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'From hunter to hunted': (temporary) marginalisation in Muslim men's memories of the allied occupation period in Turkey (1918–1922)

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I study memories of the Allied occupation of Maraş, Mersin and İzmir that were published in local newspapers between the 1920s and 1960s. The narratives were published when Muslims had re-gained political hegemony and forced both the occupying armies and most local non-Muslims to leave the country for good. The texts I use were published in the dailies Sebilürrreşad in 1921 (in Istanbul), in Ahenk in 1926, in Ege Ekspres in 1958 (both in İzmir), and in the late 1960s in Kuvayi Milliye, a monthly veterans' magazine published in Mersin. Their authors were ordinary insofar as they were relatively low ranking clerks, former reserve officers, and readers of the İzmir papers. As literate Muslim males able to pen their own memories, however, they certainly held a certain degree of privilege over less educated and illiterate people, women and non-Muslims. In order to analyse their narratives, I use concepts developed by Maurice Halbwachs [Halbwachs, M., 1992 (1939) *On Collective Memory: Edited, Translated, and with an Introduction by Lewis A. Coser*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, collective memory] and Jan and Aleida Assmann [Assmann, A., and Assmann, J. 1994. Das Gestern im heute. Medien und soziales Gedächtnis. *In:* K. Merten, S. J. Schmidt and S. Weischenberg, eds. *Die Wirklichkeit der Medien: Eine Einführung in die Kommunikationswissenschaft*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 114–140.]. The loss of Ottoman sovereignty also brought about that of Muslim supremacy, which privileged Ottoman Muslims experienced as a massive threat for themselves. As I show throughout, all the stories recount experiences of humiliation and distress that resulted from the reversal of social roles under occupation: Being Muslim was no longer an advantage or even a privilege: the privileged had become ordinary. Memory was gradually securalised, and the use of allusions facilitated forgetting.

KEYWORDS

Memory; forgetting; Armenian genocide; Greek occupation; Cilicia; İzmir/Smyrna; remembrance; violence

On March 25, 1926, the İzmir daily *Ahenk,* as part of a larger campaign in which it asked its readers to write down their recollections of the period of Greek occupation in western Anatolia between 1919 and 1922, published a text signed by one Mustafa Sıtkı from Karaburun. In the piece, Mustafa Sıtkı recalled how he, on a day towards the end of the occupation, had been out hunting in the woods of Karaburun–he stressed that he had a hunting license issued by the Greek authorities–when Greek gendarmes pursued and arrested him for illegal possession of his rifle and poaching. Describing the moment when the gendarmes overwhelmed him and broke his rifle, he wrote: 'At that

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moment, I understood that I was no longer a hunter, but fair game' *(O vakit anladım ki, ben avcı değil, av bulunuyordum)* (Mustafa Sıtkı 1926). Apart from the actual context of hunting, Mustafa Sıtkı's observation about his change of roles clearly also had a political dimension: living under Greek occupation, and being pursued by Greek gendarmes, he was no longer part of a privileged group ruling over others (the 'hunters', i.e., Muslims)–he was one of those who were ruled ('fair game'). The story put in a nutshell the fundamental problem that the Greek occupation had brought about for many Muslims living in western Anatolia: former relationships of political domination had been turned upside down. Muslims were no longer privileged by law, and non-Muslims used their new freedoms–including that to bear arms–to intimidate, harass and occasionally kill their former masters.

In this article, I study Muslim-Turkish narratives about the Greek (1919–1922) and French (1918 – 1921) occupations of Ottoman Anatolia that were recounted and published in daily or monthly papers between the early 1920s and the late 1960s. The sources I use were published in *Sebilürrreşad* in 1921 (in Istanbul), in *Ahenk* in 1926, in *Ege Ekspres* in 1958 (both in İzmir), and in the late 1960s in *Kuvayi Milliye,* a monthly magazine published in Mersin. The texts analysed recount events that took place during the French occupation period in Maraş and Mersin, and the Greek occupation of İzmir. All were published in the course of campaigns of commemoration, during which the papers had asked their readers to send in their memories. The recollections that were published were written in quite colloquial Turkish, are relatively short, and are full of references to local places and names. All of this would have increased the likeliness of these texts being read aloud in coffeehouses and other places of social gathering. Public reading, at least in Istanbul, was practised well into the twentieth century (Sezer-Aydınlı 2022). By the 1960s, literacy rates in cities had increased considerably, and veteran magazines often mention talk about (oral and written) memories and memoirs as an important part of socialising. I therefore conceptualise these texts as part of local popular memory in the respective locations.

Historical context

The stories I analyse here are all set at the beginning of the war known in Turkey as the Turkish War of Independence (1918–1922). It erupted after the end of World War I, when parts of present-day Turkey were occupied by Allied troops. These occupations form the historical background of the stories, and the readers were clearly expected to be familiar with it. Since a similar familiarity cannot be assumed for present-day international readers, I shall briefly explain the context.

At the end of World War I, on 31 October 1918, representatives of the Ottoman Empire signed an armistice with a British-led delegation in the port of Mudros, on the island of Lesbos. Among other things, the armistice, which 'really amounted to an Ottoman capitulation', stipulated that the Ottoman army be demobilised (Zürcher 1998: 133). It gave the Allies the right to occupy Ottoman territory if they considered their own troops to be in danger. Occupations were also allowed in those provinces with large Armenian populations in case the latter's security was under threat. The Allies, however, had already made secret agreements concerning Ottoman Anatolia among themselves during the war: according to the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, France was to rule Syria, Lebanon and parts of southern Anatolia. At the end of the war, the area was occupied by British troops, which were replaced by French forces in November 1918. Both Greece and Italy had been promised parts of western Anatolia, and eventually, the Greek delegation at the Paris peace conference succeeded at getting the other Allied negotiators' approval for a Greek occupation of the district of Smyrna/İzmir. Greek troops landed there on 15 May 1919 (Zürcher 1998: 143–149). These territorial divisions were later enshrined in the Treaty of Sèvres, which was signed on 20 August 1920, but which, due to the success of the Muslim nationalist movement, could never be implemented.

In both southern and western Anatolia, the situation was already tense before the arrival of occupation troops. This was particularly true for the town of Adana, which had been the scene of a major pogrom in April 1909, in the course of which up to 10,000 Armenians and over 1000 Syriac Christians,

many of them seasonal migrant workers, were massacred (Der Matossian 2022). During the Genocide of 1915–1916, large portions of the Armenian and Syriac population of Anatolia were killed. When the French arrived in 1918, they brought with them many survivors, who were also allowed to join the French troops as part of a unit known as the 'Armenian Legion'. The arrival of armed survivors further aggravated an already tense situation (Morris and Ze'evi 2019).

As for western Anatolia, the ruling Committee of Union and Progress had organised boycotts and systematically harassed the coastal Greek Orthodox population during the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, forcing many to leave for the nearby Greek islands. At the end of the war, many of these Greeks returned only to find that their houses were occupied by Muslim people, many of them refugees from the Balkans. The result was a situation slightly less explosive than that in the South, but certainly one characterised by deep and multiple conflicts, which was also not ameliorated by the fact that the occupiers shared the religion and ethnicity of one of the parties.

The events narrated in the stories I analyse here took place at a time when the nation-wide movement of Anatolian and Thracian Muslims against the Allied occupation did not yet exist. While local conflicts were smouldering all over the country, a centralised movement of Muslims against Allied occupations only started to emerge by May 1919, when a massacre at İzmir created a welcome opportunity for Muslim propaganda against the Greek occupation.

Collective and communicative memory in post-WW1 Turkey

More than 70 years ago, Maurice Halbwachs observed that there is such a thing as collective memory – and that individual memories are only possible insofar as the person remembering is part of a wider social context of remembering:

> (T)here exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection. (Halbwachs 1992 (1939): 38).

In other words, what and how a person remembers depends on the social forms of memory that are available to them. Personal memories are both a part of and, provided they are shared, instrumental in shaping collective memory. By implication, memories that cannot be shared are often forgotten.

Starting from Halbwachs' observations, Jan and Aleida Assmann have fine-tuned the concept of collective memory: they speak of 'communicative memory', which is characterised by an active participation of witnesses (but also younger generations, as listeners) in the process of collective remembering. This memory may also be called 'memory of generations' *(Generationengedächtnis)*: it changes with the succession of generations over a time period roughly corresponding to the maximum lifespan of people.

While communicative memory changes with the ageing of individuals and usually dissolves after about 80–100 years, it may become 'collective memory' by the act of institutionalisation, usually performed by political collectives such as nation-states. (A. Assmann and Frevert 1999, 41). Collective memory tends to 'minimalism in content and symbolic reductionism'. (A. Assmann and Frevert 1999, 42). The variety and complexity of historical experience are boiled down to a limited number of iconic events (or even only one), which are often charged with affective energy and 'immunise against alternative perceptions of history' (A. Assmann and Frevert 1999, 42). The repetition and standardisation of certain stories eventually makes people irresponsive to the narration of non-iconic events as they do not resonate with their perception of history.

The sources I utilise here were all written by people who had either themselves witnessed the events discussed, or were reporting on close relatives' narrations. They can thus be conceptualised as parts of the communicative memory that existed at the times of writing. By paying attention to differences between the three times of publication, I trace how *Generationengedächtnis* was changing over time. This concerns the social position of those remembering, but also differences in spatial location (urban/rural, western/southern Anatolia) and the events discussed.

It is possible to distinguish between several levels of social frameworks that the authors were (probably) part of and that must have influenced and shaped their remembering, encouraging and fortifying some memories and discouraging others. This is, first of all, the immediate everyday environment in which people were living: their families, their neighbourhoods or villages. This social framework is likely to have had greater influence on their personal memory than official commemoration: the Republic of Turkey was relatively unsuccessful at reaching the minds of ordinary people, especially if they were living in the countryside and/or in the more remote provinces (Tuna 2018). (Republican) indoctrination at school was not an issue for the authors at hand: all of them were adults by the 1920s, meaning that they received their primary and secondary education in Ottoman times.

The next level is that of official commemoration in towns and villages. To this day, the towns and villages of Turkey that were once occupied by Allied troops celebrate their respective day of liberation. Some, such as Istanbul, also have commemorated or continue to commemorate the beginning of their occupation. Local newspapers have continuously reported on these celebrations, allowing us to trace the rituals performed and speeches delivered, and to see which events were emphasised and which were not (Morack forthcoming).

Written between the 1920s and late 1960s, all the sources utilised here formed a part of living, or communicative, memory. A collective, fixed and institutionalised memory in the Assmannian sense was still in the making. While it is possible to identify iconic events and standard ways of narrating them – which arguably form the communicative paths that eventually became highways of collective memory–there was still a great variety of stories and perspectives that seem to have been perceived as equally important by contemporary readers.

Nations commemorate differently depending on their position in a historical conflict. Aleida Assmann, characterising different forms of collective, institutionalised memory, distinguishes between memory of victims *(Opfergedächtnis)*, memory of perpetrators *(Tätergedächtnis),* memory of victors *(Siegergedächtnis)* and memory of the defeated *(Verlierergedächtnis)* (Assmann and Frevert 1999). Assmann's distinction is based not on what is remembered, but what was done: with respect to Germans after 1945, she speaks of a *Tätergedächtnis* that is characterised by a refusal *(Abwehr)* to remember their role in the Shoah. Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich have described this psychological phenomenon as the inability to mourn' (Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich 1978). It is problematic and probably useless to simply take concepts developed for the context of post-1945 Germany and apply them directly to Turkey after 1918. But that said, they can very well be *adapted* to the Turkish case. We can certainly speak of a memory of victors *(Siegergedächtnis)*: the texts at hand narrate a war against foreign occupation that the Turkish nationalist movement eventually won, and many texts deal with winning in one way or another. Yet, the country that would become Turkey was not simply attacked by a foreign country: the war commonly known as the 'Independence War' or 'Turkish War of Independence' can be more adequately described as a series of civil wars with Great Power involvement, the causes of which can be traced back at least to the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, the boycotts and violence against Greek Orthodox communities along the coasts in 1913–1916, and the 1915 deportation and Genocide of Anatolia's Armenians and Assyrians. As others have already shown, this background to the Allied occupations in Anatolia is hardly ever discussed in Turkish memory texts (Göçek 2015, Ekmekçioğlu 2014, Suciyan 2016). In this sense, Turkish post-war memory is characterised by an inability to mourn former neighbours and by an unwillingness to address their suffering. The collective memory therefore should be conceptualised as both victors' and perpetrators' memory (*Sieger* –and *Tätergedächtnis)*.

This conceptualisation, however, does not imply that all the stories are true. Rather than study the stories as reports about facts (a practice widely common in Turkish historiography), I am interested in their social uses. This means that even stories that may not be true (or only partly true) can tell us something about their significance and function for the communities in which they were shared. In this case, I look into narratives about the beginning of the 'national struggle'.

The narratives

In the case of İzmir, the standard event marking the beginning of the Greek occupation very clearly was (and is) May 15, 1919, when Greek troops landed in the city. I have already discussed elsewhere how individual people, most of them males, recounted the events of that day, during which several hundred Muslims were killed, beaten, arrested and humiliated and shops were looted. In those memories, which were published in 1926, the experience of fear and humiliation was described in great detail (Morack 2017).

While İzmir's occupation in May 1919 was immediately taken up by Turkish nationalist propaganda and crafted into a narrative, a similar early focus on the very first occupation day cannot be found in places already occupied in 1918. In local memory in Maraş and Mersin (occupied in November 1918), the marker of occupation was apparently not the arrival of Allied troops, but the hoisting of foreign flags–and local resistance against it: In early 1921, shortly after the end of the French occupation of the area and the forced migration of its surviving Armenians, two Muslim clerics (*hocas)* from Maraş and Antep came to *Sebilürreşad's* newly opened office in Ankara, declaring their intention to talk about their activities in Maraş (Snowden 2020). The Istanbul-based Islamist paper, which was clearly trying to catch up with the growing tide of Muslim nationalism in Anatolia, published a lengthy interview with them. The *hocas* first gave an account of the beginning of the British occupation and the slow deterioration of conditions when the French arrived and, reportedly, started to favour the Armenians. As for the beginning of armed actions by Muslims, they recounted:

> It was November 28 [1918], and instead of the Ottoman flag, which was hoisted on the castle on Fridays, they [the French] hoisted their own flag. When the Muslim population saw this, they got very upset. People were already very irritable anyway. The pulling down of our flag meant that, from now on, Ottoman sovereignty, Muslim supremacy was ended in this place (Osmanlı hakimiyetine, Müslüman hakimiyetine hitam veriliyordu). They immediately gathered all Muslims in the great mosque and said: 'Now that our banner (sancağımız), the sign of our Muslim supremacy/sovereignty (hakimiyet-i milliye) has been pulled down by the infidels, it is no longer possible to perform the Friday prayer'. After this, the preacher climbed down from the pulpit and prayers were not performed. Three to four thousand Muslims took the flag from the great mosque and, under cries of 'Allahu Akbar' and 'La ilahe illallah', stormed the castle, planting the Ottoman flag. After this, the call for prayers and the Friday prayer were performed at the castle. From there they went to the government [office]. [Armenian] Interpreter Vahan, who wanted to intervene, got a good beating. The French baulked at the people's rage. We had risked everything. But the French did nothing, and the Armenians, too, were afraid. (Eşref Edip 1921: 300)

In the *hocas*' depiction, the hoisting of a foreign flag on the town's castle meant that local Muslims could no longer perform the Friday prayer. They thus offer a purely religious interpretation of the significance of the Ottoman flag that is absent from narratives published later.

The idea that prayers were impossible under the French flag is an implicit yet strange reference to the concept of *dar al-harb*, or the realm of war, in Islamic law and political theory. While interpretations of *dar al-harb* vary greatly among different schools of jurisprudence and in different historical settings, *dar-al-harb* is essentially a place that is not under Muslim rule and that Muslims need to leave because they cannot perform their religion there. By 1918, however, millions of Muslims were living under non-Muslim rule and were freely practising Islam. Various British Indian, French North African and Bosnian scholars had written *fatwās* stating that areas of non-Muslim rule were not necessarily *dar al-harb* and that Muslims could therefore continue to live there (al-Arnaut 1994, Albrecht 2016).

A similar, yet also crucially different, account involving a flag exists for Mersin and the French occupation there. This was published in 1968, in *Kuvayi Milliye*, a veterans' magazine in Mersin, by a certain Memduh Çelik. In this narrative, the flag has no religious meaning anymore:

> Although there was a Turkish government [in Istanbul], it actually had no power at all. Young Armenians, Greek Orthodox and Syriacs were placed in the police and gendarmerie forces according to their share of the population, and the French gave such posts as police inspector, deputy police chief and gendarmerie commanders to

> these traitors of the fatherland. They covered up attacks [on Muslims] and let known murderers go free (…) On one of those dark days, Mersin's governor Anfre had the French flag hoisted on the government building (Çelik 1968, 20).

The story here continues with the narrator's father, a man nicknamed for his command of French as 'Monşer [mon cher] Süleyman', who was serving as deputy district governor in Mersin, protesting the hoisting of the French flag. The French commander, however, tells him that 'only cannonballs will bring this flag down', and that the French indeed intend to stay. He also mentions a letter exchanged between the British and French governments 'in which the Armenians were given the right to take revenge on the Turks' (Çelik 1968, 21) . Monşer Süleyman replies with a threat, pointing out that this might well end in a similar way to April 1909, thus hinting at the Adana Massacre: He describes the massacre of April 1909 as having been a reaction to the local Armenians being armed by the British. After this conversation, 'Monşer' Süleyman immediately leaves for Adana where he calls an urgent meeting of the local notables (eşraf). Here, he informs the notables: 'It is true (sarihtir) that he said 'the Armenians were given the right to take revenge', the occupiers will encourage the Armenians to use their protection to massacre the Turks. Let's take precautions [against that]!' (Çelik 1968, 21). What exactly the Armenians wanted to take revenge for is left unspoken. The readers of *Kuvayi Milliye* were probably old enough to know how to fill this gap in the story, but even slightly younger people may no longer have understood the allusion to the Armenian Genocide.

In both stories, it is the hoisting of the French flag and its significance as a symbol of foreign sovereignty over Ottoman territory that is presented as the straw that broke the camel's back. While the first story from Maraş, which was told already in 1921, provides a religious explanation for the flag's significance (presenting it as a marker of dar al-harb or darülharp), and depicts the beginning of organised resistance as an action motivated by Islamic piety, the second provides a secularised explanation: it is not the flag itself–and thus the symbolic end of Ottoman sovereignty–that puts things into motion here, but the supposedly authentic news that the Armenians had been given 'permission to take revenge'. What exactly they would take revenge for is again left unspoken: the 'deportations' of 1915/16 are not mentioned, but the earlier reference to the Adana massacre of 1909 makes it clear what 'precautions' were supposed to mean–at least for those old enough to know what the narrator was talking about. Interestingly, the magazine's publishers added a note of correction at the end of that issue: according to their inquiries, the narrator's (Memduh Çelik's) father had not served as deputy district governor, but had sprung into action after merely hearing of the flag affair. This implies that 'Monşer' Süleyman had not witnessed the French governor mention an Armenian 'right to revenge' (Anon 1968). The actual straw, was possibly not the letter, but the flag, the idea of living under Christian rule and no longer enjoying national sovereignty (hakimiyet-i milliye)–which can, however, just as well be translated as 'Muslim supremacy', implying the unequal relationship between rulers and ruled. The loss of sovereignty or supremacy, according to the second story, amounted to being helpless against Armenian acts of retaliation, a situation that had to be avoided by pre-emptive violence.

The actual experience of Greek and French occupation, however, was different from those early misgivings about massacre and religious oppression. The oral history accounts I have found contain very few narratives of wholesale violence against the Muslim population, and these few are always told in third person narrative. Those narrated in first person narrative deal with personal experiences that all revolve, in one way or another, around the experience of lost political hegemony and privilege, and the resulting changed relationships of power with non-Muslim neighbours.

In 1926, a man who identified himself as Yenişehirli Mehmet Emin reported an incident that he said had taken place 15 days after the Greek landing, on a tramway in İzmir where he had been working as a ticket collector. A Greek soldier jumped on the trolley and immediately started to molest some Turkish women who were sitting in the front of the car, 'placing his filthy hands on the Turkish ladies' *(pis ellerini Türk hanımların üzerine sürmeğe başladı)*. The Muslim ticket collector, enraged by this sight 'both as a ticket collector and as a Turk', rushed over, telling the soldier to leave the women alone. Pretending not

to understand, the soldier turned to some local Armenians and Greeks who, however, told him to 'do as he pleased' *(keyfine bak cevabında bulundular)*. A second attempt at protecting the women resulted in the soldier arresting the ticket collector and delivering him to a police station, where the non-Muslim witnesses testified against him. He was quickly transferred to the barracks, where he was jailed for the rest of the day and severely beaten (Mehmet Emin 1926).

In Yenişehirli Mehmet Emin's story, sexual harassment of women in public space is bound up with the collective humiliation of foreign occupation and the sudden reversal of roles between Muslims and non-Muslims: the ticket collector is unable to protect the Muslim women from the Greek soldier's harassment and the latter's uniform suddenly has greater authority than his own. Greek and Armenian passengers, who would usually have obeyed the ticket collector's orders, tell the soldier 'to do as he pleases', taking responsibility for his actions, and later, in the police station, even testify against the ticket collector–something that, in pre-Tanzimat times, they would have been unable to do. The scene depicted here is one in which all traditional roles are turned upside down. The sexual harassment of Muslim women constitutes a humiliation not only of the ticket collector, but also of Ottoman Muslim masculinity and supremacy at large.

A somewhat similar story was published in *Ege Ekspres* in 1958. The paper, which at that time was about to start publishing Ali Orhan İlkkurşun's memoir about the beginning of the national struggle in Ödemiş, 'Haydin Efeler', asked its readers to complement the memoir's instalments with their own recollections:

> [H]undreds of *İzmirlis* and thousands of people from the Aegean area who have witnessed that catastrophe themselves are still alive, and every one of them has memories of small incidents that took place in their own areas and that are alive in their minds. (Anon 1958)

In response to the call, a certain Muharrem Kurtkapmaz reported a memory that he dated to the fourth day of the occupation, on which he had been working in his usual job as a wagon driver, transporting bran from a mill to the docks in İzmir. In his story, Greek soldiers stop him and force him to give them a ride, and once on the wagon, start to sing triumphant Greek songs about the reconquest of Constantinople and the Hagia Sophia. His comprehension of the lyrics suggests that the hero/narrator knew and spoke Greek. The soldiers tried to force him to shout 'Zito Venizelos' in Greek ('Long live Venizelos', the Greek prime minister) but he instead shouts 'padişahim çok yaşa' ('Long live my Sultan', in Turkish) to which the soldiers react by beating him. One of the soldiers asks him where he is from. The hero, afraid to say that he is from İzmir, claims to be a refugee from Dimetoka in western Thrace, where he had served his military service. One soldier, who happens to be from there, takes pity on him and stops the others from beating him: 'leave him alone, he is a refugee!' The soldiers eventually let him go, and he starts to cry (out of exhaustion and/or relief about having escaped the danger?). A Rum Orthodox acquaintance buys him a tea and tries to comfort him, saying 'be quiet my son, your God will give them what they deserve' (sus oğlum onlar Allahından bulurlar). The story ends with an explanation for this acquaintance: 'Boyocaki Yorgi knew me, because my dock was there' (Kurtkapmaz 1958).

This story evokes the much-better known one of colonel Süleyman Fethi Bey who reportedly was killed by Greek soldiers on May 15, 1919 for refusing to shout 'Zito Venizelos' (Cebesoy 1953: 58). Despite this implicit reference, the story is much more ambiguous than the previous one: the hero is severely beaten, humiliated, and clearly fearing for his life, but his narrative also points at a shared sense of belonging and solidarity between him and Greek Orthodox people: the soldier from Dimetoka treats him as a compatriot and pities him for being a refugee forced out from his own homeland during the Balkan Wars. The local *Rum* who buys him a tea does so because they work in the same place: the İzmir docks. The narrator may have hinted at an additional sense of solidarity here: that between members of the city's multi-ethnic working class.

A comparable sense of shared compatriotism is absent from the stories about Mersin and Adana that were published in the late 1960s in *Kuvayi Milliye*, a monthly magazine published by the Mersin branch of the Association of Veterans of the National Forces. In January 1969, one Rıza Bozkurt recounted his experiences during the French occupation. As he explained, he worked as deputy

police commissioner, first in Adana, and then in Mersin. His reason for applying to the police forces was the following:

> Most of the French forces were Armenian volunteers who had been officers or sergeants in the Turkish army. They were murdering Turkish people all over the place and covering their crimes up. In the face of this, I applied to the provincial governor in order to get an armed position. Reserve officers were accepted as gendarmerie and police officers by the Ottoman government. (Bozkurt 1969)

Mersin, in other words, was under French occupation, but the Ottoman police and gendarmerie continued to function. What the narrator doesn't mention here is that not only Muslims (as had been the case in late Ottoman times) but also Armenians and other Christians were now working in the gendarmerie (See Özbek 2008). The narrator claims that his position allowed him to prevent several murders by Armenian volunteers.

In his account, Bozkurt explains how one day he tried to arrest several drunken Armenian soldiers who were beating up a Muslim man in the streets of Mersin. When he asks them why, they explain that the man tried to kill one of their friends. Bozkurt, however, relates in his text that he actually knew the real murderer, who was one of his friends. He tries to take the Armenians to the police station, but, on their way there, the hero is himself wounded and eventually rescued by Muslim gendarmes. He gains consciousness in the local government building:

> When I opened my eyes again, I found that my head was bandaged. There was a one-armed French doctor and an Armenian doctor, and the friends who had rescued me (…). The doctors were trying to get me to the hospital. Their plan was to have me poisoned by the Armenian doctors in the hospital. I didn't accept [to go there]. (Bozkurt 1969: 24)

After twenty days, during which he is treated by a Muslim doctor, he gets a letter informing him of his dismissal from the police force. He is 'followed everywhere' for membership in the committee [of Union and Progress], and decides to flee to Istanbul. However, when he boards the ship to Istanbul, he realises that there is a group of Armenian refugees (*Ermeni muhacir*) on the boat, who, he believes, will surely try to kill him. His friend, a certain Rüştü Galeyani from Baghdad, who used to work as interpreter for the commander of the British occupation troops in town, helps him out: he approaches the refugees and introduces the hero/narrator as his cousin, asking them to look after him. The refugees, apparently because Rüştü protected them on another occasion, accept: 'Yes, Sir! You saved us, we will follow your orders' *(Başımızın üstüne bizleri kurtardınız emirlerinizi yapacağız*) (Bozkurt 1969: 25). Later, the Armenians' leader approaches Rıza and tells him that 'most of them wanted to join the Greek army as volunteers, and that they would kill all Turks down to the last man. I couldn't say much, only bits and pieces, with an Arab accent' (Bozkurt 1969: 25). Like this, Rıza, who apparently was involved in the Genocide and therefore fears being killed by the Armenians, is able to travel safely.

Rıza Bozkurt's story depicts French-occupied Mersin as a post-genocidal city torn apart by inter-ethnic strife, in which both Armenians and Turks use their positions in the Ottoman armed forces and gendarmerie to kill the others, and where Muslims are convinced that Armenian doctors will try to kill them in the hospital. He especially mentions that most of the Armenian volunteers in the French army were former Ottoman officers or sergeants, a point that is not mentioned by other authors. Again, like the narrator of the previous story, Bozkurt sees no need to explain why the Armenians on the boat were 'refugees' or why they wanted to kill all the Turks–and especially him, a member of the Committee of Union and Progress. Yet, he hints that there were some Muslims (in this case: an Arab from Iraq) who had protected Armenians and were therefore in turn protected by them. It is due to the Arab friend's protection that the narrator/hero, by pretending to be the Baghdadi's 'cousin' and faking an Arab accent, can travel to Istanbul safely. The irony is that he and the Armenians, who after all want to join the respective enemy's armies, and will eventually fight each other, travel together. Like the wagon driver in İzmir who claimed to be from Western Thrace, Bozkurt is protected by the Armenians' belief in his Baghdadi origins. Both stories suggest that people from territory outside present-day Turkey were considered bystanders who were not involved in the Turkish-Armenian or Turkish-Greek struggle over the land.

Conclusion

All the stories analysed here were published at a time when Turkish victory and the re-establishment of Muslim supremacy had been accomplished, either in a particular area (Maraş in 1921) or all over Turkey (after 1923). In this sense, they form a part of 'victor's memory' *(Siegergedächtnis)*: they narrate marginalisation as a matter of the past that only had temporary character because Muslim-Turkish nationalists eventually won the Civil War.

The accounts can also be described as *Tätergedächtnis,* though largely for what they don't mention: they do not discuss the large-scale violence committed in order to re-establish Muslim supremacy in Anatolia. They also ignore non-Muslim suffering and fail to mention why non-Muslims wanted to 'take revenge' or were keen on 'killing all Muslims'. One account describes the 1909 massacre at Adana as a reaction to an imminent Armenian uprising, thus reversing the roles of perpetrator and victim–another characteristic of perpetrators' memory.

Most of the stories revolve around classic signs of Muslim supremacy in the Ottoman state: the right to bear arms, access to employment in the gendarmerie and army, the wearing of Ottoman uniforms, and the hoisting of the Ottoman flag. All include some kind of reversal of traditional roles between Muslims and non-Muslims: under Greek or French occupation, the former underlings (non-Muslims) are suddenly able to harass, humiliate, or beat up Muslims. The significance of these reversed roles, however, goes far beyond that of dominance in everyday life or one or another state ruling over a given territory. In the story from Maraş, the local believers think that the hoisting of the French flag makes it impossible for them to practice Islam. In this case, it is still the *religious* significance of the Ottoman flag that is depicted as having triggered Muslim resistance against the French occupation: they storm the castle believing that the presence of a foreign [Christian] flag on the castle makes it impossible for them to hold Friday prayers. By storming the castle and hoisting the Ottoman flag again, they symbolically re-instate Ottoman sovereignty and thus regain their ability to perform that prayer.

In the stories from Mersin and Adana published in the late 1960s, the loss of Ottoman sovereignty/Muslim supremacy not only changes previous relationships, it is a threat to the lives of all Muslims. Tellingly, a similar notion of imminent disaster and 'revenge' for the unspoken is absent from stories set in western Anatolia, where the pre-war Armenian population was far less numerous and partly spared from the Genocide. Relations between Greek Orthodox and Muslim inhabitants in the area around İzmir, while strained, don't seem to have broken down to the same extent as those between Muslims and Armenians in southern Anatolia.

While the sample of stories given here is clearly too small to allow for a definitive statement, the material I have presented suggests that the work of memory may have slowly transformed religious connotations into secular ones. In the stories that were narrated in republican times, Islamic piety is replaced by a secular notion of sovereignty, and that of life in *darülharp* by the idea of imminent massacre of Muslims.

As for generational memory, the allusions to the Adana massacre of 1909 and to the Armenians' desire for 'revenge' must have been comprehensible for people old enough to remember. Over time, however, such allusions would slowly have lost their functions because younger listeners had no memories to fill the gaps with. This technique of leaving blanks or gaps probably was a crucial part of the process of forgetting.

Notes on contributor

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