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Dominik J. Schaller, Jürgen Zimmerer. *Late Ottoman Genocides: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Young Turkish Population and Extermination Policies.* London: Routledge, 2009. 116 S. $115.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-415-48012-3.

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D. Schaller u.a. (Hrsg.): Late Ottoman Genocides

Recent events suggest that scholars, politicians and the public at large are arriving at a new understanding of the Armenian Genocide. A âroad mapâ leading to formal diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey has now finally been consummated. The United States governmentâs hesitancy towards recognizing the Armenian Genocide appears to have dulled somewhat with the ascendency of President Barack Obama. On the scholastic front, new research and more comparative perspectives have begun to shed new light upon the scope, execution and significance of Ottoman domestic policy during the First World War. The volume under review here, âLate Ottoman Genocidesâ, presents an exemplary case of the sort of new directions historians may follow in expanding our collective understanding of the deportations and massacres that typified the collapse of the Ottoman imperial order.

The uniqueness of this volume lies in its central focus. Editors Dominik Schaller and JÃ¼rgen Zimmerer correctly point out that the destruction of the Ottoman Armenian population during the First World War represents only one fraction of the grander domestic policies implemented under the rule of the Young Turks (also known as the Committee of Union and Progress or CUP). The mass deportation and massacre of Armenians, as well as the general expropriation of land formerly belonging to these condemned citizens, was part and parcel of an ambitious and expansive program of social and demographic reengineering in the Ottoman Empire. Alongside the hundreds of thousands of Armenians forcibly displaced during the war, the CUP regime targeted an untold number of other communities in Anatolia and the Levant, including Greeks, Assyrians, Kurds, Arabs and Muslim refugees of various stripes. The goal of this edited volume extends beyond proving, yet again, the Ottoman regimeâs genocidal intent. Each of the contributing articles assembled in this work justly and ably complicates our comprehension of the myriad of deportations that took place and adds new insights into the Ottoman Empireâs final years.

In order to understand how âLate Ottoman Genocidesâ attempts to reshape the traditional narrative of the First World War deportations, one must first look to the exceptional and hitherto unexplored archival sources that serve as the basis of each of the articles that com-

prise this work. A total of seven contributors were assembled for this project (earlier versions of each article appeared in a special issue of the âJournal of Genocide Researchâ). UÄur Ãmit Ãngorâs reassessment of the continuities in state policy towards eastern Anatolia between the late Ottoman and early Republican periods highlights rich examples of internal correspondence and ethnographical studies written by the architects of the deportations. Matthias Bjornlundâs use of Danish accounts of the 1914 cleansing of Aegean Greeks further discounts the notion that Western sources dealing with Young Turk domestic policy were inherently biased by wartime antagonisms. Daniel Marc Segesser convincingly demonstrates that an articulate debate over the legal nature and significance of the Armenian Genocide did take place as events were unfolding. The most intriguing and interesting revelations advanced by this volume are found within the contributions of Herve Georgelin and Dikran Kaligian. Georgelinâs study of oral accounts residing in the Centre for Asia Minor Studies (CAMS) tells of the degree to which Orthodox Christians related to (and were, at times, ambivalent towards) the suffering of their Armenian neighbors. In taking on the years leading up to the Armenian Genocide, Kaligianâs study of the internal communiques of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (or ARF) suggests that confrontation between the Ottoman state and Armenian nationalists was not inevitable. Instead, ARF agents appeared to have genuinely hoped to cooperate and engage with the Young Turk regime. It was only after escalating acts of violence in the eastern provinces (with local Kurds serving as the main perpetrators) that the ARF sought to rearm and defend themselves.

Taken as a whole, this volume offers scholars of the Armenian Genocide new directions for future research and reflection. The notion of looking more closely at the wide variety of victims of the CUPâs demographic policies returns us to the fundamental challenge of trying to understand the historical and social context of the multiple genocides that took place during this period. Clearly the Young Turks possessed a fairly complex (although not totally thorough) vision of the empireâs social make up and, consequently, sought to manage the reordering of the stateâs demographic composition at the most local of levels. The research conducted by both UÄur Ãmit Ãngor and Herve Georgelin suggests we should look more closely at the differing regional manifestations of the CUPâs wartime administration in order to understand the differences and continuitites that span the history of Kurds, Greeks, Armenians, Assyrians and Muslim immigrants in Anatolia. Dikran Kaligian takes this point further still in his study of the ARF. He, along with Georgelin, reminds us that the deportations and massacres of Armenians was a not a fated act. Both works prompt us to consider the degree to which Anatoliaâs various communities (both Muslim and non-Muslim as well as native and immigrant) interacted with one another at various levels of power and attempted to comprehend their individual and shared futures.

As one assesses each of these contributions, there is one common assumption each author could reconsider. Each article comprising this volume generally, and often uncritically, speaks of Turks and Turkish nationalism as if both concepts were firmly delineated and concrete at the time of the genocide. In recent years scholars of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey have come to question any sort of unitary notion of Turkish identity at both the state and local level. On the one hand, many of the individuals who presided over the Ottoman state during the First World War were, by their own account, not Turks in the truest sense of the word. One could point to the example of Abdulhalik Renda, the wartime governor of Aleppo, who was rather outspoken of the fact that he was an Albanian from the old Ottoman province of Yahya. On the other hand, Ottoman and republican officials did cast a somewhat leary eye upon ethnic Turcomans throughout Anatolia (be they the Zeybeks of western Anatolia or the Turkish-speaking Alevi groupings of the east). In short, it behoves us to be more skeptical of the end results the CUP regime had hoped to achieve through the demographic reengineering of the Ottoman state. If the Armenian Genocide and other acts of Ottoman state violence were to benefit the âTurksâ of the empire, we should be more critical what or who these âTurksâ were. Does âTurkishnessâ refer to certain classes of Sunni Muslims? Or does it refer to certain members of the provincial or national elite? If one looks at the immigration laws of the late 1920s (whereby a wide variety of ethnic and religious groups were placed in various ranks in accordance to their social and political desirability), we can assume that the CUP and republic leadership possessed a fairly set understanding of what ethnic groups were or could become âTurkishâ.

Setting these suggestions aside, âLate Ottoman Genocidesâ is an essential read for scholars and students of the Armenian Genocide and the late Ottoman Empire. In both composition and construction, the articles presented in this volume do serve as useful signposts for how to approach the future of the field.

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