

**ATA 613**  
**Late Ottoman Revolutionaries**

**Spring 2021**

Tuesdays, 14.00-17.00

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By the late nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had become home to a number of revolutionary organizations that would play crucial roles in the transformation of the imperial polity. Late Ottoman revolutionaries were young, educated, and politically ambitious, but were often denied access to formal channels of politics, whether in the imperial metropole or in emerging national capitals. They organized themselves into secret societies and operated underground, tapping into a broad range of ideologies from nationalism to socialism and anarchism. Their willingness to employ tactics of violence, however, was what united this heterogeneous mix of individuals who saw violence as a way of facilitating historical ruptures in the service of revolutionary goals. Over the course of time, particularly after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, their organizations gradually turned into political parties that ultimately oversaw the violent transition from empire to nation-state. This course revisits this contentious historical period spanning from the mid-1850s well into late 1920s, sampling the existing historiographical literature along the way.

In traditional historiographies, late Ottoman revolutionaries are either demonized due to their violent legacies or romanticized as a result of later ideological re-appropriations. In this course, we hope to approach them in their complexity and develop a working set of tools to historicize them as agents of change in their own right. In so doing, this graduate seminar will first of all help students attain a more complex empirical understanding of revolutionary politics in the late Ottoman history. Some basic questions will drive this mission: what really sets apart the late nineteenth-century revolutionaries from their earlier counterparts? Why did revolutionary organizations suddenly begin to mushroom in the Ottoman Empire by the mid-1880s? What explains the specific context and timing of their violent acts? Such context-driven questions will also enable us to develop a more critical approach to studying the end of the Ottoman Empire, forcing us to come to terms with the powerful narratives that continue to shape the history writing on the period.

**Assignments & Evaluation**

**1) Participation & Presentations (20 percent)**

Students are expected to participate in each session, come to the class having done all the required readings and be active during the discussions. Students will also be asked to present, at least once, if not twice, to present for 15 to 20 mins. selected pieces from optional readings.

**2) Response Papers (30 percent)**

Students will be required to write a total of three response papers (2 pages long, double-spaced), discussing the required readings for the weeks of their own choosing. Please submit your response papers on Mondays, a day before the class.

**3) Final Paper (50 percent)**

Students will write a final paper due July 3 (10-15 pages, double-spaced for MA students; 15-20 pages for PhD students). You have to discuss the topic of your final paper with me beforehand, preferably before the start of the spring break.

# Course Schedule

## Week 1, March 23

### Introduction

Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolutions: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) chapters 1-3.

### Optional Readings

Varak Ketsemanian, “Ideologies, Paradoxes, and Fedayis in the Late Ottoman Empire: Historiographical Challenges and Methodological Problems in the Study of the Armenian Revolutionary Movement (1890-1896),” in *Armenians and Kurds in the Late Ottoman Empire*, eds. Ümit Kurt and Ara Sarafian (Fresno: The Press at California State University, Fresno, 2020) pp. 119-60.

## Week 2, March 30

### Ottoman Empire in the Age of Revolution

Frederick F. Anscombe, “The Balkan Revolutionary Age,” in *The Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 3 (2012) pp. 572-606.

Tolga Esmer, “Economies of Violence, Banditry and Governance in the Late Ottoman Empire around 1800,” in *Past & Present*, 224:1 (2014) 163-99.

### Optional Readings

Dennis N. Skiotis, “The Greek Revolution: Ali Pasha’s Last Gamble,” in *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation (1821-1830) Continuity and Change*, ed. P. D. Nikiforos (Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976) 97-109.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983) pp. 47-65.

## Week 3, April 6

### Revolutions of 1848 and the Ottoman Empire

Anna Vakalis, “Tanzimat in the Province: Nationalist Sedition (*Fesat*), Banditry (*Eşkiya*) and Local Councils in the Ottoman Southern Balkans (1840s to 1860s),” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Basel, 2019, pp. 116-99.

Andreas Kosmas Lyberatos, “The Nation in the Balkan Village: National Politicization in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Thrace,” in *Turkish Historical Review*, 7:2 (2016) pp. 167-93.

### Optional Readings

Cengiz Yolcu, “‘Bulgar Fesad Komitesi Reisi’ Vasil Levski’nin Eylemleri ve Mahkemede Verdiği İfade Üzerine bir Değerlendirme’, in *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* 27 (2015) pp. 15–63.

Idean Salehyan, *Rebels without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009) pp. 19-55.

**Week 4, April 13**  
**Heightened Interstate Competition**

Mark Biondich, *The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence since 1878* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) pp. 46-75.

Duncan Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Revolutionary Movement, 1893-1903* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988) pp. 31-69.

Optional Readings

Feroze A. K. Yasamee, "European Equilibrium or Asiatic Balance of Power? The Ottoman Search for Security in the Aftermath of the Congress of Berlin," in M. Hakan Yavuz with Peter Sluglett, *War and Diplomacy: the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 and the Treaty of Berlin* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011) pp. 56-78.

Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 3-38.

**Week 5, April 20**  
**Changing Horizons of Expectations**

İpek K. Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014) pp. 48-78.

Oya Gözel-Durmaz, 'The Rise of the Ottoman Military Medical School as the Center of Anti-Hamidian Opposition', in *Current Debates in History and Politics*, eds. Oya Gözel-Durmaz, Abidin Çevik, and Günay Gönüllü (London: IJOPEC, 2017) pp. 7–20.

Optional Readings

Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010) pp. 60-93.

Niall Whelehan, "Youth, Generations, and Collective Action in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and Italy," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 56:4 (2014) pp. 934-66.

**Week 6, April 27**  
**Patterns of Elite Competition**

İpek K. Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014) pp. 169-208.

Tetsuya Sahara, "The Making of 'Black Hand' Reconsidered," in *Istorija 20. Veka*, 1 (2016) pp. 9-29.

Optional Readings

Dimitris Livianos, "'Conquering the Souls': Nationalism and Greek Guerilla Warfare in Ottoman Macedonia, 1904–1908", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999).

Hagop Barsoumian, "The Dual Role of the Armenian Amira Class within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian Millet (1750-1850)," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: the Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol.1, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982) pp. 171-84.

### **Week 7, May 4**

#### **Émigré Milieu, Diasporas and Refugees**

Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963) pp. 104-31.

Keith Brown, *Loyal unto Death: Trust and Terror in Revolutionary Macedonia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013) pp. 41-69.

#### Optional Readings

Isa Blumi, 'Publishers, Hitmen, Diplomats, and Dreamers: Switzerland's Ottoman-Albanian Diaspora, 1899-1920', in *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte = Revue suisse d'histoire = Rivista storica svizzera* 52 (2002) pp. 309-320.

Davit Gutman, "Migrants, Revolutionaries, and Spies: Surveillance, Politics, and Ottoman Identity in the United States," in *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Empire and Identity, 13<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, eds. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016) pp. 284-96.

### **Week 8, May 18**

#### **Global Economy of Discontent**

Tasos Kostopoulos, "'Land to the Tiller': On the Neglected Agrarian Component of the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement, 1893-1912", *Turkish Historical Review*, 7 (2016) pp. 134-66.

Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010) pp. 135-64.

#### Optional Readings

Varak Ketsemanian, "The Hunchakian Revolutionary Party and the Assassination Attempts against Patriarch Khoren Ashekian and Maksudzade Simon Bey in 1894," in *IJMES*, 50 (2018) pp. 735-55.

Nadir Özbek, "The Politics of Taxation and the 'Armenian Question' during the Late Ottoman Empire, 1876-1908," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 54:4 (Sept. 2012) pp. 770-97.

### **Week 9, May 25**

#### **New Tools, New Tactics**

Niall Whelehan, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp. 27-69.

Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, "Tools of Revolution: Global Military Surplus, Arms Dealers, and Smugglers in the Late Ottoman Balkans, 1878–1908," in *Past & Present* 237:1 (2017) pp. 167-95.

### Optional Readings

Richard Jensen, "Daggers, Rifles and Dynamite: Anarchist Terrorism in Nineteenth Century Europe," in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 16:1 (2004) pp. 116-53.

Yin Cao, "Bombs in Beijing and Delhi: The Global Spread of Bomb-Making Technology and the Revolutionary Terrorism in Modern China and India," in *Journal of World History*, 30:4 (Dec. 2019) pp. 559-89.

### **Week 10, June 1**

#### **Connected Revolutionaries, Connected Revolutions**

Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) pp. 210-78.

Houri Berberian, *Roving Revolutionaries: Armenians and the Connected Revolutions in the Russian, Iranian, and Ottoman Worlds* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019) pp. 47-105.

### Optional Readings

Erik Jan Zürcher, "The Young Turk Revolution: Comparisons and Connections," in *Middle Eastern Studies* 55:4 (2019) pp. 481–98.

Ramazan Hakkı Öztan, "Chemistry of Revolution: Naum Tyufekchiev (1864-1916) and the Networks of Revolutionary Violence in the Late Ottoman Europe," in *Age of Rogues: Rebels, Revolutionaries and Racketeers at the Frontiers of Empires*, eds. Ramazan Hakkı Öztan and Alp Yenen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021) pp. 261-301.

### **Week 11, June 8**

#### **Revolutionary Paths out of Empire**

Benjamin C. Fortna, "Late-Ottoman 'Rogues' and their Paths to Power: A Prosopographic Study," in *Age of Rogues: Rebels, Revolutionaries and Racketeers at the Frontiers of Empires*, eds. Ramazan Hakkı Öztan and Alp Yenen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021) pp. 302-32.

Erik-Jan Zürcher, "[Patterns of Young Turk Decision-Making 1913-1915]," in *Das Deutsche Reich und die Völkermord and den Armeniern*, eds. Rolf Hosfeld and Christin Pschichholz (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017) pp. 81–105.

### Optional Readings

Alp Yenen, "Envisioning Turco-Arab Co-Existence between Empire and Nationalism," in *Die Welt des Islams*, 61 (2021) pp. 72-112.

Michael Reynolds, "Buffers, Not Brethren: Young Turk Military Policy in the First World War and the Myth of Panturanism," in *Past & Present*, 203:1 (May 2009) pp. 137-79.

**Week 12, June 15**  
**Post-Ottoman Revolutionary Trajectories**

John Paul Newman, “The Origins, Attributes, and Legacies of Paramilitary Violence in the Balkans,” in *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, eds. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) pp. 145-62.

Michael Provence, “Ottoman Modernity, Colonialism, and Insurgency in the Interwar Arab East,” in *IJMES*, 43 (2011) pp. 205-25.

Optional Readings

Alp Yenen, “Internationalism, Diplomacy, and the Revolutionary Origins of the Middle East’s ‘Northern Tier’,” forthcoming in *Contemporary European History* (2021).

Jordi Tejel, “The Last Ottoman Rogues: The Kurdish-Armenian Alliance in Syria and the New State System in the Interwar Middle East,” in *Age of Rogues: Rebels, Revolutionaries and Racketeers at the Frontiers of Empires*, eds. Ramazan Hakkı Öztan and Alp Yenen (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021) pp. 355-82.

**Week 13, June 19 – July 3**  
**Finals Week**

Final Papers due July 3