defending the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and Entente plans to partition the Empire, led the government of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in Istanbul to enter the war on Germany's side. The Unionists believed that Germany's victory would protect the Ottoman Empire from the danger of partition and enable it to regain international importance and the parts of the country it had lost,[19] most notably Egypt.[20] In this context, the Speaker of the Ottoman Parliament said, "We, along with the Germans, will in the future defend the Eastern and Western culture – not only in battle, but also in the economic domain. With proper organisation of the administration we can excel with their help and be the victorious allies."[21]

## 2. *German propaganda: active techniques in the Ottoman Empire and Arab provinces*

German Prime Minister Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg said, on 31 August 1914 that "... Germany should not only fight the enemy face-to-face, but she should also fight (his) false propaganda about Germany and the false impression which was given about her". He called for initiating propaganda outside the

16 Edwin Pears, "Turkey, Germany and the War", *The Contemporary Review* 107 (1915), 286-287.

17 L. N. Kotlof, *Thawrat al-ʿishrīn al-waṭaniyyah al-taḥaruriyyah fī-l-ʿIrāq*, translated by ʿAbd-al-Waḥīd Karam, Beirut/Baghdad 1975, 61-64.

18 With respect to the German/Zionist relations, refer to Klaus Polkehn, "Zionism and Kaiser Wilhelm", *Journal of Palestine Studies* IV, 2 (1975), 84, 85, 87; David Yisraeli, "Germany and Zionism", in: ed. Jehuda L. Wallah, *Germany and the Middle East 1835-1939* (Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte, Beiheft I), Tel-Aviv 1975, 144; Isaiah Friedmann, *Germany, Turkey and Zionism 1897-1918*, Oxford 1977, 192, 219- 220 and 228; with respect to the German/Palestinian relation from starting the Protestant Bishopric of Jerusalem until the end of the Second World War 1841-1945, ʿAlī Muhāfiza, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-almāniyyah al-filasṭiniyyah min inshāʾ mutraniyyat al-Quds al-protestantiyyah wa ḥattā al-ḥarb al-ʿālamiyyah al-thānīyah 1841-945*, Beirut 1981, 160-179.

19 David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace. Creating the Modern Middle East 1914-1922*, London 1989, 66.

20 Laṭīfa Muḥammad Sālim, *Miṣr fī-l-ḥarb al-ʿālamiyyah al-ūlā*, Cairo 1984, 15.

21 Quoted from: Gottfried Galli, *Der heilige Krieg des Islams und seine Bedeutung im Weltkriege unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Interessen Deutschlands*, Freiburg 1915, 17.

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country and printing and distributing brochures.[22] One result was the foundation of the *News Agency for the Orient* (*Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient*) 1915 in Berlin. This agency dedicated its activities to the supervision of German propaganda in the Eastern and Islamic countries. It was supervised by Oppenheim and controlled by the German Foreign Ministry. The military side of this process was represented by the Chief of the Political Office of the German General Staff Rodolf Nadolny (1873-1953).[23] To perform this project, Oppenheim got the help of a group of Orientalists and German translators.

The task of such an institution was to counter enemy propaganda while at the same time launching propaganda to provoke rebellions against the Entente throughout the Islamic world, especially in India, Egypt, Africa and Caucasus.[24] This was accomplished by sending German representatives to those regions, as well as to neutral states, in order to get information with regard to economy, politics and military. The German representatives had also to convince the people of these regions of Germany's support for Islam and her point of view in the war.[25]

This agency was also responsible for editing the news coming from Berlin and translating it into Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, Persian, Hindu, Urdu, Sawahili and the languages of the Crimean Muslims. In addition, by the year 1917, the agency was responsible for posting advertisements and teaching the German language at its centres.[26] Oppenheim also included Sufi fraternities and the pilgrimage to Mecca in his plans. The Germans advertised their goals by distributing brochures to the pilgrims who travelled from Damascus via the Haifa-Maʿān-Medīna Railway, and by sending Indian spies among the pilgrims to disseminate propaganda among them.[27]

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22 Irmgard Farah, *Die deutsche Pressepolitik*, Beirut 1993, 235-236.

23 With respect to the role and departments of this agency, refer to: Peter Heine, "Al-Ğihād. Eine deutsche Propaganda-Zeitung im 1. Weltkrieg", *Die Welt des Islams*, N.S. 20 (1980), 197-199. Also refer to: Weltkrieg, in: PAAA/Deutschland 126g adh 1, R 1535, Vol. 26, Tätigkeit der Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient 1914-1918, 1-4.

24 Concerning this topic, refer to the files of the German political archive related to the First World War and how to instigate the Muslims against the Entente Powers: Der Weltkrieg No. 11 R 20936f: Unternehmungen und Aufwiegelungen gegen unsere Feinde; Faligot/Kauffer, *Le Croissant et la croix gammée*, 36; Heine, "Al-Ğihād", 197. Also refer to: PAAA/WK No. 11g, R21128, Vol. 6, A 5037, Hardegg to Wangenheim, Damascus, Dec. 21.

25 Heine, "Al-Ğihād", 197. See Ill. 1.

26 Compare with Max Freiherr von Oppenheim, Die Nachrichtensaal-Organisation und die wirtschaftliche Propaganda in der Türkei, ihre Übernahme durch den Deutschen Überseedienst, streng vertraulich, Berlin 1917.

27 Concerning the details about the direct German policy and works of publicity refer to: PAAA/Deutschland 126g, adh1, Tätigkeit der Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient, 5-6; PAAA Akten betr. den Krieg 1914. Unternehmungen und Aufwiegelungen gegen unser Feinde. Allgemeines. From July 1914 to Nov. 30, 1914, Vol. 1, Der Weltkrieg R 20936, A 17810, No. 11, Oppenheim to Bethmann Hollweg, No. 1, Berlin, Aug. 18, 1914; PAAA/WK, No. 11g, R 20936, Unternehmungen und Aufwiegelungen gegen unsere Feinde. Allgemeines,

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The News Agency for the Orient also supported Islamic journals founded in Berlin. One of these was *Die Islamische Welt*; other Arabic journals in the Near East that received German support were: *al-ʿAhd*, *al-Raʾy al-ʿāmm*, *al-Sharq*, *al-Ittiḥad al-ʿuthmānī*, *Journal de Beyrouth*, the weekly Beirut magazine *Abābīl*, and *al-Muhājir* magazine published in Damascus. The German consul cultivated good relations with Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, the owner of the *al-Muqtabas* newspaper, and worked on transferring the editing of *al-Mufīd* newspaper – belonging to ʿAbd-al-Ghanī al-ʿUrayysī – from Beirut to Damascus, because of its great influence on public opinion. [28]

The agency strategically concentrated upon Asia Minor, Syria and Iraq, accessed Morocco via German diplomatic channels in Madrid and Barcelona,[29] and Egypt, Beirut and Tripoli (Libya). In April 1915 Oppenheim, upon a request from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited Syria for several months to discuss the role of propaganda with the German Embassy in Istanbul. He was also responsible for creating a secure line of communication between Syria and Europe via Istanbul, and between Syria, Egypt, Sudan and African countries under the sway of the enemy, as well as between Syria, Persia, Afghanistan and India.[30]

By 1916, Oppenheim set up 70 centres for the dissemination of news and an office of journalism in the Ottoman Empire.[31] These centres were established in high-density areas in the cities, near the large marketplaces.[32] The number of prints of each piece distributed ranged between 500 and 3000. In 1916 the highest number per propaganda item reached 10.000 in Turkish language and 8.000 Arabic.[33]

In Germany itself, the agency's most important act was establishing a Prisoner of War camp in the area of Wünsdorf (*Halbmondlager*), which included a mosque with a 23-metre-high wooden minaret.[34] In the Weinberglager, in the region of Zossen near the city of Potsdam, another PoW camp was established for the same

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No. 11, Vol. 1, Oppenheim to Bethmann Hollweg, No. 1, A 17811, No. 2, Berlin, Aug. 18, 1914; PAAA/WK, No. 11g, R 21124, E. Schäffer to Mathieu, A 22364, Sept. 1914; PAAA/WK, No. 11g, R 21126, Vol. 4, Wangenheim to Bethman Hollweg, A 33830, No. 291, Pera Nov. 30, 1914. Farah, *Die deutsche Pressepolitik*, 239.

28 PAAA/WK No. 11g, R 21126, Vol. A 35153, No. 138, Löytved Hardegg to Bethmann Hollweg, Haifa, Nov. 26, 1914.

29 Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, 152-153; Walter B. Harris, *France, Spain and the Rif*, London 1927, 59-60.

30 PAAA/WK No. 11g, R 21130, Vol. 8., A 19008, Auswärtiges Amt to the Consulates at Beirut and Jerusalem, No. 414, Berlin, March 14, 1915. Under the title: Aufgaben der Mission des Kaiserlichen Minister-Residenten Freiherrn von Oppenheim, Berlin, March 14, 1915.

31 See Ill. 2.

32 Irmgard Jacobsen, "German attempts to influence the intellectual life in the Ottoman Empire during World War I", *Revue d'Histoire Maghrebine* 59-60 (1990), 95-100, here 98.

33 F.J. Dupre, "The Holy War that Failed", *Muslim World* 8 (1918), 172.

34 See Ill. 3.

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purpose. In 1916, the two military camps counted 15,000 Muslim captives.[35] The aim of opening these two centres was to make "use of the Muslim and Indian captives for (German) political purposes".[36] This was done by spreading the propaganda of Germany's supportive position toward the Muslims, giving the Muslim captives the impression that they were not captives but "guests", and consequently convincing them to enrol in the Ottoman Army against the Entente.[37] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote to the German Kaiser in this regard:

> "For the expressing of the announced amiable relationships between Germany and the Islamic people, which got the custody of your majesty, and for convincing the Muslim fighters on the side of the enemy of German friendship, the Muslim captives (those who fall into the hands of the German army) are going to be exceptionally kindly treated. They are going to have (in the camps) all kind of facilities under the supervision of selected officers and personell."[38]

In order to make the propaganda work among the Muslim captives, *Al-Ǧihād* magazine was established.

## *3. Components of the German propaganda*

German propaganda aimed to agitate both the Islamic and the Arabic world against the Entente. This was done through the German consuls' communication with local inhabitants.[39] Community and military leaders, religious figures, intellectuals, journalists and city representatives were assigned to spread propaganda, distribute booklets and show films about the war.[40] In addition to this, Arab and Muslim exiles in Germany gave propaganda lectures to both Germans and Muslim prisoners in war camps in Berlin. Special attention was given on Muslim feasts.[41] German propaganda emphasised two issues: strengthening the

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35 Gerhard Höpp, "Die Wünsdorfer Moschee: Eine Episode islamischen Lebens in Deutschland, 1915-1930", *Die Welt des Islams* 36, 2 (1996), 204-208.

36 Cited in Gerhard Höpp, *Arabische und islamische Periodika in Berlin und Brandenburg*, Berlin 1994, 9.

37 Herbert Müller, *Islam, Ǧihad ("Heiliger Krieg") und Deutsches Reich. Ein Nachspiel zur wilhelminischen Weltpolitik im Maghreb 1914 –1918*, Frankfurt a.M. ect. 1991, 21; Werner Ende and Peter Heine, "al-Waṭanīyyūn wa nashātuhum al-sīyāsī wa-l-ṣaḥāfī fī Almānīyah ḥattā al-ḥarb al-ʿālamiyyah al-ūlā", *al-Majalla al-tārikhiyyah al-miṣriyyah* 27 (1981), 211.

38 Quoted from Iskander Giljazov, "Die Muslime Russlands in Deutschland während der Weltkriege als Subjekte und Objekte der Grossmachtpolitik", in: eds. Gerhard Höpp and Brigitte Reinwald, *Fremdeinsätze. Afrikaner und Asiaten in europäischen Kriegen, 1914-1945*, Berlin 2000, 144.

39 For more details about the German consul's making propaganda for his country during conversations with locals in Damascus restaurants, refer to Irmgard Jacobsen, "German Attempts to Influence the Intellectual Life in the Ottoman Empire During World War I", 99.

40 PAAA/WK No. 11g, R 21128, Vol. 6, A 5037, Hardegg to Wangenheim, Damascus, Dec. 21, 1914.

41 In 1915, a festival celebrating the Muslim feast of *Aḍḥa* took place in Berlin in the presence of high-ranking German civil and military personalities. German newspapers

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relationships of the Muslims with the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph, and obtaining the appreciation of the Muslims and their support for German policy and the Central Powers.

The propaganda also showed that Emperor William II was a true friend of the Muslims, who appreciates their historical heroes. This propaganda did not try to deny the rumours about the Emperor's secret conversion to Islam and the expected change of his people's religion to Islam in the near future. Part of this Islamic policy included the emperor offering a chandelier to the tomb of Sultan Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn (1137-1193) in Damascus, on the occasion of the Ottoman attack on Suez.[42]

Examining the content of the propaganda brochures and booklets clearly shows how the Germans used Muslims religious feeling, ambition and expectation of national liberation and the end of colonialism in its own struggle with the Entente. One of the brochures distributed by German propagandists to Muslims said: "Germany, Austria–Hungary and Bulgaria now support you and assist you against your enemies, so you should help them all. Germany has always offered you a clear and white hand against any attack on you."[43]

Other German propaganda brochures attacked the Entente, accusing them of partitioning, robbing and contaminating the sacred possessions of the Islamic world, and blaming them for the submission of millions of Muslims to the colonial powers. One of the propaganda brochures ends saying: "These are your enemies and these are their acts and these are their thoughts about you, about your religion, your holy book and your Kaaba". The German propaganda gave the Muslims direct instructions on what they were supposed to do against France, saying: "Kill all the French! Kill them all! All of them! (...) Slaughter the French! Slaughter them all! All!"[44]

On the other hand, the allies of the Muslims, their supporters and liberators, are the Germans. A brochure read:

> "God blessed the German nation, the supporter of humanity, the Islamic world and the friend of our great [God]"; God has appreciated the German nation because of its sincerity to humanity, to the Islamic World, its friendship to your great Caliph ... They [the Germans] all agreed to save you form the hands of God's enemies – the Russians

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wrote on their front pages that "all the German nation is celebrating *Aḍḥa* with the Ottomans and may the Sultan live long". Quoted from Farah, *Die deutsche Pressepolitik*, 249.

42 For example: The visit of the Emperor to the tomb of Sultan Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn in Damascus in October 1898 where he said: "Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn was the great sign of his time, due to his boldness, justice and noble nature". Refer to ʿAbd-al-Raʾūf Sinnū, "Riḥlat imbrāṭūr Almānīyah ilā al-sharq fī mirʾāt al-ṣaḥāfah al-ʿarabiyyah", *Tārīkh al-ʿArab wa-l-ʿālam* (Beirut), 180 (1999), 75-76. Also refer to: PAAA/Türkei 177/R 14032, Vol. 11, Löytved to Wangenheim, A2046, Damascus, Dec. 22, 1914.

43 The title of the brochure is, "Germany and the Caliphate", in: Hagen, *Die Türkei im ersten Weltkrieg*, 218-219.

44 Booklet entiteled „The Sicilian Century" refers to: PAAA/WK No. 11g, R21123, Vol. 1, A 20625, Seminar for Oriental Languages to Secretary of State, Sept. 5, 1914.

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> [al-Moskov], the British and the French – and *al-Jihād* was announced by the will of Commander of the Faithful [*amīr al-mu'minīn*], And this is how *al-Jihād* has become a must for every Muslim, male and female, old or young."[45]

The brochure ends with a warning against listening to the lies and deceit of the enemies.[46]

The German propaganda was not only limited to those brochures. The political archive in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin (previously in Bonn) includes booklets that contain colour cartoons in both Arabic and Ottoman Turkish from the summer of 1917. These booklets were sent to Arabic and Islamic figures of importance. One booklet, entitled *Injustice and Justice*,[47] emphasises German superiority over its enemies in demography, economics, infrastructure and administrative planning.[48] The booklet also shows the military supremacy of the Central Powers, demonstrating their armies' control over the area extending from the North Sea to Asia Minor, and the number of Entente PoWs in the hands of the Central Powers. The cartoons point to the beginning of the Entente's commercial involvement in India, Egypt, North Africa and the Caucasus, and argues that the Entente, with a few citizen colonisers, enslaved the people of those countries, exploited them, absorbed their national wealth and impoverished them.[49]

## *4. Arab attitudes to German propaganda*

Trying to realise its war aims, Germany approached Sharīf Ḥussayn of Mecca and attempted to convince him to join the Central Powers against Britain, asking him to propagandise for Germany in the Islamic world through his high position and prestige. In May 1915, a meeting took place in Istanbul between Oppenheim and Prince Fayṣal (1885-1933), Sharīf Ḥussayn's son. The prince emphasised his father's loyalty to the Ottomans and his readiness to serve them against the Entente. The meeting centred on a plan to start a Pan-Islamic movement from India to Egypt under the motto of the sacred *jihād*, which would have entailed sending the Sharīf's sons as leaders of Ḥijāzi groups to participate in another Ottoman attack on the Suez Canal.[50] This German policy toward the Sharīf failed when Ḥussayn changed his alliance to the British and waged "The Great Arab Revolution" against the Ottoman Empire.

Among the prominent Arab leaders who co-operated with Germany were Shakīb Arslān, ʿAbd-al ʿAzīz Jāwīsh, Muḥammad Farīd, Muḥammad Fahmī, ʿAbd-al-

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45 Quoted from Hagen, *Die Türkei im ersten Weltkrieg*, 218-219.
46 Ibid.
47 See Ill. 4.
48 See Ill. 5.
49 See Ill. 6a und 6b.
50 PAAA/WK, No. 11g, R21133, Vol. 11, A 17149, Wangenheim to Bethmann Hollweg, No. 310, Pera, May 22, 1915; Suppl. 1&2 to report No. 310, Pera, May 15, 1915.

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Malik Ḥamza, ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān ʿAzzām and Manṣūr Rifʿat. The Khedive ʿAbbās Ḥilmī also attempted to get German and Ottoman support to regain his position in Egypt. In Iraq, ʿAzīz ʿAlī al-Miṣrī, one of the founders of al-ʿAhd Society appeared friendly toward Germany, without establishing a direct relationship. Many Arab nationalist and Islamic leaders co-operated with Germany, gaining advantages from the international conflict for their causes under the motto of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend".

Oppenheim described Shakīb Arslān (1869-1946) as serious, independent and educated, with influence not only over the Druze, but over all of Syria.[51] On his part, Arslān praised Germany as above any colonial ambitions. He argued that, with regard to the Islamic World, Germany did not enslave people, nor plunder their wealth, and did not take advantage of the feelings of the Muslims and the Arabs in seeking their independence, the way Britain acted, especially with the Sharīf of Mecca. Arslān thought that Sharīf Ḥussayn was leading the Muslims toward division, and that the Entente was trying to destroy them.[52]

Fearing the Entente plans for Islam and of falling along with the Ottoman Empire, Arslān argued that Islam should be friendly toward Germany, which, he believed, confronted those who sought to threaten Islam and the Caliphate. In an article entitled *Islam and the German Reich,* he said: "It is clear that Islam should be friendly with the enemy [of the enemy] who plans evil against Islam. And who is currently a stronger enemy of Britain and France on land and sea than Germany?" Thus Arslān called for strengthening the alliance between Germany and Islam, urging that Muslims should offer Germany their help to get their support. He ended his article saying:

> "As long as the British and the French exercise oppression against the Islamic countries ... as long as the Ottomans and the Germans are united against every enemy who wants to attack them ... (the French and the British) will not succeed in extinguishing the fire of love in the breasts of both the Muslims and the Germans."[53]

Arslān argued that common denominators brought Germany and the Muslims together, and that Germany was faithful to both Muslims and the Ottoman Empire. This was proven as Germany did not colonise their regions, did not enslave other people like other colonial countries and was Britain's enemy.[54]

Like Arslān, two groups of Egyptians resided in Germany. The first group included Jāwīsh, Farīd, Fahmī, Ḥamza, ʿAzzām and Rifʿat. The other was led by the deposed Khedive of Egypt, ʿAbbās Ḥilmī, and worked to take advantage of the international struggle for its own purposes.

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51 PAAA/Türkei, R 14037, Der Libanon und Mesopotamien, Vol. 16, Oppenheim to ?, A 41781, Berlin, Dec. 12, 1917.

52 Muḥammad Shayyā, "Al-Amīr Shakīb Arslān wa ishkālīyat al-ʿalāqa bi-l-gharb", in: *Al-Amīr Shakīb Arslān wa taḥadiyāt ʿaṣr an-nahḍah 1869–1946,* Lebanon 1989, 11.

53 Shekib Arslan, "Der Islam und das Deutsche Reich", *Die Islamische Welt* 7 (1917), 416-417.

54 Ibid.

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ʿAbd-al-ʿAzīz Jāwīsh (1876-1929) was more of a radical Islamist against colonialism, than an Egyptian nationalist. He saw in Britain the old enemy who caused disasters to strike Egypt and the Islamic world. He believed in Egypt's right to freedom, independence and a constitution, as well as in the unity of the Islamic world, as represented by the Ottoman Empire.[55] He also believed in resisting the Entente's attempt to split this empire. Jāwīsh represented an Egyptian group who worked with the Ottomans via the Grand vizier Muḥammad Saʿīd Ḥalīm, under the motto of "Egypt is for the Muslims".[56] This slogan differed drastically from that raised by the 'National Party' of Muḥammad Farīd: "Egypt is for the Egyptians".

When the war broke out, Jāwīsh travelled to Germany and established with Muḥammad Farīd The Islamic Union, which included the Society of Miṣr al-Fatat and Muslims residing in Europe. Beginning in November 1916, he produced the monthly magazine *Die Islamische Welt* (The Islamic World) with the participation of ʿAbd-al-Malik Ḥamza, written in German and supported by German financing. He also participated in the magazine *Al-Ǧihād,* which, designed for Muslim PoWs in Germany, was written in their languages. He also wrote for German magazines.[57] In Berlin, he published a book entitled: *Egypt and the War.* In another article, entitled 'Islam and Germany' published in Stuttgart's *Deutsche Revue* magazine in September 1915, he said: "We cannot choose people other than the Germans because their friends are our friends and their enemies are the enemies of the Muslims." He added, "The Germans and the Muslims complement each other".[58] Jāwīsh believed that Islam "found (...) in Germany the right and real friend, and with her help it is possible to have high capacities, because the spirit of discipline which Germany has reached is not more than what our religion (Islam) requires".[59]

At the same time, other national and Islamic Arab leaders delivered speeches and reports against the British from Geneva, Berlin and Vienna. The attitude of the (Egyptian) National Party toward the war was the same as the earlier position of its leader Muṣṭafā Kāmil (1874-1908). Kāmil had taken advantage of the international conflict between the imperial countries on the Eastern Question to gain

55 Refer to Anwar al-Jundī, *ʿAbd-al-ʿAzīz Jāwīsh. Min rūwwād at-tarbiyah wa-l-ṣaḥāfah wa-l-ijtimāʿ*, al-Ḥarām 1965.

56 Awrāq Muḥammad Farīd, *Mudhakkarātī baʿda al-hijra*, 1904-1919, Vol. 1, Cairo 1978, 38-39.

57 Around Jāwīsh's participation in German journalism, refer to Gerhard Höpp, *Texte aus der Fremde, Arabische Politische Publizistik in Deutschland 1896-1945, eine Bibliographie*, Berlin 2000, 84-85; PAAA/WK, No. 11g, R 21136, Vol. 14, Bl. 69-71.

58 Gerhard Höpp, "Zwischen Entente und Mittelmächten. Arabische Nationalisten und Panislamisten in Deutschland (1914 bis 1918)", in: *asien, afrika, lateinamerika*, 19 (1991), 835; PAAA/WK, No. 11g, R 21136, Vol. 14, Bl. 69-71.

59 Höpp, " Zwischen Entente und Mittelmächten", 835.

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liberation from the British and to guarantee Egypt's strategic return to the Ottoman Empire as well as maintaining its national character.[60]

After the Egyptian government decided to join the war on the side of Britain on 8 August 1914, and after Ottoman suzerainty over Egypt was terminated by the declaration of the British protection on 18 December, the National Party and Germany had common interests. The leadership of the National Party expected Germany to offer its support for the independence of Egypt as a proof of her friendship to the Muslims.[61] Germany promised them intensive military support. However, the failure of the two Ottoman attacks on Egypt in February 1915 and August 1916, and the German policy of exploiting Islam while accommodating Ottoman interests in Egypt, made Muḥammad Farīd (1868-1919) and others of the nationalist movement doubt Germany's real goals.[62] As a result, Farīd criticised Germany for trying to monopolise Pan–Islamist thought for its own purposes. He warned the Ottoman leadership against leaving the politics of Pan-Islamism in German hands because this would endanger the Ottoman Empire as a Caliphate.[63] Farīd also criticised Arab leaders who were still working with Britain.

Muḥammad Fahmī (1880-1963) published articles in German newspapers in which he attacked Britain and its Egyptian policy.[64] However, his relationship with Germany weakened after he failed to get clear answers on Germany's attitude toward Egypt's independence after the war. Fahmī and other Egyptians, doubted Ottoman intentions for Egypt.[65]

In contrast to Fahmī, ʿAbd-al-Malik Ḥamza (1886-?) indulged in the activities of German propaganda and was, along with Jāwīsh, the editor of the *Islamische Welt*. In Berlin, Ḥamza founded the Thursday Society, which was responsible for publicising the National Party's point of view to German men of thought and science.[66] During his stay in Germany, Ḥamza wrote many articles on Pan-Islamism, the Egyptian issue, the Egyptian National Movement, the Egyptian governing elite and the relationship of Egypt and the Muslims to the war.[67]

ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān ʿAzzām (1893-1976) was sent by German intelligence to "Libya" in a submarine at the end of the war to provoke the Egyptians to revolt.

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60 ʿAbd-al-ʿAẓīm Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Ramaḍān, *Taṭawwūr al-ḥarakāt al-waṭaniyyah fī Miṣr min sanat 1918 ilā sanat 1936*, Cairo n.d., 33-34.

61 Muṣṭafā Kāmil previously doubted the truthfulness of the German policy toward Islam. In general, refer to: Sinnū, *al-Daʿwah ilā-l-Islām*, 269-270.

62 Raouf Abbas Hamed, "Germany and the Egyptian Nationalist Movement 1882-1918", *Die Welt des Islams*, N.S. 28 (1988), 18.

63 Ibid., 24.

64 Some of these articles are: "The Aggression on Egypt", "Egypt and Britain". Refer to: Höpp, *Texte aus der Fremde*, Berlin 2000, 36.

65 Sālim, *Miṣr fī-l-ḥarb al-ʿālamiyyah al-ūlā*, 347.

66 Ende and Heine, "al-Waṭanīyyūn al-ʿArab", 208.

67 Höpp, *Texte aus der Fremde*, 48-49. There are some articles which have been published by ʿAbd-al-Malik Ḥamza under the false name of 'Ibn-Marwān'.

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He was able to communicate with the Egyptian National Movement. However, the defeat of the Ottomans at the end of May 1918, and their signing of the cease-fire treaty foiled this effort.[68]

What differentiates Manṣūr Rifʿat (1883-1926) from other Egyptian nationalists in exile was his radicalism and his refusal to promise any future relationship between his country and the Ottoman Empire. Until the summer of 1916, Rifʿat tried to unite his principles on Egypt's liberation from British colonisation – while not returning to the rule of the Khedive or the Ottomans – with his dealings with Germany. At Germany's request he wrote brochures and booklets, and published articles in German newspapers, serving its political propaganda.[69] However, Rifʿat soon realised that Germany was not the liberator of his country, but rather the ally of the Ottoman Empire, which wanted to regain its supremacy over Egypt. Moreover, he argued that Germany was exploiting Arab nationalists in its strategy of revolutions and *jihād* movements against the Entente. He openly criticised Germany, saying that it sold only words. He asked the Ottoman Sultan to give up his supremacy over Egypt.[70]

ʿAbbās Ḥilmī (1874-1944) focused his attention on regaining his position as Khedive of Egypt, following his expulsion because of his "co-operation with the enemies of his majesty, the king of Britain". He tried to get help from Germany and the Central Powers to realise his ambitions. He contacted Wangenheim, the German ambassador in Istanbul, and announced his readiness to co-operate with the Ottoman Empire in a military attack against Egypt, scheduled to coincide with a revolution against the British. The Khedive received large sums of money from the German government to issue propaganda for the Central Powers and to 'buy' French newspapers.[71]

In Iraq, ʿAzīz al-Miṣrī (1880-1964), one of the founders of the ʿAhd Society, was a prominent Arab nationalist leader. Al-Miṣrī hated the British and believed that it was necessary to safeguard the Ottoman Empire. In 1917, he considered co-operating with Germany because he believed that Britain was going to lose the war, and that Germany was going to liberate Egypt from the British and reunite it with the Ottoman Empire. He was sure that the government of Berlin would exert pressure on the Sublime Porte to apply the decentralisation according to the principles of al-ʿAhd Society.

With regard to public opinion and Arab journalism, German documents point to the sympathy of the Christian Syrians with the Entente in general, and

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68 Hamed, "Germany", 23.

69 Refer to Dupre, "The Holy War", 173-175. For more details on the articles which Rifʿat has published abroad, refer to: Gerhard Höpp, *Texte aus der Fremde*, 67-69.

70 Gerhard Höpp, "Zwischen allen Fronten: Der ägyptische Nationalist Mansur Mustafa Rifʿat 1883-1926 in Deutschland", in: eds. Wageh Atek and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, *Ägypten und Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert im Spiegel von Archivalien*, Kairo 1998, 58.

71 *Aurāq Muḥammad Farīd*, Vol. 1: *Mu akkarātī baʿad al-hiṣra 1904-1919*, al-Qāhira 1978, 35.

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with France in particular. These documents show that Syrian's Christians feared the Ottoman cancellation of their privileges in Mount Lebanon.[72] Yūsuf al-Ḥakīm mentioned that the citizens of Mount Lebanon were anxious to welcome the Entente in their country.[73] Al-Ḥakīm drew attention from the Parisian *Le Matin* newspaper to a report that Patriarch Ilyās al-Ḥuwayyik (1843-1931) said that 5,000 armed Lebanese were ready to support French forces as soon as the French landed on Lebanese shores. Similarly, many Christian Lebanese abroad were eager to enrol in French armies.[74]

In Beirut, before the Ottoman government joined the war on the side of Germany, journalists were divided: some supported the Ottomans and German victories, others supported the Entente. A third group among the local journalists maintained neutrality. In Mount Lebanon, al-Matn, and Zahle, journals glorified France as Lebanon's friend, wishing its armies victory. This division led to a "journalistic war"[75] which became stronger following the declaration of *jihād* against the Entente. Afterwards the Shaykh al-Islam issued five *fatwahs* related to this issue.[76] He stated that "God's Mercy and the Prophet's support will counter-attack the struggle of the enemies of Islam (the Entente) with Germany and Austria and make the Muslims exceptionally victorious".[77]

German propaganda among the Muslims became more concerted after German declarations supporting Islam. Because of their hatred of their colonisers, the Arabs and the Muslims did not realise the true aims of German imperialism in the Ottoman Empire. Following the German emperor's speech in 1898, in which he announced his friendship with the Muslims, and his famous message to Russian Tzar Nicholas (1895-1917) – stating that had he not been a Christian he would have converted to Islam[78] – he became al-Ḥājj William for the Muslims, to whom the people prayed in the mosques of Damascus.[79] Similarly, prominent Sufi leaders and other Muslim clergymen expressed support to the Germans and the Ottomans.

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72 PAAA/Türkei 177, R 14032, Der Libanon, Vol. 12, Wangenheim to Bethmann Hollweg, No. 250, A 28594, Therapia, Oct. 24, 1914. 1. Suppl.

73 Yūsuf al-Ḥakīm, *Bayrūt wa Lubnān fī ʿahd al-ʿuthmān*, 4th ed., 1991, 159-160.

74 al-Ḥakīm, *Bayrūt wa Lubnān*, 153-154, 156.

75 Ibid., 138-140.

76 Refer to the *fatwahs* in: Ibrāhīm Naʾūm Kanʾān, *Lubnān fī l-ḥarb al-kubrah (1914-1918)*, Beirut 1974, 119-120.

77 Hurgronje, *Versprijde Geschrifte III, The Holy War*, 272-273.

78 His message was as follows: "I was really embarrassed when I left the sacred city (Jerusalem) facing the Muslims. Had I not belonged to a certain religion when I came here, I would have certainly converted to Islam ... I come back to my country greatly frustrated and really convinced that Christ's tomb is not safe under the sponsorship of any of the churches there. These greatly ornamented churches cannot but be compared negatively with the simplicity of holiness and greatness of Omar's Mosque". Cited in: Sinnū, "al-Daʿwa ilā-l-Islām", 246.

79 PAAA/WK 11g, R 21124, Vol. 2 E. Schäffer to Mathieu, A 22364, Saarbrücken, Sept. 1914.

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The newspaper of *al-Raʾy al-ʿāmm* in 1915 published an article by Shaykh Zāda Asʿad, the patron of the Naqshabandiyya Fraternity in Damascus, entitled: *An Important Proclamation to the World of Islam.* In the article he praised the Sultan for announcing al-jihād and for defending the religion and the nation against Britain and France – the two enemies of Islam – and against Russia – for mistreating the Muslims under its control. He concluded saying that Germany and Austria-Hungary "are the Muslims' real friends"[80] and that each Muslim should support them. In another article in the magazine *Al-Ǧihād* no. 51, also published in *al-Raʾy al-ʿāmm* newspaper, Shaykh Asʿad urged "taking the two countries, Germany and Austria, as allies to the Sultan-Caliph, with the aim of protecting the Qur'an and the throne of the Caliphate".[81]

In Egypt, German victories at the beginning of the war led to a wave of aggression against Britain. *Al-Shaʿb* newspaper, expressing the views of the National Party, claimed that the victory of Germany and the Ottoman Empire in the war was a means of getting rid of the British, of their military power and their cruelty.[82] On 5 November 1914, German sources reported that prayers in one of the Egyptian mosques included the German emperor's pilgrimage trip in Palestine in 1898, and asked God to make "*Ḥājj* Muḥammad William II" victorious.[83] The *ʿulamāʾ* at al-Azhar mosque issued a *fatwah* after Sharīf Ḥussayn declared his revolution against the Ottomans, accusing "the traitors and the renegades who support what the British have done". This *fatwah* viewed the Arab Movement led by Sharīf Ḥussayn as a British conspiracy to break Islamic unity.[84]

During the first stages of war, the Iraqis sympathised with the Ottomans and their German allies. Germany took advantage of Iraqi feelings by pushing the Shiite *mujtahids* in Karbalāʾ and in Najaf to issue a *fatwah* supporting the Islamic *jihād* against Britain and Russia, trying to make Persia join the Central Powers, and to provoke the Muslims in India to revolt against Britain. A German expedition led by Frederick Klein (*Kleinexpedition*) visited Karbalāʾ, as did another guided by the archaeologist Dr. von Preusser. Klein and von Preusser contacted the Shiite *mujtahids* at the end of 1914 and the beginning of January 1915. Based on this, the Shiite *mujtahids* issued *fatwahs* calling for *jihād* against the British, who invaded the country in November 1914. The highest *mujtahid* in Karbalāʾ,

80 Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam. Ideology and Organization*, Oxford 1900, 113-114, 351- 357; Dupre, "The Holy War", 173-175.

81 PAAA/Deutschland 126g, R 1514, Tätigkeit der Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient, Vol. 5, Schabinger to Wesendonk, A 34265, Berlin, Nov. 24, 1915.

82 Sālim, *Miṣr fi-l-ḥarb al-ʿālamiyyah al-ūlā*, 296.

83 Lothar Rathmann, *Stossrichtung Nahost 1914-1918*, Berlin (Ost) 1963, 83.

84 Quoted from: Wamī Jamāl ʿUmar Naẓmī, *al-Judhūr al-sīyāsiyyah wa-l-fikriyyah wa-l-ijtimāʿiyyah li-l-ḥarakah al-qawmiyyah al-ʿarabiyyah (al-istiqlāliyyah) fi-l-ʿIrāq*, 3rd. ed., Beirut 1986, 148-149.

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ʿAlī Khānqīn, offered to give the Germans a letter addressed to the Persian Shah urging him to give up his neutrality in the war and join the Central Powers.[85]

The calls for *jihād* resounded positively among the Iraqis. The clans of the middle Euphrates joined the Ottomans to defend the country against the British invasion.[86] In spite of this, this situation could not overcome the contradictions between Arab and Turkish nationalisms. The military defeat of the Ottomans by the British and the spread of hunger and epidemic diseases in Ottoman territories, in addition to the harsh policy of Jamāl Pasha in Syria and the revolution of Sharīf Ḥussayn in Ḥijāz, all undermined the alignment of the Iraqi people with the Ottomans. As a result, Najaf and Karbalāʾ revolted in 1915 and 1916 and fought the Turks. In addition Arab nationalists, some Iraqi officers from al-ʿAhd Society, were encouraged to establish secret branches, organising themselves in Mosul and Baghdad to liberate the country until the south of the Gulf.[87] At the same time, communications started with the British about joining the Ḥijāzi Movement.[88]

## *5. Conclusion*

German propaganda failed to realise its aims. The announcement of an "Arabic *jihād*" by the British was a catastrophe to the German project of "Ottoman *jihād*". The latter jihād did not resonate with the Muslims in terms of its religious-political concept and "stayed without an echo," as expressed by a contemporary observer.[89]

Egypt did not respond to the calls to revolt against the British, whereas the Arabs in Syria, Iraq and Ḥijāz announced their 'own' *jihād* and revolted against the Ottoman Empire in favour of the British. There were three reasons for this. Firstly CUP policies in Istanbul favoured Pan-Turkism over Pan-Islamism, meaning they ignored Arab national sentiments and still hoped their country would regain direct rule over the Arab provinces. Secondly, Britain succeeded in making a network of allies with important Arab personalities and Bedouin leadership, announcing that Britain was not fighting Islam, but rather German attempts to colonise the world.[90] Thirdly, Germany ignored Arab national interests or exploited them, as Britain did, and gave priority to its ally, the Ottoman

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85 Werner Ende, "Iraq in World War I: The Turks, the Germans and the Shiʾite Mujtahids' Call for Jihad", in: *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, Amsterdam, 1st to 7th September 1978, Leiden 1981, 58.

86 Naẓmī, *al-Judhūr al-sīyāsiyyah*, 122-126.

87 Eliezer Tauber, *The Arab Movements in World War I*, London 1993, 8.

88 Naẓmī, *al-Judhūr al-sīyāsiyyah*, 125-155.

89 Paul Schmitz, *All-Islam! Weltmacht von morgen*, Leipzig 1937, 62.

90 Edith W. E. Penrose, *Al-ʿIrāq. Dirāsāt fī ʿalāqātihi al-khārijiyyah wa taṭawūratihi al-dākhiliyyah 1915- 1917* (translated by ʿAbd-al-Majīd Ḥasīb al-Qaysī), Beirut 1989, 86-87.

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Empire, which wanted to regain control over the Arabs after the war. German propaganda concentrated on Pan-Islamism and on the necessity of obeying the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph and urging the Arabs to stay under his rule. As such, Germany did not protest harsh Ottoman policies in Syria or Iraq. It did not even try to criticise it seriously. Through Germany's consul in Beirut, the Ottomans could access French consular files, which contained the names of Arab political activists.[91] Once Ottoman authorities had this information they did not hesitate to use it to silence their detractors.

On the other hand, Germany's "good" treatment of the Muslim prisoners and its efforts to recruit them into the Ottoman Army proved its downfall.[92] Of 4,000 North African captives, eight hundred showed a readiness to join the Central Powers[93]. The others, however, ran away in battle and most of them joined fronts which belonged to the Entente. This was a clear indication of how false Pan-Islamism was. The Arab national feelings were stronger than the lure of religious solidarity. German claims that it supported Islam were contradicted by its colonial policies, which saw it govern 2 to 2.5 million Muslims.[94]

During the war, Germany was satisfied with attracting Arab Muslim VIPs and using them for propaganda – as sources of information, not allies. Most of their articles and booklets published in Germany were vetted and censored. The activities of the Arabs in Germany and outside were sponsored and controlled by the Germans. Germany and the Ottoman Empire lost the war, those nationalists and Muslims who worked with Germany were exposed to Arab nationalist accusations and attacks.

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91 The French consul's translator Phillip Zalzal told the Ottomans where to find the files. Zalzal informed the German consul-general of his readiness to reveal where the documents were hidden on the condition that the Ottomans not threaten his life. The German consul passed on the informed to the Ottomans. Refer to: Tauber, *The Arab Movements*, 39-40.

92 Ende and Heine, "al-Waṭanīyyūn", 212.

93 Heine, "Al-Ǧihād", 199.

94 Victor Bérard, *Le Sultan, l'Islam et les Puissances*, Paris 1907, 37.

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| *Representatives* | *Basic Profession* | *Task during 1914-1918* | *Countries* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Baron Max von Oppenheim | Archeologist and diplomat | Head of the Military Information | Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Ottoman Empire and Algeria |
| Hermann Frobenius | Officer | | Iraq and Persia |
| Johann von Berntorff | Diplomat | Ambassador to Washington, Istanbul | Egypt |
| Fritz von Papen | Officer | U.S.A. | Ottoman Empire |
| Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer | Geologist | Head of the German mission in Tehran | Iraq and Persia |
| Wilhelm Wassmuss | Diplomat | Organization of guerrillas in Persia | Iraq, Persia & Kurdistan |
| Werner Otto von Hentig | Diplomat | Missions to Persia and Afghanistan | Afghanistan & Persia |
| Fritz Grobba | Lawyer & Diplomatic | Expedition to the Arab Peninsula | Damascus & Palestine |
| Leo Frobenius | Archeologist | Expedition to Algeria | Algeria, Tunis, Sudan |
| Hans von Kalle | Officer | Expedition to Morocco | Tanger, Morocco, & Spain |
| von Preusser | Physician & Archeologist | | Iraq, Egypt, and the Ottoman Empire |
| Frederick Klein | Officer | Expedition to Iraq | Persia and Iraq |

Ill. 1 German missions to the Islamic World to agitate rebellions against the Entente
Faligot/Kauffer, *Le Croissant et la croix gammée*, 36.
Preusser and Klein expeditions have been added from my side.

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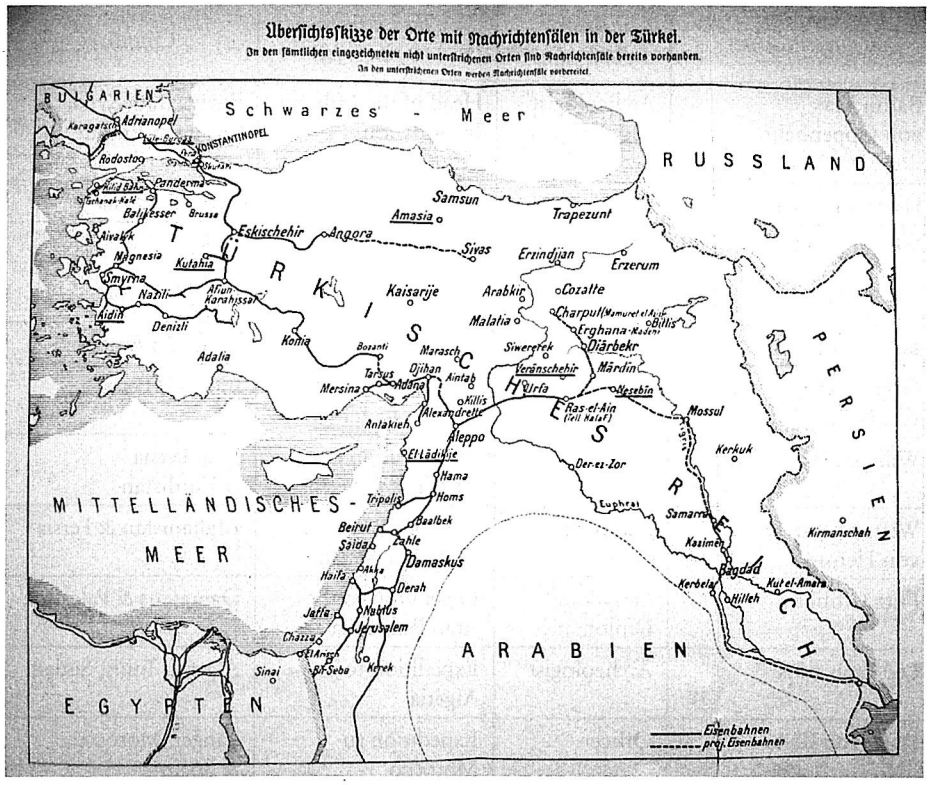


Ill. 2: Sketch of the distribution of news centers in the Asiatic Turkey.
Politisches Archiv und Historisches Referat, Asservate, Max Freiherr von Oppenheim: Die Nachrichtenstelle der Kaiserlich Deutschen Botschaft in Konstantinopel und die deutsche wirtschaftliche Propaganda in der Türkei, Berlin 1916 (R 27063).
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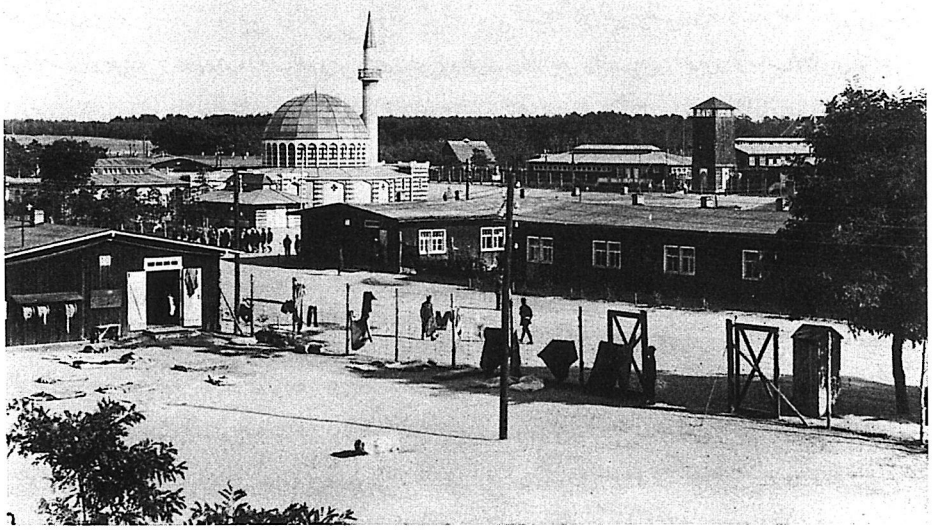

Ill. 3: The Prisoner War Camp at Wünsdorf with its wooden minaret.
Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin, Foto: Fotograf unbekannt, Wünsdorf bei Berlin, 1917.
(With kind permission of BPK Berlin)

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# الجور والعدالة

مكث الشرق بين نخت سيطرة الطاغين ويتململ من حكم المغتالين احقابا من السنين كان اهله يرقبون في خلالها فرصة تمكنهم من تمزيق قيوده واستعباده حتى اتاح الله لهم هذه الحرب الضروس فانضموا باقوامهم وقلوبهم الى الحلفاء الذين والمنسوبين . انحازوا الى جانب الالمانيين لانهم انسوا فيهم صداقة قديمة ولم يروا منهم حيفا على بلادهم او ميلا الى مراعيهم وخيلهم كما فعل معهم الفريق الآخر . انضموا الى المانيا والنمسا والمجر ليتكلوا جميعا بالانجليز ومحالفيهم اشد تنكيل ويسومونهم سوء العذاب عما كانوا يظلمون . اني هؤلاء الاعداء من الظلم والاعتساف في افريقية الشمالية والجزء الآسيوي من آسيا وفي بلاد الهند ما تقشعر منه ابدان وتتفطر له القلوب وهم يريدون الآن في هذه الحرب تمزيق ما بقي من ممالك المسلمين وتوزيعه فيما بينهم . لهذا كله تآخى وتحالف المتزيفون مع من عرفوا وجربوا فيهم الصداقة والاخلاص ليبيدوا ويجتمعين شمل من اراد تبديد شملهم . وها هو الشعب الالماني يهجم على عدوه الهجمة بعد الهجمة وعزيمة الهزيمة اثر الهزيمة ولا يمضي يسير من الزمن حتى يرفع الحلفاء نيون والمتسولون والمجريون والمتزيفون من تركيا وعرب وفرس والبلغاريون لواء النصر والغلب فيصبح الشرق حرام مستعبدا به طاهرا من الاجانب والاحتلال التي انبثت في ارجائه وكادت تخنق عظامه وتقضي عليه القضاء الاخير . وهذه الصور تظهر ان الشرق قدير على تحرير نفسه من بقايا الجنس الذي جنى الضاعف عليه والمستبد لرقاب اهله . قال الحاكم العام الانجليزي في بلاد الهند : « ما مثلنا في الهند الا كمثل رغوة امواج محيط عظيم مظلم لا قرار له » . حقيقة ان الملايين العديدة من المسلمين في اسيا تعتقد ان الانجليز هم قيود الذل والاسترقاق التي تكبلهم بها مغتصبو بلادهم لو انهم ان يستعملوا قوتهم ويأسهم . هذا ! ولما رأى الانجليز ومن حالفهم ان الالمانيين موجهون كل قواهم للاغارة عليهم والبطش بهم وشاهدوا انهم منتصرون لا محالة وعاملون على تحرير الشرق والشرقيين . لما عاينوا ذلك وقع في قلوبهم الرعب فأشاعوا ان الالمانيين لا حول لهم ولا قوة فقراء في المال والرجال لا تمكنهم بوجه من الوجوه اعانة انفسهم فضلا عن اعانة سواهم . — هكذا اذاعوا — ولكن الحوادث والوقائع الحاضرة اظهرت غير ذلك . اظهرت الالمانيين وفي يدهم سيف الغلب . اظهرتهم اعظم قوة واشد بأسا واكثرها لامن اعدائهم . وها نحن نترقب وننتظر نصرهم وفوزهم الذي خير على اعدائهم وكل آت قريب . وسيعلم الذين ظلموا اي منقلب ينقلبون .

Ill. 4: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amt, Abt. IA, Deutschland 126g adh. 1, Tätigkeit der Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient, Bd. 22 (R 1531).
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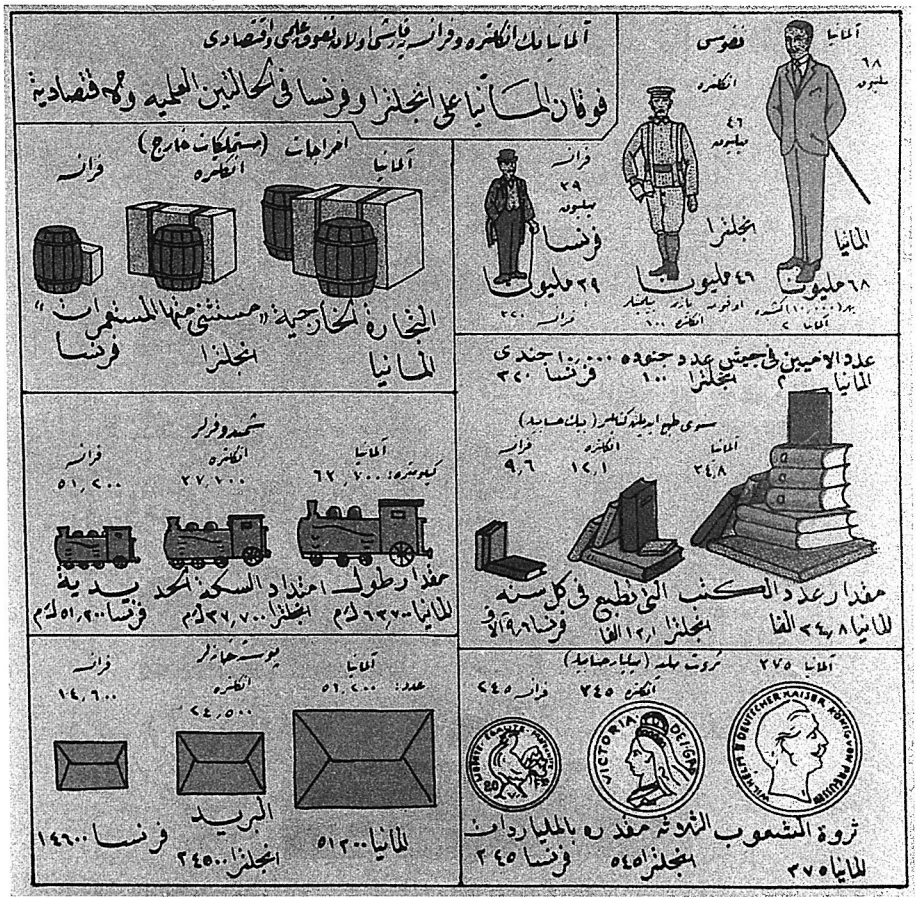

Ill. 5: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amt, Abt. IA, Deutschland 126g adh. 1, Tätigkeit der Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient, Bd. 22 (R 1531).
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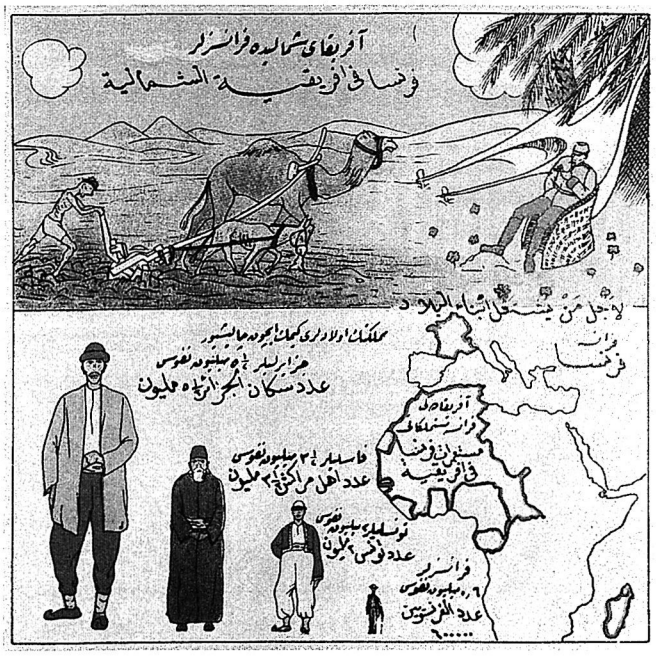



Ill. 6a u. 6b: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amt, Abt. IA, Deutschland 126g adh. 1, Tätigkeit der Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient, Bd. 22 (R 1531). (With kind permission of PAAA)

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# The "Traditional Turco-German Friendship" – Fact or Fiction?

*Hans-Peter Laqueur (Bremerhaven)*

The article "Zur Geschichte der türkisch-deutschen Beziehungen", on the official website of the Turkish Embassy in Berlin[1] begins with the statement:

> "Türkisch-deutsche Beziehungen gibt es seit 800 Jahren."

The author goes on to surprise his readers with sentences like:

> "Zwischen den Osmanen und den Deutschen gab es keine direkte Nachbarschaft, keine direkten Grenzen."

He also writes:

> "Der letzte Krieg in dem türkische und deutsche Soldaten gegeneinander ins Feld zogen war die zweite Belagerung von Wien im Jahr 1683. (...) Mit Ausnahme von diesem Krieg haben das türkische und das deutsche Volk für mehr als 300 Jahre nicht aufeinander geschossen."

The author's intention is obvious: with his attempt to separate "Germany" from Habsburg Austria (the leading power up to the end of the so-called Holy Roman Empire), he tries to draw an image of mainly peaceful relations between Germans and Turks throughout history. – This is not what history books tell us; they state that from the early 16th to the late 18th centuries relations were dominated by a series of wars. Diplomatic missions were sent out only to negotiate conditions of peace or cease-fire, and to gain intelligence for the next war.

The first non-belligerent political contact between a German state and the Ottoman Empire took place on the eve of the Seven Years' War. In 1755 Prussian King Friedrich II, in desperate search for allies against Austria, Russia and their allies, sent an emissary to Istanbul.[2] In 1761 these contacts led to the signing of a treaty of commerce and friendship between the Ottoman Empire and Prussia,[3] but not much more.

More than half a century later, when the Ottoman Empire began opening up to Europe and adapting western methods in the organisation of its armed forces, Sultan Mahmud II turned to the King of Prussia for a military advisor. In 1835 a young Prussian captain – Helmuth von Moltke, later field marshal-general and chief of staff of the Prussian Army – arrived in Istanbul. He was joined by three

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1 Http://www.tcberlinbe.de/de/trde/geschichte.htm (22. 10. 2003).

2 Kemal Beydilli, *Büyük Friedrich ve Osmanlılar. XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı-Prusya münasebetleri.* İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi 1985, 25-32.

3 Ibid., 59.

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other Prussian captains, thus beginning the tradition of German military advisors to the Ottoman Army, the "backbone" of what became known as the Turco-German friendship.

From my childhood and youth in Turkey in the 1960s I have vivid recollections of meeting old men, who spoke with great enthusiasm about their military service in the First World War, and about the German officers. This generation that experienced the "traditional Turkish-German friendship" of 1914-1918 first-hand is no longer alive. But the idea of this friendship is still around, in spite of the fact that for some decades now about 3 million Turks have been living and working in Germany as so-called *Gastarbeiter*. The image of Germany in Turkey in the 1970s and early 1980s was influenced more by this historical alliance than by contemporary realities.

It was not until the 1880s that German officers had a continuous presence in the Ottoman Army. Major-General von Kaehler Paşa[4] led a military mission of four officers to the Ottoman Empire in 1882. Kaehler Paşa died in Istanbul in 1885 and was replaced by Freiherr von der Goltz-Paşa, probably the most influential German officer in the Ottoman Army. His first stay in the empire lasted 13 years, until 1895/96, and a whole generation of Turkish officers – most of whom were purged from the army by Enver Pasha in 1913/14 – were trained by him. He returned several times and late in 1914 he was recalled to the Bosphorus, where he took command of the Sixth Army and died in Baghdad 1916.

Some of the officers of the Goltz-Mission were in the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars of 1912/13, commanding Turkish troops. One of them, the Bavarian Captain Franz Carl Endres wrote in the conclusion of his report on the Balkan Wars: "[...] daß die deutsche Reformtätigkeit ein völliges Fiasko gemacht hat und daß deutsches Ansehen dadurch, gleichgültig, daß die Deutschen nicht daran schuld waren, gelitten hat."[5]

Consequently, when in 1913 a new, larger military mission for the reform and reorganisation of the Ottoman Army was envisaged, this led to discussions on whether to call on German officers again, or rather turn to another power. While some political leaders sought closer links to France and her allies, Enver very strongly supported the German side, and succeeded. In the summer of 1913 the Ottoman government officially requested that Berlin send a military mission. Interestingly, the request explicitly stated that an officer knowing the country and the language was not wanted to head of mission.[6] This can be understood as a

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4 Hans Werner Neulen, *Adler und Halbmond. Das deutsch-türkische Bündnis 1914-1918,* Frankfurt, Berlin: Ullstein 1994, 16-17. [Also published as: *Feldgrau in Jerusalem. Das Levantekorps des kaiserlichen Deutschland,* München: Universitas 1991; 2nd. ed. 2002]

5 "Bericht über meine Anteilnahme am Balkankrieg 1912/13." *Bayerisches Kriegsarchiv, München*, Gen.Stab, Bd. 42.

6 Wangenheim an AA, Nr. 282 vom 22.5.1913: *Politisches Archiv Auswärtiges Amt Berlin*, Türkei 139, Bd. 27, A 10443. The text of Wangenheim's telegram is quoted by Liman, *Fünf Jahre*, 9-10.

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signal that the return of "the great friend of the Turks" von der Goltz was not desired.

Ottoman officials emphasised to the French, British and Russian press that the decision to turn to Germany for a new military mission was not a political one, but based on practical grounds[7] – as the Ottoman Army had co-operated with German officers for almost 25 years. Of course the decision was political, one that meant the triumph of Enver and the Germanophiles in the leadership of the state, and the Committee of Union and Progress that dominated it.

What did they expect from Germany, and why was Germany so eager to get involved in the Ottoman Empire? The latter part is easier to answer. The German *Reich*, founded in 1871, was a latecomer in the race for colonies; the British and French had already built their empires, the Portuguese and Spanish had owned territories overseas for centuries, and the Dutch and the Belgians claimed control over potentially profitable territories. Ambitious, young Germany had to take the "left-overs," those areas none of the other colonial powers were particularly interested in, and there raise the flag of the Reich. Possessing a selection of territories of limited attraction and negligible economic value in Africa, Oceania and China, Germany tried to expand its sphere of interest by a "pénetration pacifique," of economic, cultural and political influence – rather than by rule – making the crumbling Ottoman Empire an ideal target.

This former superpower had been the object of desire for many European powers for decades. The Russians hoped to fulfil their age-old dream of controlling the Straits, the British wanted to improve their control of the route to India, and everyone hoped for a slice of the pie, particularly after the discovery of petrol in Iraq.

This was what led Enver Pasha, the most influential figure of Turkey 1908-1918, to seek German support. Germany was the only European power that did not make any claim to Ottoman territory, content in seeking economic, rather than political, domination and thereby offering hope of survival to the threatened Empire.

There were plans for the establishment of German settlements in Anatolia discussed in the German media, the most spectacular of them put forward by Professor Aloys Sprenger in 1886. He envisaged a "Neu-Deutschland" in Syria and Mesopotamia that would be home to 25 million German settlers.[8] This and other plans for German colonization in the sparsely populated Ottoman Empire were not a serious threat, as they found no support at all with the German government, which feared offending the Ottoman authorities.

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7 E.g. "Eine Äußerung über die deutsche Militärmission." *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 6. Jahrgang Nr. 287 (30.11.1913), 1.

8 Neulen, *Adler*, 21.

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Economic endeavours, however, were encouraged and supported. Railway lines were financed by German banks and built by German entrepreneurs hoping to make huge profits, but the regions made accessible profited the Ottomans as well. This was the case with many of the small-scale investments – farms, factories and mines – established by Germans in Ottoman lands in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The successes benefited not only the foreign investor, but also the local population.

In the summer of 1913 the contract for the new German Military Mission was negotiated, and Liman von Sanders was nominated its chief. He arrived in Istanbul together with some of the officers of the mission early in December 1913 and took up work immediately. In Liman's view, close contacts with Turkish officers were essential for the success of his mission and he formed a staff of almost all Turkish officers. Liman held to this throughout his five years in Turkey, in spite of strong German criticism.

İsmet İnnü, then a young officer, describes in his memoirs that on inspection trips or manoeuvres Liman was always accompanied by Turkish officers, and that each day ended with a banquet for all officers.[9] Unlike most of his predecessors, Liman considered it essential to have not only professional, but also social and personal contacts with his Turkish partners. With this attitude he may have laid the groundwork for the veneration he enjoyed among many Turks decades after his death and, subsequently, to the creation of the idea of a "traditional Turco-German friendship."

A new element came into this relationship with the outbreak of the First World War in summer 1914. The Ottoman Empire had commissioned two large naval vessels from Britain, the payment for which had been largely financed by public subscription. They were ready for delivery early in summer 1914, but due to the mounting tension in the European crisis, the British confiscated the two Dreadnoughts.[10] In August 1914 two German ships, the battle cruiser *Goeben* and the light cruiser *Breslau*, were operating in the Mediterranean. They escaped the French and British fleets and were allowed to enter the Straits to the then-neutral Ottoman Empire.

Upon their arrival in Istanbul it was announced that they had been sold to the Turks, renamed *Yavuz* and *Midilli*, and their officers and crew replaced their German naval caps with fezzes. Psychologically, this action was very effective, demonstrating the British to be traitors for not delivering goods already paid for, and the Germans to be helpers of Ottoman interests. The Ottoman Empire remained neutral until 29 October, 1914 when – in an action secretly planned by Enver, some of his closest associates and the German leadership – it joined the

9 İsmet İnnü, *Hatıralar*, 1. Kitap, Ankara: Bilgi 1985,88.
10 David Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace*, London: Phoenix 2000, 54-61.

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war with the two officially Turkish, but German-manned and – commanded, ships bombarding Russian ports on the Black Sea.

Enthusiasm about this new ally was great in Germany, with the media and the public greatly overestimating the military strength of the Ottoman Empire. Newspapers published predictions that Ottoman forces would draw part of the Russian army on them, thus relieving the German and Austrian fronts, possibly even defeating them.[11] Another factor that caught the public's imagination – and was greatly overestimated by propaganda and the media in Germany – was the *jihad*, the Holy war declared by the sultan in November 1914. The immediate defection of the Islamic population of the French and British colonies, especially India, was expected. The alliance with the Ottoman Empire led to a forceful push in the German public's interest in anything Turkish. Moreover, a great number of experts, or self-styled experts, published their opinions on Turkey and on the economic, as well as the strategic, effects of an axis "from Berlin to Basra," which would force the British Empire to its knees, etc.

Aside from the military co-operation, the alliance had further effects almost forgotten today: German professors taught at the *Darü 'l-funun*, the predecessor of Istanbul University,[12] and a monumental German "House of Friendship" was planned there, an idea put forward by the *Deutsch-Türkische Vereinigung* of Ernst Jäckh.[13]This plan, however, was not undisputed. Influential member of the *Reichstag* Matthias Erzberger wrote in his report about his visit to Istanbul in 1916:

> "Von allen Seiten wurde ich dringend gebeten, doch in Berlin darauf hinwirken zu wollen, dass keinerlei amtliche Empfehlungen des deutsch-türkischen Freundschaftshauses und Sammlungen hierfür stattfinden. Die ganze Idee dieses Freundschaftshauses sei verfehlt, es werde nicht nur keinen Nutzen bringen, sondern unseren Interessen direkt schaden."[14]

Of still more relevance for the two nationalities getting to know each other was the program – again initiated by the *Deutsch-Türkische Vereinigung* in Berlin and its secretary Jäckh – to send pupils from Turkey to Germany to complete their schooling. One of these pupils, in the title of his memoirs, refers to a "bitter friendship" between Turkey and Germany.[15] Hundreds of young boys were also

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11 E.g. "Der gehobene Wert der türkischen Armee." *Bayerische Staatszeitung. Kgl. Bayerischer Staatsanzeiger*, 2. Jahrgang Nr. 259 (4.11.1914), 2.

12 Horst Widmann, *Exil und Bildungshilfe. Die deutschsprachige akademische Emigration in die Türkei nach 1933*, Bern, Frankfurt: Lang 1973, 35-37.

13 Heide Hepner, "Das Haus der Freundschaft (Dostluk Jurdu) - ein deutsches Kulturzentrum in Istanbul," in: *Germano-Turcica. Zur Geschichte des Türkisch-Lernens in den deutschsprachigen Ländern*, eds. Klaus Kreiser and Dieter Karasek, Bamberg: Universitätsbibliothek 1987, 109-112.

14 *Politisches Archiv Auswärtiges Amt Berlin*, R14090.

15 Muammer Tuksavul, *Eine bittere Freundschaft. Erinnerungen eines türkischen Jahrhundertzeugen*, Düsseldorf, Wien: Econ 1985.

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sent to Germany as apprentices in various crafts.[16] This latter measure, of course, was not only meant to improve the skills of Turkish craftsmen and to improve the two peoples' knowledge of each other, it was also intended to fill the gaps in the German workforce caused by the war.

The First World War was the first (and, before the influx of so-called guest workers from the late 1960s, the only) period in which a considerable number of Turks and Germans – soldiers, apprentices, students, etc. – were in direct contact. At the end of the war there were more than 10,000 German officers and soldiers, who had spent months or years in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish battle units had fought side by side with Germans and Austrians on other fronts. Moreover, 1,000 or more Turkish youths had been sent for education to Germany.[17]

The new allies' first major military action was carried out in response to the attempt of British and French forces to break through the Straits and a route to their Russian allies. The Battle of the Dardanelles between spring and December 1915 was fought by Turkish troops commanded by the German General Otto Liman von Sanders. As head of the Ottoman Fifth Army he formed his staff mainly of Turkish officers and only two Germans – as he had done in peacetime. Officers and men, there were only about 700 Germans and Austrians participating in the Battle of the Dardanelles, which is generally viewed as a "cornerstone" of the Traditional Turco-German friendship, as well as its symbol. Writing on the battle, one Turkish historian said that it was the Turks, and only the Turks, who had won it and that the Germans had merely provided a bit of decorum, of which they were boasting.[18]

During The First World War the degree of friendship between the two partners was limited, both sides viewed each other with distrust. A German officer in a rather bibulous mood said openly what many of his colleagues believed:

> "Wir müssen jetzt während des Krieges die Freunde der Türken sein, damit wir sie uns nach dem Kriege um so besser dienstbar machen können."[19]

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16 In July 1918 an estimated 1,500 youths from Turkey, about half of them apprentices, were in Germany, cf. Mustafa Ergün: "Die deutsch-türkischen Erziehungsbeziehungen während des ersten Weltkrieges." www.egitim.aku.edu.tr/alman.atm (30.10.03).

17 Between 1914 and 1917 the number of Turkish citizens registered as residents in Berlin almost doubled, to 2,046, cf. Gültekin Emre, *Dreihundert Jahre Türken an der Spree*, Berlin: Ararat 1983, 94.

18 İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol. 4, İstanbul: Türkiye 1972, 430.

19 Jakob Künzler, *Im Lande des Blutes und der Tränen. Erlebnisse in Mesopotamien während des Weltkrieges (1914-1918)*, Zürich: Chronos 1999, 117.

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Erich von Falkenhayn, then German chief of staff, explained in November 1915 why he was opposed to the Turkish offer of sending troops in support of the German and Austrian forces against Russia, saying that

> "[...] er in der Ausrüstung dieser 150 000 Mann einen glatten Abgang von Offizieren, Geschützen und Munition sehe; ebensogut ... hätte man russische Gefangene an die Front schicken können."[20]

A year later, when the battle at Verdun forced the Germans to move large numbers of troops from the eastern to the western front, Falkenhayn changed his mind; now Turkish troops were welcome to fill the gaps. General Hans von Seeckt, German chief of the Ottoman general staff in 1917/18, was more outspoken in his evaluation of the Turkish ally. His report "Die Gründe des Zusammenbruchs der Türkei Herbst 1918," composed upon his return to Germany early in November 1918, concluded with the statement: "On ne se marie pas avec un cadavre."[21]

The Turkish side had reservations as well. The German archaeologist Theodor Wiegand quotes a Turkish officer telling him:

> "Die Deutschen sind zu schroff, die Österreicher würden sich nie so wie die Deutschen benehmen. Übrigens – was haben wir den Deutschen zu verdanken? Tapfer sind sie. Aber acht Wilajets haben wir schon verloren."[22]

He and others reported numerous complaints from Turkish officers about the impolite and undiplomatic manners of their German counterparts. This attitude, displayed particularly by newly arrived German officers, was not only reserved for the Turks but included fellow German officers who had spent more time in the country and had gained experience in its traditions and lifestyle. The latter were denounced and their expertise ridiculed by people like Falkenhayn for being "vertürkt"![23]

Falkenhayn had so little confidence in local expertise that he insisted on having his orders translated into Turkish by Germans who had studied at the *Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen* in Berlin[24] – mainly academics who had little or no knowledge of military affairs and terminology. For Falkenhayn, this was better than trusting the many Turkish officers who had undergone years of military training in Germany, were fluent in the language and knew what a military order

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20 Holger Afflerbach, *Falkenhayn. Politisches Denken und Handeln im Kaiserreich*, 2nd. ed., München: R. Oldenbourg 1996, 421-22 Fn. 1175.

21 Akdes Nimet Kurat, "Die Berichte der deutschen Generale Liman von Sanders, Bronsart und Hans von Seeckt über die militärische Lage der Türkei während des ersten Weltkrieges," *Cultura Turcica* 2 (1966), 83-97.

22 Theodor Wiegand, *Halbmond im letzten Viertel. Archäologische Reiseberichte*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern 1985, 363.

23 Friedrich Freiherr Kreß von Kressenstein, *Mit den Türken zum Suezkanal*, Berlin: Vorhut-Verlag Otto Schlegel 1938, 265.

24 Ibid., 64.

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was. Falkenhayn's career as commander of *Heeresgruppe F* in Palestine in 1917 was so brief and lacklustre not because of his ignorance of the conditions he had to work under, but due to his unwillingness to accept advice from Turks or "vertürkten" Germans.

It was only with the creation of the *Asiencorps* in 1917, the German contribution to the newly established *Heeresgruppe Jildirim*, that really significant numbers of German soldiers and NCOs (non-comissioned officer) were dispatched to the Ottoman Empire. These men of *Operation Pascha* were hand-picked, extremely well clad and armed, but obviously nobody thought about the necessity of instructing them on the personal aspects of their deployment. Leaflets distributed to these troops dealt more with the dangers posed by the native population than with how to interact with them decently.[25] The motto was "Make the Romans do as we do."

Tensions must have arisen from the social and cultural gulf between Turkish and German soldiers, and, possibly even more, the contrast between the latter's good uniforms and supplies and the former's often having mere rags to wear, no boots and hardly any food. I have so far not found any accounts of violent clashes, but a *Tagesbefehl* issued to the *Heeresgruppe Jildirim* on August 11, 1918 indicates the seriousness of the problem:

> „Ereignisse der letzten Zeit veranlassen, darauf hinzuweisen, daß Tätlichkeiten zwischen deutschen und türkischen Mannschaften unbedingt vermieden werden müssen. Im Falle von Übergriffen türkischerseits haben die deutschen Mannschaften sich darauf zu beschränken, die Zugehörigkeit der türkischen Mannschaften festzustellen und den Vorfall an ihre deutschen Vorgesetzten zu melden. Dieser Befehl ist allen deutschen Mannschaften bekannt zu geben."[26]

Not all encounters were so grave, one incident – that could happen anywhere when a sizeable group of young people stays in a foreign place, to which they feel superior – saw a few German soldiers amusing themselves by teaching some German to an Arab sweets-seller at the Damascus railway station. He was taught a sentence which he proudly recited whenever he saw any German military: "Süß wie Zucker, schmeckt wie Sch ..." ("Sweet as sugar, tastes like sh*t")[27]

In general relations between Turks and Germans in the Ottoman Empire seem to have declined during the second half of the war. There are three main reasons for this:

- Ever-increasing numbers of Germans, military as well as civilian, present on Ottoman soil, and their daily confrontations with their Ottoman counterparts.

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25 E.g. Neulen, *Adler*, 278-279: "Merkblatt für die Reise Konstantinopel – Aleppo!"

26 *Bundesarchiv Militärarchiv Freiburg*, RM 40/v, 632: "Tagesbefehle Jildirim (Apr.-Sep. 18)," Fol. 74: Tagesbefehl Nr. 83.

27 Neulen, *Adler*, 185.

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- A change of Ottoman attitudes. In the beginning Istanbul was the junior partner in the alliance, depending heavily on help from big brother. But after the victory at the Dardanelles, and still more so after the German acceptance of Ottoman troops at the European eastern front,[28] Ottoman politicians saw their country as an equal, rather than a junior partner in the alliance.
- Finally, the differing positions of the governments in Istanbul and Berlin concerning the Armenians, and still more so the opposition of German individuals – the most prominent and outspoken being Pastor Johannes Lepsius – and institutions to the prosecution of Armenians.

The end of The First World War, with the defeat of Germany as well as Turkey, brought about a substantial change in relations. For some years direct contacts were almost non-existent.[29] In Germany in particular, though, there were memories of four years of mutual warfare, with well over ten thousand officers, NCOs and soldiers who had served in the Ottoman Empire now sentimentally nursing their memories. An "old boys club," the *Bund der Asienkämpfer,* was founded, which in 1921 had about 2,500 members and published regular newsletters,[30] as well as a couple of yearbooks.[31]

The members were sailors and admirals, privates and generals. It was founded and was chaired by Kreß von Kressenstein and Admirals von Usedom and Souchon joined, as well as General Bronsart von Schellenberg, but the most senior German officer in Turkey, Liman von Sanders, kept his distance. – In the years after 1918 a large number of Germans who had spent time in the Ottoman Empire wrote books and articles. Some wrote on specific subjects like tropical diseases and the fight against them,[32] or the struggle against locusts in Mesopotamia and Syria,[33] but most were motivated more by nostalgia or self-glorification than by the intention of enlightening their readers about Turkey and the Turks.

In the years after the war a new aspect can be observed in the German view of Turkey. Nationalists and right-wing politicians looked upon Mustafa Kemal's reversal of the Treaty of Sèvres with admiration and envy, an attitude also shaping

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28 [Otto] Liman von Sanders, *Fünf Jahre in der Türkei*, Berlin: August Scherl 1920[?], 154-158; Şefik Okday, *Der letzte Großwesir und seine preußischen Söhne*, Göttingen: Muster-Schmidt 1991, 72-78.

29 [Hans] Tröbst, *Soldatenblut. Vom Baltikum zu Kemal Pascha*, Leipzig: K.F. Koehler 1925, 97-100.

30 *Mitteilungen des Bundes der Asienkämpfer*, 1919-, from 1931: *Orient-Rundschau*, until 1935[?], an almost complete collection in the library of the *Orientalisches Seminar der Universität Bonn.*

31 *Zwischen Kaukasus und Sinai. Jahrbuch des Bundes der Asien-Kämpfer,* I Berlin 1921, II Berlin 1922, III Sangershausen 1923; from vol. IV: *Jahrbücher des Bundes der Asien-Kämpfer.* A complete(?) collection in *Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen.*

32 For a comprehensive bibliography cf. Helmut Becker, *Äskulap zwischen Reichsadler und Halbmond*, Herzogenrath: Murgen-Altrogge, 1990, 451-465.

33 E.g. the publications by Gustav Bredemann (detailed references in Becker, *Äskulap, 452*), cf. Künzler, *Im Lande des Blutes*, 120.

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Hitler's view of Turkey.[34] After 1933, a second wave of publications on Turkey appeared, mainly memoirs by military men again, but there was at least one novel describing the Turkish War of Liberation from a Nazi point of view.

Turkey did not reciprocate this attempted embrace, but steered a very careful course between the main powers throughout the Second World War. The motto was "The Germans are our friends and the Allied powers our partners." During Nazi rule in Germany a further aspect in Turco-German relations came into existence. Following 1933 a large number of scholars, many of them of international reputation, were expelled from German universities for racial or political reasons. Turkey offered refuge to some hundreds of them, as well as to a few non-academic German and Austrian refugees of racial or political prosecution.[35] This, however, was not so much a sentimental act of friendship, but quite utilitarian: The young Turkish Republic was in the process of reforming its educational system, and thus in need of highly qualified foreign scholars.

The next – and so far last – stage in Turco-German relations began in the 1960s, when the first Turkish workers (then called *Gastarbeiter*) arrived in Germany, where manpower was urgently needed.[36] Today almost three million Turkish citizens live in Germany, many of them born there, but the relationship is still uneasy, defined by distrust and ignorance on both sides. When, early in the 1980s, Germany was the first European country to require an entry visa for Turks, it aroused great bitterness in Turkey. When France, Italy, Great Britain and other European states undertook the same steps it was more or less ignored by the Turkish media and the public, but Germany's action was considered a betrayal from the traditional friend.

The traditional friend? Was there ever anything like a friendship between Turkey and Germany? It is, of course, doubtful whether the term "friendship" can ever be applied to relations between nations. Friendship is a very personal relationship between individuals, based on intimate mutual knowledge. This mutual knowledge of Turks and Germans exists not even today, when millions of Turks live and work in Germany, and millions of German tourists travel to Turkey. The so-called traditional Turco-German friendship is nothing more than a series of coinciding interests.

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34 After his return to Germany Captain Hans Tröbst, the only German officer in Mustafa Kemal's army, was invited to report his experiences to Hitler personally. His son C.C. Troebst supplied this information.

35 For a select bibliography on this subject cf. *Haymatloz. Exil in der Türkei 1933-1945*, ed. Verein aktives Museum Berlin, Berlin 2000, 232-233.

36 For a select bibliography on this subject cf. *Zur Geschichte der Gastarbeiter in München. "Für 50 Mark einen Italiener"*, eds. Franziska Dunkel and Gabriella Stramaglia-Faggion, München 2000.

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# Jamāl Pacha, en une version libanaise
# L'usage positif d'une légende noire

*Youssef Mouawad (Lebanese American University of Beirut)*

«... La potence égalise
Vieux Cheikhs à turban vert, Druzes à blanc turban
Voisinent dans la Mort avec des gens d'Eglise.»
Chekri-Ghanim[1]

Certes, Jamāl Pacha est le personnage le plus honni de l'histoire du Liban.[2] Pour plus d'une raison, ce proconsul turc en Syrie, commandant de la IVe armée ottomane pendant la première guerre mondiale, fait toujours l'unanimité contre lui. Le fait est assez significatif; il mérite d'être souligné dans un Liban où la société est si fracturée qu'il suffit qu'un personnage soit haï par une communauté confessionnelle, pour que la communauté adverse le porte aux nues, ou du moins lui accorde les circonstances atténuantes.[3] La présente intervention ne cherche pas tant à établir la vérité historique, qu'à tenter de comprendre pourquoi l'idéologie officielle de la République Libanaise a tant accablé Jamāl Pacha. Pourquoi de tous les méfaits qu'on lui impute, cette même idéologie n'a retenu que les exécutions publiques et a fait du Burj (ou Place des Canons) un «lieu de mémoire», un site fondateur à l'exclusion de tout autre, un emplacement qui portera désormais le nom de Place des Martyrs.

## *Qui est Jamāl Pacha?*

En effet, il est difficile de parler avec sérénité de Jamāl Pacha aussi bien en Syrie[4] qu'au Liban. Arrivé à Damas en décembre 1914, il jouit des pleins pouvoirs civils et militaires pendant trois ans. Il quitte la Syrie en janvier 1918, laissant derrière

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1 Shukrī Ghānim, cité in: Editorial, I.C., 6 mai, «In Memoriam», *L'Orient*, 6 mai 1944, 1.

2 Cette assertion qui valait jusqu'en 1975, point de départ de la guerre libanaise, doit désormais être mitigée et relativisée; les souvenirs douloureux du dernier conflit civil ont plutôt occulté sinon gommé la mémoire des horreurs de la période 1915-1918.

3 Dans l'histoire récente, le sort réservé dans les diverses opinions aux personnages de Kamāl Jumblāṭ, de Mūsā al-Ṣadr et de Bashīr al-Jumayyil illustre cette situation.

4 Muṣṭafa Ṭlās, *al-Thawrah al-ʿarabiyyah al-kubrah*, Damas 1978, 281-290 ; Naʾīm al-Yāfi, *Jamāl Bāsha, Dirasāt fi-l-shakhṣiyyah wa-l-tārīkh*, al-Lādhiqiyyah 1993 ; Nadyā al-Ghazzī, *Ayyam min Safar Barlik*, Damas: Dār al-Shādī 1993; Mamdūḥ ʿUdwān, *Safar Barlik: ayyām al-jūʿ*, Damas 1994, cité in: Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, Columbia University Press 2000, 363, 375; Concernant la série télévisée syrienne «Ikhwāt al-Turāb», cf. article Jihād al-Zayn, «Jamāl Bāshā saffaḥan wa masfūḥan», *al-Safīr*, 7 février 1996, 17.

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lui une image charriant d'atroces souvenirs dans la mémoire populaire, même si de nos jours elle a plutôt tendance à s'estomper. C'est le protagoniste d'une période noire de l'histoire de la région et le héros d'une légende encore plus noire, dont le feu est ravivé par une production littéraire et historique,[5] ainsi que par la commémoration de la fête des Martyrs le 6 mai de chaque année, aussi bien à Damas qu'à Beyrouth. Nul personnage historique n'a été aussi vilipendé que lui, même pas Aḥmad Pacha al-Jazzār.[6] La comparaison entre les deux hommes est d'autant plus aisée que Jamāl Pacha fut surnommé al-Saffāḥ (*le sanguinaire*) alors que le Pacha d'Acre portait le titre de al-Jazzār (*le boucher*), deux épithètes qui les dépeignaient comme des êtres assoiffés de sang. Mais l'on conviendra à priori qu'il y a toujours un écart entre l'imagerie populaire et une certaine réalité historique. Qui était donc Jamāl Pacha, cet homme qui avait fait contre lui l'unanimité des Musulmans et des Chrétiens, des Syriens et des Libanais, des tenants du Grand Liban aussi bien que des partisans de la Grande Syrie, pour ne pas citer les Arméniens, etc. Rappelant au passage combien «l'histoire qu'on nous a racontée quand nous étions enfants ... nous marque aussi pour l'existence entière»[7], voici un exemple des termes dans lesquels les manuels d'histoire scolaires libanais le présentent:

> «Jamal Pacha connaissait l'attachement des Libanais à leurs libertés et la volonté des Arabes d'obtenir l'indépendance. Il instaura dans les zones soumises à son autorité, un pouvoir militaire qui sanctionnait sur simple suspicion et exécutait sur accusation. L'histoire a désigné ce tyran sous le titre "al-saffāh" (le sanguinaire), à cause du sang de tant d'innocents qu'il versa, ayant instauré à Aley un tribunal qui condamna à mort, à la prison ou à l'exil, les hommes du pays et ses leaders. Il s'en prit surtout aux Libanais; il leur coupa le ravitaillement en denrées et leur fit subir toutes sortes d'oppressions pour les amener à capituler. Cette famine atroce emporta la vie de milliers de citoyens et amena nombreux à prendre le chemin de l'exil pour échapper à la conscription dans les armées d'un Etat qui leur avait fait subir des calamités, et qui avait mis fin à leurs libertés.
>
> Pas un Syrien ou un Libanais qui ne se souvienne de Jamal Pacha sans que n'apparaissent devant ses yeux les potences où pendaient des martyrs glorieux, les prisons et les routes de l'exil qui résonnaient des voix de ceux qui souffraient. Et comme si la nature voulait aider ce tyran dans son entreprise, des nuées de sauterelles dévorèrent les cultures, les épidémies firent rage, les villages se vidèrent et la misère régna. Le pou-

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5 Les ouvrages littéraires et historiques seront cités tout au long de l'article. Pour la production théâtrale citons: Yūsuf Buṭrus Sa'd, *Najm al-'ajūs*, cf. *al-Bashīr*, 23 décembre 1922, 3-4 ; Buṭrus al-Ashjār, *Jamāl Bāsha fī Lubnān*, cité in: Ewa Machut-Mendecka, «The concepts of history and society in modern Arabic drama», in: *Gesellschaftlicher Umbruch und Historie im Zeitgenössischen Drama der Islamischen Welt* (Beiruter Texte und Studien, Band 60), Beyrouth, 1995, 186; Bākhus 'Assāf, *Baṭrak Lubnān al-kabīr*, mise en scène: Elie Laḥūd, première représentation à Jubayl, 1994; Pour le cinéma, le film *Safar Barlik* (Sefer Berlik), 1966, mise en scène: Henri Barakāt.

6 Toufic Touma, *Paysans et Institutions féodales chez les Druzes et les Maronites du Liban du XVIIe siècle à 1914*, Beyrouth: Publications de l'Université libanaise 1972, Tome II, 709.

7 Marc Ferro, *Comment on raconte l'histoire aux enfants à travers le monde entier*, Paris 1986, 7.

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> voir ainsi que certains accapareurs cupides saignèrent la population à tel point que certains mangèrent les pelures et les herbes et appelèrent de leurs vœux une mort qui pouvait les soulager de la faim. On a dit que le nombre des victimes libanaises avait atteint début 1918, le chiffre de cent cinquante mille. Cette époque fut appelée, à juste titre, l'époque sanguinaire.
> Le Liban, son gouvernement et son peuple, commémorent le 6 mai le souvenir de leurs martyrs.»[8]

L'ouvrage scolaire en question est de 1952; il fut largement utilisé jusqu'au début des années soixante-dix et même au-delà dans certains établissements. Le texte était accompagné d'une illustration représentant un officier barbu portant colback: c'est Jamāl, l'ennemi total. C'est en ces termes, ou en des termes semblables que des milliers d'élèves du cycle secondaire, apprenaient l'histoire de cette période.[9] Le jugement qui condamne le Pacha est définitif et ne souffre guère d'appel. Ce point de vue sera conforté et confirmé par toute une littérature faisant assumer aux Turcs tous les maux qui frappèrent le Liban et le Moyen Orient arabe en général durant quatre cents ans de pouvoir ottoman. Et ce n'est que très dernièrement que des études impartiales et nécessairement révisionnistes allaient nuancer les jugements et les condamnations.[10]

Le portrait de Jamāl avait été croqué, une bonne fois pour toutes, par Henri Morgenthau, ambassadeur des Etats–Unis à Istanbul, en ces termes:

> «L'extraordinaire acuité de son regard, la surprenante vivacité avec laquelle d'un seul coup d'œil il embrassait tous les détails d'une scène, trahissaient à son insu sa cruauté et son égoïsme; son rire même, qui découvrait ses dents blanches, était déplaisant et bestial.»[11]

Quelles étaient ses opinions? Il semble que dès 1913, l'élite politique ottomane à Istanbul ait adopté une nouvelle conception de l'ottomanisme en vertu de laquelle l'Islam était désormais le ciment de l'unité de l'empire[12], et que Jamāl Pacha s'était rallié à cette nouvelle vision.[13] L'ambassadeur Morgenthau en semble

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8 Lajnah min asātidhat al-madrasah al-būlisiyyah, ed., *Al-ʿUṣūr al-ḥāliyyah*, Ḥarisa 1952, Tome 8, 271.

9 Cf. également un autre texte scolaire cité in: Nicholas Z. Ajay Jr., *Mount Lebanon and the Wilayah of Beirut, 1914-1918: the war years*, a dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 1972, 530-532.

10 Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj, «The Social Uses of the Past: recent arab historiography of ottoman rule», *IJMES*, 14, 1982, 185-201; ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Tamīmī, «Siyāsat al-ittiḥādiyyīn bi bilād al-Shām wa-l-thawrah al-ʿarabiyyah sanat 1916. Muḥāwalah jadīdah li-l-fahm», *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine*, 19e Année, numéros 65-66, Août 1992, 71-72; Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab History and the Nation State*, London 1989, 197, cité in: Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, London/New York 1998, 175; Maurus Reinkowski, «Late ottoman rule over Palestine: its evaluation in Arab, Turkish and Israeli histories, 1970-90», *IJMES*, Vol. 35, No. 1, January 1999, 66-97.

11 Henri Morgenthau, *Mémoires, suivies de Documents inédits du Département d'Etat,* Flammarion 1984, 158.

12 Ḥasan Kayyālī, «Jamāl Bāshā fī Sūriyyah», Revue *al-Ijtihād*, n° 45-46, Beyrouth 2000, 200.

13 Ibid.

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convaincu quand il affirme que Jamāl représentait le panislamisme dont l'influence s'imposa rapidement à la politique gouvernementale, ce qui ne l'empêchera nullement de mépriser «les peuples asservis à la nation ottomane: les Arabes, les Grecs, les Arméniens ...».[14] Par ailleurs, étant officier de carrière, Jamāl avait tendance à résoudre les problèmes qui se posaient à lui avec une rigueur toute militaire,[15] à telle enseigne qu'à Istanbul, on s'était plaint de sa façon si brutale de procéder.[16]

## *Le pathos, l'acte d'accusation et les droits de la défense*

A partir de quelle date approximative les souvenirs funestes de l'intermède 1914-1918 se sont-ils estompés dans la mémoire populaire des Libanais? Phénomène progressif s'il en est, qui a accompagné la lente disparition des générations ayant connu les affres de cette période. Mais revenons au lendemain de la première guerre mondiale. Les exécutions publiques, la grande famine, les déportations,[17] les confiscations et saisies opérées par les militaires, le climat de terreur[18] et les vexations n'étaient pas près d'être oubliés par une population qui, au sortir de quatre années terribles, était divisée en deux courants majeurs: l'arabisme et le libanisme.

L'opinion musulmane avait *grosso modo* répudié le pouvoir ottoman et épousé la cause d'un état arabe qui regrouperait les provinces syriennes; l'identité nouvelle qui s'affirmait tenait les Turcs pour responsables de la décadence qui avait frappé les territoires arabes durant "quatre cents ans" de pouvoir ottoman. Jamāl Pacha devait non seulement répondre des crimes qui lui étaient personnellement imputés comme les exécutions publiques, mais il devait également comparaître devant le tribunal du nationalisme arabe naissant, dans le procès intenté contre le pouvoir turc.

En revanche, l'opinion chrétienne, qui accaparait le discours politique officiel du Liban sous le Mandat français, et dans la foulée de l'Indépendance, tenait Jamāl Pacha pour responsable aussi bien des pendaisons que de la famine qui avait ravagé le pays, famine qui avait été provoquée sciemment par le blocus alimentaire imposé au Mont Liban par Jamāl en personne. Cette même opinion était, en outre, ulcérée de l'abrogation du régime particulier dont jouissait le Mont Liban avant la guerre, de l'occupation de certains monastères,[19] de la fer-

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14 Morgenthau, *Mémoires*, 159.

15 Kayyālī, «Jamāl Bāshā fī Sūriyyah», 193.

16 Eliezer Tauber, *The Arab Movements in World War I*, London: Frank Cass 1993, 49, 52.

17 Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks. Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*, University of California Press 1997, 193.

18 Cf. Nicholas Z. Ajay Jr., «Political Intrigue and suppression in Lebanon during World War I», *IJMES*, 5, 1974, 140-160.

19 Philip Hitti, *Lebanon in History from the earliest times to the present*, 2e édition, London 1962, 483; Luc Vissers, *L'ordre antonin maronite*, Liban 1995, 71.

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meture des écoles et des établissements congréganistes français,[20] ainsi que des vexations dont le patriarche maronite avait été l'objet.[21] Et pour tout dire, le courant majoritaire chez les Chrétiens considérait l'autorité ottomane comme ayant été, à travers les âges, l'obstacle majeur à l'émergence d'un Liban indépendant et souverain.

Mais en gros, une opinion publique générale et diffuse gardera longtemps le souvenir des deux évènements saillants de cette période 1914-1918, à savoir les exécutions des patriotes et la famine. Voici ce qu'en dit un ouvrage scolaire, en fait le premier manuel d'histoire officiellement agréé par le Ministère de l'Education en 1937:

> «Jamal Pacha institua une cour martiale qui siégea à Aley et fut chargée d'examiner les dossiers de certains Libanais qui réclamaient l'indépendance de leur pays dans les articles ou les ouvrages qu'ils publiaient, ou qui cherchaient à travers les associations politiques étrangères à se libérer du joug turc. La cour martiale condamna, au cours des années 1915-1916, un grand nombre de Libanais et de Syriens à la mort ou à l'exil. Certains des condamnés se trouvaient en Egypte ou en Amérique, et de ce fait échappèrent au sort que leur réservaient les Ottomans. Cependant certains d'entre eux qui se trouvaient au Liban et en Syrie furent pendus à Beyrouth et à Damas, les autres furent exilés.»[22]

L'ouvrage en question poursuit en ces termes:

> «Les sauterelles dévastèrent le pays de manière effroyable, les sources de revenu se raréfièrent, et plus précisément les fonds de l'émigration qui, du fait de la guerre, ne parvenaient plus au Liban. Le chômage s'amplifia et la famine frappa la population. Et bien que les autorités turques assuraient quantités de denrées pour être distribuées aux pauvres, ceux-ci n'en reçurent qu'une infime partie du fait de certains fonctionnaires du gouvernement, des Libanais mêmes, qui ne distribuèrent pas les quantités reçues. Et comme la misère s'abattait sur le pays, les gens prenant de moins en moins de mesures d'hygiène, le typhus se propagea faisant de nombreuses victimes. Tous ces facteurs firent perdre au Liban beaucoup de ses fils, les villages dans certaines régions étaient en ruine et désertés par leurs populations, alors qu'ils regorgeaient de vie avant guerre.»[23]

Dans le débat où Jamāl et sa gestion ont été pris à partie, et où l'accusation a pu s'exprimer sans entrave, la défense n'a pas toujours eu voix au chapitre, du moins dans les pays arabes autrefois soumis à son autorité. Il faut cependant dire à la décharge de Jamāl, que quoiqu'ayant aboli les privilèges particuliers dont jouissait le Mont Liban sous la *Mutaṣarrifiyyah,* il n'imposa guère la conscription mili-

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20 Pierre Corcket, *Les Lazaristes et les Filles de la Charité au Proche-Orient (1783-1983)*, Beyrouth 1983, 150; Henri Jalabert, *La Congrégation des Sœurs des Saints-Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie*, Beyrouth 1956, 132.

21 Youssef Mouawad, «Exercice de dhimmitude: Patriarche Iliyas al-Huwayyik versus Jamal Pacha», in: Thomas Scheffler, ed., *Religion between Violence and Reconciliation* (Beiruter Texte und Studien, Band 76), Beirut 2002, 193-210.

22 Asad Rustum et Fu'ad Afram al-Bustāni, *Tārīkh Lubnān al-mūjaz*, Beyrouth 1937, 123-124.

23 Ibid. Il est à noter que, curieusement, ce manuel d'histoire ne fait pas état de la décision du blocus alimentaire du Mont Liban prise par Jamāl Pacha.

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taire aux Libanais. Dans ses Mémoires d'ailleurs, il tente de se disculper face aux accusations portées contre lui.[24] Jamāl nous dit que la population chrétienne, réputée francophile, disposait, lui avait-on assuré, de cinquante mille fusils, et qu'un soulèvement se préparait en faveur des alliés.[25] Il refusa cependant d'ordonner le désarmement des Chrétiens, de crainte que des excès ne soient commis par la soldatesque, dont auraient pu pâtir des Libanais innocents et paisibles. De même qu'on doit mettre à son crédit, nous rappelle-t-il, qu'il s'est opposé au déclenchement des troubles confessionnels que voulaient susciter, au nom du *jihād* proclamé par le calife, certains extrémistes musulmans contre des Chrétiens.[26] Enfin, poursuit-il, n'a-t-il pas empêché les bédouins de ravager les zones chrétiennes réputées riches et aisées?[27] Quant à la question majeure de la disette et du blocus alimentaire qui l'a provoquée, Jamāl l'élude en disant que le fait de l'accuser d'avoir «intentionnellement laissé les chrétiens de Syrie mourir» est pure fiction et qu'un jour la vérité sera rétablie.[28] Ni le mot famine ni le mot blocus ne sont prononcés. En fait, ce qui importe pour Jamāl dans ses Mémoires, et ce à quoi il consacre des pages entières, c'est de justifier les exécutions capitales qui auraient pu lui être reprochées. Le même souci prévalait lorsqu'il publia à Istanbul fin 1916, *La Vérité sur la Question Syrienne* en français, en arabe et en turc.[29] Ce souci de prendre le public à témoin, cette volonté affichée de se disculper aux yeux d'une opinion arabe, turque et internationale, ayant publié l'ouvrage en trois langues, est insolite quand on se rend compte qu'il escamote la question autrement plus grave des victimes de la famine.

## *La famine ou le gibet? Les «deux cent mille» ou les «quarante»?*

Jamāl Pacha n'est pas le seul à passer sous silence les victimes de la disette. Le Liban semble lui avoir emboîté le pas avec la fin des années vingt. C'est d'autant plus surprenant que dans son *Mémoire à la Conférence de la Paix* en octobre 1919, le patriarche maronite Elias Hoyek (Ilyās al-Ḥuwayyik) a eu largement recours à l'argument de la famine dévastatrice dans son plaidoyer en faveur d'un Mont Liban élargi ; ainsi, s'adjoindre les terres fertiles de la Biqāʿ allait assurer les besoins en denrées du pays et le mettre à l'abri de la misère. Le Patriarche avait souligné que le Mont Liban avait perdu durant les années de guerre «plus du tiers de sa

24 Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman (1913-1919)*, London 1922, 197-237.
25 Ibid., 202.
26 Ibid., 204.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Commandement de la IVe Armée, ed., *La Vérité sur La Question Syrienne*, Stamboul: Imprimerie Tanine 1916. Il existe également une version arabe et une version turque de ce texte; Cf. Eliezer Tauber, «La Vérité sur la Question Syrienne: A Reconsideration», *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 15, 1991, 315-344.

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population» des suites d'une famine «organisée par l'ennemi».[30] A ce niveau, on peut se poser la question de savoir quel était le nombre approximatif, sinon exact des victimes, et dans quelle mesure Jamāl Pacha en était responsable.

La proportion du tiers avancée par Mgr. Ḥuwayyik n'a pas été contestée avec beaucoup de conviction, et les chiffres ont oscillé par la suite suivant les auteurs entre cent mille et cent quatre vingt mille morts.[31] Ces chiffres pouvaient passer pour exagérés jusqu'à une étude récente par Linda Schatkowski Schilcher. Au terme de son enquête qui s'est élargie entre autres aux sources allemandes et autrichiennes, elle est arrivée à la conclusion que sur les cinq cent mille morts de faim et de malnutrition en Syrie naturelle, on décompte deux cent mille victimes dans les régions septentrionales du Mont Liban.[32] Un chiffre énorme pour une portion de territoire aussi réduite ; ce qui fait de cet événement une *Shoah* libanaise, comparable à la *potato famine* qui a sévi en Irlande au XIXe siècle. A la question de savoir si cette famine a été planifiée par les Ottomans comme certains ont pu le croire ou l'ont prétendu, Schatkowski Schilcher répond par la négative. Cet auteur considère qu'il y a plusieurs facteurs qui ont provoqué cette situation dramatique dont le blocus maritime imposé par les flottes alliées en Méditerranée et le blocus alimentaire du Mont Liban décidé par Jamāl Pacha.[33]

Mais tous les facteurs mentionnés ont-ils eu le même effet dévastateur?! Etablir des postes militaires aux frontières du Mont Liban pour empêcher l'arrivée des denrées et confisquer les marchandises qui lui étaient destinées,[34] fut une mesure prise par Jamāl Pacha et dont les raisons n'ont pas encore été pleinement élucidées.[35] D'après une étude récente et exhaustive des relations arabo-turques,

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30 Elias Hoyek (Patriarche), «Les revendications du Liban, Mémoire de la délégation libanaise à la conférence de la Paix», Paris, 25 octobre 1919, reproduit dans *La Revue Phénicienne*, Noël 1919, 238-240.

31 Des exemples d'estimation du nombre des victimes se retrouvent entre autres in Salmā Ṣā'igh, *al-Nasamāt*, Beyrouth 1923, 50, 116; Henry Bordeaux, *Yamilé sous les Cèdres*, Paris 1923, 292; George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, London 1946, 241; D'après les sources des pères Jésuites, «sur quelque 400.000 habitants de Beyrouth et du Mont Liban, la Croix-Rouge recense 190.000 morts; des villages entiers ont disparu», Association Amicale des Anciens Elèves, ed., *Livre d'Or du cinquantenaire*, Université Saint-Joseph, Beyrouth 1949, 31; William Nimeh, *History of the Lebanon illustrated*, Mexico 1954, 287; Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 217; Laḥd Khāṭir, *ʿAhd al-mutaṣarrifīn fī Lubnān*, Manshūrāt al-Jāmiʿah al-Lubnāniyyah, Beyrouth 1967, 200; Nicolas de Bustros, *Je me souviens*, Beyrouth: Librairie Antoine 1983, 19; Pierre Fournié et Jean-Louis Riccioli, *La France et le Proche-Orient (1916-1946)*, Casterman 1996, 97.

32 Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, «The Famine of 1915-1918 in Greater Syria», in: John Spagnolo, ed., *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective. Essays in honor of Albert Hourani*, Reading: Ithaca Press 1992, 229 s.

33 Ibid., 234.

34 Ajay Jr., *Mount Lebanon*, 376-7; Yūsuf al-Ḥakīm, *Bayrūt wa Lubnān fī ʿahd al-ʿuthmān*, Beyrouth 1991, 249.

35 Schatkowski Schilcher («The Famine», 236) tente d'expliquer les raisons qui ont pu amener Jamal à ordonner le blocus alimentaire et de ce fait cherche à le disculper de l'accusation d'avoir voulu délibérément affamer le Mont Liban.

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si la Syrie a beaucoup plus souffert de malnutrition que les autres régions de l'empire, c'est bien des suites du blocus maritime imposé par les Alliés;[36] curieusement, nulle mention n'y est faite de l'embargo décidé par Jamāl.[37] Le débat reste donc ouvert. Malheureusement, la question fut posée de telle sorte que, dès le départ, elle se cristallisa en ces termes: qui des alliés qui, par leur blocus naval, ont empêché l'arrivée de deux navires de denrées affrétés dans les Amériques, ou de Jamāl Pacha qui imposa une «quarantaine» au Mont Liban, est responsable de la famine? Comme si établir la responsabilité partielle d'un protagoniste pouvait, non pas atténuer, mais plus encore, exclure la responsabilité de l'autre. Dans cette polémique, on a fini par perdre de vue le fait qu'imposer un blocus alimentaire à une région, à laquelle en temps normal son relief montagneux ne pouvait assurer que quelque mois de subsistance par an, c'était condamner à une mort lente une population dont on avait la responsabilité. C'était également faire preuve d'indifférence et de négligence criminelles, alors que d'autres facteurs étaient déjà intervenus pour détériorer une situation qui s'aggravait de jour en jour.[38] Cependant notre propos, en l'espèce, n'est pas tant d'établir les responsabilités que de suivre et d'enregistrer les répercussions et l'écho de ce désastre humain au niveau des discours et des mentalités dans l'après-guerre.

Reste l'interrogation suivante: pourquoi ce silence discriminatoire à l'égard de la population décimée par la faim, alors que le pays commémore tous les ans, le six mai, les martyrs qui ont fini sur le gibet? En vertu de quoi et sur quelle base la distinction entre «deux cent mille» morts d'une part, et une «quarantaine» de suppliciés[39] de l'autre a-t-elle été établie? Pour les uns, qui sont de loin les plus nombreux, pas une plaque commémorative, pas une place qui rappelle leurs

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36 Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 199.

37 Ibid.; une étude moins récente a passé également sous silence le blocus alimentaire: Zeine N. Zeine, *The emergence of arab nationalism*, 3e édition, New York: Caravan Books 1973, 111.

38 Le fait pour Jamal Pacha d'avoir ordonné la distribution de denrées, à certains points précis de sa carrière, pour marquer sa satisfaction ou faire preuve de générosité ostentatoire (télégrammes de remerciement, discours et poèmes laudatifs lui furent adressés), ne peut en aucun cas atténuer sa responsabilité. Si la décision de l'embargo n'avait pas été prise, le Mont Liban aurait certes souffert de la famine à l'instar des autres provinces syriennes, et peut-être même plus sévèrement, mais jamais sa population n'aurait été décimée de la sorte. Pour survivre dans une région sous blocus, il fallait compter sur la contrebande, ou alors quitter sa terre comme l'ont fait par exemple beaucoup de Druzes du Chouf en émigrant par familles entières auprès de leurs coreligionnaires dans le Ḥaurān. Les Chrétiens n'ayant pas de base arrière où se replier quittèrent leurs foyers individuellement ou par petits groupes pour grossir le nombre des miséreux dans les villes côtières ou dans celles de l'intérieur. D'une manière ou d'une autre, par la mort certaine ou par le déplacement de ses habitants, si la guerre s'était poursuivie plus longtemps, la décision d'imposer le blocus aurait fini par vider le Mont Liban de sa population.

39 C'est le chiffre approximatif des condamnés à mort exécutés à l'époque de Jamal Pacha dans les territoires soumis à sa juridiction. Shakīb Arslān parle d'une quarantaine de pendus, cf. Najīb al-Buʿaynī, ed., *Dhikrayāt al-amīr Shakīb Arslān*, Beyrouth 2000, 250; un ouvrage récent donne le chiffre global de quarante deux suppliciés: Ghassan Tuéni et Farès Sassine, eds., *El Bourj*, Beyrouth: Dār al-Nahār 2000, 213.

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souffrances et leur fin tragique, pas une cérémonie; pour les autres, une journée nationale et tous les honneurs du Souvenir. Pourquoi avoir refoulé le souvenir d'une calamité, qui par son ampleur, rappelle la tragédie arménienne à la même époque? Pourquoi, est-ce que l'establishment maronite, toujours si prompt à clamer son indignation et à revendiquer ses droits, a-t-il mis en sourdine la mémoire de son *sheol,* en fait la plus grande catastrophe répertoriée de l'histoire de sa communauté?

## *Le pourquoi?*

A cet égard, il faut distinguer entre la réaction populaire et celle des autorités en exercice. Au lendemain de la guerre, les esprits dans la strate populaire n'avaient qu'un souhait: celui d'oublier une période abominable. La prospérité et la sécurité recouvrées allaient petit à petit occulter l'inavouable ; car à côté de certains actes de dévouement, la solidarité avait souvent fait défaut, et certains mauvais souvenirs dans la mémoire humaine devaient être éradiqués. Les vieilles histoires de la montagne libanaise ont répété à l'envi combien tel a profité de la pénurie de vivres en rachetant le terrain de son voisin pour littéralement une bouchée de pain.[40] De même les rumeurs ont colporté tout bas comment certains ont refusé cette dernière bouchée de pain à l'ami qui mourait d'inanition, pour la réserver aux membres de leur propre famille. La loi du silence en milieu montagnard et clanique se devait de gommer certains faits; on n'allait pas se gausser des filles qui avaient quitté leurs foyers pour chercher du travail loin du cadre familial, ni des femmes qui avaient probablement accordé leurs faveurs pour un sursis de vie.[41] Par amour propre, on allait éviter de parler des siens, de ceux de son quartier, de son village, morts dans le dénuement, réduits à la dernière extrémité ou amenés à mendier de quoi survivre. Tout cela, il était préférable de l'oublier. On n'allait quand même pas constituer un groupe de pression pour exiger de l'Etat une commémoration, car la misère n'est jamais héroïque, d'autant plus que certains des anciens accapareurs s'étaient rachetés une conduite, et qu'en tout état de cause, nul profiteur n'avait été inquiété ni traduit en justice.[42]

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40 Jacques Tabet, «Lettre Ouverte au Général Gouraud», *La Revue Phénicienne*, Noël 1919, 219; Jean Donon, «La Rescision des Ventes de Guerre au Liban», *L'Asie Française*, janvier 1922, 16-21. Dans une zone limitrophe du Mont Liban de l'époque, on rapporte l'histoire d'un *agha* qui échangea pour survivre toute une oliveraie contre une orange, Cf. Michael Gilsenan, *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence and Narrative in an Arab Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1966, 113-156.

41 Iskandar Riyāshī, *Niswān min Lubnān*, Dār al-Thaqāfah 1961, 77-80 ; Idem., *Al-ayyām al-lubnāniyyah*, Beyrouth s.d., 51; Eveline Bustros, «Sous la Baguette du Coudrier», in: *Romans et Ecrits Divers*, Beyrouth 1988, 193; Hitti, *Libanon in History*, 484; Cf. Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 27.

42 Antūn Yammīn, *Lubnān fi-l-ḥarb*, Tome II, Egypte 1920, 25-43; H. Lammens, *La Syrie, précis historique*, Tome II, Beyrouth 1921, 252; Pierre Benoit, *La Châtelaine du Liban*, 1er édition en 1924, Paris: Editions Athéna 1952, 88-89.

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Mais cela n'absout pas l'Etat libanais qui est, ne serait-ce qu'en partie, garant et dépositaire de la mémoire nationale. C'est qu'il y a probablement une autre raison qui expliquerait le silence des autorités: les «deux cent mille» victimes, tombées principalement dans les régions septentrionales du Mont Liban comme le dit Schatkowski Schilcher,[43] étaient de ce fait majoritairement chrétiennes. Le constat est on ne peut plus net: la catastrophe ne concernait donc pas au même titre toutes les composantes sociales du pays. Mais au fait, comment est-ce que la disette dans un pays essentiellement agricole, pouvait être aussi sélective et frapper les Chrétiens tout en épargnant la communauté druze, l'autre constituant majeur de la population du Mont Liban? Un article de Samir Seikaly portant sur la situation comparée de deux groupes mitoyens, les Juifs et les Arabes de Palestine en 1914-1918, nous donne la clef du problème en utilisant les termes «unequal fortunes» pour qualifier le sort respectif mais nullement identique de deux communautés vivant côte à côte.[44] Pour l'auteur en question, certes tout le monde avait souffert des répercussions de la guerre en Terre Sainte, cependant la situation des Arabes était de loin plus à déplorer que celle des Juifs. Dans un espace géographique précis et même restreint, des communautés religieuses ou ethniques peuvent subir différemment, ou à des degrés divers, les effets d'un même phénomène. Aussi les «sorts inégaux» des Druzes et des Chrétiens du Mont Liban s'expliquent-ils par le fait que ceux des Druzes qui n'avaient pas les moyens de survivre, se réfugièrent auprès de leurs coreligionnaires dans le Ḥaurān fertile, une voie de salut dont ne pouvaient pas bénéficier les chrétiens.[45] Une autre comparaison entre la situation du Mont Liban et celle du Jabal ʿĀmil, majoritairement chiite et non compris dans la zone du blocus alimentaire décrété par Jamāl Pacha, est tout aussi éclairante: un auteur chiite Shaykh ʿAlī al-Zayn déplore quelques morts de malnutrition dans son village de Jibshīt,[46] alors que Simʿān Khāzin parle d'une fosse commune à Zgharta, village maronite, où trois mille huit cents morts de faim seraient enterrés.[47] Durant la même période, l'agglomération chrétienne de Batrūn passa, nous dit-on, de cinq mille à deux mille personnes,[48] alors que le village

43 Schatkowski Schilcher, «The Famine», 229.

44 Samir M. Seikali, «Unequal Fortunes: The Arabs of Palestine and the Jews during World War I», *Studia Arabica and Islamica*, Festschrift for Iḥsān ʿAbbās, Beyrouth: AUB 1981, 399-406.

45 Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 484; A rappeler que le professeur Phillip Hitti est originaire d'une région druzo-chrétienne, qu'il était rentré des Etats-Unis au Liban à la fin du conflit mondial, et que de ce fait, son témoignage est de première main. Une enquête personnelle de l'auteur du présent article dans le Chouf lui a confirmé que plusieurs familles druzes qui s'étaient rendues dans le Ḥaurān rentrèrent au Liban à la fin de la guerre, alors que d'autres y demeurèrent à titre définitif. Cf. à cet égard Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 33.

46 al-Majlis al-thaqāfī al-janūbi, ed., «Min Dhikrayāt al-Shaykh ʿAli al-Zayn», *Daftar al-dhikrayāt al-janūbiyyah*, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnāni 1981, 22.

47 Simʿān Khāzin, *Tārīkh ihdin al-qadīm wa-l-ḥadīth*, Tome 1, *Tārīkh ihdin al-madanī*, Jūniah 1938, 264.

48 Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 486.

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maronite de Ḥusrāyil ne comptait plus à la fin de la guerre que soixante habitants, ayant perdu cent vingt personnes des suites de la famine.[49] La consultation de ce genre littéraire que constituent les *tawārīkh* (singulier *tārīkh*) des agglomérations,[50] villages ou bourgs dans les zones chrétiennes du Mont Liban, ou le recensement de la région de Batrūn de 1921, nous donne une idée de l'ampleur du désastre.[51] Les rapports publiés dans les bulletins des missions catholiques peuvent également constituer une source d'information à cet égard, si l'on fait la part de l'exagération.[52] Un témoin oculaire nous rapporte comment sa ville de Tripoli fut envahie par les miséreux des villages de la montagne, sous-entendu par les Chrétiens, qui criaient famine et qu'on ramassait inanimés le long des rues.[53]

Encore une fois, toutes les régions ont souffert de la disette à l'intérieur des frontières du Mont Liban tout comme dans les zones qui lui étaient extérieures ou limitrophes.[54] Mais une chose est de ne pas manger à satiété tous les jours et de souffrir de malnutrition, autre chose est de mourir de faim par dizaines[55] et d'accuser la perte de deux cent mille personnes dans un Mont Liban dont la population était évaluée entre 414 mille et 496 mille personnes.[56]

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49 Yūsuf Khaṭṭār al-Ḥilū, *Min nāfidhatī*, Beyrouth: Dār al-Farābi 1978, 1.

50 A titre indicatif, voi Khāzin, *Tārīkh ihdin al-qadīm*, 260-6; Yūsuf Abī-Ṣaʿb, *Tārīkh al-kufūr Kisrawān wa usarihā*, Jūniah 1985, 103-5; Ṣaqr Yūsuf Ṣaqr, *Tārīkh Bijjeh wa usarihā fī Lubnān wa buldān al-ightirāb*, Beyrouth 1986, 346-354; Sharbīl Abī-Khalīl, *Tārīkh al-kaḥḥālah*, Beyrouth 1997, 65; Nabīl Ḥannah Yūsuf, *Tuhum. Dirāsāt tārīkhiyyah dīmughrāfiyyah dīniyyah*, Tuhum 2000, 39; Antoine Bassil, *al-Batrūn, Nawādir al-aḥdāth wa l-aḥādīth*, Tome II, s.l. 2001, 67-72; Jūzāf Naʿīm Shallīṭa, *Dhākirat Kfarʿabīda (1519-2001)*, 1er édition, s.l. 2002, 30-31.

51 Archives de l'école Mar Yūḥanna Marūn de Kfarḥayy (diocèse de Batrūn), dossier n° 93, cité in: Jean Nakhūl, *al-Dīmughrāfiyyah fī minṭaqat al-Batrūn min al-mutaṣarrifiyyah ilā Lubnān al-kabīr (1867-1965)*, cité in: *Dawlat Lubnān al-kabīr (1920-1996)*, ed. Manshūrāt al-Jāmiʿah al-Lubnāniyyah, Qism al-Dirasāt al-Tārikhiyyah, No. 44, Beyrouth 1999, 208.

52 Les Martyrs en Arménie et en Syrie, *Œuvre des Ecoles d'Orient*, n° 330, octobre 1916, 90-91 ; Les Libanais meurent de faim, *Œuvre des Ecoles d'Orient*, n° 331, novembre-décembre 1916, 130-1; La Syrie martyre, *Œuvre des Ecoles d'Orient*, n° 332, mai-juin 1917, 192-3; Informations diverses, Syrie, *Les Missions catholiques*, n° 2564, 26 juillet 1918, 353; P. François Lahoud, La famine au Liban, *Les Missions catholiques*, n° 2589, 17 janvier 1919, 25-26; Th. Malouf, Les souffrances du Liban pendant la guerre, *Les Missions catholiques*, n° 2637, 19 décembre 1919, 603-4.

53 Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn ʿĀrif Mīqāti, *Ṭarābulus fī al-nisf al-awwal min al-qarn al-ʿishrīn mīlādi*, Tripoli: Dār al-inshāʾ lil-ṭibāʿah wa l-nashr s.d., 152.

54 Yūsuf Shadīd, *Bayna al-siyāsah wa-l-diblumāsiyyah, dhikrayāt wa mudhakkarāt*, Beyrouth: Dār al-nahār, 2001, 28-30.

55 Cf. Schatkowski Schilcher, «The Famine», 229-230, notes 3, 4, 5, 6.

56 Cf. Tableau Statistique, 1913, in: Albert Naccache, «Notre Avenir Economique», *La Revue Phénicienne*, juillet 1919, 8. Cf. également Tableau Statistique, 1912-1913, in: Paul Noujaim, «La Question du Liban, Etude Politique, Economique et Statistique», *La Revue Phénicienne*, Août 1919, 71.

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## *Les représentations et le discours*

Comme toujours, chaque communauté confessionnelle a sa propre version d'un même événement. Chaque groupe ayant sa propre perspective et sa propre cohésion discursive à préserver, ne devient-il pas pour autant indifférent et sourd au discours de l'autre? Le pathos chrétien, dans les années vingt surtout, se distingue du discours des autres communautés par son insistance sur la question de la famine; il en fait un sujet incontournable et un thème récurrent. Certes toutes les parties s'accordent à dire que le Mont Liban fut durement touché par la disette en 1914-1918, même si des voix se sont élevées et continuent à le faire pour disculper les Turcs de l'accusation de crime prémédité contre les chrétiens du Liban ou pour contester l'ampleur du désastre.[57] Il n'en reste pas moins que dans les représentations collectives, la famine dévastatrice a été perçue comme une affaire plutôt chrétienne; elle a constitué un thème majeur du discours spécifiquement maronite dans la foulée de la Grande Guerre, avant de sombrer dans l'oubli, alors que les autres communautés confessionnelles n'avaient pas accordé à cette question la «primordialité» que leurs partenaires chrétiens lui accordaient.

Déjà en plein conflit mondial, la question s'était posée de savoir si la décision du blocus alimentaire n'avait pas pour but de liquider les chrétiens sans avoir à prendre la responsabilité de massacres et de sang versé. Dès 1916, les autorités turques furent accusées de vouloir affamer les Libanais pour les réduire. Les journaux alliés et surtout français[58] n'avaient pas manqué de souligner la responsabilité de Jamāl à cet égard, ce qui amena ce dernier à exiger des lettres de dénégation formelles de la part des autorités religieuses maronites.[59] Au prélat qu'il avait convoqué, Jamāl avait demandé s'il pouvait être tenu pour responsable des ravages des sauterelles en 1915, ou de la sécheresse en 1916 pour que la presse française l'accusât d'affamer les Chrétiens.[60] Très tôt donc, la question s'était cristallisée en ces termes: l'embargo procédait-il de la volonté délibérée de Jamāl Pacha d'affamer les Chrétiens?

Les chancelleries et la presse alliées ne pouvaient que se saisir des propos apocryphes attribués à Enver Pacha lors de son passage en Syrie en février 1916, à savoir: «L'empire doit être nettoyé des Arméniens et des Libanais. Nous avons

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57 Cf. al-Buʿaynī, ed., *Dhikrayāt al-amīr Shakīb Arslān*, 43s, 49s, 59s, 81s, 249-250 et passim. L'ouvrage en question rassemble entre autres des articles que Shakīb Arslān a publiés dans la revue *al-Manār* (Le Caire) en 1922 ainsi que dans la revue «*La Nation Arabe*» en 1931-32; Cf. également préface de l'émir Shakīb Arslān de l'ouvrage d'Edmond Rabbath, *L'évolution politique de la Syrie sous le mandat*, Paris, 1928, p. XII-XIV; Najwa Barūdi, «Hal qaṣada al-Atrāk tajwīʿ al-lubnāniyyīn?», *al-Zamīl*, Université Arabe de Beyrouth, n° 22, septembre 1993, 28-30.

58 Pour la liste de ces journaux, voir Ibrāhīm Ḥarfūsh, *Dalāʾil al-ʿināyah al-ṣamadāniyyah*, Jūniah 1934, 555.

59 Ibid., 553-559.

60 ʿAbdallah Khūrī, «Ṣafḥa tārīkhiyyah min ayyām al-ḥarb», *al-Bachīr*, 1er mars 1922, 1,2.

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détruit les premiers par le glaive, nous détruirons les seconds par la faim.»[61] Gibran K. Gibran, installé aux Etats-Unis, se fait l'écho de la rumeur en écrivant à Mary Haskell:

> «My people, the people of Mount Lebanon are perishing through a famine which has been planned by the Turkish government. 80.000 already died. Thousands are dying everyday. The same things that happened in Armenia are happening in Syria. Mt Lebanon, being a Christian country, is suffering the most.»[62]

Par ailleurs, les propos du patriarche Ḥuwayyik affirmant à la Conférence de la Paix en octobre 1919 que la famine avait été «organisée par l'ennemi»,[63] allaient être confirmés par Edmond Rabbath en ces termes:

> «une famine voulue, méthodiquement poursuivie, isola Beyrouth et le Liban, les deux régions les plus suspectes, du reste de la Syrie, décima un tiers de la population et dépeupla des villages entiers.»[64]

George Antonius n'hésite pas à impliquer Jamāl Pacha, dont les intentions étaient malveillantes, en ces termes: «... there lay a deliberate motive which was vindicative ...»[65] Il est à noter que ce sont exclusivement des auteurs chrétiens, même s'ils ne sont pas toujours du même bord politique, qui ont accusé les Ottomans d'avoir planifié la famine, alors que ce furent généralement des auteurs d'autres communautés qui ont tenté, dès le départ, de disculper les Turcs ou d'atténuer leurs responsabilités.

Dans ses Mémoires, Salīm ʿAli Salām, notable sunnite de Beyrouth qui rapporte le climat de terreur sous Jamāl Pacha,[66] garde cependant un mutisme surprenant quant aux victimes de la famine alors que des centaines d'indigents faméliques avaient envahi les rues de cette ville et criaient famine *jūʿān*.[67] De même, une autre personnalité beyrouthine, témoin oculaire des événements, ne s'attarde pas dans sa contribution tardive sur les souffrances des affamés, même s'il considère que la famine a été planifiée, et qu'il nous rapporte les souvenirs

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61 Defrance à Aristide Briand, Le Caire, 19 mai 1916, A.M.A.E., Guerre 1914-1918, Turquie, Tome 872, ff. 216-216v, cité in: Arthur Beylerian, *Les Grandes Puissances, l'Empire Ottoman et les Arméniens dans les Archives Françaises, 1914-1918*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne 1983, 205.

62 Lettre à Mary Haskell, 26 mai 1916, in: Ghāzi Fuʾād Braks, *Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān*, Beyrouth 1973, 220.

63 Hoyek, «Les revendications du Liban», 240.

64 Rabbath, *L'évolution politique* , 38, 263.

65 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 242.

66 Ḥasan Ḥallāq, ed., *Mudhakkarāt Salīm ʿAli Salām (1869-1938)*, Beyrouth 1982, 203-227.

67 H. Lammens, *La Syrie*, 220; *Mufakkarāt Hind*, Harisa 1924, 139; Halide Edib, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, New York: The Century Co. 1926, 451, cité in: Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 20; Jirjis al-Khūri al-Maqdisī, *Aʿẓam ḥarb fī-l-tārīkh*, 2e édition, Beyrouth 1927, 68-70; l'auteur en question était un professeur à l'université américaine de Beyrouth; Ibrāhīm bek al-Aswad, *Tanwīr al-azhān fī tārīkh Lubnān*, Tome III, Beyrouth 1930, 54-74; Yūsuf al-Ḥakīm, *Bayrūt wa Lubnān*, 251.

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pathétiques de son passage dans la montagne libanaise.[68] Par contre, les exécutions publiques sont un sujet sur lequel il s'étend plus longuement.[69] Il est tout aussi intéressant de se pencher sur l'historiographie du Jabal ʿĀmil, région chiite et limitrophe du Mont Liban comme précisé plus haut. La majorité des auteurs de cette région, tout en relevant les horreurs de la famine générale, traite de ce problème comme d'un dégât résiduel ou collatéral.[70] Les propos de Shaykh ʿAli al-Zayn sont assez caractéristiques: s'il s'étend longuement sur le climat de conspiration, de délation et de terreur sous Jamāl, il ne dit mot sur la disette dans son ouvrage majeur sur la période en question;[71] et ce n'est que dans un enregistrement tardif qu'il avoue que certaines personnes étaient mortes de faim dans son village de Jibshīt.[72] C'est la version des événements donnée par Shaykh Sulaymān Dhāhir qui est relativement la plus proche du discours chrétien; l'auteur prend la mesure de l'événement, s'apitoie sur les victimes de la disette et rend les autorités turques responsables de la misère pour avoir interdit la libre circulation des denrées.[73] Il n'empêche qu'en gros, ni les sentiments ni les représentations collectives des chrétiens n'ont été partagés par leurs partenaires appartenant à d'autres communautés, pas plus qu'ils n'ont suscité l'intérêt ou l'adhésion des auteurs musulmans. Au Jabal ʿĀmil, le choléra, la conscription et les exécutions capitales sont tout aussi, sinon plus, dignes d'intérêt que la disette.

En revanche, toute une production littéraire atteste l'intérêt que les auteurs chrétiens ont porté, au lendemain de la guerre et même au-delà, à la question majeure de la famine. En témoignent des articles dans la presse,[74] des monographies,[75] des romans,[76] des récits autobiographiques,[77] des élégies,[78] des représen-

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68 Muḥammad Jamīl Bayhum, *Al-ʿahd al-mukhāram fī Sūriyyah wa Lūbnān 1918-1923*, Beyrouth 1968, 186-7.

69 Ibid., 188-194.

70 al-Muʾtamar al-takrīmī li-l-dhikrah al-thalāthīn lī raḥīlihi, al-Muhājir al-ʿĀmili al-Shaykh Ḥabīb Āl-Ibrahīm, al-Mustashāriyyah al-thaqāfiyyah li-l-jumhūriyyah al-irāniyyah fī Lubnān, 1966, pp. 42, 44 ; Muḥammad Jābir Āl-Ṣafa, *Tārīkh Jabal ʿĀmil*, Beyrouth 1981, 202; al-Imām al-Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Aʿyān al-Shīʿa*, Beyrouth 1984, Tome X, p. 367; Ḥasan al-Amīn, *Ḥill wa tarḥāl*, Beyrouth 1999, 13.

71 ʿAlī al-Zayn, *Min Awrāqi*, Beyrouth s.d., 7-61.

72 «Min dhikrayāt al-Shaykh ʿAlī al-Zayn», 27.

73 Sulaymān Dhāhir, *Jabal ʿĀmil fī-l-ḥarb al-kawniyyah*, Beyrouth 1986, 43-47.

74 Pour ne citer qu'une revue d'expression française, pas moins de huit articles de *La Revue Phénicienne* de 1919 portent sur la question de la famine et sur ses conséquences désastreuses.

75 Antūn Yammīn, *Lubnān fī-l-ḥarb*, Tome 1-2, Beyrouth 1919; Luṭfallah Naṣr al-Bakāsīni, *Nabdhah min wakāʿ al-ḥarb al-kawniyyah*, Beyrouth 1922 ; Antoine Yammine, *Quatre ans de misère*, Le Caire 1922; al-Khūrī al-Maqdisī, *Aʿẓam ḥarb fī-l-tārīkh*, 57-58 et 63-70 ; Cf. illustration in Blanche Lohéac-Ammoun, *Histoire du Liban*, Beyrouth 1948, 174-175; Mikhāʾīl Isḥāq al-Najjār, *Ḥadīth tārīkhī ʿan al-kūrah wa Bishmizzīn*, Ṭarābulus: Maṭbaʿat al-Adīb 1952, 25; Ibrahīm Naʿūm Kanʿān, *Lubnān fī-l-ḥarb al-kubrah (1914-1918)*, Beyrouth 1974, 163-169, voir illustrations; Ibrāhīm Kanʿān, *Hulāku Lubnān (1908-1980)*, s.l. 1980, 145-150, voir illustrations; Youssef Haddad, *al-Lubnāniyyah, risālah fī nakabāt al-ḥarb ilā al-muhājirīn*, 2e édition, Jubayl: Dār ʿIssām Ḥaddād s.d.

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tations théâtrales,[79] etc. Ce thème de la disette n'a pas trouvé d'écho, ou plutôt ne s'est pas développé, dans l'environnement musulman de l'après-guerre. En somme, la famine en dehors du Mont Liban n'accuse pas ce caractère de centralité que l'on retrouve dans les mentalités et dans les écrits émanant de Chrétiens.

## *Instrumentalisation au choix*

Ce désastre humain avait frappé majoritairement, sinon exclusivement, la population chrétienne du Mont Liban ; il ne pouvait donc intéresser ou concerner au même degré les autres communautés confessionnelles du pays dans ses nouvelles frontières de 1920. Cette disette «ciblée», qui dans les faits avait décimé plus particulièrement les Chrétiens, ne pouvait constituer un thème fédérateur entre toutes les confessions religieuses, au même titre que les exécutions publiques qui avaient fait des victimes aussi bien dans les rangs chrétiens que dans les rangs musulmans. Le deuil des «deux cent mille» allait, au mieux, devoir se cantonner dans le privé.

Si le Mont Liban avait perpétué son autonomie dans ses frontières de la *Mutaṣarrifiyyah*, la famine et ses victimes auraient probablement conquis une autre place dans la mémoire et l'idéologie officielles. Les martyrs n'auraient peut-être pas accaparé toute l'attention, et la question des victimes de la disette aurait été autrement traitée dans un Mont Liban d'avant 1914, pays à forte majorité chrétienne. Mais l'Etat du Grand Liban proclamé en 1920 se révélait plus large géographiquement, et englobait désormais des régions à forte représentation musulmane qui n'avaient pas une perception identique des mêmes événements. La

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76 Tawfiq Yūsuf ʿAwwād, *al-Raghīf*, Beyrouth 1939; Charles Corm, «Conte de Pâques», in: *Les Miracles de la Madone aux Sept Douleurs*, Beyrouth: Editions de la Revue Phénicienne 1949, 1-62. Ce conte est dédié «A toutes les mamans qui souffrent de la faim de leurs enfants»; les illustrations, qui représentent des êtres faméliques, ont été reproduites «d'après un carnet de croquis pris sur le vif par l'auteur dans les rues de Beyrouth pendant la famine 1915-1918»; Bustros, *Sous la baguette*, 192-194, 197-199; Voir également des romans d'auteurs français qui se font l'écho des ravages de la famine dans le Mont Liban: Bordeaux, *Yamilé sous les Cèdres*, 292; Pierre Benoit, *La Châtelaine*, 88-89 et 91.

77 B. Khūwayrī, *al-Riḥlah al-sūriyyah fī-l-ḥarb al-ʿumūmiyyah fī 1916*, Egypte: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Yūsufiyyah 1921; Bishārah al-Buwārī, *Mudhakkarāt Bishārah Jirjis al-Buwārī ʿan arbaʿ sinīn al-ḥarb min sanat 1914 – 1918*, New York: Al-Huda Press 1926; Cf. Toufic Touma, «Evasions», *FMA*, Beyrouth 2000; Anīs Frayḥa, *Qabla an ansa*, Tripoli: Jarrous Press s.d., 49-59; Voir également «Mudhakkarāt al-Khūrī Isṭfān al-Bishʿalānī», in: ʿIṣām Kamāl Khalīfah, *Shakhṣiyyāt bārizah fī tārīkh Lubnān al-muʿāṣir*, Beyrouth 1997, 108-110.

78 Cf. «al-Jūʿ wa-l-majāʿāt», *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 20 novembre 1918, 1; Dawūd Mūsa, «Ibtisāmat al-naṣr», *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 2 février 1921, 1; Ṣāʾigh, *al-Nasamāt*, 50, 55, 58 et 116; Najīb Murād et Diyār Bakri, *Sinīn al-Ghalāʾ*, Tripoli s.d., probablement des années 1920, poème fleuve en langue vernaculaire; Mikhāʾīl Nuʿaymī, «Akhī» in: *Majmūʿat al-rābiṭah al-qalamiyya li-sanat 1921*, Beyrouth: Dār Ṣādir & Dār Bayrūt 1964, 27-28; Ṣaqr Yūsuf, *Tārīkh Bijjeh*, 350-354; Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān, «Māta Ahlī», *al-ʿAwāṣif*, Beyrouth: Dār al-Jamīl 1997, 189-196.

79 Yūsuf Buṭrus Saʿd, *Najm al-majūs*.

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catastrophe de la famine allait être évacuée de la mémoire collective pour rester une affaire personnelle ; de même les souvenirs privés allaient à leur tour être refoulés pour les raisons indiquées plus haut. Dans les nouvelles frontières d'un pays élargi et face à la nouvelle donne, les chrétiens se devaient d'occulter le souvenir des «deux cent mille», pour commémorer avec leurs nouveaux partenaires musulmans le souvenir d'une lutte commune se concrétisant dans la célébration des Martyrs. Par la même occasion, l'opinion chrétienne, en lâchant du lest, allait éviter les dérives et certains dérapages possibles; on pouvait craindre, de fait, que des accusations ne soient portées haut et fort contre l'Islam ou les musulmans, les tenant pour responsables de la famine.[80] L'amalgame pouvant être vite fait entre Islam et Turcs et tenir, par glissements successifs, les Musulmans responsables de la catastrophe. C'est ce qu'avait frôlé le père Antūn Yammīn dans ses ouvrages, en donnant les noms des accapareurs, des profiteurs et des collaborateurs dont certains appartenaient aux familles sunnites les plus en vue de Beyrouth ; ce même auteur, poussé par une vindicte compréhensible, n'avait d'ailleurs pas hésité à prendre pour cible des Chrétiens, de la capitale comme de la Montagne, qui avaient désormais pignon sur rue et qui tenaient le haut du pavé sous le Mandat.[81] Ne fallait-il pas plutôt éviter la discorde civile qui consistait à rouvrir les plaies en accablant les uns et les autres, en leur faisant des procès publics ou en les dénonçant à la presse? Le discours sur la famine est un discours diviseur alors qu'on cherchait désespérément un thème intégrationniste. Boîte de Pandore ou bombe à retardement, la question de la disette devait être reléguée aux oubliettes et nul apprenti sorcier ne serait admis à jouer cette carte «sécessionniste».

Sacrifiés une première fois par le jeu des blocus et par le déchaînement des éléments, les «deux cent mille» allaient être sacrifiés une seconde fois sur l'autel de l'entente nationale et du dénominateur commun minimal qu'elle impliquait. En somme, pour légitimer le nouvel Etat du Grand Liban et pour resserrer les liens avec les nouveaux associés qu'étaient les Musulmans, les Chrétiens devaient faire, encore une fois, le deuil de leurs victimes quasi exclusives. Aussi, seul le gibet pouvait-il cimenter l'unité nationale ; la famine, par contre, devait être évacuée de la mémoire collective. Elle n'aurait donc pas son jour de Souvenir. En revanche, la Fête des Martyrs, celle des patriotes musulmans et chrétiens, exécutés par l'ennemi ottoman, allait capter toute l'attention et constituer le point d'ancrage du nouvel édifice libanais. Au pathos diviseur des «deux cent mille», on avait préféré l'ethos liant des «quarante» Martyrs. Cependant la journée des Martyrs ne s'est pas faite en une seule fois ; elle a connu des vicissitudes et des avatars. Avant d'être la fête des «retrouvailles nationales», elle fut la fête de la «désunion nationale» par excellence.

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80 Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 27 et 30.
81 Yammīn, *Lubnān fī-l-ḥarb*, T. II, 25-43.

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## *Brève histoire de la Fête des Martyrs*

Au commencement, c'est à dire sous le Mandat français, il y avait deux Fêtes des Martyrs: d'une part, la fête officielle qui avait lieu le 2 septembre, et d'autre part la fête populaire qui était célébrée le 6 mai. La cérémonie du 6 mai ne semblait concerner qu'une partie du pays, celle qui, *grosso modo*, était 'unioniste', en clair celle qui était réservée, sinon hostile à la puissance mandataire, et qui récusait le fait accompli qu'était la proclamation d'un Grand Liban détaché de l'hinterland syrien. Beyrouth et Tripoli à l'unisson avec les principales villes syriennes ne manquaient pas de célébrer la «fameuse journée» à cette même date du 6 mai.

Pour plus de clarté, retraçons le cours des évènements. En 1922, le comité de commémoration du souvenir, qui s'était déjà constitué en octobre 1918,[82] avait sollicité des autorités que la journée du 6 mai soit consacrée fête officielle.[83] Mais le Haut-Commissaire ne donna pas son accord.[84] L'affaire ayant été portée devant la Chambre, ce fut au 2 septembre que la date fut fixée.[85] Le journal *Lisān al-Ḥāl* ne manque pas de relever qu'en 1923, les autorités avaient commémoré le souvenir des Martyrs le 2 septembre alors que la nation, à l'exception de certains parents des Martyrs, avait boudé la cérémonie.[86] Au même moment, une messe était célébrée en la cathédrale maronite St. Georges pour le repos des âmes des suppliciés.[87] *Six mai* ou *deux septembre*, l'opposition entre les deux dates est significative, chaque partie ayant déjà choisi son camp: unionistes contre libanistes, le peuple à majorité sunnite de Beyrouth face à la puissance mandataire, autour de laquelle se retrouvait un courant majoritairement chrétien. Déjà l'abcès de fixation!

La première fête populaire se déroula le six mai 1925, autour de jeunes et d'étudiants qui s'étaient retrouvés place du Burj.[88] Les groupes représentés étaient en majorité des Musulmans beyrouthins et plus généralement des unionistes ravis d'accueillir une délégation damascaine.[89] Certes, des chrétiens y participaient, mais le courant libaniste n'était pas de la partie. Il est clair que la manifestation était une protestation contre le régime du mandat.[90]

Pendant plus de dix ans, les choses allaient se poursuivre de la sorte: deux fêtes parallèles, qui se défient et qui s'ignorent. Ainsi, à la cérémonie du 6 mai 1936, étaient présents une délégation de Damas et une autre du Liban Sud, à côté de celles du collège des *Maqāṣid* (institution sunnite), de la *Madrasah al-ʿIlmiyyah al-*

82 *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 2 septembre 1924, 1.
83 Ibid., 5 mai 1922, 2.
84 Ibid., 6 mai 1922, 2.
85 Ibid., 2 septembre 1924, 1. Rappelons que le 1er septembre était le jour de la fête de l'Indépendance, commémorant la déclaration de l'Etat du Grand Liban.
86 Ibid., 1er septembre 1924, 1.
87 Ibid., 1er septembre 1923, 2.
88 Ibid., 7 mai 1925, 2.
89 Ibid.
90 Saʿīd Taqī al-Dīn, «Ana wa-l-tannīn», in: Tuéni/Sassine, eds., *El Bourj*, 209.

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*Islāmiyyah*, des étudiants arabes de l'Université Américaine, de la *Kulliyyah al-Islāmiyyah* et d'autres institutions scolaires islamiques. Certes, des écoles arméniennes étaient représentées ainsi que le parti de l'Unité Libanaise aux côtés de certains parents des martyrs qui appartenaient aux diverses confessions religieuses. Il n'en reste pas moins cependant que les libanistes et les écoles catholiques boudaient l'événement.[91] Le quotidien *l'Orient* ne manque pas de relever les faits suivants en ces termes:

> «Les orateurs syriens disaient des leurs qu'ils (les martyrs) sont morts pour l'Arabie (sic). Les Libanais se sont bornés à rendre hommage à ceux qui par leur mort ont jeté les bases de l'indépendance de leur pays.»[92]

En 1937, changement d'atmosphère. Désormais, il n'y a plus qu'une seule Fête des Martyrs; la dichotomie est abolie. Le 6 mai est désormais une fête officielle et populaire. Cette décision est saluée par le journal *al-Bashīr*, organe des pères jésuites, qui s'en prend aux agitateurs et pêcheurs en eau trouble.[93] Le 6 mai sera revêtu d'un faste particulier comme dans les années qui allaient suivre: le président de la République, le président du Conseil, les ministres, un représentant des autorités mandataires, l'armée, la police, la sonnerie aux morts... et des milliers de phalangistes qui défilent en «colonnes de compagnie», et qui sont salués par «d'immenses ovations».[94] Au cimetière des Sablons, Michel Zakkūr, ministre de l'Intérieur, prononce ces paroles unificatrices:

> «Nos martyrs dorment côte à côte, pêle mêle, chrétiens et musulmans. Chrétiens et Musulmans sont unis dans la cérémonie du Souvenir. Puissent-ils demeurer toujours étroitement unis pour assurer l'existence, la grandeur, et la gloire de la Patrie Commune.»[95]

C'est un avant-goût du pacte national (*al-Mithāq al-Waṭani*) de 1943. Le 6 mai 1938, est un *remake* de l'année précédente. On retrouvera participant côte à côte les *Najjādah* (plutôt sunnites), les Phalangistes (chrétiens sans complexe), le parti communiste, *al-kashāf al-muslim*, et c'est une première, des étudiants de la faculté de droit de l'Université Saint-Joseph.[96] Le ton est donné même si la presse n'est pas unanime dans l'appréciation de l'événement. Ainsi le journal *al-Nahār* se félicite que depuis deux ans le gouvernement et le peuple commémorent simultanément le souvenir des Martyrs, car, dit-il, «nous avons assez durement expié nos égarements durant les vingt années de l'après-guerre».[97] *Ṣawt al-Aḥrār*, organe de presse unioniste, déplore que «de cette indépendance pour laquelle tant de jeu-

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91 *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 7 mai 1936, 4.

92 *L'Orient*, 8 mai 1936, 2. Il est à noter qu'à quelques exceptions près, la presse désignait Martyrs de la patrie (*Shuhadā' al-waṭan*) ceux qu'on commémorait le 2 septembre, et Martyrs de la nation (*Shuhadā' al-umma*) ceux qu'on commémorait le 6 mai.

93 *al-Bashīr*, 6 & 7 mai 1937, 4

94 *L'Orient*, 8 mai 1937, 2.

95 Ibid.

96 *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 6 mai 1938, Dār al-Jamīl 3; *L'Orient*, 8 mai 1938, 2.

97 Cf. *L'Orient*, 9 mai 1938, 3.

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nes hommes sont morts, nulle trace ... Le sang a été versé en vain.»[98] Un autre son de cloche dans *al-Bashīr*, libaniste bon teint, qui table sur l'unité:

> «Unis sous le même joug, confondus dans la même oppression, Musulmans et Chrétiens se reconnaissent frères dans la même infortune et compagnons dans la lutte commune pour l'affranchissement.»[99]

Et nous arrivons au 6 mai 1944. Le pays a déjà fait son unité, à la suite des évènements de novembre 1943 qui opposèrent les «indépendantistes» aux autorités françaises. Le président maronite Bishāra al-Khūrī, le président du conseil sunnite Riyāḍ al-Ṣolḥ, les Chiites, les Druzes, les Najjādah et les Phalanges ont fait l'union sacrée ; tout le monde a sa place dans la commémoration. C'est «une journée de concorde libanaise, dans l'exaltation des énergies civiques.»[100] L'éditorialiste de l'Orient est on ne peut plus clair en affirmant:

> «les hommes dont on commémore le sacrifice (commun) nous appartenaient. Ils représentaient tout le Liban et tous les Libanais de toutes les classes et de toutes les religions du Liban. Quelques-uns ne les monopoliseraient pas sans un abus grossier ...»[101]

Mais c'est le discours du président du Conseil Riyāḍ al-Ṣolḥ qui a, tant bien que mal, rallié l'opinion sunnite à l'idée d'un Liban indépendant dans ses frontières de 1920, qui définit l'idéologie de l'Etat libanais à venir. Pour lui, c'est une journée de sacrifice et d'union, les martyrs ayant eu la «prescience» d'un «Liban indépendant et souverain»; et s'adressant aux martyrs, de conclure: «Votre souvenir sera éternel du Liban comme dans tout pays arabe pour la liberté duquel vous êtes morts.»[102] Ainsi le fond du problème est escamoté, et par une habile formulation, on a évité pour un moment le choc de deux sensibilités au niveau national.

Le 6 mai 1960, le régime du général Fu'ād Shihāb, voulant surmonter les effets de la crise de 1958, inaugure en grande pompe le nouveau monument Place des Martyrs. Dans son allocution, le député Clovis al-Khāzin (maronite), fils de l'un des suppliciés, prononce le mot de l'Assemblée nationale, saluant le souvenir de ceux qui se sont sacrifiés pour la patrie, et déclarant que le pays s'unissait derrière le nouveau président de la République pour mettre en œuvre le but qu'ils s'étaient fixés et pour lequel ils se sont sacrifiés. De son côté, Amine al-ʿArayssi (sunnite) parlant au nom des familles des martyrs, déclare que ces derniers avaient versé leur sang pour assurer l'unité nationale, et que désormais tous les Libanais se rassemblaient derrière le président Shihāb.[103] En somme, les «orateurs ont mis l'accent sur le noble sacrifice consenti par les Martyrs sans distinction de

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98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
100 Nabīḥ Abi Zayd, «L'unité dans le souvenir», *L'Orient*, 6 mai 44, 1.
101 Editorial, I. C., *L'Orient*, 6 mai 1944, 1.
102 *L'Orient*, 7 mai 44, 2.
103 *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 7 mai 1960, 4.

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confessions religieuses, pour la gloire du Liban.»[104] De fête qui divisait les Libanais, la Fête des Martyrs est devenue par glissements successifs une fête qui les rassemble, ou du moins, qui tente de le faire; une Fête qu'on doit aux Ottomans: la légende dorée des martyrs et en contrepoint la légende noire de Jamāl Pacha.

## *Le thème fédérateur et l'«oublieuse mémoire»*

Tout pays a besoin d'un héros national réel ou imaginaire autour duquel la nation se retrouve dans une communion sacrée. Tels sont Guillaume Tell, Jeanne d'Arc, Georges Washington, Simon Bolivar, etc. L'essentiel est de commémorer autour d'une date ou d'un personnage, un instant magique où toutes les différences entre citoyens d'obédiences opposées se trouvent gommées. L'unanimité est assurée et se concrétise par un sentiment intense de cohésion nationale qui occulte les antagonismes entre compatriotes d'allégeances diverses.

Mais qu'advient-il dans un pays déterminé si tel personnage est introuvable? Que faire si au Liban le personnage de Fakhr al-Dīn ne rassemble autour de lui que les seuls Druzes et Maronites?[105] Que faire si l'émir Bashīr Shihāb n'est héros que pour les seuls chrétiens (et encore!)?[106] Alors forcément, on se rabat sur des personnages négatifs tels que Aḥmad Pacha al-Jazzār ou Jamāl Pacha al-Saffāh pour assurer l'unité des rangs de la nation.

La proclamation du Grand Liban en 1920 et sa formation politique ultérieure s'était faite pour répondre aux vœux d'une partie de la population, et contre le gré d'une autre partie qui tenait à l'union avec la Syrie. Le «maronitisme politique», ou ce qu'il convient désormais de désigner comme tel, devait faire flèche de tout bois et s'évertuait à récupérer l'opinion musulmane dans le sein de la nouvelle patrie, opinion qui continuait plus ou moins à bouder la création d'un Liban détaché de la Syrie. L'occasion était à saisir: commémorer les martyrs exécutés par les Turcs et accabler Jamāl Pacha pouvaient cimenter une cohésion nationale, ne serait-ce que l'espace d'un jour. Cérémonies et allocutions, manuels scolaires, poèmes patriotiques ou élégiaques, presse nationale, théâtre et cinéma allaient entretenir la flamme du 6 mai et l'unité, si précaire par ailleurs, entre Chrétiens et Musulmans. Rien n'incarne mieux ce souhait d'unité, rien n'illustre autant la symbolique et le choix délibéré du consensus que la première statue, œuvre du sculpteur Yūsuf Ḥuwayyik, érigée en 1930 Place du Burj, et qui représente deux femmes, deux pleureuses, l'une chrétienne et l'autre musulmane, se lamentant sur le sort des martyrs et unissant leurs mains autour d'une urne funéraire.[107] Le poème Al-Shuhadā' de Rashīd Salīm al-Khūrī, reprend cette symbolique en une métaphore qui nous dépeint un martyr chrétien tendant de sa

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[104] *L'Orient*, 7 mai 1960, 1.
[105] Kamal Salibi, *A House of many mansions*, London 1985, 126-7, 169.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Cf. Tuéni/Sassine, eds., *El Bourj*, 209-210.

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tombe-même, sa main à un martyr musulman gisant à ses côtés.[108] Eveline Bustros ne manque d'ailleurs pas de critiquer la politique du Mandat en disant que le Général Gouraud aurait mieux fait de réconcilier «toutes les communautés syro-libanaises autour des gibets des martyrs de tout rite, victimes des Turcs.»[109] Il faut noter que la Syrie elle-même n'a pas manqué d'instrumentaliser ses Martyrs à des fins d'unité nationale. Ainsi, en 1934, le programme de la commémoration à Damas prévoyait que le défilé se rendrait aussi bien au cimetière musulman qu'au cimetière grec orthodoxe, geste symbolique pour resserrer les rangs entre les différentes confessions religieuses.[110]

Rappelons par ailleurs que le Liban, plus encore que la Syrie de l'époque, est un pays où le consensus national est un but en soi, et qu'il doit être recherché quel qu'en soit le prix, quitte à prendre des libertés avec l'histoire et avec la vérité. Monter en épingle certains faits, amplifier certains événements, fermer les yeux sur d'autres, constituent une pratique courante du discours officiel qui, *volens nolens*, tient à observer le mot d'ordre «ni vainqueur, ni vaincu» afin de préserver la paix civile entre les divers groupes. Cela peut s'avérer difficile et les débordements des discours tenus sont fréquents, tout comme les excuses et les justifications. Il n'empêche que les propos ou les allocutions dans un domaine aussi inflammable et volatil que la politique doivent, dans la mesure du possible, éviter de heurter les susceptibilités ou de s'appesantir sur certains sujets au nom de la «coexistence» (*al-taʿāyush*) et de «l'unité nationale» (*al-waḥdah al-waṭaniyah*). Les articles 317 et 318 du Code Pénal libanais ne sanctionnent-ils pas sévèrement les «délits susceptibles de porter atteinte à l'unité nationale ou de troubler l'harmonie entre les divers éléments de la population»[111]? Or à la différence de certains souvenirs fâcheux de l'histoire libanaise sur lesquels il est préférable de fermer les yeux afin de préserver la concorde civile, l'intermède Jamāl Pacha, dans sa seule dimension des exécutions publiques, laissait le champ libre à tous les pourfendeurs de l'ère ottomane. Le pathos qui s'exprimait, et qui s'exprime toujours le 6 mai, surtout dans la presse écrite, n'est guère censuré par les autorités, vu le rôle rassembleur qu'il peut jouer. Pour une rare fois au Liban, se défouler ou dire tout ce que l'on a sur le cœur, n'est pas porteur de division. Au risque de paraître cynique, on pourrait dire que si Jamāl Pacha n'existait pas, il aurait fallu l'inventer. Et au Liban, pays où «deux négations ne font pas une nation»[112], un héros négatif s'imposait et se révélait utile sinon indispensable.

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108 Rashīd Salīm al-Khūrī, «Al-shuhadāʾ», in: *Diwān al-Qarāwī*, Dār al-ḥurriyyah lil-ṭibāʿah, Maṭbaʿat al-jumhūriyyah 1973, 321-323.

109 Bustros, *Sous la baguette*, 313.

110 *Lisān al-ḥāl*, 4 mai 1934, 5.

111 L'article 317 du Code Pénal libanais sanctionne «tout acte, tout écrit rendu public, tout discours dont le but ou l'effet est d'exciter l'esprit de corps confessionnel ou ethnique et de susciter des conflits entre les communautés ou les différents éléments de la population».

112 Georges Naccache, *L'Orient*, 10 mars 1949, cité dans «Un Rêve Libanais (1943-1972)», *Fiches du Monde Arabe*, Beyrouth 1983, 52, 58.

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L'idéologie libanaise a passé par pertes et profits deux cent mille morts; elle aurait pu s'en servir pour accabler Jamāl, même si la politique et la gestion de ce dernier n'assument pas la responsabilité exclusive du désastre humain. Non, cette idéologie a préféré instrumentaliser les patriotes suppliciés, et à bon escient, car ils ont représenté et représenteront encore l'unité des Libanais, unité si factice et si illusoire si l'on y regarde bien. Mais devant le tribunal de l'histoire, convoquera-t-on jamais la mémoire du refoulé? Probablement que non, car toute mémoire nationale est, par essence, «oublieuse» et sélective. Y a-t-il, au fait, une «juste mémoire»?[113] On peut être «troublé par l'inquiétant spectacle que donne le trop de mémoire ici, le trop d'oubli ailleurs, pour ne rien dire de l'influence des commémorations et des abus de mémoire»[114] et des excès d'amnésie.

[113] Paul Ricœur, *La Mémoire, l'Histoire, l'Oubli*, Paris 2000, 1.
[114] Ibid.

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