



The Tragedy of the Ottomans: Muslims in the Balkans and Armenians in Anatolia

M. Hakan Yavuz & Hakan Erdagöz

To cite this article: M. Hakan Yavuz & Hakan Erdagöz (2019) The Tragedy of the Ottomans: Muslims in the Balkans and Armenians in Anatolia, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 39:3, 273-281, DOI: [10.1080/13602004.2019.1654188](https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2019.1654188)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2019.1654188>



Published online: 14 Aug 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 4508



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Introduction

The Tragedy of the Ottomans: Muslims in the Balkans and Armenians in Anatolia

M. HAKAN YAVUZ and HAKAN ERDAGÖZ

Introduction

This special issue seeks to examine and compare Muslim minority experiences in the Balkans and Christian Armenian experiences in Anatolia. Furthermore, it seeks to indicate how the treatment of Muslims by the Christian majority shaped the perceptions and policies of the Muslim majority toward Christian minorities in Anatolia. The special issue evolved out of a series of conferences funded by the Turkish Studies Project (TSP) at the University of Utah. The main questions these workshops focused on were:

- What were the main social and political causes of the collapse of religious co-existence in the Balkans?
- How did the European power struggle lead to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire?
- What was the impact of the new state and then the nation-formation for the Muslim communities?
- What were the patterns of ethnic cleansing and massacres of the Muslims in the Balkans.

After organizing two workshops on the destruction of religious co-existence and ethnic cleansing of the Muslims in the Balkans, the Conference organizers were asked to examine the impact of these policies on Christian–Muslim co-existence in the Caucasus and especially in Anatolia. The first part of the workshops focused on the ethnic cleansings of Muslims in the Balkans. Ethnic cleansing is defined as (i) an organized political act directed against unwanted religious or ethnic groups, which are defined as the “other/enemy/ or alien” (ii) with the intent of forcibly removing a group from its home to create ethno-religious homogenous territory. In the Balkans and Anatolia, ethnic cleansing has been a function of nation/state building in the modern period. The workshop

M. Hakan Yavuz is a professor of political science at the University of Utah. He received his PhD in Political Science from University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1998 and his MA from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and spent a semester at the Hebrew University in Israel (1990). He is also the author of four books: *Toward and Islamic Enlightenment: The Gülen Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2013). *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (Oxford University Press, 2003); *Muslim Democracy and Secularism in Turkey* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); ed. *The Emergence of a New Turkey* (University of Utah Press, 2007).

Hakan Erdagöz is an Assistant Professor of Department of Political Science and International Relations at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Istanbul, Turkey. He has a PhD in Political Science from University of Utah, USA and an MA in history from Salisbury University, Maryland, USA. His main area of research is the accommodation of religious minorities in Europe. His research interests also include religion and secularism, post-Soviet politics, populism, historical sociology, and democratization.

This article has been republished with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

concluded that the imperial rivalries of the major European powers in the Balkans as a response to the rivalries over the Eastern Question as their coordination with local violent ethno-religious entrepreneurs directly led to the tearing apart of historically ethno-religiously diverse societies and attendant mass atrocities and forced expulsions.

Thus, the Turkish Studies Project (TSP) held a day-long workshop and examined the origins and patterns of ethnic cleansing, mass killings, and forced conversions policies of the Balkan states on shaping similar approaches in the Young Turk policies in Anatolia *vis-à-vis* the Armenian Christian population. The workshop concluded that this earlier pattern of nation-building had a direct impact on the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)¹ program of nation-state formation in Anatolia. The Armenian massacres and deportations cannot be understood outside and apart from the earlier round of ethnic cleansing and massacres directed at Ottoman Muslim populations in the Balkans, Crimea, and the Caucasus.

Historical Background

The deportations and mass killings of Muslims from the Balkans by the newly created-states had played an important role in the formation of anti-Christian public opinion amongst the Anatolian Muslim population.² The Ottoman State in 1912–13 faced an unprovoked attack and had been defeated by its ex-Balkan provinces with the help of the European Great Powers. While the nominally Christian West looked on, these new Balkan states pursued a policy of ethnic cleansing and mass killing to create homogenous nation-states. In other words, the Balkan states, unlike imperial powers of the recent past, tried to homogenize their populations through ethnic cleansings by utilizing the wars as a function of modern nation-state building. For example, according to the population records of 1876, there were 1,120,000 Muslims in Bulgaria as opposed to only 1,233,500 Bulgarian Orthodox Christians and with mass expulsion and killings Bulgaria managed to create a relatively homogenous nation-state in a short period of time.³ In contrast to Ottoman atrocities and reprisals against Balkan Christian insurrectionaries, these vastly greater atrocities and ethnic cleansings were met with silent condonation by the leading Western Christian powers of the international system.

In order to understand the impact of these mass expulsions and killing of Balkan Muslim population, one also needs to examine the new role of the public sphere and what Benedict Anderson termed “print-capital”—popular newspapers and their availability in different parts of the Ottoman Empire. By dissemination of personal stories and official reactions to the defeats and the mass expulsions and atrocities, an aroused Ottoman Muslim public opinion was formed even amongst the majority of the population which was not literate but had the stories relayed to them from the newly emerging educated class. As a result, these news reports of atrocities radically changed the Muslim perception of their own Christian neighbors. This role of the media in the formation of this anti-Christian public opinion continues to be understudied and unappreciated. It is imperative to focus on the wars/defeats/mass expulsions and killings and their coverage by the media and their impact on the public and the role of public opinion on the policies of the state.

During the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913, not only did Christian soldiers of the Ottoman army defect in large numbers, but also Ottoman Greek and Bulgarian villagers closely collaborated with the occupying armies. This marked not only the end of the Ottoman state in Europe but also the end of its efforts at crafting a secular multi-religious army. The defeat and widespread defections had a major impact on Ottoman officials. Thus, they had to take several counter-measures, including the removal of the Greek

and Bulgarian villages from the border region and some critical coast-lines. In the eyes of some Ottoman officials, Greek, Bulgarian and some other Christian groups proved themselves essentially unreliable. In June 1914, the Ottoman State, just before entering the War, decided to remove the Greek population of the Aegean littoral due to their sympathy for the Greek Army during the Balkan wars.⁴ Since the Greeks were unreliable groups in the eyes of the Ottoman officials, Ottoman Greek defections and out-migration continued.⁵ Along with the Greek minority community, the Ottoman Armenian community was also very much affected by the deepening sense of suspicion and insecurity and weakness of the state itself. Although some scholars tend to explain the Ottoman policies against the Armenian community on the basis of a few key state officials, the workshop indicated that these policies were more responsive to a broader societal threat perception as well. The policies evolved in response to societal, especially Kurdish tribal, anxiety and insecurity about the future of the eastern Anatolian provinces. Even though the decision of the mass deportations was based on security concerns, it also aimed to win Kurdish support against Russian overtures to the Kurds.

In the nineteenth century, European Great Powers rivalry to solve the “Eastern Question” accelerated. The starting point was the Greek rebellion in 1821, initiating a period of massacres, ethnic cleansing and genocide: the killing of people solely by the criterion of their group membership setting a pattern of atrocities and counter-atrocities. It was, like the *reconquista* in Spain, a fight to regain former territories, establish Christian sovereignty, and to expel or kill the resident Ottoman Muslim population. The most important cases after the Greek rebellion were the massacres and ethnic cleansing of Caucasus in 1864, in Bulgaria in 1877–78, and present-day Northern Greece and Macedonia in 1912–13. In this period several million Ottoman Muslims, mostly Turks, were expelled or died as victims of ethnic cleansing. This vicious cycle of fear and violence was the dynamic finally leading to extensive massacres, deportation and death of more than half of the Ottoman Armenians. Of all the targeted groups in Anatolia, the Ottoman Armenians were the hardest hit by deportations, concomitant massacres, ensuing starvation and disease. This was a result of four interrelated factors:

- The insecurity and fear created by the loss of the Balkan territories and the mass deportation of the Muslims in the Balkans;
- The great power struggle to control the last part of the Ottoman Empire, namely, Anatolia;
- The conditions of World War I and the weakness of the Ottoman military;
- The collaboration and cooperation of Armenian militia groups with Russia.

It was clear that the Ottoman state bureaucracy was overwhelmed by the defeats of the Ottoman military during World War I and the fear of the total collapse of the state was regarded as inevitable in mid-April 1915. Except for Gallipoli, all fronts ended in catastrophic defeats with unexpected consequences for the society and the state. By March 1915, the hopes and last attempt to save the state from the partition among the major European powers gave way to fear about the survivability of a Muslim society as a sovereign entity in Anatolia. The Entente Powers⁶ in April 1915 reached the very doorsteps of Istanbul by attempting to enter the Turkish straits. The Ottoman Armenian political leadership regarded the war and weakening of the Ottoman army as an opportunity to assert their territorial demands.

It was an opportune moment to overthrow the Ottoman Empire and together with the more powerful Russian troops to carve out their own homeland. The Armenian political

leadership, using the success of the Balkan Christian populations and their enthusiastic embrace by most Western Christian powers, ignored the fact that they were in minority in every province and the creation of an Armenian homeland caused major local backlash and fear amongst the majority Muslim population of the region. The more the Armenian fighters allied themselves with the occupying troops of Russia and other Entente powers, the more they became distrusted by the local Muslim communities. Under these psychological and political conditions, the CUP military leaders decided on radical measures to remove the Armenian population from the conflict-zone. The decision was gradual and it eventually included a large section of Anatolia. The pattern of deportation indicates that there was no previous plan to deport the Armenians; no organizational structure or scheme. The decision was a reaction to the severe security challenges the state confronted with the collapse of the Eastern Front after the battle of Sarikamish in 1915. The Ottoman state genuinely worried and concluded that the empire-wide Armenian mass rebellion was inevitable. The Russian-Armenian collaboration in the province of Van played into the fears of the CUP Triumvirate and their radicalization. The policies of the Ottoman security bureaucracy between January and June 1915 were complicated, contradictory, and uncoordinated and they evolved and shifted according to new security challenges. These policies were not always premeditated and linear as many historians ascribed them. The best way to understand the rationale of these policies is to examine the shifting security challenges and the lack of resources at the state level. The deportation was the least costly policy for the security of the state since the state was involved at five different fronts.

An Overview

This Special Issue comprises nine articles divided into three sections as follows:

1. Orientalism and the Construction of the Ottoman Muslim “Other”

Raymond Taras's article draws a link between the genocidal ethnic cleansing of Ottoman Muslims in the nineteenth century while the rest of Europe indulgently looked on, and the repeat of this phenomenon at the end of the Cold War in the former Yugoslavia, a pattern that was also observed by Mujeeb R. Khan.⁷ One of the critical ideological justifications for the ethnic cleansing of the Ottoman Muslim populations was the dominant political discourse of Orientalism, which dehumanized Islam as a religion and Muslims as human beings. This dehumanization provided a moral justification for “rooting out” of the Muslims from the Balkans. Taras further elaborates this theme from the history of the Balkan Wars to enduring systemic causes of ethnic cleansing in the region that can also explain the pattern of ethnic violence and genocide in the recent post-Yugoslav states. He mainly sees the deep-seated ethnic hatred in the Balkans and the European *otherization* of this region as the two primary factors that account for the persistence of ethnic cleansing throughout the twentieth century. He argues that the European construction of the Ottomans and Turks as aliens became a blueprint for the ways in which Europeans imagined the Balkans as the gateway to Asia. In turn, this politics of otherization, what Taras calls Islamophobic Orientalism, in the Balkans turned out to be a model emulated and used against the indigenous Balkan Muslims up until the recent Kosovo crisis. To concretize his arguments, Taras provides an historical account of ethno-religious cleansing of the Muslims from Spain to Sicily to the Balkans. This historical narrative shows us that the Christian hatred toward Muslims started as Turkophobia and continued as Orientalism and later as Islamophobia.

However, Taras also notes that ethnic based animosity of the ancient Balkan nations toward each other was already embedded in the region by the time “Islamic threat” showed up in the imagined borders of “Christian Europe”. The author elaborates his points by looking at historical novels. For instance, even the Albanians considered the Ottoman customs and culture quite primitive before they converted to Islam. He then continues to explain this historical legacy on the patterns of ethnic cleansing in the twentieth century. One theme the author explains is the persistence of violence and *otherization* in delineating ideational and territorial borderlines. On the one hand, the sacrosanct borders kept the enemies at bay through constant territorial reconstructions, which led to the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs at the hands of the Croatian Ustashe during World War II and then later the Bosnian Muslim genocide in the early 1990s.

Admir Mulaosmanovic’ adopts a broad historical perspective to show the long-term consequences of Serbian collective meta-narratives on the genocide committed against the Bosnian Muslims during the early 1990s. He argues it is a necessary task for both methodological and empirical purposes that one has to analyze the role of Serbian collective consciousness and mythology. He aptly holds that the genocide occurred when ex-communist ruling elites were still in power and hence, one must go beyond the immediate factors and consider the historical consequences of Greater Serbian Ideology. According to Mulaosmanović, this greater national myth of Serbs not only constituted a blueprint for the perpetual ethnic cleansing among Balkan Slavs in the early twentieth century, but also helped legitimize the official Serbian policy toward Muslims in the early 1990s. The Serbian national political ideology drew inspiration largely from a historical collective mentality that demonized Bosnian Slavic Muslims by characterizing them simply as Turks, converted Serbs, or traitors. However, such defamation mainly stemmed from the teachings and iconography of Serbian Orthodox Church that often made direct references to their faith in a struggle against Muslims and Ottomans. The author makes the point that the Greater Serbian Ideology, also benefitted from the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church, survived the communist era that aimed to displace a religion-based identity for an egalitarian conception of nationalities. During the years that led up to the Bosnian genocide, public intellectuals, mass media, writers, and artists largely drew on these historical myths that legitimized the hatred and otherization of Bosnian and Albanian Muslims.

Hakan Erdagöz’s article indicates how the ideology of anti-Muslim hatred emerged as a leading influence in fervently evangelical, Victorian Great Britain. Through an examination of the writings of James Bryce, who had a crucial role in the generation and dissemination of forged texts and anti-Ottoman propaganda at the start of WW I, Erdagöz shows how and why British politicians and scholars ignored or were complicit in the ethnic cleansing of Ottoman Muslims but were roused to fury when Ottoman Christians were the victims. By employing Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism as a way to explain the widespread reception of Bryce’s writings in the Western world, including the Blue Book, Erdagöz argues that British entanglements in the “Eastern Question” and wartime propaganda were at the heart of the matter. According to him, a close scrutiny suggests that Bryce’s writings as knowledge creation are deeply saturated in *otherization* and demonization of Muslims and the Ottoman/Turkish identity. While many of the accounts in Bryce’s texts were inaccurate, fabricated, and written with an Orientalist and racist tone, much of the later historiography on the Armenian Question was written on the basis of these writings, which over time set scholarly debates on faulty premises. To illustrate his points, Erdagöz analyzes Bryce’s texts as primary sources and situates them in this context. He provides historical background of how the Eastern Question

evolved prior to the First World War and how the Orientalist discourses of this era found fitting grounds for operationalization during this war..

2. The Balkan Killing Fields

Igor Despot's article appraises the Balkan Wars by illustrating how the Balkan states came to imagine the Ottoman Empire under derogatory terms such as the "terrible Turk", oppressive Islamic despotism, and Ottoman feudalism and how this imaginary gave way to radical change in the ethno-religious landscape of the Balkans. Despot offers a useful framework that conceptually links the Orientalist discourses Europeans used against the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century to the politics of *otherization* that the Balkan states employed against the Ottoman Empire and the indigenous Muslim populations during the Balkan Wars. However, this politics of *otherization* and its materialization through constant war-making and violence continued to exist even after the Ottoman state and Muslims were expelled from the Balkans. Despot argues that the politics of *otherization* against the Ottoman state provided the Balkan states with solidarity to mobilize their societies in the First Balkan War, but their joint control of the Balkan territories turned out to be untenable and volatile in the later period. When the Second Balkan War broke out, everything was up for grabs again. Despot shows how Macedonia became a hot bed for the emergent violence and war crimes in the early twentieth century. He maintains that it is difficult to assess whether it was the Komitadjis who committed war crimes or officials who might have abetted these irregular units. Accordingly, he arrives at the conclusion that there was no genocide that was planned by the belligerents. Finally, the author leaves us with interesting conclusions about the ways in which European Orientalist thinking penetrated the Balkan nations. Although the Balkan nations viewed the Ottoman state through the lenses of European Orientalism, they were considered uncivilized by the Europeans. Despot ironically shows the violent severance with the Ottoman past that rested on *otherization* not only brought great misery, but also it also caused the erosion of rights and customs that the *millet* system had guaranteed.

Umut Uzer introduces us to the effects of minority nationalism in the Ottoman Empire on the formation of Turkish nationalism. Unlike the national uprisings of minority nations (*millets*) in the Ottoman Empire, there was no such clear-cut definition of what constitutes the Turkish nation and nationalism, until the new Turkish Republic was founded from the ashes of the empire. Uzer illustrates how this formulation took place among the very few late Ottoman literati who increasingly became critical of Ottomanism and pan-Islamism. Uzer focuses on the biography and literary works of Ömer Seyfettin, a former lieutenant in the Ottoman Army who later wrote many short stories, plays, and novels that attempted to formulate and promote a particular form of Turkish nationalism. Uzer narrates that during his formative years, Seyfettin served in the Army and he was taken hostage during the Balkan Wars. The loss of the Ottoman Balkans and his capture deeply affected his thinking about Turkish nationalism. He understood that not even Albanian Muslims were interested in either Ottomanism or pan-Islamism as they had at times negative attitudes toward Turks. In his writings, Seyfettin ardently advocated "purification" of the Turkish language from Arabic and Persian. He used a simple language in his works and saw the high culture of earlier Ottoman intellectuals as too distant from the ordinary people of Anatolia. However, Seyfettin's political ideals and vision were not limited to Anatolia. He and his colleagues adhered to an imagined homeland, Turan that would unite all Turks. Yet, despite seemingly his heavy

emphasis on ethnicity through the notion of Turan, Seyfettin thought that one must be Muslim and speak Turkish to be a true Turk. Uzer demonstrates how Seyfettin cultivated his ideas on Turkish nationalism as a response to minority nationalisms and laid the foundations of Turkishness. He also engages in recent debates surrounding Seyfettin and his impact on Turkish nationalism. Even though Seyfettin made his points clear in his writings and affected the development of Turkish nationalism, his death at the young age of thirty-six also shows the limits of such an impact.

Senadin Musabegovic' continues with the theme of borders and their indispensable role in the making of ethno-nationalist identity. While the previously discussed articles focus on historical construction of borders by exploring themes such as *otherization* of Muslims, Islamophobia, and the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, Musabegović, from a constructivist-critical perspective, takes the borders as imagined reconstructions of the past in light of the loss of communist nationalism and the emergent ethno-nationalism that is marked by the neoliberal-capitalist worldview. Therefore, Musabegović argues that lacking firm civic roots to hold a society together, ethno-nationalism became detrimental to local cultures and customs, family, and tradition. He illustrates his points through a sociological comparison of the periods between the leadership of Josip Broz Tito and Slobodan Milošević. The author makes it clear that such a schizoid construction of identity also provides justifications for victimization, in which the Serbs were forced to commit war crimes due to the "provocation of outside intruders". Finally, Musabegović elaborates his points by a critique of pop culture in Serbia especially the musical genre of turbo folk. It is a musical style that became popular during the Milošević era, which blends ethnicity and folklore with post-modern components of capitalism such as consumerism, transgression, and war.

3. The Revenge of the Young Turks and the Armenians

Mehmet Arisan's article further elaborates the role of violence and the *Komitadjilik*⁸ in the creation of the Balkan states. Arisan makes a distinction between nationalism rooted in ethnic and primordial social networks and nationalism based on insurgency movements and terror. He suggests that the latter is a better conceptual framework to understand what happened in the Balkans. In the late nineteenth century, revolutionary insurgent movements were a widespread phenomenon across Europe because the diffusion of power in a Foucauldian sense prescribed the formation of insurgency movements as a blueprint. Often clandestine and violent in nature, these nationalistic movements had little, if any, linkage to their societies and local traditions where most of the population were peasants and dependent on the land. Therefore, Arisan argues, violence became the only means to mobilize the society in the absence of civic or broader primordial self-identity. However, this picture is incomplete without considering the role of the Great Powers (mainly Britain, Germany, and Russia) that ended in global warfare. Arisan builds his argument in this theoretical framework and maintains that the nation- and state-building processes in the Balkans were predominantly shaped by two mutually reinforcing factors, one being the *Komitadjilik* and the other being manipulations of the Great Powers. While the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO), the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) were the main insurgency movements until 1908, this scene changed when the CUP took over the state and turned out to deploy counter-insurgency strategies due to the territorial losses in the Tripoli and the Balkans. Since then, the CUP and ARF moved away from working closely to being antagonistic to each other. Even

though the Komitadji structure in the Armenian community lacked popular support, the settlement policies as well as the Hamidian regimes' mishandling of the Armenian issue were counterproductive. Arisan holds that the Komitadji insurgent movements later undertook a nation-building pathway through eradication of ethno-religious diversity, whereas their Ottoman counterpart, the CUP, followed no such pattern because it was only preoccupied with the saving of the state. This Komitadji mindset of the Balkans, though being influential in creating a constitutional state, persisted well into the Republican period when ethnic homogenization was undertaken during the 1930s and 1940s.

Brad Dennis looks at how the ethno-cultural cleansing of Muslims in the Balkans affected the Armenian insurgency movement in Eastern Anatolia. He examines the consequences of Balkan model of liberation for the Ottoman Empire by focusing on the Armenian revolutionary movement that was initially informed by socialist idealism, but evolved into an exclusionary ethno-religious nationalism. Since the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78, the Armenians increasingly came to believe and realize the idea that the best way to achieve liberation was to replicate the Bulgarian way of national emancipation in Eastern Anatolia by provoking the Ottoman state to engage in vicious reprisals against Armenian communities and hence generating the necessary conditions for European intervention. Dennis argues that the Armenians were divided over how best to achieve their goal. While some endorsed the British guidance through reform pressures on Ottoman state, some others preferred more direct Russian military intervention. However, the divided makeup of Armenian nationalists gradually merged, especially after 1878 and now many believed that the liberation could only be attained through self-reliance. Yet, they still felt the need to find support from the Great Powers. To this end, Armenians emulated the violent tactics of Balkan insurgencies and undertook the task of cleansing the Muslims in Eastern Anatolia in an effort to bring about demographic transformations. The Armenians' failure to receive European support through direct intervention pushed them toward Russian-backed rebels and made the Ottoman state more suspicious about Armenians' loyalty.

Christopher Gunn continues to examine Armenian wartime atrocities by focusing on the actions of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation's (ARF) members between 1914 and 1916. The ARF formed volunteer legions in the beginning of World War I for Armenian national liberation. Even though there was a close alliance between the Committee of Unions and Progress (CUP) and the Ottoman ARF elites up until 1914, the latter increasingly relied on the Entente by allying with Russia during the war. During the war, the actions and decisions of ARF and its *fedayis* (voluntary fighters) had serious consequences on the development of Ottoman state behavior as the former used every means to attract the attention and support of the great powers. Gunn holds that Armenian publication organs for the most part during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries celebrated the *fedayis*. Such a pattern can even be seen during the assassination of Turkish diplomats by the Armenians during the 1970s and '80s. From this point of view, Gunn seeks to find out why the Armenian volunteer legions of the ARF between 1914 and 1916 were barely mentioned in ARF publications and historiography. According to him, the missing glorification of the *fedayis* and their violent acts in ARF publications are related to three main factors. First, one cannot have a complete picture of the Armenian question during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire without taking into account the broken alliance between the Ottoman ARF and the CUP and the consequences that resulted from such shifting loyalties of the Armenians. Second, the depiction of Armenian volunteer fighters as "guides" and "scouts" in the historiography prevents us from understanding why the legions were created and how violently they functioned. Finally, the

overall Armenian strategy to provoke instability within the Ottoman Empire through massacres played out in 1915 when the ARF leaders and fighters put their co-ethnics in jeopardy by leaving them to their fate while they could have retreated with them just as they had done in the province of Van.

Acknowledgements

We take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to the Chief Editor, Dr. Saleha S. Mahmood, whose impressive grasp of the history and politics of Muslim communities throughout the world has been deeply inspiring and elucidating. Dr. Mahmood was involved at every step in compiling this Special Issue and in editing every accepted paper. We also gratefully thank her colleagues at the *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* for their collaboration and those at Taylor & Francis publishers. Their efforts have ensured an outstanding scholarly publication.

NOTES

1. The CUP was a secret society founded in 1889 by a group of elites and bureaucrats who were trained in the military and medical schools opened by Abdulhamid II. The members of the society came together to secretly oppose Abdulhamid and his policies that were purportedly disintegrating the Ottoman Empire. The society later transformed into a political organization whose primary aim was to topple down the Ottoman sultan, restore the parliament initially dissolved by Abdulhamid II in 1878, and eventually save the state. With the culmination of the Young Turk revolution of 1908, the CUP played a central role in the Ottoman Empire until its demise in 1918.
2. M. Hakan Yavuz and Peter Sluglet, eds., *War & Diplomacy, The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and the Treaty of Berlin*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011; M. Hakan Yavuz and Isa Blumi, eds., *War and Nationalism: The Balkan Wars, 1912–1913, and Their Sociopolitical Implications*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2013; Also Mujeeb R. Khan, “The Ottoman Eastern Question and the Problematic Origins of Modern Ethnic Cleansing, Genocide, and Humanitarian Interventionism in Europe and the Middle East”, in *War and Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 and the Treaty of Berlin*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz and Isa Blumi, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011.
3. Stefanos Yerasimos, *Az Gelişmişlik Sürecinde Türkiye* [Turkey in the Course of Underdevelopment], İstanbul: Belge Yayınevi, 1980, pp. 468–469.
4. Celal Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım* [I, too, Wrote], İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1965–1972; Midhat Şükrü Bleda, *İmparatorluğun Çöküşü* [The Collapse of the Empire], İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1979; Mehmed Reşid Şahingiray, *Hayatı ve Hâtıraları* [His Life and Memoirs], ed. Nejdet Bilgi, İzmir: Akademi Kitabevi, 1997.
5. On the Young Turk-ideology and the impact of the Balkan Wars on the CUP see, Erik Jan Zürcher, “Macedonians in Anatolia: The Importance of the Macedonian Roots of the Unionists for Their Policies in Anatolia after 1914”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 6, 2014, pp. 960–975; Fikret Adanır and Hilmar Kaiser, “Migration, Deportation, and Nation-Building: The Case of the Ottoman Empire”, in *Migrations and Migrants in Historical Perspective. Permanencies and Innovations*, ed. René Leboutte, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2000, pp. 273–292.
6. During World War I, the Entente Powers, which consisted of Britain, France, Russia, and later Italy, fought Central Power that included Germany, the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria.
7. Mujeeb R. Khan, “Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Crisis of the Post-Cold War International System”, *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, Fall, 1995, pp. 459–498.
8. Komitadilik was a secret organization originated in Ottoman Macedonia in the late nineteenth century. It was defined by a deep state of conviction and commitment to die and kill for the cause of one’s state, homeland, and ideological position.