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New Europe College
Str. Plantelor 21
023971 Bucharest
Romania

www.nec.ro; e-mail: nec@nec.ro

Tel. (+4) 021.307.99.10, Fax (+4) 021. 327.07.74



RAMAZAN HAKKI OZTAN

Born in 1985, in Turkey

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of History, University of Utah

Dissertation: *Economy of Nationalism: Technologies of Rebellion and Networks of Resistance in the Late Ottoman Balkans, 1878-1912*

Presidential Fellowship, University of Utah, 2009-2011

Larson-McGee Summer Research Grant, Department of History,
University of Wyoming, March 2008

Conference participations in U.S.A., Switzerland, Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovina,
Georgia, and Austria

TECHNOLOGIES OF REBELLION: OTTOMAN BALKANS AS A SITE OF TECHNOLOGICAL CONTESTATION, 1878-1912*

Abstract

In pursuit of their national histories, historians in the successor state of the Ottoman Empire in Europe and the Middle East have tended to identify neat paths of national development going back deep into the late Ottoman imperial context where they point out the intellectual ‘roots’ and politically significant moments—known as watershed moments—that have ostensibly contributed to the development of their national histories. Such an examination of the late Ottoman world from the perspectives of the post-World War I nation-states has accordingly carved a set of ethnic compartments out of late Ottoman history that came to embody neat analytic utilities in scholarship. One way of going beyond such nationalist teleology is to approach the late Ottoman history in a thematic manner rather than bowing to the appeal of ethno-centered categories of analysis. This study takes one such approach and examines the Ottoman Balkans right before and after the turn of the century as a site of technological contestation between revolutionary political actors and Ottoman state apparatus. In doing so, it shifts the unit of analysis to more global processes and locates revolutionary political conduct as deeply connected to transnational flow of commodities and technologies. Under the impact of modernist theories on nationalism, technologies such as print capitalism have often been framed as the vehicles of fulfilling ideological dissemination and cultivating ethnic and religious loyalties. Another strand of scholarship, on the other hand, frames technologies such as telegraph, railroads, and the steam engine as the tools with which the state apparatus extends its reach into otherwise uncontrollable territories. Critiquing such linear constructs, I argue that the late nineteenth century saw the democratization of the means of contention and violence. In the Ottoman Balkans, the major struggle between revolutionary actors and the Ottoman state apparatus had been that of establishing authority and monopoly on the technologies and commodities of violence. I therefore examine when and under what conditions new technologies empowered actors and when it made them vulnerable.

Keywords: Ottoman Balkans, revolutionary politics, technology, global commodities

Technology: Means of Transmission or Vectors of Competition?

The existing literature often treats nationalism as an ideology that spreads like a virus, while failing to specify the exact process of its transmission. The literature instead assumes that nationalism spreads thanks to modern technologies such as newspapers, novels, radio or television, and it does so in an unbroken linearity since the French Revolution (1789).¹ In this regard, modern institutions like schools, factories, hospitals or army barracks have also been treated as hotbeds of this virus, as they function in our narratives as sites of ideological dissemination and circulation. These institutions somehow spreads the virus of the necessity of national sovereignty—a virus that boasts of a level of ability, agility, and strength to turn peasants into co-nationals after the immediacy of contact, and transform unassuming townsmen into willing executioners ready to sacrifice their lives for their co-nationals. In the words of Benedict Anderson, these modern mediums allow the undifferentiated masses of the dynastic communities that had so far remained ethnically blind to “imagine” themselves as part of a larger national community—one that is “inherently limited and sovereign.”² Likewise, as Ernest Gellner has come to theorize, modern institutions such as factory—with new labor relations embedded in it— required homogeneity of culture as a result of necessary labor specializations— leading to the emergence of a homogenous national culture that differs from the high clerical culture of the medieval times. Like Gellner’s modern factories, railways, army barracks, roads, and so on also embody the same capacity of transmission and transformation, as convincingly analyzed and detailed by Eugen Weber who showed how these institutions came to unify a nation by turning the passive peasants into Frenchmen.³ Scholars from different fields and orientations have therefore continued to theorize the emergence of nation-states and nationalism as a logical outcome of such processes of nationalist socialization and sociability.

Even though the literature on nationalist socialization is vast and convincing, it does not explain why some co-nationals resisted in the past, or continue to do so today, to the appeal of the virus when in times of contact, why others find the virus of nationalism so appealing so far as to sacrifice their lives and livelihood in championing its cause or why similar processes of nationalist socialization continually provides contradictory results, with diverse geographic variations and fluctuations. Furthermore, if I borrow Keith Brown’s apt analogy, this modernist perspective, with emphasis on national socialization, reduces ‘pre-national’ communities to

“vessels either waiting to be filled, or already flowing, with the substance of national sentiment.”⁴ It is this modernist tendency that explains why we lean towards explaining nation-state formation as a matter of the transition from an intellectual nationalism to a political nationalism—that is, when the national sentiment hits the brim of the vessel and starts overflowing with (now political) national consciousness. It is also this modernist tendency that highlights a set of points of transitions, shifts or watersheds on a linear historical canvas, thus creating linear and progressive histories. These historical turning points all anticipate ‘that’ key moment in a nation’s history—the moment when the nation finally broke the pre-national yoke, escaping from the “imperial prison” or colonial dungeon—boundaries that were unable to resist the power of national will, i.e. the flood of national zeal.⁵

As Clifford Geertz noted, it is this ultimate national moment when “it all has ‘finally’ come out,” the final outcome that dominates the way we relate to its immediate pre-present.⁶ Previous historical episodes and historical figures in nation’s pre-history are thus valuable and relevant only as far as they relate to this final outcome of the long history of national struggle. In nationalist imaginings then, these episodes and forefathers became important because they proved crucial in filling the ‘vessel’ with national sentiment/zeal/consciousness, therefore leading up to the final national outcome. In evaluating such historical figures and breaking-points in nations’ histories, scholars certainly developed a more objective terminology—one that strives to steer away from the vocabulary of nationalist historiographies and official histories. Therefore, scholars often frame these ‘pre-national’ episodes and figures as ‘proto-national’ and specify ‘liminal’ phases in the linear development of nation’s history—a rather commonplace teleological terminology that is illustrative of the shockingly thin methodological and theoretical divide between academic scholarship and nationalist mythologies. In the end, both scholarship and nationalist mythology orders and theorizes the past in reference to the national outcome. Modernist views of nationalism do not just re-cycle such teleology but actually theorize and thus embed it, for it has become theoretically safe and sound to see nationalism as an ideology that has the viral capacity of transmission thanks to human to human contact—one that spread *only* in modern times because of modern advancements and institutions such as schools, conscript armies, newspapers, novels, and industrial labor.

This study focuses on the Ottoman Balkans, i.e. “Turkey in Europe” as Western contemporaries put it at the time—comprising of six Ottoman vilayets/provinces (i.e. Adrianople, Salonika, Manastir, Yanya, Iskodra, and Kosova provinces)—right before and after the turn of the century when, in the words of Mark Mazower, “a history of revolt and revenge stretching back almost a century” came to reach its climax in what one may frame as three decades of contention that lasted from 1878 to 1912—that is, from the Bulgarian annexation of Eastern Rumelia to the end of the Balkan Wars.⁷ Even though this period saw the greater proliferation and circulation of newspapers, armies, schools, and other mediums that one would normally expect to foment national consciousness in theoretical terms, I frame technology and modern institutions such as schools not as a vehicle of disseminating and circulating ideology and a means of cultivating ethnic loyalties but rather treat technological mediums as vehicles that facilitated political contention on the ground. I argue that the importance of technology has not been its ability to spread ideological convictions and loyalties but in its ability to facilitate political competition and contention in proportions unimaginable before.

Unlike modernist views of nationalism, my approach frames nationalism as political competition based on identity markers. This form of political competition was not necessarily a phenomenon peculiar to modern times, but rather a process that gained unprecedented momentum from the late nineteenth century onwards because of the growing availability of the technological means of contention. In seeing technology as such, I try to move away from the outcome-centric methodology of modernist views of nationalism and instead highlight a dynamic process of contention that evolves as the means of contention continues to change. As the routes of contention are dependent on its technological and logistical environment, I construct a process-driven perspective that hopefully allows us not only to understand the history of national contention in the late Ottoman era but also the contentions that are constantly in-the-making today or tomorrow. Furthermore, by rejecting to frame technologies as vehicles of ideological dissemination where the receivers lack historical agency and instead seeing it as the axes of political competition for various actors, I reinstate historical agency to those actors who risked their lives in making political claims and frame them as active participants in history.

In what follows, I examine the way the revolutionaries in the Ottoman Balkans after the turn of the century came to utilize *new* technologies of rebellion such as dynamite, bombs, photography, and newspapers.

These new technologies proved vital to the revolutionary enterprise, as they embodied a capacity to shake off what remained to be weak vestiges of Ottoman legitimacy and prestige in the region. The regulation and containment of these new technological fields of contention proved a crucial process for the Ottoman state apparatus, however. The existing scholarship often frames technological advancements as directly contributing to the efforts of state centralization and modernization whereby they enable the state apparatus to reach out and penetrate into otherwise uncontrollable territories where the bureaucrat came to tame the uncivilized and unruly. This perspective is often reflective of our tendency to write histories from the perspective of imperial metropolises. I instead illustrate below that technological advancements were double-edged sword, as they not only strengthened the central state apparatus but also made it growingly vulnerable to the political contenders from below, for technological advancements of the late nineteenth century also democratized the means of violence and revolutionary contention.

Infrastructures of Power? Railroads, Telegraphs, and Postal System

Spring was a time of rebellion across the Ottoman Balkans.⁸ Steep rocky mountains perching high above the towns that remained nestled in the protective cover of forests and cliffs meant that the snow covered passes would guarantee safe passage neither to soldier, nor rebel. Those few who opted to carry out revolutionary struggle in winter could only do so on a very low scale.⁹ Yet, once the spring came, snow melted, and nature relaxed its ways, arms buried last September would get dug up in preparation of the new season of rebellion.¹⁰ The rebels would remain active throughout the whole spring and summer, with the partial exception of the harvest period when human labor became a valuable commodity in and of itself.¹¹ After the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the mountainous region of the Balkans that has thus resisted the reach of outside control began to encounter significant penetrations in the form of railroads and other means of transportation and communication. As the appropriation of the Balkans by the Ottoman state apparatus and capitalist ventures took place, a particular discourse of civilization also began to form on the side, legitimizing such 'modernizing' initiatives.

Approximately fifteen years later than the railroad boom of 1840s in England and more or less a decade after the Great Exhibit of London in 1851, it was the English companies that were awarded contracts to build railroads in the imperial domains of the Sultan. Accordingly, within a decade after the Crimean War of 1853-5, two short lines were constructed in the Ottoman Balkans, first stretching from Chernovo to Constanta (1860) and the second from Varna to Ruse (1865).¹² Yet, the Ottoman metropole remained to be unconnected to the European railroad grid. Therefore contracted in 1869 to the famous railroad tycoon of the time Maurice de Hirsch (1831-96), the duty to construct a line between Constantinople and Wien was given to his Chemins de fer Orientaux (*Rumeli Şimendiferi Kumpanyası*) but Hirsch's company instead ended up constructing two separate rail lines, the first stretching from Constantinople to Belova via Adrianople and Plovdiv, and the second from Salonica to Mitrovica via Skopje.¹³ This was so not only because the military conflicts such as the Russo-Ottoman Wars of 1877-88 brought about territorial shifts that required revisions of original plans along new national borders but also such hefty contracts almost always unearthed intra-governmental competition that led to change of plans, as high investment costs included bribes rumored to be distributed among the deserving bureaucrats, which led to public scandals.¹⁴

Not always did the wars or bureaucratic lumps mean delays or obstacles in the face of technological advancements. As a matter of fact, quite the opposite since the wars often necessitated the greater implementation of technology as well as facilitated new innovations. The Crimean War of 1853-56, in this sense, when the Ottoman armies allied with Britain and France in the face of Tsarist Russia, occasioned the introduction of telegraph to the Ottoman domains due to wartime necessities. As the Western powers constructed telegraph lines for purposes of military communication, the Ottoman metropole also decided to connect itself to the war grid of telegraphs formed in war-zones up north by extending a line from the capital to Shumen via Adrianople. In 1857, Constantinople also got linked to the European grid thanks to a line that stretched from the metropole to Plovdiv, Sofia, and Niš.¹⁵ By 1870s, the world was a better connected place, with submarine cables linking Europe with other continents such as the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Australia.¹⁶ Around the same time the Ottoman Empire, too, was better connected, as telegraph linked most of its cities to one another, reaching 25,137 kilometers by 1869. In the end, the technology of telegraph proved much easier to

install and cheaper to expand, particularly when compared to railroad construction. The Hamidian period (1876-1909) would accordingly see the continued expansion of the service, with the opening of additional branch lines.¹⁷ By 1869, the European provinces of the empire boasted of the highest number of telegraph offices—143 to be exact.¹⁸ Better connectivity among the Ottoman towns meant that the Ottoman center was quicker in responding to provincial crises and smarter in distributing its coercive capacity across its domains from mountainous regions of the Balkans to the arid deserts of Yemen. “Defective enough,” wrote Henry Harris Jessup in 1874, “yet enabling the central power in Constantinople to move the whole empire like a machine.”¹⁹ By 1874, the map of the Ottoman Empire was indeed literally dotted with telegraph offices in each and every city.²⁰

Technology proved to be a double-edge sword, however, and no one knew this better than Sultan Abdulhamid II himself. Reigning over the Ottoman domains from 1876 to 1909, i.e. the most critical juncture of technological innovation and the increasing revolutionary opposition from below, Abdulhamid II certainly embodied a sense of awe towards technological developments of his time. As the sultan saw greater utility in railroads, telegraph lines, and institutions of education for the prosperity of the empire and happiness of his subjects, his reign accordingly witnessed the incredible expansion of these public services across the imperial domains.²¹ Yet, technological advancements also instilled fear into the Sultan. The first telephone communication at the Ottoman capital took place in 1881, only five years after the first telephone call between Alexander Graham Bell and his assistant. Abdulhamid II rightfully feared that such a technology would essentially benefit the revolutionaries in tremendous ways, as it would enable them to communicate and organize secretly and effectively at the expense of state authority.²² Accordingly, the Ottoman state began to issue bans against private initiatives that tried to install telephone lines, arguing that communication was a matter of state monopoly in the Ottoman Empire and such a technology presented some certain “handicaps.”²³ The official ban on telephones would only be lifted after the Young Turk revolution of July 1908.

Beyond the uncertain menace the telephone presented, Abdulhamid’s fears included the revolutionary prospects of any other possible innovation as well as those who could be held accountable for such technological novelties. Mehmed Nazım Pasha (1840-1926), for instance, a Hamidian bureaucrat who served in multiple posts as governor such as in Mersin,

Kayseri, Diyarbakir, Aleppo, Konya, Sivas, and Salonika, recalls an interesting anecdote after his encounter with Said Pasa the English (1830/1-96).²⁴ The latter then served as the governor of Konya but he was originally trained in artillery sciences for seventeen years in England. The result, according to Nazım Pasha, was that he was “a man of his word and a virtuous person who adapted English manners and methods” (thus his moniker).²⁵ Yet, at a time when Said Pasha’s skill set in artillery sciences was simply unmatched across the Ottoman domains the sultan decided not to utilize his services and skills in artillery, because, Nazım Pasha argued, the Ottoman Sultan feared that new advances in artillery technology could end up being used in toppling him from the Ottoman throne.²⁶ Sultan’s fears of coup d’états, however, had a higher toll than the unexploited skills of an artillery officer, as he would also ban “higher-unit maneuvers and all live firing exercises” in the Ottoman land forces, for he feared the military action to take him down.²⁷

In retrospect, Abdulhamid II’s fears do not seem to be unfounded. To be sure, the Ottoman history had its own share of regicides such as that of Osman II in 1622 in what may be termed as a Janissary-style dethronement, or more recent but failed organized conspiracy, as in the Kuleli Incident of 1859 that tried to topple the Sultan Abdulmecid I (1839-61). These were certainly lessons learnt for Abdulhamid II as he grew up in the palace quarters. Only less than two years into his reign—just as if to refresh the memory of young Sultan—Abdulhamid II came to experience a small-scale conspiracy of his own—one that tried to reinstate his brother Murad V to the throne at his expense in what is known as the Çırağan Incident (1878).²⁸

As Riedler argued, most of the conspiracies in the nineteenth-century Ottoman capital were in one way or another tied to the question of succession.²⁹ By the turn of the century, however, the axis of intra-state political competition was no longer a dynastic matter. Therefore, by July 1905, the rationale and the technology used to topple a monarch differed from its historical precursors. Remarkably similar to the assassination of the Russian Tsar Alexander II by the revolutionary organization Narodnaia Volia (People’s Will) in 1881 when the Tsar was on a routine military inspection in Saint Petersburg,³⁰ the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF hereafter) also chose a day when Abdulhamid II had developed a routine schedule and behavior: that of Friday prayer. In co-operation with the Bulgarian revolutionaries and some European anarchists, the members of the ARF planted 80 kilos of timed bombs into a carriage that would park by the mosque and detonate as the Sultan exited the Friday

prayer. According to the official report, the revolutionaries purchased the carriage from Vienna, the dynamite from Athens, the gadgets to make the bombs from Marseilles, thereby assembling a truly transnational “infernal machine” (‘dinamit makinesi’). As the soldiers were given the command ‘present arms’ in expectation of the sultan’s exit, the bombs exploded right at the time when the sultan was supposed to have stepped out of the yard but gotten caught up in a conversation with the head of the Religious Affairs, the Sultan remained unhurt. The attack instead killed twenty six others, wounded fifty eight, and destroyed sixteen other carriages together with their horses.³¹ “The world was hardly prepared for such an evidence of the spread of ‘Western ideas’ into the Near East,” *the New York Times* reported about the failed assassination attempt, since “the use of dynamite suggests the modern Anarchist, the European ‘Red’.”³²

Beyond such flashy instances of the use of technology in political violence, however, whether successful or abortive, technological advancements had actually gained broader utility in the Sultan’s realm from the late nineteenth century onwards. Technologies of rebellion such as dynamite, bombs, photograph, rifles, pistols, newspapers, and many others have all reached their prime time by the end of the nineteenth century when they became cheaply producible, easily transportable, safely handleable, and therefore gradually more available to the multiple revolutionary causes across the Ottoman Balkans. This was thus a time when the means of contention got democratized and the revolutionaries boasted of a technology better suited to fight off the state machineries in their hit-and-run or resistance tactics. Such technologies, however, were not simple disseminators of a clear-cut ideology from a circle of nationalist intellectuals and politicians to a passive illiterate peasantry ready to consume ideological dictates. Rather, these technologies would establish loyalties and trust by shaking off the Ottoman legitimacy in the region, thus offering alternative political futures to diverse constituencies. The technologies of rebellion were therefore crucial blocs of intra-state competition that began to reach its climax from the 1880s onwards when the availability of new technologies of rebellion coincided with more structural international and regional shifts in the Ottoman Balkans. The post-1880s in the region was when the intra-state competition not only attained necessary means of contention but also its more favorable geopolitical climate.

Changing Geo-Politics of the Ottoman Balkans since 1878

The history of organized revolutionary politics in the Ottoman Empire goes back to the first decades of the nineteenth century when underground organizations such as the Filiki Etaireia (Friendly Brotherhood)—founded in Odessa in 1814 and Alexander Ypsilantis assuming the leadership by 1820—became an active participant in the earlier phases of the Greek Revolution (1821-30), even though the exact role of the organization in the uprisings remain a point of debate among historians.³³ Similar secret organizations, with diverse political agendas, also emerged in later decades. In 1859, for instance, Fedailer Cemiyeti (the Society of Martyrs) was formed featuring a broad coalition of discontented ulama (Islamic scholars), officers, and bureaucrats, complete with an oath and defined goal of overthrowing Abdulmecid I from the throne.³⁴ Mid-1860s also saw the development of a secret Bulgarian revolutionary organization in Bucharest, which drew members from the Bulgarian youth who had spent time in Russia for educational purposes. Such secret revolutionary committees actively sent bands across the Danube River into the Ottoman territories and were active in organizing the 1868 rebellion.³⁵

The period from the mid-1880s onwards, however, witnessed the most significant developments in the late Ottoman history that would benefit greatly to the rise of such intra-state competitors to the forefront of Ottoman domestic politics. Up until the mid-1890s, for instance, England held the territorial protection of the Ottoman Empire very dearly, thinking that Russia could benefit the most from its scramble. In the end, the aftermath of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78 was about to turn the entire Balkans “into a Slavic federation under Russian hegemony,” which was overturn thanks to the Congress in Berlin.³⁶ Furthermore, such a scramble of the Ottoman territories could have translated very easily into a more direct Great Power confrontation, as it did in the Crimean War few decades earlier. Therefore, the British policy that favored the territorial integrity (‘tamamiyet-i mülukiyet’) of the Ottoman Empire was more reflective of London’s fears about the uncertain paths of a possible Great Power confrontation than an ideological affinity with Constantinople.

Yet, since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869—an initiative spearheaded by a French national, which was surely enough to keep London suspicious and on its toes, Egypt’s role in the way Britain calculated the global security of its most prized possession i.e. India began to alter. By 1875 London purchased the debt-ridden Egypt’s shares in the Suez

Canal but Egypt's debts continued to soar in the following decade, so did the concerns of those like Britain or France which were too invested in the region to lose simply because of a spendthrift khedive of Egypt.³⁷ As the British stepped in by 1882 to restore order to the rebellion-stricken Alexandria and Cairo, it was the Ottoman territorial integrity that had received yet another blow. Certainly, the Ottoman metropole did not enjoy a direct control over Egypt to begin with. In the end, Muhammad Ali (1769-49), an Ottoman captain of Albanian origin, began to assert his own authority over the region since the early 1800s and slowly came to establish himself first as the governor of Egypt and then acquiring by early 1840s an autonomous status to Egypt where his descendants would later exercise hereditary rule. But the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and its formal annexation a decade later in 1895 began to signal clear shifts in the otherwise traditional British attitude of favoring the Ottoman territorial integrity—a shift that would gradually push the Ottoman metropole to seek another Great Power ally in the following decades (thus the Ottoman-German rapprochement).

Such diplomatic turn of events and the gradual change in the British policy vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire was not devoid of a domestic political angle, however. The ways in which the Ottoman metropole responded to the Armenian revolutionary enterprise in Eastern Anatolia since mid-1890s had rekindled the negative Turkish imagery in the Western capitals, which contributed to the consolidation of British policies.³⁸ The emergence of Armenian revolutionary organizations abroad, together with the formation of Armenian *fedayeen* in the Eastern Anatolia since 1880s, resulted in a series of rebellions such as the Sasun Uprising in 1894 and that of Zeitun in 1895-6. The ruthless suppression of these rebellions by the Ottoman state, coupled with effective manipulation of the public opinion by the Armenian sympathizers in the West in an attempt to secure a foreign intervention, created an unfavorable climate towards the Ottoman Empire in the European capitals then under the liberal wave.³⁹ This lethal combination of growing diplomatic isolation and the dominance of negative European public opinion vis-à-vis Constantinople came to be tested out with the Ottoman-Greek War of 1897. After the Kingdom of Greece landed troops to Crete, then an Ottoman island with significant Greek population, in response to the Cretan revolutionaries' calls for union with the Greek mainland, the Ottoman armies quickly scored decisive victories against Greece but these advances meant very little, as the empire was forced to yield autonomy to Crete after the diplomatic intervention of the Great

Powers. As the *Harper's Weekly* put it, "the stake does not always go to the winner."⁴⁰

While the Ottoman Empire suffered from growing international isolation and deteriorating European public opinion, developments in the region did not fare that much better, either. In 1885, the Principality of Bulgaria came to annex the province of Eastern Rumelia, an autonomous territory that owed its existence to the arrangements of the Treaty of Berlin (1878). Even though the annexation started a crisis among the Great Powers as well as their regional allies—complete with a military conflict between Bulgaria and Serbia, the Ottoman Empire, then devoid of military and financial means to confront the move, was forced to confirm the annexation a year later.⁴¹ Such a territorial change in the Balkans therefore not only turned Bulgaria into a more eminent threat to reckon with for the regional governments including the Ottoman Empire, but also came to animate the political competition over the remaining Ottoman territories in the Balkans, which would pit Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, and Ottoman Empire against one another in the following two decades.⁴²

Such increasing political competition in the region certainly announced further troubles down the road for the Ottoman metropole, because the Balkan states of Greece, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria had all spent the last quarter of the nineteenth century in modernizing their bureaucratic apparatus and building up military capacity, with the end result of each turning into formidable enemies capable of mobilizing large sectors of their populations for a possible military engagement.⁴³ By 1903, the Balkan neighbors of the Ottoman Empire indeed posed a significant military threat that Istanbul began to take seriously, as the Sultan would decidedly spend the rest of his tenure in making sure that any attempt at a Balkan alliance remained a stillborn move.

The Bulgarian annexation of Eastern Rumelia in 1885, however, brought about an interesting turn of events for the regional alliances, albeit briefly. With the annexation, the Principality of Bulgaria lost the diplomatic and military support of Russia and such a move-away from the Russian orbit in turn translated into warmer ties with the Ottoman capital. For the next decade, it was a former revolutionary Stefan Stambolov (1854-95) who remained in charge of the Bulgarian affairs. As he favored a pacifist policy to advance Bulgarian interests over the Ottoman Balkans in general and Macedonia in particular, Stambolov was thus able to negotiate concessions from Constantinople to extend Bulgaria's religious and educational reach further into Macedonia. Such concessions would

enable Stambolov to open Bulgarian schools even in places such as Kesriye (Kastoria in today's Greece) where no Bulgarian student existed, thus forcing the school authorities to transfer students from elsewhere.⁴⁴

By 1894, however, Stambolov was pushed aside by his opponents, including King Ferdinand of Bulgaria who decided to act beyond the parameters of a figurehead monarch. As Stambolov was murdered in the streets of Sofia a year later, Bulgaria had already abandoned its pro-Ottoman policy and sided with the Tsar, clearly reflective of the more aggressive Bulgarian policy to brew over the Ottoman Balkans.⁴⁵ Therefore, when Russia got involved in war (1904-5) with Japan, the rising constitutional power of Asia, the Bulgarian dignitaries, both civil and military, together with a sizeable crowd, therefore flocked to the official religious ceremony where they prayed for the victory of Russia, their Great Power sponsor.⁴⁶

Therefore, both international and regional political climate by mid-1890s had come to animate an environment favorable for the growth of political competition over the remaining Ottoman territories in the Balkans. The regional and international dynamics thus provided a number of political opportunities to diverse intra-state competitors who were to draw personnel, funding, morale, and weapons not only from the populations of the contested territories but also from a multiplicity of inter-state sponsors, whether in the region or in Western Europe—sponsors that had invariably developed preferences for the victory of certain factions over the others. Therefore, political competition over the Balkans was hardly ever a local or a national story devoid of regional and international contexts by mid-1890s. It was precisely this political climate that offered political opportunities to a number of revolutionary groups to take the center stage in the late Ottoman history. All (in)famous and major underground revolutionary organizations of the late Ottoman era thus date back to this period, with Hunchaks founded in 1887, Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in 1889, Dashnaksutyun (aka ARF) in 1890, Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) in 1893, and the External Macedonian Organization founded in 1895. Yet, beyond the favorable shifts in the geo-politics of the Ottoman Balkans from 1890s onwards that would enable the rise of intra-state competitors in the region, the post-1890 era also witnessed another set of crucial developments—that is, the increasing availability of technologies that would become the staple of revolutionary action in the Ottoman Balkans.

Towards New Technologies of Rebellion

As soon as night covered the land all was in a simmer of revolutionary activity: rifles, cartridges, bombs and dynamite were transported from place to place; agitators sowed the seed of rebellion; messengers carried news, warnings, and instructions hither and thither; and one by one the peasants stole out into the fields to meet and drill. It became a common saying that the day was to the Turk but the night to the *Komitadji* [committee men].⁴⁷

Revolutionary political activism in the Ottoman Balkans, whether carried out in the name of Macedonians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians, Muslims, Vlachs, or Turks, has increasingly resorted to a similar tactic: the use of political violence and terror tactics, together with conspiracy, to advance an alternative political legitimacy at the expense of the existing legitimacies of competing factions. 'Propaganda by the deed', as popularized by the Russian anarchist literature since 1860s, thus intended to mobilize a target constituency and rally them behind a revolutionary program. The revolutionaries were aware, however, that they could not field armies that could match the coercive power of the Ottoman state apparatus. Even at the height of a concentrated attempt at challenging the Ottoman legitimacy militarily, for instance, as it would happen in the *Ilinden Uprising* of 1903, revolutionaries could hold onto power only very briefly up until the auxiliary Ottoman troops reached the scene.⁴⁸ It was this reality, for instance, that made the External Committee in Sofia to issue orders in the spring of 1903 to the bands roaming the villages in the southern Ottoman Balkans, telling them to avoid confrontations with the Ottoman forces, instead spread propaganda among the villagers, and wait until the time of the general uprising.⁴⁹

Therefore, the revolutionary organizations functioned more than often as a state within a state, creating a parallel system of taxation, coercion, and representation, while avoiding a direct armed confrontation with regular armies. When the latter took place eventually, revolutionaries preferred to hit symbolic targets that were the emblems of the competing political legitimacies. In carrying out such 'legible' actions, revolutionaries invariably hoped to leverage the sympathies of the Great Powers by illustrating both the extent of chaos and the lack of authority in the Ottoman Balkans as well as positing themselves as the only truly appropriate political alternative that had popular backing in the region.⁵⁰ The Ottoman bureaucrats were well aware of such a contentious repertoire and reported it in what often amounted to formulaic statements that characterized their

daily correspondence: revolutionaries were “to commit acts of arson here and there and blow up government buildings and other structures with dynamite in order to agitate the Ottoman soldiers and Muslim inhabitants to commit acts of violence towards Christians, all geared towards drawing foreign intervention” that would hopefully support their cause.⁵¹ Revolutionaries freely expressed such tactics to foreign observers too, as one revolutionary remarked that “a series of outrages by the Turks such as would horrify the civilized world was what they hoped for and intended to bring about.”⁵²

Such a contentious repertoire was indeed put into practice, as illustrated by the manners in which the revolutionaries started off and carried out the Ilinden Uprising of 1903 in rather symbolic ways. In every town the revolutionaries attacked, they made sure to damage, if possible to destroy, the public buildings and cut off the lines of communications. In the town of Krusevo, for instance, where the revolutionaries would later declare a short-lived republic—yet another symbolic move, they immediately circled the city hall (*‘hükümet konağı’*), telegraph office, and the military residences, and burnt them all down, thus cutting off communications as well as destroying any other vestige of Ottoman legitimacy. Public buildings such as city halls were repeatedly targeted in other towns, as well. Setting the hay barns to fire was also part of the revolutionary pattern, as fires across the town certainly contributed to the revolutionary spectacle. For the revolutionaries, soldiers who were either out for training or roll-call were also favorite targets. They would repeatedly cut off telegraph lines, thus not allowing the state to re-establish communication with the center or the nearby administrative divisions. The revolutionaries would also target buildings such as bridges to delay the move of auxiliary troops from one trouble spot to the next. The authorities were therefore constantly forced to send large detachments to repair bridges and telegraph lines in an attempt to re-establish communication and restore authority.⁵³

Therefore, technology such as telegraph lines that were to consolidate state authority presented a set of vulnerabilities for the state apparatus on a central and local level, as telegraph not only became the only means of communication but also the emblem of authority and legitimacy. Furthermore, technology was also the major material condition that enabled the revolutionary contention. In this sense, technology would begin to serve the revolutionaries not as the means with which they got their co-nationals socialized into the larger nation but rather as the vehicles with which they carried out their campaign of mounting, sustaining, and

publicizing alternative political legitimacies. One such technological innovation that proved crucial to the revolutionary enterprise in the Ottoman Balkans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was dynamite. Often being seen as the technology that enabled great progress in fields of mining, engineering and construction—breakthroughs that we often associate with the rise of modern state power (yet another linear and state-centric interpretation), dynamite was also the technology that has revolutionized the ways in which subaltern actors such as the revolutionaries and anarchists of the late nineteenth century came to operate.⁵⁴ In this sense, as the “secret societies opened a way to politics in a system that excluded many on account of their low rank or their group’s standing in the political system,”⁵⁵ technologies such as dynamite similarly democratized the manners in which revolutionaries could challenge the state monopoly on legitimate violence, which was the crux of what constituted statehood itself (à la Max Weber).

In 1866 Alfred Nobel’s discovery of the blasting cap as the detonator and his later addition of a stabilizing element into the dynamite’s mixture were indeed revolutionary steps that helped him harness the power of nitroglycerin—invented earlier in the century—in much safer ways.⁵⁶ Yet, this technology that Nobel sold to the mining and construction companies worldwide as well as the warring states of his time also found itself an unlikely bunch of underground customers: revolutionary and anarchist organizations. The 1890s would accordingly see the explosion in the use of dynamite and other high-impact explosives in politically-minded spectacles that would begin to ‘terrorize’ the larger populations across the world. As one Balkan revolutionary put it, “civilized methods” of fighting, “with certainty of defeat” was now cast aside.⁵⁷ In the end, dynamite offered to the late nineteenth-century revolutionaries “new vistas of power, not solely for its potential to wreak destruction, but also for its ability to terrify a public.”⁵⁸ Dynamite was indeed a great equalizer in the revolutionary struggle against the coercive means of a state apparatus, as the revolutionaries were now, as the Ottoman soldiers came to admit, able to carry “their cannon in their pockets.”⁵⁹

To be sure, the know-how of manufacturing dynamite, bombs, and poisons was circulated across Europe by the emerging anarchist literature of 1880s.⁶⁰ Whenever the literature fell short, however, the revolutionaries in the Ottoman Empire traded their knowledge with one another. In 1897, for instance, Goce Delcev of IMRO traveled to Odessa to meet with Armenian revolutionaries to exchange such practical bomb-making

skills.⁶¹ In the end, Armenian revolutionaries made it to the headlines a year earlier on August 29, 1896, with the first high-profile attack that took place in the Ottoman Empire. That day the members of the ARF entered the headquarters of the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople, held the people inside hostage, and planted bombs and dynamite, and threatened to blow up the building. Concurrently, other ARF members fired guns and threw bombs and dynamites in different parts of the imperial capital—all in an attempt to draw attention to the misery of the Armenians under the Ottoman rule, particularly the manners in which the Hamidian Cavalry Forces, a group of Kurdish irregulars, came to suppress the Armenian uprisings of the previous three years. As the European powers intervened and the revolutionaries were accorded a free passage to Europe, the imperial capital witnessed the massacre of few thousand Armenians in retribution by the Hamidian loyalists.⁶²

After the turn of the century, the Ottoman Balkans saw the increase in the number of similar bombings and attacks which took place more frequently and on a wider scale, both in urban settings as well as across the countryside. On April 28, 1903, the city of Salonika came to witness the infamous *Gemidzii* (i.e. “Boatmen”) bombings that created a revolutionary spectacle so far unmatched in the Ottoman realms. First a French steamer ship was rocked by the explosion of twenty kilos of dynamite, followed by the detonation of another bomb laid on the rail tracks, which missed its main target, i.e. the Istanbul train, as the timer went off early, only damaging the locomotive and sparing the lives of soldiers on board. Next day, another bomb went off at dusk damaging the gas line, which immediately cut off the electricity across the city at dusk, signaling the rest of the conspirators to start throwing bombs at pre-determined cafes and bars, followed by the highlight of the entire plot—that is, the explosion of the dynamite-mined tunnel dug underneath the Ottoman Bank for the past forty days. These explosions were followed by an immediate crackdown by the Ottoman authorities, which actually prevented the next round of explosions which would have targeted a mosque, post office and military headquarters.⁶³

As the revolutionaries in Salonika also came to target the symbols of European capitalism together with those of Ottoman sovereignty to guarantee an international publicity to their cause, the Ottoman authorities were therefore forced to extend protection to other private banks such as the *Crédit Lyonnais* to prevent such similar attacks.⁶⁴ The empire’s vast territories provided too many possible targets for the Ottoman

state to manage the security of its domains. Long stretches of railroads, gasworks, bridges, and water supply centers provided ample opportunities to strike, thus keeping the Ottoman officials increasingly alert for any suspicious behavior around these public landmarks, particularly by those of the 'suspect' ethnic group.⁶⁵ Thus, the state correspondence after the turn of the century constantly talk about the Bulgarian or Macedonian revolutionaries operating in disguise and with false identities and passports, looking for opportunities to commit acts of murder, arson, and poison. One representative correspondence from the Prime Ministry thus warned the Ministry of Interior, for instance, about a set of Bulgarian conspirators ('fesede') who came to Constantinople with the goals of setting certain neighborhoods to fire, murdering passengers on city ferries, and adding poison to the capital's water supplies.⁶⁶ Such threats led the authorities to appoint additional guards on the city ferries, and send in extra forces to scout the long stretches of rail lines and waterways.⁶⁷

Such correspondence since the turn of the century was more of the rule than the exception, as the Ottoman bureaucrats kept receiving similar intelligence briefs and responded often through formulaic ways by highlighting the necessity of taking the necessary measures ('tedabir-i lazımenin ittihazi') against these sinister plots. Ad hoc state responses to such revolutionary contention since the 1890s, however, gradually gained its legal characteristics. As explosives and ammunition such as dynamites, hand bombs, cartridges, and gunpowder became the weapons of choice for the revolutionaries in the Ottoman Balkans, the state authorities accordingly added an addendum in October 1903 to the article 58 of the Ottoman criminal law, specifying fifteen years in prison for the production, sale, or smuggling of dynamite, lifelong imprisonment if done so in the name of a conspiracy, and the capital punishment if dynamite gets used by conspirators.⁶⁸ Article 166 of the criminal law also got a similar addendum for the illegal manufacture or smuggling of gunpowder and cartridges. August of 1910, a time of a concentrated military confrontation in the Albanian highlands, witnessed the expansion of the criminal law so as to include the individuals who carried these prohibited weapons for personal use as well as those who were engaged in the smuggling of guns within the imperial territories, thus removing any possible legal loopholes.⁶⁹

Photography and Print Capitalism: Image Control and Market Regulation

By the turn of the century then, technologies such as railroads and telegraphs that the Ottoman state continued to invest in to expand its central reach became a source of constant concern from the point of state security. On the other hand, as we have seen, some other technological innovations such as dynamite came to democratize the means of contention for the revolutionaries and challenged the state's authority on the legitimate use of violence. Yet, certain other technologies such as photography and print media continued to provide a certain degree of relief. The Hamidian regime accordingly began to utilize the power of newspapers and journals to inculcate loyalty among the Ottoman subjects, which required close monitoring and censorship of the Ottoman press.⁷⁰ According to Hanioglu, the Hamidian censorship, harsher and more repressive when compared to other conservative monarchies of the time, succeeded to create "a press entirely committed to the service of the regime."⁷¹ Accordingly, the publications in the empire, whether in dailies or books, were closely monitored to see whether they fit the set standards and if, preferably, they came to contribute to the official imagery.

As print capitalism provided the Ottoman state a degree of soft power, the improving technology of photography allowed the Ottoman security officials to track down the suspect revolutionaries or anarchists more closely and effectively before they acted to implement their 'sinister' plans. To be sure, old methods persevered, as certain correspondence simply opted to report the facial features of the revolutionaries. For instance, the Ministry of Interior received intelligence from Sofia on December 20, 1903 about a certain revolutionary named Nikola Boyaceyf in his mid-thirties with blue eyes, blonde facial hair, and medium height, accompanied by two other revolutionaries, the first with darker features and ten years older and the second who was blonde and aged thirty seven—revolutionaries who were suspected of coming to Constantinople to blow up buildings with dynamite.⁷² Yet, particularly when it came to the leaders, the Ottoman authorities began to make use of the 'carte de visite' photographs of the revolutionaries, to be distributed to the local authorities with the names of each revolutionary written below the photo prints—all in the name of facilitating their capture.⁷³

Ironically such 'carte de visite' photographs were first taken by the palace photographers in mid-1860s, featuring the Sultan, the royal family,

high-profile commanders and bureaucrats. Yet, the court photographers two decades later by the Hamidian era also began to take the pictures of convicts in Istanbul.⁷⁴ Thus photography slowly emerged as yet another means of extending the central state's control over the criminals in the empire, which certainly included revolutionaries and anarchists. In 1872, for instance, the Ottoman police was able to capture some of the members of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee, including Vasil Levski, thanks to their photographs.⁷⁵ Similarly by the summer of 1876, two revolutionary leaders on a recruiting mission were rumored to be traveling on an Austrian postal ferry, and as an Ottoman official took their photographs and exposed their identity, the Ottoman authorities were able to intercept the ferry and capture the revolutionaries.⁷⁶ A correspondence that dates back to August 2, 1894, for instance, asked the authorities to take the mug shots of socialists and anarchists, before they got deported from the Ottoman Empire ("fotoğrafları aldırılarak heman def'i ve teb'id edilmeleri")—a standard procedure for peoples of this sort "who even got deported from a country like France that is governed by republicanism."⁷⁷

Yet such a technology in pursuit of the revolutionaries proved to be elusive, if not totally counter-productive. During the course of February of 1903, for instance, first the photographs of Boris Saratov, one of the leaders of IMRO, and then the copies of the photographs of fourteen revolutionaries from the pro-Sarafov camp were distributed—a total of 252 to be exact—to the provinces and sub-districts in the Ottoman Macedonia to facilitate their capture.⁷⁸ A month later by March 19, the sub-governor ('mutasarrıf') of Çatalca reported back, having taken the duty of finding Sarafov rather personally. The sub-governor apparently stormed the Bulgarian villages in his district with a retinue of 400 soldiers and gendarme, searched these suspect villages inch by inch ('karış karış'), and questioned the villagers in a commanding way ('suret-i hakimane') about the whereabouts of Sarafov and his companions, albeit to no avail ('bir emare alınamamış').⁷⁹

As the whole villages started factoring into the Ottoman Empire's threat perception, it remained to be quite rare for the Ottoman authorities to catch revolutionaries to begin with, since the intelligence on the locations of the members and leaders of revolutionary groups kept pouring in proportions that were probably unmanageable by the bureaucratic standards of the turn of the century. Furthermore, the technology of photography seem to have other unintended consequences for the state security officials, as photographs were not only an amazing means of spreading anti-Ottoman

propaganda but they also succeeded to create a visual culture with which the larger populations came to romanticize revolutionaries and their tradition of resistance and wartime heroism against the state authorities, as reflected in common circulation of postcards with the pictures of diverse revolutionary figures. Such a popular market for photographs created yet another contentious realm that the state authorities struggled to regulate, as the photographs of revolutionaries as well as anti-Ottoman images became an important commodity in the market, both local and transnational.

One such instance dated back to February 28, 1903 when the cover of *L'illustration* featured a famous photograph of Ottoman security forces posing with the severed heads of revolutionaries—not an unusual picture, as both the security officials and rebels often got such pictures taken as personal trophies.⁸⁰ Coming at a time as the Macedonian and Bulgarian revolutionaries were in preparations for a large scale uprising, the publication of such an anti-Ottoman image caused a great shock for the Ottoman authorities. In the end, one peculiar feature of the Hamidian state machinery was its obsession with image-management at home and abroad, leading it to produce daily clippings from hundreds of newspapers or journals, whether major or obscure, and issuing constant official denials of things that damaged the imagery of the empire and the sultan.⁸¹ Furthermore, Abdulhamid II paid particular attention to the uses and misuses of photography, as he expected it only to report grand developments in the empire such as construction of schools, hospitals, and military barracks—all evidences of an empire on the path of progress in an equal footing to Europe.

Therefore, the appearance of such a picture in a major European journal came to shatter what little positivity that the Ottoman bureaucrats succeeded to cultivate in European public opinion. Such an image did not fare well for the domestic market, either. The authorities accordingly first determined the origins and whereabouts of the photograph, tracing it to Manastır (today Bitola) where two gendarme and a police officer posed with the severed heads of Greek brigands killed in the environs of Görice (Korçë). The local officials took immediately action as they first destroyed the original found in a studio in the city and then began to hunt down its prints in bookstores in Bitola and Salonika.⁸² As technology increasingly contributed to the ways in which revolutionaries targeted the Ottoman state sovereignty in pursuit of their alternative vision for the future, technology thus became gradually a site of contestation for the state authorities.

Conclusion

The existing literature has often treated technology either as the enabling factor of the consolidation and centralization of modern state apparatus or as the vehicles that socialized co-nationals into a larger nation, as technologies helped them imagine themselves to be part of a larger community. In this chapter I moved beyond such linear assumptions and interpretations, and argued that technological advancements by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century mattered significantly because they came to facilitate intra-state competition by endowing significant vehicles of contention to a diverse body of actors. In this sense, technological developments of the second part of the nineteenth century in a way democratized the means of violence, enabling revolutionaries and others to engage in meaningful political struggles against better-resourced central state apparatus. In this sense, the importance of newspapers, photographs, and other technologies has not rooted in their ability to increase nationalist sociability but rather in the way they unleashed intra-state competition.

As revolutionaries created parallel systems of legitimacy in their areas of operation and came to challenge the state conduct in gradually more effective ways, they essentially broke down the state's monopoly on legitimate violence. The state authorities in turn tried to restore their monopoly on violence by passing new regulations and increasing state's means and capacity of repression. No doubt, the reign of Abdulhamid II has often been portrayed as the reign of terror, with state repression, crackdown, and censorship—realities that certainly defined the daily lives of Ottoman citizenry before and after the turn of the century. Yet, the Hamidian autocracy was actually rooted not in the preferences of the Sultan but rather in the shifting meanings and changing vehicles of legitimate violence at a time when technology provided countless means and opportunities to a diverse body of intra-state competitors. Therefore, technology has not historically provided a linear trajectory of action to revolutionaries or bureaucrats. Similarly it should not yield such neat and linear analytic utility to scholars, either.

Framing technology as the enabler of inter- and intra-state competition provides a much more dynamic and process-oriented historical perspective rather than the existing explanations that often fixate upon outcome-centric approaches. The literature on nationalist socialization falls under the latter category, as it assumes that nationalist socialization is a definitive and final

historical process because the possibility of undoing such a socialization does not seem to be an option in theoretical terms. If we frame modern technological means as the facilitators of inter- and intra-state competition, however, and in doing so, see consolidation of identities as a result of political competition, it remains to be a possibility for later episodes of competition to politicize identities anew thanks to novel technological breakthroughs that the state mechanisms have not yet come to regulate.

NOTES

- * I would like to thank Peter Sluglett and Serhun Al for their comments and suggestions.
- ¹ For a well-written and argued summary, see Joshua Barker and Sharon Kelly, "Technology and Nationalism," in *Nations and Nationalism: A Global Historical Overview*, eds. Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan, vol.1 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008) pp.126-136.
- ² Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006) 5-6.
- ³ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).
- ⁴ Keith Brown, *Loyal unto Death: Trust and Terror in Revolutionary Macedonia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013) 21.
- ⁵ I am borrowing the term "empires as prisons of nations" from an article by Ellen Comisso, "Empires as Prisons of Nations versus Empires as Political Opportunity Structures: An Exploration of the Role of Nationalism in Imperial Dissolutions in Europe," in *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*. Esherick, Joseph, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young. Eds. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2006) 138-66.
- ⁶ Geertz, "Review of Rudolf Mrázek's *Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony*," in *American Anthropologist*, 106:2 (2004), 420.
- ⁷ Mazower, *The Balkans: a Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2000) xxviii.
- ⁸ This was so much so that "spring as a time of troubles" became a generic statement in the Ottoman bureaucratic framing of the rampant rebellions of the day. For instance, see: "İsa Bolatinin meşrutiyet idaresi aleyhinde avenesini tezyid etmekte olduğu ve mevsim-i baharın hulülünde mucib-i müşkilat ahval ifa edeceği" Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives, BOA hereafter), DH.MKT. 2718 - 52 - 1327 M 2, leaf 2.
- ⁹ The infamous revolutionary Boris Sarafov (1872-1907) from the Bulgarian Supremacist Committee, for instance, was in the opinion of a continued struggle year round. "Sarafov'un efkar-ı umumiyesi de hareket-ı iğtişaiyenin her zaman devam ettiği fikrini idame ve ibka etmek için bazı ufak tefek çeteler dahilde kışın hasarata devam eylemesi..." BOA. Y.PRK.MK. 17 - 36, 15 Teşrin-i sani 1319, leaf 4.
- ¹⁰ Robert Elgood, *The Arms of Greece and her Balkan Neighbors in the Ottoman Period* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2009) 37.
- ¹¹ "Hasad mevsiminin takarrubu cihetiyle fesedenin muvakkaten tatil-i hareket ile ağustos avasıtına doğru tekrar icra-yı şekavete ibtidar..." BOA, TFR.I.A. 7 - 695, 29 Mayıs 319. In this particular instance, it was Doce Delchev who insisted upon having the Ilinden Uprising of 1903 after the harvest

season. Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements, 1893-1903* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988) 127.

12 One should note that the British companies had already been awarded an earlier concession in the Ottoman Empire. Abbas of Egypt awarded a contract in 1851 to build a railroad between Alexandria and Cairo in what was by then the autonomous province of the empire.

13 Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi: Islahat Fermanı Devri (1861-1876)*, vol. 7 (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2003) 268-71.

14 For an account on the corruption charges around the construction of the line, including figures from the higher echelons of the reformist Ottoman bureaucracy such as Ali, Fuat, and Ziya Paşa, see Nazım Paşa, *Selanik Vali-i Sabıkı Nazım Paşa'nın Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1992) 18-24.

15 See Diren Çakılcı, "Osmanlı-Avrupa Telgraf Hatlarında Sırbistan Emareti'nin Rolü," in *OTAM*, 34/Fall 2013, pp.59-81.

16 Max Boot, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006) 111.

17 Roderic Davison, "The Advent of the Electric Telegraph in the Ottoman Empire," in *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923: The Impact of the West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) pp.133-65, 137-8.

18 Tanrikut, *Türkiye Posta ve Telgraf*, 539 and 614-5.

19 Qtd. in Davison, "The Advent of the Electric Telegraph," 147-148.

20 For the telegraph map by 1874, see <<http://www.midafternoonmap.com/2013/02/trains-and-telegrams.html>>.

21 Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004) 77-8.

22 Gökhan Akçura, "İhtilalci ve Çapkın bir Alet: Abdülhamit'ten Bugüne Telefon," in *Popüler Tarih*, Ağustos 2000, 36-41. Tanju Demir, *Türkiye'de Posta Telgraf ve Telefon Teşkilatının Tarihsel Gelişimi (1840-1920)* (Ankara: PTT Genel Müdürlüğü, 2005) 156.

23 BOA. DH.MKT. 1384/127, 17 Rabiulevvel 1304; DH.MKT. 1392/57, 20 Rabiulahir 1304.

24 For more information on Mehmet Nazım Paşa, see Fevziye Abdullah Tansel, "Bir Mevlevi Nasir ve Şairi Mehmed Nazım Paşa: Basılı Eserleri ve Yazma Şiir Mecmuası," in *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 14 (1966) pp. 155-74.

25 Nazım Paşa, *Selanik Vali-i Sabıkı*, 81.

26 "Topçulukta yeni terakkiler yapılacağından ve bu toplarla kendisinin iskat olunabileceğinden korkarmış." Ibid, 81-2. To be sure, things were more complex than Nazım Paşa's straightforward judgment. In the early years of Abdulhamid II's reign, Said Pasha actually served the Sultan as the head of the palace secretariat (i.e. Mabeyn Başkatibi) and then became a minister in different cabinets, yet only to fall from the Sultan's favor after the Çırağan conspiracy which led to his dismissal to rural administrative posts. For more

- details, see Burhan Çağlar, *İngiliz Said Paşa ve Günlüğü (Jurnal)* (İstanbul: Arı Sanat, 2010).
- 27 Mesut Uyar and Edward Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans* (Santa Barbara: ABC CLIO, 2009) 211.
- 29 For a systematic treatment of the Kuleli and Çırağan Incidents, see Florian Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire: Conspiracies and Political Cultures* (London: Routledge, 2011) 12-25, 58-70.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 85.
- 30 Matthew Carr, *The Infernal Machine: A History of Terrorism* (New York: The New Press, 2006) 13-14.
- 31 Haluk Selvi, *Sultan'a Suikast: Sultan II. Abdülhamid'e Sunulan Bomba Hadisesi Fezlekesi* (İstanbul: İBB Kültür A.Ş. Yayınları, 2013) 117-20, 143.
- 32 "The Attempt on the Sultan," in *New York Times*, July 23, 1905, pg.6.
- 33 For more information on the formation of the society, see Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle for Independence, 1821-1833* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) 41-8.
- 34 Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy*, 23-5.
- 35 "Bulgar gençlerinden bir çoğu Rusya'da tahsil görüyorlar, istiklal hislerini vatandaşları arasında da neşr ve edebiliyorlardı. Bükreş'de muntazam teşkilatıyla bir komite teşkil etmişlerdi. Bu komite 'Tuna'dan' çeteler geçiriyor, Bulgarları Osmanlı İmparatorluğu aleyhine kıyama teşvik ediyordu." Ahmed Refik, "1284 Bulgar İhtilali," in *Türk Tarih Encümeni Mecmuası*, 15:9/86 (İstanbul, 1341 [1925]) pp.137-164, 137. Also see Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu, ed., *Mithat Paşa'nın Hatıraları: Tabsıra-i İbret*, vol.1 (İstanbul: Temel Yayınları, 1997) 85-6.
- 36 Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 121.
- 37 Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *A Brief History of Egypt* (New York: Facts on File, 2008) 73-5, 84-9.
- 38 Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, 131.
- 39 Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1814-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) 191-202.
- 40 *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, vol. XLL, no. 2118, New York, July 24, 1897.
- 41 R. J. Crampton, *Bulgaria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 122-5.
- 42 Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, 134.
- 43 Sinisa Malesevic, "Wars that Make States and Wars that Make Nations: Organised Violence, Nationalism and State Formation in the Balkans," in *European Journal of Sociology*, 53:1 (Apr.2012) pp.31-63, 40-1.
- 44 "...Kesriye kazası Bulgar cemaatinden hiç kimse olmadığı halde on dokuz sene evvel mekteb-i mezkur tesis ve kışad olunarak hariçden bir takım

etfal... tedris olunmakta..." BOA, TFR.I.MKM. 3-258, 14 Rabiülevvel 1321 (10 June 1903), Lef 258-6.

45 İpek Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878-1908* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2014) 25-9.

46 "Rusya ve Japonya hükümetleri beyninde ibtidar eden muhasamanın Rusya ordusunun tahliye ve muzaffariyetiyle neticelenmesi..." BOA, DH. MKT. 621-43, 30 Kanunsani 1319 (12 February 1904), Lef 193-19. One should note that the eventual victory of Japan over Russia in turn inspired the anti-imperialist discourse among the CUP revolutionaries who interpreted the Japanese victory as the triumph of constitutionalism.

47 Frederick Moore, "The Macedonian Committees and the Insurrection," in *The Balkan Question*, ed. Luigi Villari (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, W, 1905) 192.

48 The Ilinden Uprising was indeed a time when the sheer number of the mobilized revolutionary bands across the Ottoman Balkans presented significant challenges to the existing Ottoman forces in the region. The archival documentation from this time period is full of instances when the Ottoman authorities constantly asked for auxiliary troops from nearby stations. In one representative instance on 4 March 1319 (17 March 1903) at a time when the bands were in the midst of preparations for a general uprising to come in the spring, the Office of Ottoman General Staff asked from the Prime Ministry for additional forces to be dispatched from the nearest post ('en yakın mevkiden kuvva-i kafi sevkine') since the two detachments ('müfreze') numbering 110 soldiers could not simply track down and tackle effectively a revolutionary band numbering over 120. BOA, DH. MKT. 621-43, Lef 193-131.

49 "Çetelere irsal olunan ta'limatda asker-i şahane ile müsademedin içtinab ve yalnız köyleri dolaşarak umum Bulgar ahalsinin ihtilale ihzar edilmesi..." BOA, TFR.I.A. 8-743, Sadaret'ten Rumeli Müfettişliği'ne, 1 Haziran 1319 (14 June 1903), Lef 1.

50 "...memalik-i şahanelerinde idaresizlik yüzünden bu gibi ahval-i müessifinin zuhur ve tevali ettiğini ve kıyam eden ahlinin teba-yı şahaneden olub idare-i devlet-i aliyyeden bizar kalan Bulgarlardan olduğunu..." BOA, Y.PRK.MK. 12-66, Şubat 318 (February 1903).

51 "...asker-i şahane ile ahali-yi islamiyyeyi hristiyanlar aleyhine tahrik ve bu suretle bir müdahale-i ecebiyye celb edebilmek için ba'dema ötede bir yere ifa-yı harik ve dinamik vesaire ile emakin-i amireyi ve sair mebani-i cismiyyeyi bir heva eylemek..." BOA, DH. MKT. 621-43, Sadaret'ten Dahiliye Nezaretine, 14 Muharrem 1321/30 Mart 1319 (12 April 1903), Lef 193-147. In a letter to Shaik al-Islam dated 1877, Midhat Pasha had advanced exactly the same line of interpretation. Kocahanoğlu, ed., *Mithat Paşa'nın*, 345.

- 52 Moore, "The Macedonian Committees," 200.
- 53 These facts are compiled from two separate correspondence that reported the confusion on the part of the local Ottoman authorities on the first few days of the Ilinden Uprising and how they tried to control the situation. BOA, TFR.I.MN. 14-1398, 2 Ağustos 319 (15 August 1903) Lef. 1398-1 and 1398-9.
- 54 Richard Bach Jensen, *The Battle against Anarchist Terrorism: an International History, 1878-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 6.
- 55 Riedler, *Opposition and Legitimacy*, 84.
- 56 Stephen R. Brown, *A Most Damnable Invention: Dynamite, Nitrates, and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005) 55-69.
- 57 Moore, "The Macedonian Committees," 205.
- 58 Sarah Cole, "Dynamite Violence and Literary Culture," in *Modernism/Modernity*, 16:2 (April 2009) 301-328, 302.
- 59 Moore, "The Macedonian Committees," 217.
- 60 The German anarchist Johann Most's publications were a case in point in this regard. See the following pamphlet by him originally published in 1885: *The Science of Revolutionary Warfare: a Handbook of Instruction regarding the Use and Manufacture of Nitroglycerine, Dynamite, Gun-Cotton, Fulminating Mercury, Bombs, Arsons, Poisons, etc* (El Dorado: Desert Publications, 1978).
- 61 Brown, *Loyal unto Death*, 62.
- 62 Ilkay Yilmaz, "Anti-Anarchism and Security Perceptions during the Hamidian Era," in *Zapruder World*, vol.1 (Spring 2014), <<http://www.zapruderworld.org/content/ilkay-yilmaz-anti-anarchism-and-security-perceptions-during-hamidian-era>>
- 63 Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews 1430-1950* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005) 249-52. Moore, "The Macedonian Committees," 205-9.
- 64 "Dersaadette bulunan bank vesair gibi müessesat-ı maliyye aleyhine erbab-ı fesad tarafından dinamit istimali misullü mel'anet ve cinayet vukua geleceği hakkındaki istihbardan dolayı Osmanlı Bankası hakkında icra kılınacak tedabir-i muhafazakarının Kredi Liyone bankası hakkında dahi tatbikle..." BOA, DH.MKT. 621-43, Hariciye Nezareti'nden Dahiliye Nezaretine, 5 Safer 321/20 Nisan 319 (3 May 1903), lef. 193-81.
- 65 In one instance, ten revolutionaries were arrested, as they were scouting for possible targets that included gasworks and a rail bridge. "Dereköy mevkiindeki şimendifer köprüsünün orta ayağını dinamit ile tahrib ve Hüseyin Mustafa Paşa gazhanesini bir hava eylemek maksadıyla..." BOA, DH.MKT. 621-43, 26 Mart 319 (8 April 1903) lef.193-90.
- 66 BOA, DH.MKT. 760-7, 8 Cemazeyilahir 321 (1 September 1903) lef. 1 and 10.
- 67 BOA, DH.MKT. 793-58, 22 Şevval 1321 (11 January 1904).

- 68 "Hükümet-i seniyyenin müsaadesi olmayarak memalik-i devlet-i aliyyeye cüz'i ve külli dinamit idhal ve kabul ve ... ve imal edenler ve bunların bu halleri teshil eyleneyle on beş sene ve işbu efalın bir madde-i fesada olduğu sabit olursa mütecasiri müebbeden küreğe konur ve madde-i fesad faale çıkar ise idam olunur." BOA, DH.MKT. 637-15, 5 Şaban 321/14 Teşrinvevvel 319 (27 October 1903), lef. 74.
- 69 "...esliha-yı memnua taşıyanlar ile dahil-i memalik-i Osmaniye'de bir mahalden diğer mahale esliha-yı memnua ve alet ve ecza-yı nariyye nakl ve idhal eyleyenler hakkında..." BOA, İ. DUİT. 79-8, 18 Şaban 1328 (25 August 1910).
- 70 or an insightful overview, see Muammer Göçmen, "II. Abdülhamit Döneminde Yabancı Basın Nasıl Takip Edilirdi?," in *Tarih ve Toplum*, 22:128 (Aug 1994) pp.18-24.
- 71 Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, 126
- 72 BOA, DH.MKT. 621-43, 30 Ramazan 1321 lef. 193-36.
- 73 "...kopya suretiyle adedi teksir olunarak lüzum-u mikdarının zirlerine isimlerinin tahririyle vilayet-i lazıma ve zabıta nezareti celilesine irsali..." BOA, DH.MKT. 621-43, Sadaret'ten Dahiliye Nezaretine, 2 Mart 1319/16 Zilhicce 1320 (16 March 1903) lef. 193-7. For the type of photographs known as carte de visite, see William C. Darrah, *Cartes de Visite in Nineteenth-Century Photography* (Gettysburg: W.C. Darrah Publisher, 1981).
- 74 Fulya Ertem, "Facing the 'Other': A Critical Approach to the Construction of Identity Narratives in the Early Photographic Practice of the Ottoman Empire," in *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 9:4 (Nov. 2011) pp.293-307, 296.
- 75 Martina Baleva, "Revolution in the Darkroom: Nineteenth-Century Portrait Photography as a Visual Discourse of Authenticity in Historiography," in *Hungarian Historical Review*, 3:2 (2014), pp.363-90, 366-7.
- 76 Kocahanoğlu, ed., *Mithat Paşa'nın*, 73-5.
- 77 "...Fransa gibi cumhuriyetle idare olunan bir memlekette bile tard edilmiş olan merkurum ve emsal-i sosyalist ve anarşistlerin..." BOA, DH. MKT. 2068-45, 21 Temmuz 310/29 Muharrem 312.
- 78 BOA, DH. MKT. 475-28, lef. 69, 71, 83. 94.
- 79 Ibid., lef 97.
- 80 Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties*, 229. For the reproduction of the picture in question, see page 227 in Yosmaoğlu's book.
- 81 Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999) 136-8.
- 82 "...Göricce taraflarında etlaf edilen Yunan eşkiyasının ser-i maktualları Manastır'a getirilerek iki jandarma ve bir polis..." and "...fotoğrafların Selanik ve Manastır'daki kitapçı dükkanlarında mevki-i fûruhte konulmuş olduğu..." TFR.I.A. 4-380, lef 16 (16 Şubat 318) and lef 9 (25 Şubat 318).

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