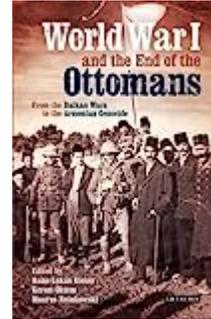


Hans-Lukas Kieser, Kerem Öktem, Maurus Reimkowski, eds. *World War I and the End of the Ottoman Empire: From the Balkan Wars to the Turkish Republic*. Library of Ottoman Studies Series. London: I. B. Tauris, 2015. Illustrations. 288 pp. \$90.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-78453-246-8.



Reviewed by Hakan Gungor (Ordu University, Turkey)

Published on H-War (March, 2017)

Commissioned by Margaret Sankey (Air War College)

World War I and the End of the Ottomans strives to place the First World War in a global perspective, in particular, Ottoman Anatolia, the Balkans, and Palestine. For each of these three regions, the authors endeavor to present how nationalism and its politics questioned the Ottoman State and its legitimacy before and during the Great War. Two of these territories—Palestine and the Balkans—continue to be theaters of conflict today. This collective volume covers significant events, including the Balkan Wars, World War I, and the Armenian genocide. Coeditors Hans-Lukas Kieser, Kerem Öktem, and Maurus Reimkowski jointly wrote the introduction, and ten authors contributed chapters to the volume.

The book is broken into four main sections. The volume follows a chronological order, starting with the Ottoman loss of its European possessions in the Balkan Wars in 1912 through the end of World War I. The first section includes two chapters and sets the stage for the Great War. In this part, Kieser argues that the Ottoman State “questioned the imperial loyalties of certain population” (p. 29), such as Maronite Christians in Mount Lebanon, Jews in Palestine, Arabs of Mecca, and Kurds and Armenians in Anatolia. The government put its non-Turkish citizens under surveillance, because the state considered these minority citizens to be the potential al-

lies of foreign powers. Yiğit Akın presents a different kind of surveillance during the *Seferberlik* (mobilization). Akın concludes, “threat of death for noncompliance to the army created a wave of fear and anxiety in the Ottoman towns and villages (p. 62). Kieser and Akın show that questioning of minorities’ loyalty to the state and the fear of recruitment into the army created violence in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, following the coup d’état of January 23, 1913 (Bab-I Ali Baskınları), which brought the Young Turks to power until 1918, coercion of different minority groups began in the Ottoman land.

The second part contains two chapters written by Y. Doğan Aetinkaya and Emre Erol. Aetinkaya and Erol present how nationalism and religion united people against the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the severe response of the Ottomans to this uprising, which ignited the Balkan War of 1912-13.

The last two parts of the book explore Palestinian, Kurdish, and Armenian problems in the Ottoman Empire. In the third section, Michelle U. Campus and Yuval Ben-Bassat shed light on the Ottoman perspective during the last decade of its rule about the never-ending Palestinian issue. Campus and Ben-Bassat explore the range of re-

actions to Ottomanism and the roots of Palestinian nationalism after the 1908 revolution. Hasan Kayali's book *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908- 1918* (1997) presents an analytical approach to the emergence of Arab nationalism. Kayali concludes that the Young Turks's Turkification policy intensified and unified sentiments of Arabism. As Kayali, Campus and Ben-Bassat state that after the Young Turks claimed power, the Palestinians saw Ottomanism as a *âsickâ* concept. In 1912, several leading articles in the Haifa-based newspaper *al-Kamil* and the Jaffa-based newspaper *Falastin* *â*decided the grave *âsicknessâ* facing Ottomanismâ (p. 131). Four years after 1908, these newspapers played a key role in promoting Arab nationalism, which still persists in the Arab Peninsula.

The last part of the book is devoted to Kurdish and Armenian problems, which Turkey has been forced to face in the international arena. Part 4 contains four chapters written by Mehmet Polatel, Thomas Schmutz, Vahâ© Tachjian, and Uâ©ur â©mit â©ngâ©r. In their chapters, the authors explore various issues between the central government and the Kurds and Armenians. These problems included the central government's policy regarding land distributions and disputes; confiscations of Armenian lands by local, mostly Kurdish people; and the Armenian communities siding with the Russians against the Ottoman Empire. As early as 1913, the Russians en-

deavored to create one big Armenian region as a buffer zone between themselves and the Ottomans. With this intention, the Russian dragoman Andrâ© Mandelstam demanded the six eastern Ottoman provinces for the Armenians. Such proposals, demands, and issues brought Turkish-Armenian relations to a deadlock, which still continues.

In this impressive collection, the authors use various archival sources in many languages, including Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, Armenian, and Macedonian. The essays interconnect diverse processes of social, political, and nationalistic exchange that escalated into conflict and created violence throughout the Balkans and the Middle East. The volume effectively presents the definitive end of religious and ethnic coexistence in the Ottoman Empire after World War I. The events that took place until 1915 marked a definitive Ottoman break with the idea of Ottomanism or Ottoman identity (*Osmanlilik*). The Ottoman revolution of 1908, the Balkan Wars, the coup dâ©tat of January 23, 1913, and the Armenian events of 1915 all marked the end of *Osmanlilik*; that is, the chain of mentioned events ended the viability of a multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious Ottoman community. This provocative work will become a central reference work for scholars, as well as an indispensable source for future studies of Arab-Ottoman and Balkan-Ottoman interactions during the Young Turks reign.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-war>

Citation: Hakan Gungor. Review of Hans-Lukas Kieser; Öktem, Kerem; Reimkowski, Maurus; eds., *World War I and the End of the Ottoman Empire: From the Balkan Wars to the Turkish Republic*. H-War, H-Net Reviews. March, 2017.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=45873>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.