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CONGRESS

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Panel 63

Fault-lines of a Continental Empire: Restructuring of the Millets and Rise of Nationalism in the Late Ottoman Period

In his collection of articles on nationalism, *Encounters with Nationalism* (1994), British-Czech social anthropologist Ernest Gellner wrote: "Modern nationalism, which is a passionate identification with large, anonymous communities of shared culture and cultural imagery, creates its units out of pre-existing differences of various kinds. Among these, religious ones are important [...]". Religion and nationalism, indeed, have become closely embroiled in the late Ottoman period. As in the cases of the other continental empires, the Ottoman Empire was divided into smaller and generally weaker nation-states in the first quarter of the 20th century. These nation-states that emerged after intensive nation-building projects, such as deportations, forced resettlements, and even mass murders, were endowed with the disadvantages of the previous imperial unit. In order to explore this radical transformation period for both state and society, this panel attempts to investigate the influences of the Ottoman administrative reforms on the various ethno-religious communities (millets), the rise of nationalism and inter-communal violence, and their subsequent repercussions over the Ottoman society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Person in charge: Eser Umit (PhD SOAS, University of London; Assistant Professor at Necmettin Erbakan University)

Discussant: Baydar Ayca (PhD SOAS, University of London; Lecturer at Kastamonu University)

Program

Alici Abdulvahap (PhD Candidate, Necmettin Erbakan University)

Transformations of Communal Identity in the 19th Century Aleppo

Intercommunal relations within the multi-religious and multi-ethnic Ottoman society were regulated following the zimmi law which delineated the lines between the ruler and the ruled. Non-Muslims within the confines of the millet concept had a set of jurisprudential rules which foresaw an inferior status before the Islamic court compared to their Muslim counterparts. The pertaining system prevailed until the 19th century through which the Ottoman Empire launched a period of modernization. The modernization modeled on the French type of citizenship foresaw the equality of all citizens in regard to economic, social and jurisprudential aspects. The Edict of Tanzimat, the first of its kind with a focus on the guarantee of life, liberty and honor, distorted the mundane characteristics of Ottoman society and unleashed a backlash either from the Muslims or the non-Muslims. In this respect, Aleppo as a cosmopolitan city is to be investigated to what extent the pertaining modernization period penetrated alongside the clash between the old and new notions of governing that paved the way for the further insurgency. The study is to use archival sources, chronicles and co-eval newspapers so as to ascertain the gradual transformation within the Ottoman society of Aleppo.

Baydar Ayca (PhD SOAS, University of London; Lecturer at Kastamonu University)

The Church between Greek and Turkish Nationalism: The Case of the Turkish Orthodox Church

After the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, the Ottoman territories in the Balkans were lost and Anatolia became defined as the Turkish heartland, defined as needing to be secured as the only remaining land belonging to the Turks. Moreover, following the Balkan Wars and especially after WWI, the word Christian became synonymous with 'traitor'. Therefore, Anatolia had to be purified from non-Muslims; i.e., there emerged a policy of 'Turkey for the Turks'. Various methods were employed to homogenize Anatolia including forced migration, population exchanges and religious conversion. The Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians of Cappadocia (Karamanlis) were one of those peculiar exceptions. Karamanlis was seen as a part of the 'enemy' as long as they belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church. In this sense, the foundation of a Turkish Orthodox Church was aimed at neutralizing the Karamanlis. In the light of British archival sources, this study will attempt to place the case of the Turkish Orthodox Church and the subsequent deportation of the Karamanlis into the context of the Turkification of Anatolia.

Eser Umit (PhD SOAS, University of London; Assistant Professor at Necmettin Erbakan University)

Between Patriarchate and Exarchate: Political Fragmentation of the Orthodox Christian Communities in the Late Ottoman Balkans

This paper attempts to analyze the political fragmentation of the Orthodox Christian communities along the ethnic lines in the late Ottoman Balkans during the Patriarchist-Exarchist confrontation. After the recognition of the Bulgarian millet distinct from the millet-i Rum by the Sublime Porte in March 1870, Greek and Bulgarian national identities started to be constructed by the rival nationalist intelligentsias. Following the establishment of the Bulgarian Principality in 1878, the Bulgarian Exarchate became an apparatus of the nation-state. In other words, this church became an instrument of Bulgarian nationalism; however, the Patriarchate's vision remained closer to that of the Ottoman reformers of the Tanzimat. Besides, the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate prepared the ground for the Macedonian Question, a series of political and military conflicts, in the late Ottoman period. As nationhood was articulated as a normative standard in the 19th century, the new notions of secular statehood and nationality disrupted religiously defined collective identities and Orthodox ecumenism in the south-eastern edge of Europe. At long last, the shared past of the Orthodox peoples, which prevailed over a chiliad, were shattered by the rival nationalisms of the nascent nation-states.

Zeybek Ahmet (PhD Candidate, Bilkent University)

Development of National Identity among Turkish Cypriots in the Late Ottoman Empire

The history of Cyprus is generally a neglected area both within Ottoman studies and colonial/postcolonial studies. Yet the island was once a major part of the Ottoman Empire (1571-1878) and a British colony (1878-1960). This paper will aim to investigate and summarise the main milestones in the development of Turkish Cypriot national identity during the late Ottoman Empire. Turkish Cypriots had somewhat ambivalent relations with the Ottoman government and these relations continued well after 1878 until the Ottoman Empire crumbled and the sultanate abolished. I will try to contextualize the emergence and development of Turkish Cypriot nationalism within two factors. First, the development of the Greek independence movement and its effect on the island beginning from 1821 and second, the arrival of British colonial power in 1878.