



**European
Journal of Turkish Studies**
Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey
2011

The Sons of Two Fatherlands: Turkey and the North Caucasian Diaspora, 1914-1923

Ryan Gingeras



Éditeur
EJTS

Édition électronique

URL : <http://ejts.revues.org/4424>
ISSN : 1773-0546

Référence électronique

Ryan Gingeras, « The Sons of Two Fatherlands: Turkey and the North Caucasian Diaspora, 1914-1923 », *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [En ligne], Liste complète, 2011, mis en ligne le 30 novembre 2011, Consulté le 30 septembre 2016. URL : <http://ejts.revues.org/4424>

Ce document a été généré automatiquement le 30 septembre 2016.

© Some rights reserved / Creative Commons license

The Sons of Two Fatherlands: Turkey and the North Caucasian Diaspora, 1914-1923

Ryan Gingeras

“We have citizens and co-nationals in the contemporary Turkish nation who wish to propagate notions about Kurdish-ness, Circassian-ness and even more so Laz-ness or Bosnian-ness inside of the political and social collective. But this false naming, which is a product of the despotism of the past age, for anyone other than a few reactionary tools of the enemy and imbeciles, had no other effect on the nation other than worry and stress. Because the individuals of this nation, like the whole Turkish community, are in possession of a common past, history, morality and law.”¹

“No Matter what happens, it is our obligation to immerse those living in our society in the civilization of Turkish society and to have them benefit from the prosperity of civilization. Why should we still speak of the Kurd Mehmet, the Circassian Hasan or the Laz Ali. This would demonstrate the weakness of the dominant element... If anybody has any difference inside of him, we need to erase that in the schools and in the body politic, so that man will be as Turkish as me and serve the homeland.”²

- 1 Pronouncements such as these underscore the fundamental premise of ethnic politics in the Republic of Turkey for much of its brief history. Turkish nationalism, as suggested in the quotes above is the mortar with which the Turkish state is kept together. A rich heritage and culture binds all those born within Turkey’s borders. To suggest otherwise condones the subversive and reactionary politics of the Ottoman past.
- 2 The above summations on the subject of nationalism in Turkey nevertheless reference a core truth regarding the nature of politics and society in Anatolia. Turkey is a country of immense cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. Contemporary debates over Kurdish cultural or political self-expression represent only a fraction of the profound heterogeneity found among Turkey’s citizenry.³ Moreover, there was indeed a time, before the Kemalist ascendancy, when it was possible for inhabitants of Anatolia to articulate and publicize differing notions of identity. Both of the above statements

blithely refer to the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, an era of unprecedented interest and activism in the realm of identity politics.

- 3 Among the groups referenced above is the North Caucasian diaspora of Anatolia. North Caucasians, or Circassians as they are more commonly known, comprise a rich smattering of tribal and linguistic groups drawn from highlands and coastal slopes of the Caucasus Mountain range.⁴ It is in the diaspora, mostly within Ottoman Anatolia, that these desperate groupings forged a more singular notion of identity and national interest. North Caucasian figures exercised considerable political influence at various levels of the Ottoman state. The depths to which Circassian notables were able to shape politics and policies during the latter years of the Ottoman Empire mirrors the much broader impact Muslim migrants from Southern Russia had upon imperial affairs.⁵
- 4 Nevertheless, even during this period of relative openness with respect to rhetoric and discourse, the leading lights of the North Caucasian diaspora ultimately attempted to place limits upon the interests and desires of their nascent nationalist movement. With the outbreak of war in 1914 and the looming threat of imperial collapse, the bulk of Circassian officers, officials and intellectuals in Anatolia channeled their collective interests and energies into upholding the Ottoman state. In choosing to remain loyal to their comrades and the state they served, prominent Circassians tended to subordinate, but not suppress, their national interests in the Caucasus in light of the crises confronting Ottoman Anatolia. When one considers the realm of political possibilities during the First World War and its immediate aftermath, this collective action appears all the more striking. In placing themselves and their ethnic interests at the disposal of the Ottoman Empire, elite members of North Caucasian diaspora ultimately elected to forgo any demand towards self-determination or any other form of national restitution. Circassian demands for self-determination and national sovereignty were instead directed towards Ottoman Anatolia and the emerging Kemalist order.
- 5 Over the following pages I wish to explore how and why a select cohort of Circassians concurrently staked a claim to both their adopted home in Anatolia and, to some degree, their more distant homeland in the Caucasus. I would argue that this period represents an Ur moment when the politics of Turkey's North Caucasian diaspora first crystallized. The emergence of a clearly visible and mobile "Circassian politic" during the years between 1914 and 1922 strikes at the very heart of identity politics in Asia Minor and the evolution of Anatolia as a geographic, cultural and political bridge between multiple worlds.
- 6 The unity of action and influence wielded by elite elements of the North Caucasian elite during this period is also at the heart of the demise of this political faction in the aftermath of the so-called Turkish War of Independence (fought from 1919 to 1922). As we shall see, the scars and lessons left by this period of warfare, together with ascendancy of Mustafa Kemal's exclusive entourage, served to condemn any expression of national interest that deviated from the emerging orthodoxies of Turkish nationalism. It is only recent years that Circassian diaspora politics has been permitted to resurface.

Brothers from Another Mother: The Making of the North Caucasian Elite of Anatolia, 1860-1923

- 7 A detailed account of the emergence of the modern Middle East is not possible without mentioning the roles played by the peoples of the North Caucasus. Long before the armies of the Russian tsars began to push further south into their steppe frontier, men and women born or departing from the northeastern shores of the Black Sea were counted among the most important or intimate members of the empires that defined the evolution of the eastern Mediterranean. Circassian slave-soldiers administered the political affairs and commanded the armies of the Seljuk, Mamluk, Safavid and Ottoman states. Fair North Caucasian “beauties” bought in the slave markets of Baghdad, Cairo and Istanbul became the mothers and matriarchs of the most prominent households of the *darüislam*. Scholars of the early modern period have tended, even during this time before the age of nationalism, to describe the North Caucasians of the great Islamic empires as an exclusive class within the imperial elite.⁶ Ironically, the early intermingling of Circassians in the politics of the Islamic lands largely occurred at a time when most people still residing in the North Caucasus had yet to convert in mass to Islam.⁷
- 8 The mass exodus of North Caucasians to the Ottoman Empire, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, consummated and solidified the historical links the North Caucasian peoples now share with the Middle East. Between 1860 and 1914, Russian forces, perhaps with the connivance of the Ottoman state, expelled hundreds of thousands from their homes. Upon arriving on the Black Sea’s southern shores, the refugees were then distributed, often without their consent, to areas of settlement in the southern Balkans, Anatolia and Syria. Although a portion of these refugees ultimately did return home, perhaps as many as 2.5 millions North Caucasian decided to build new lives in the Ottoman lands. If scholar Kemal Karpat’s estimates are correct, the population of the Circassian diaspora at the turn of the twentieth century exceeded the total number of Kurds living in the Ottoman Empire.⁸
- 9 Tremendous logistical and material challenges hampered Istanbul’s efforts to settle these successive waves of North Caucasian refugees. During the 1860s, tens of thousands of refugees died as a result of malnutrition, exposure and disease. Thousands more attempted to return home due to dissatisfaction with the lands the government allotted to them or as result of strife with their new neighbors. All in all, Ottoman officials used the crisis to their political advantage. In a time when portions of the empire was threatened by rebellion, sedition and wear, Istanbul used resettlement of North Caucasian immigrants as a means of diluting potentially restive native populations (such as Balkan Christians or Arab nomads) in strategically valuable territories. In addition to portions of the southern Balkans and Syria, the overwhelming majority of North Caucasian were settled various corners of Anatolia.⁹
- 10 For an unknown number of North Caucasian refugees, the historic ties created by Ottoman Caucasian slave trade helped to facilitate a rapid ascendancy up the ranks of the imperial elite. Caucasian slaves, and increasingly their descendants, continued to populate the households of the most powerful families of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century. Whether by design or by accident, the institution of slavery allowed members of the North Caucasian diaspora to integrated themselves into the Ottoman political elite. With the gradual replacement of slave administrators by professionally

trained bureaucrats in the nineteenth century, the descendents of Ottoman-born Caucasian slaves began to establish their own households, in certain cases transforming themselves into interlocutors between Istanbul and newly arriving North Caucasians.¹⁰

- 11 The experiences of deportation and exile impacted North Caucasian refugees and their descendants in several critical ways. First and foremost, the *sürgün* (or exile in Turkish) helped to forge a singular, popular notion of collective identity among the incredibly diverse number of North Caucasian groups who came to reside throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Although divergences along regional, dialectical, filial and cultural lines may have contributed to the often fractious (or non-existent) relations between Adige, Ubih, Abkhaz, Dagestani, Chechen, Osset and Georgian peoples, the collective experiences and memories of flight, poverty, mortality and resettlement bonded North Caucasian refugees and their descendants together. This comradeship, which manifested itself in schools, offices and within the ranks of the military was readily apparent to many outsiders.¹¹
- 12 Equally homogenizing was the collective designation of the term Circassian [*Çerkes*] for all refugees from the North Caucasus. Although usage of the term *Çerkes* (or the plural *Çerkesler* in Ottoman, *Çerkesler* in modern Turkish) had a long history within the Ottoman lands, the diversity found among North Caucasian refugees did little to limit the use of this collective label. Although it is not entirely clear whether this phenomenon resulted from the fact that the first and probably the largest contingent of refugees were Adige and Ubih (the two groups most often associated with “Circassian-ness”), it is clear that other manifestations of North Caucasian identity (such as Chechen, Dagestani or even Abkhazian) were marginalized or sublimated in terms of official parlance and self-representation.¹²
- 13 Istanbul’s initial overtures towards these newcomers would ultimately cement ties between successive generations of North Caucasian elites and the Ottoman state. Sultan Abdülhamid II in particular endorsed a series of policies that favored North Caucasian notables seeking upward mobility through state service. By the outbreak of the First World War, the Ottoman officer corps, as well as the state bureaucracy, became heavily populated by the sons of North Caucasian immigrants. Many of those who chose the military as means of upward mobility were allowed to distinguish themselves as a group apart from the regular rank and file. Dressed in North Caucasian “costumes,” many units made up of immigrant recruits and officers comprised members of the same extended family (who were settled together in the same village) and were placed under the command of a regional or “tribal” notable.¹³
- 14 A viable, and increasingly vocal, milieu of North Caucasian officers, bureaucrats and intellectuals began to take root in Istanbul in the closing years of the nineteenth century. At the center of this elite group of North Caucasians was Field Marshal *Deli* Fuad [Fuad the Mad], the son of an old Ubih family from Egypt.¹⁴ This emerging elite of North Caucasian cadres formed a collective voice just after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 with the establishment of the Society for Circassian Unity and Mutual Aid [*Çerkes İttihat ve Teavün Cemiyeti*]. Officially speaking, *Deli* Fuat and other founders of the organization largely limited their activism to advancing the political and cultural concerns of North Caucasians in the Ottoman lands. Along with subsequent groups formed in Istanbul, such as the North Caucasian Political Committee [*Şimali Kafkas Cemiyet-i Siyasiyesi*] and the Circassian Womens’ Mutual Aid Committee [*Çerkes Kadınları Teavün Cemiyeti*], the men and women who gathered around *Deli* Fuad campaigned to open Adige language schools (for

men and as well as women), published newspapers in both Turkish and in Adige and called for the creation of an independent North Caucasian state.¹⁵ In practice, these organizations served as the political nexus for the most powerful North Caucasians in the empire. The Society for Circassian Unity and Mutual Aid and other such North Caucasian immigrant groups formed an exclusive network of individuals who shared a general set of political and cultural agendas and values. As bodies gathering together the most elite strata of Ottoman North Caucasian society, these organizations became closely tied to the state's administrative apparatus and in certain respects became quasi-arms of the state itself (particularly in regards to recruitment and distribution of propaganda).

- 15 In an era that saw the promotion of an increasingly articulate notion of identity grounded in Islamic unity and loyalty to the Ottoman state, elite North Caucasians engaged in their own internal debate over the question of national belonging. As men who were overwhelmingly acculturated and groomed within the classrooms of the empire's finest schools, and as comrades of other equally devoted state employees, high-ranking North Caucasian officers and officials appeared to have been no less committed to the causes and rites of twentieth century Ottoman nationalism. In the words of Eşref Kuşçubaşı, one of the founders of the Ottoman clandestine service, he could not deny that he was a Circassian who dreamt of Dagestan (the North Caucasus). Yet he was, first and foremost, "a Muslim Ottoman who spoke Turkish."¹⁶
- 16 Eşref's commitment to the Ottoman state and his ability to speak the lingua franca of the empire did not necessarily mean however that he, or other prominent North Caucasians like him, equated Ottoman nationalism with ethnic, cultural or even political unanimity. Parallel to this devotion to the Ottoman sultanate was an equally strong commitment to the maintenance and exploration of "Circassian-ness" within the Ottoman context. Newspapers, articles and books discussing the history, the politics and the future of North Caucasians inside and outside of the empire flourished in Istanbul in the years preceding the First World War. Among the most active participants in this discourse was Mehmet Fetgerey (şoenu), the son of an Ubih refugee family from just east of Istanbul. As a former administrator and educator in Istanbul and Macedonia, Mehmet's career in publishing began in the years immediately following the First World War. Although only a few pamphlets written by Mehmet Fetgerey have survived to the present day, it appears they strike upon certain consistent themes. His histories of North Caucasians (which by and large correspond to Adige history) emphasize their ancient and seemingly European and Aryan roots. "Circassians" (again, meaning all North Caucasians) savored and guarded their independence until the *sürgün*, the great calamity of North Caucasian history. Exile and the death of tens of thousands did not break the North Caucasian spirit or resolve towards restoring their independence. Yet, after their arrival on to the shores of the Ottoman Empire, Circassians extended their full devotion and loyalty to their sultan and his Muslim subjects.¹⁷ A similar pattern of historical and political observations appear to have been expressed in the works of such older Circassian activists as Aziz Meker and Yusuf İzzet (Met Çanatuka).¹⁸
- 17 This vision of Circassian life both in the diaspora and back in the homeland was put to the test once the First World War ended. To borrow a long and overused cliché, the period immediately follow 1918 represented both the best of times and the worst of times for the North Caucasian imperial elite. On the one hand, Russia's utter collapse, coupled with the Tsar's ouster, signaled a hopeful turn in North Caucasian affairs. Under the aegis of the right of self-determination, local rebels seized upon this moment to form the

Mountaineer Republic, a state that encompassed the lands of the Adige, Chechens, Dagestanis and Ingushis. In an era defined by Wilson's Fourteen Points and the possibility of self-determination, it is clear that many North Caucasians living in Ottoman Anatolia hoped to reestablish a connection with, or perhaps return to, their place of origin.

- 18 Yet, closer to home, the war had produced the greatest of catastrophes. Defeat in 1918 would result in the fall of the imperial Ottoman government, the collapse of its military and signaled a radical redrawing of its borders. This latter crisis shook the Ottoman Circassian establishment to its core. For the young, well-educated and established officers and officials residing in Istanbul or found within the upper ranks of the army, resisting the threat of foreign occupation and saving the Ottoman state from partition and dissolution superseded any duty to their more distant homeland. Ultimately, their fealty to their adopted home came at the expense of realizing their dreams of independence for the lands their father's had forfeited.

The North Caucasian Elite and the Turkish War of Independence

- 19 As the British armies closed in on Anatolia in 1918, the Ottoman triumvirate government appointed a young North Caucasian officer with the task of bringing the war to a dishonorable end. Hüseyin Rauf Orbay, age 37, in many respects represented the cream of his generation. Born in Istanbul, Rauf was the son of an Abkhazian immigrant father who rose to serve as the Ottoman governor of the province of Libya. After Rauf graduated from the Ottoman Naval Academy in 1899, he went on to serve with distinction in the Balkan and Libyan wars. In 1917 he received the esteemed honor of acting as the Ottoman representative at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.¹⁹ His appointment as head of the Ottoman delegation at the Modros Armistice in 1918 marked a dramatic reversal in his promising career. Yet, the harsh terms of the Ottoman surrender however did not dull his ardor or devotion towards the state he had so faithfully served. In the days before he arrived to the negotiating table, Rauf Orbay had already included himself in the plans for a war of resistance against the foreign occupation of Anatolia that was sure to come.²⁰
- 20 The landing of Greek troops on Izmir's harbor front on May 15, 1919 is often seen as the beginning of the Turkish War of Independence. Yet plans for an organized, statewide campaign of armed resistance to foreign occupation in Anatolia predated the arrival of the Greek invasion force. Shortly before the flight of the "triumvirate government" in November 1918, the ruling Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) laid the groundwork for a clandestine operation to thwart the partition of Anatolia. Rauf Orbay, a long time CUP member, was among the first Young Turk activists to take part in planning and organization of these National Forces [*Kuva-yı Milliye*].²¹ Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), who would seize the reins of this resistance in May of 1919, Rauf proved decisive in bringing other prominent North Caucasian officers into the fold. From the sources available to us, it appears that the recruitment of high-ranking Circassian officers, intellectuals, bureaucrats and provincial notables was seen as a key element to the success of the struggle to come. In addition to their outstanding presence in the Ottoman officer corps (particularly in the Ottoman clandestine service), several members of the North Caucasian elite possessed close connections to rural paramilitary gangs. In lieu of a regular army, the National Forces would rely heavily on these provincial

paramilitaries [*çetecis*] to fill the ranks of the resistance during its early stages. Several of the most influential Circassian officers in the Ottoman Empire served during this crucial stage of the war as both commanders and recruiters of these paramilitaries sent to the front.²² After the war ended in 1922, the Turkish National Assembly awarded eleven North Caucasians, out of a grand total of twenty recipients, the honorific title of *gazi*.²³

- 21 Rauf Orbay's efforts bore fruit by the summer of 1919. Despite the chaos that ensued the Greek seizure of Izmir in May of 1919, CUP-turned-Nationalist militants moved quickly to draw up a defensive parameter around the Greek beachhead in the Aegean. In September, Mustafa Kemal solidified his control over the National Forces with the convening of the largest of a series of formal congresses held in the eastern Anatolian town of Sivas. As a group mostly comprising former CUP members and sympathizers, the Sivas Congress stood in direct contravention of the authority of the sultan's government in Istanbul, which rightly viewed the gathering as an attempt by the remaining Young Turk caucus to regain control over the country.
- 22 As one browses the names of the participants of the Sivas Congress, one is struck by the inordinate number of North Caucasians who were in attendance. Out of the possible 38 men who joined the gathering, twelve were of North Caucasian descent.²⁴ Of the fifteen members of Mustafa Kemal's central "representative committee," a body which would steer the war effort against the foreign occupiers, over a third were of North Caucasian descent.²⁵ In addition to Rauf Orbay, who had attended the Ottoman military academy with the future president of Turkey, this exclusive clique of Circassian insiders included Bekir Sami (Kundukh), the former governor Ottoman Syria, and İbrahim Süreyya (Yiğit), a CUP activist and former member of the Ottoman clandestine service. Meanwhile, Emin Marşan Pasha, the Circassian political/paramilitary boss of Sivas, assured that the congress would be held without disruptions.²⁶
- 23 A number of contemporary scholars have interpreted the presence of such a large number of influential North Caucasian notables within Mustafa Kemal's inner circle as a righteous display of Circassian solidarity with the goals and aspirations of Turkish nationalism.²⁷ Yet others argue that the very notion of Turkish nationalism, let alone the notion of a Turkish nation-state, was far from fully defined at this point in time.²⁸ It is perhaps safer to say that the contributions rendered by North Caucasians to the construction of Mustafa Kemal's nascent government reflected the sheer mass of Circassian occupying positions of power within the ranks of the bureaucracy and, above all, the military. Most of the North Caucasians who surrounded Mustafa Kemal were under forty years of age.²⁹ For the most part, these men had become acquainted with one another in the years before the First World War. As friends, classmates or former comrades-in-arms, pro-Nationalist North Caucasians shared a collective set of interests, values and ends defined by the Ottoman state and, to a large degree, the Committee of Union and Progress. Rather than as a testament to a Turkish ethno-nationalism that was still in its infancy in 1919, this gathering of representatives of the North Caucasian elite instead should be looked upon as evidence affirming the success to which Abdülhamid II and CUP state acculturated and groomed large numbers of Circassian immigrants, and their children, into becoming the guardians of the state.
- 24 But this is not the only reason why contemporary scholars have so explicitly connected Circassians with the early promotion of Turkish nationalism. North Caucasian participation in the National Movement occurred at a time when other "minority interests" in Anatolia sought to undermine or tear asunder the integrity of the Ottoman

state. The Turkish War of Independence was not simply a war waged by Kemalist forces against Greek and other occupying armies. Nationalist detachments and guerrilla bands equally concerned themselves with the threat of Christian separatism. Orthodox Christians throughout western Anatolia celebrated the Greek landing at Izmir, with many joining the Greek expeditionary army.³⁰ Meanwhile forces loyal to Mustafa Kemal pushed eastward against ragtag Armenian groups attempting to hold those portions of eastern Anatolia designated as Armenian territory under the auspices of the Treaty of Sèvres.³¹ Considering the supposed severity of the dangers posed by Christian separatists, Mustafa Kemal and the National Forces depended upon Muslim unanimity in Anatolia.

- 25 The prominent role played by Circassian officers, officials and notables at the Sivas Congress, as well as the Turkish War of Independence overall, stands in particular stark contrast to relative absence of Kurds in the making of the National Forces. According to Andrew Mango, not a single Kurd attended the proceedings at Sivas.³² It was only with the seating of the first Turkish Grand National Assembly after 1920 that Kurdish appointees came to populate the upper ranks of Mustafa Kemal's revolutionary government.³³ Despite the support of some members of the Kurdish rural elite, Kemalist forces nonetheless worried about Kurdish nationalist factions in Istanbul that supported secession from the Ottoman state.³⁴ Meanwhile, to the east of Sivas, a serious popular uprising among Alevi Kurds in Dersim contributed to seeping Nationalist misgivings regarding the loyalties of Kurds throughout Anatolia.³⁵
- 26 By 1921, it became clear to the Kemalist leadership and their Circassian backers that not all North Caucasians in Anatolia could be counted upon for support. The first indications that dissenting Circassians were taking up arms against the National Forces occurred in the fall of 1919. After a series of minor confrontations and clashes between local paramilitaries and Nationalist detachments, a large-scale rebellion erupted in vicinity of Bursa and Balıkesir. This state of insurrection lasted for much of the winter and spring of 1920 and would eventually encompass almost the entire southern basin of the Marmara Sea.³⁶ Meanwhile, to the south in Cilicia, Circassians were wavering in their support of the National Forces' struggle against the French occupying force.³⁷
- 27 There was even uncertainty within the core of the National Forces. One of the most prominent resistance fighters, a Circassian by the name of *Çerkes* Ethem, broke with Mustafa Kemal and surrendered his command to the Greek commander on the Aegean front.³⁸ Ethem's capitulation to the Greeks was soon followed by an even more vulgar display of "Circassian treason." In November of 1921, a meeting of provincial Circassian notables was held in Greek-occupied Izmir. In a series of declarations circulated throughout Anatolia and to various Western delegations, the congress, calling itself the Association for the Strengthening of Near Eastern Circassian Rights, declared that it was the intention of all North Caucasians in Anatolia to abandon the Nationalist struggle and to form a joint Greek-Circassian protectorate in northwestern Anatolia. After decades of mistreatment by the Ottoman government following their mass exodus from the Caucasus, the congress argued that Circassians now feared that the National Movement was seeking to exterminate them much as the Ottoman government had previously attempted to wipe out Anatolia's Greek and Armenian population.³⁹
- 28 From the point of view of supporters of the Kemalist forces, such acts of rebellion seemed to suggest that Muslim Circassians were aligning themselves with the interests of Christian secession. For the sake of external appearances, as well as internal unanimity,

North Caucasian supporters of the National Movement sought at every turn to play down suggestions of Circassian discord and affirm their loyalty to the Nationalist cause.

- 29 On the morning of 28 November 1921, a group of Circassian intellectuals, officers and notables gathered in Besiktaş, just north of Istanbul's old quarter, to release a statement countering the demands of the Near Eastern Caucasian Association. The group was led by two men who typified the Circassian establishment in Istanbul: (Big) Ahmet Fevzi Pasha and *Delî* Fuat Pasha. The group told the crowd that gathered that the Association for the Strengthening of Near Eastern Circassian Rights was composed of "good-for-nothings," such as the "traitor" *Çerkes* Ethem.⁴⁰ The association, it was claimed, was composed of only "ten to fifteen men from Bandırma," a town which had been an epicenter for anti-Nationalist activity. As for the other Circassians who had assembled in Izmir, the Beşiktaş committee accused the Greek occupational authorities in the town of forcing them men to sign on to the plan to secede from Ottoman state.⁴¹
- 30 An even more dramatic display of Circassian fealty to the Ottoman state and the sovereignty of Anatolia was printed days after the assembly in Izmir in the pro-Nationalist Ankara daily, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. In an open letter undersigned by 26 state functionaries and notables of Circassian descent from the town of Düzce, the Besiktaş committee's rejection of the Near Eastern Caucasian Association's demands was seconded. Circassians, the Düzce representative countered, had long been treated well by the Turks. Circassian immigrants, like their Turkish brothers, willfully marched off to the Balkan War and to the Great War in the name of the Ottoman state and suffered along side their Turkish comrades. Through such trials and sacrifices, no Circassian would accept the rule of any other state.⁴²
- 31 Before the members of the recently created National Assembly in Ankara, one member also rose to defend and explain the feelings and loyalties of Circassians. Having never served in the military, Hakkı Hami (Ulukan) was an unlikely member of the North Caucasian elite. The son of Abkhazian immigrants, Hakkı had practiced law in his native town of Sinop before joining the National Movement.⁴³ On the 3rd of November, he offered the following rendition of the North Caucasian experience in Anatolia:
- 32 At one time gentlemen you know that Circassians [now] living and working in Turkey were unwilling to put up with Tsarist oppression and took shelter in Turkey. They saw a great deal of compassion from the Turks and [saw] that they always possessed a distinguished kind of benevolence. They were cast upon the compassion of the Turk's bosom. Ever since that time the Circassians have not seen the slightest degree injury from the Turks. Perhaps Turks held them in far greater esteem and supported them in this nation (Bravo!) There is no suspicion that they are separate from the Turks and I declare that Turks and Circassians have become close relatives (Bravo!).
- 33 It is more than this, gentlemen! Circassians, your government is not a base one like Greece. Do not commit such a vile act as to accept the patronage of any Christian state. And you should not accept that kind of debasement. One who accepts Greek protection or the protection of any other Christian [state] is not a Circassian and a Muslim. That person becomes a Christian. He is a person doubtful of his nation and his position.
- 34 In the midst of the cheers and bravos that were interjected towards the end of Hakkı Hami's address, Rauf Orbay himself intoned, "There cannot be a traitorous nation!"⁴⁴
- 35 Further than these impassioned pleas for fealty towards the Ottoman state and the National Movement, these statements uttered by pro-Nationalist Circassians in Beşiktaş,

Düzce and Ankara reveal much about what it meant to be North Caucasian *and* a supporter of the emerging Turkish order. Above all things, support for the National Movement represented a debt that was to be paid. As a movement representing the re-establishment of a sovereign, strong state (which was to be led by the same cohort of young servicemen and statesmen who had governed the land before the outbreak of the First World War), the National Movement (as rendered by Hakkı Hami and others) represented the same set of benefactors who had welcomed North Caucasians into the Ottoman lands. Yet, as “brothers,” there seems to be an understanding among these elite Circassians that they were still a set apart from the “Turks.” They were, in other words, partners with an equal share with twin interests in the survival of the state. Interestingly, this internal consensus among pro-Nationalist North Caucasians mirrored the way in which Kurdish participation in the Kemalist movement was also framed at this time.⁴⁵ Their identity and integrity as a sub-branch of Ottoman society was to be respected in participating in this grand campaign for Anatolia’s liberation.

The Motherland Slips Away: The Circassian Elite and the Fate of the Caucasus

- 36 Combatants engaged in the struggle over the future of Anatolia were not ignorant of the large questions of how the break up of Europe’s empires would progress in the aftermath of the First World War. It was clear immediately after the guns fell silent along the Western Front that imperial borders encompassing such desperate lands as Ireland, Ukraine, India, Iraq and China would be redrawn or reconsidered.⁴⁶ Members of the North Caucasian elite in Anatolia were no less ignorant of the possibilities afoot. Yet, from the perspective of those who had thrown in their lot with the National Movement, precisely what services Nationalist Circassians could render to lands of their fathers was unclear.
- 37 Istanbul had cultivated a strong interest in the politic future of the North Caucasus long before the outbreak of the First World War. As Michael Reynolds has articulately demonstrated, Young Turk policy in the Caucasus was determined less by ideological or nationalist prerogatives as it was an expression of an ongoing geo-strategic struggle between the Ottoman Empire, imperial Russia and Iran.⁴⁷ Among the assets the CUP government had at its disposal were the members of the Circassian elite who had organized themselves into such lobbying groups as the North Caucasian Political Committee. According to Mustafa Butbay, an Abkhazian activist and academic with close ties to Istanbul’s North Caucasian consensus, the ruling Committee of Union and Progress viewed the North Caucasian Political Committee as an instrument in promoting the creation of an allied independent Muslim buffer states in the Caucasus.⁴⁸
- 38 Ironically, despite the fall of the Young Turk government in 1918, events in Russia would ultimately produce an outcome that seemed to favor Istanbul. In the midst of civil upheaval and revolution, local notables in the North Caucasus, representing a coalition of Muslim Adige, Abkhazians, Dagestanis, Chechens and Kumuks, rallied in 1918 to form a republic in tune with Woodrow Wilson’s principles of self-determination. In what Michael Reynolds describes as a move to protect the region’s “culture and identity,” the founding members of this “Union of Allied Mountaineers” exercised a fairly realist agenda in the midst of the Russian Civil War (1917-1923). Clear internal divisions however ran through the leadership of this self-styled North Caucasian Republic along social, political and

ethnic lines.⁴⁹ On 4 June 1918, the Ottoman government, in a “treaty of friendship”, formally recognized the existence of this nascent state.⁵⁰

- 39 Meanwhile, during the closing stages of the First World War, Ottoman forces had pushed well into the southern Caucasus. In September 1918, advancing Ottoman troops recaptured the disputed provinces of Batum, Kars and Ardahan and occupied large swaths of Azerbaijan. On the same day as Istanbul recognized the North Caucasian Republic, a small Ottoman force under the command of İsmail Hakkı (Berkok) entered Dagestan. The son of Adige immigrants from Uzunyayla, İsmail quickly set out to establish a locally recruited force in order to further drive Russian forces out of the Dagestan and secure an Ottoman foothold close to the oil-rich city of Baku. A much larger force under Yusuf İzzet (Met Çanatuka) Pasha, a longtime fixture of the Istanbul’s Circassian circle, arrived in support for this adventure. Even before the signing of the Modros armistice forced all Ottoman troops to withdraw from the Caucasus, the lack of resources, Bolshevik opposition and local resistance and indifference spoiled much of their advances.⁵¹
- 40 In the months after the signing of the Modros armistice, Circassian activists in Istanbul resumed contact with representatives of the North Caucasian Republic. At some point in 1919, a delegation led by the prime minister of the North Caucasian Republic, Abdülmecit Çermoyef, and the Republic’s foreign minister, Haydar Bamat, met with notable Circassian activists in Istanbul in the hopes of gleaning Nationalist support. Mustafa Kemal reportedly consented to the requests of the delegation and in turn sanctioned the sending of a Nationalist delegation to the Caucasus in 1919. Under Ankara’s orders, İsmail Hakkı (Berkok) was picked alongside Aziz Meke, a Caucasian-born teacher based in Istanbul, to lead this clandestine mission.⁵²
- 41 As one reads the memoirs of Mustafa Butbay, who accompanied this delegation, İsmail Hakkı and Aziz encountered problems from nearly the start. As Soviet, White and local forces surged back and forth over the Caucasus, Nationalist delegates had trouble obtaining a stable consensus among local factions. Mustafa Butbay was particularly frustrated with the behavior of Celal Korkmazof (alternately also called Celaladdin Korkmaz), a native Kumyk who was among the leading promoters of the Bolshevik effort in the North Caucasus. Much to Butbay’s disappointment, Korkmazof refused to place the cause of a united, independent North Caucasus above his Bolshevik leanings.⁵³
- 42 The establishment of a formal Nationalist government under Mustafa Kemal in April 1920 initially did not lead to any deviation of past Ottoman policies of supporting North Caucasian independence. In an early session of the Turkish National Assembly in Ankara, Mustafa Kemal declared:
- [...] Circassians are working towards their goals. They too are in cordial relations with us. In that degree, they see Turkey’s salvation, existence and independence as connect to their own lives and existence and they set their heart to this. Our recommendation to our co-religionists over there too is to show and affirm their existence with their own forces in their own region and then to be an example that they will be a part of the Islamic lands. And we can say that our home and our national independence and salvation is not far from the manifestation of Caucasian national aspirations and activities from their point of view. Our patriotism is entirely considered to be like a part of theirs.⁵⁴
- 43 Nationalist policy towards the Caucasus gradually shifted however as Ankara forged more permanent relations with the Soviet Union. Contact between Mustafa Kemal’s National Forces and the Bolshevik government first commenced in the fall of 1919. On 11 January 1920, representatives from both sides signed the first mutual assistance and friendship

agreement. In the agreement, the Soviets demanded that the Nationalists recognize the establishment of Soviet republics in Dagestan and Turkestan.⁵⁵ In the summer 1920, in a report to the Nationalist steering committee, it was agreed that the Nationalists could work hand in hand with the Soviet regime on issues related to North Caucasian sovereignty. Aziz Meker, for example, posed that “Muslims and Bolsheviks” were in agreement that North Caucasian lands formerly stolen by “Russians and Cossacks” be returned to native custody.⁵⁶

- 44 In the summer of 1920, the Kemalist government in Ankara assembled its first regular ambassadorial mission to the Soviet Union. Ali Fuat (Cebeşoy), a close friend and ally of Mustafa Kemal who was of North Caucasian descent on his mother’s side, headed this mission. Ali Fuat brought a coterie of other North Caucasian officers and veterans with him to Moscow.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, back in Ankara, Mustafa Kemal turned to Bekir Sami (Kundukh), one of the most powerful North Caucasian figures within the Nationalist inner circle, to lead the Nationalist foreign ministry.⁵⁸
- 45 In October 1920, direct negotiations officially opened between the Soviet Union and Mustafa Kemal’s National Movement. Several sensitive questions, principally concerning borders, Soviet financial support and the status of the Turkish Communist Party, separated the two parties. Bekir Sami, it appears however, expressed to his Soviet counterparts an inordinate amount of personal interest in the cause of North Caucasian independence. Even before his arrival to Moscow, Soviet officials accused Bekir Sami of agitating among the inhabitants of Ingushetia during his inbound trip through the Caucasus.⁵⁹ In one purported session with Soviet Foreign Minister Georgi Chicherin, Bekir Sami opened up the possibility of a trade whereby Ossetia (the land of his birth) would receive independence in exchange for Armenia’s acquisition of the Ottoman province of Van.⁶⁰
- 46 Bekir Sami’s private designs ultimately conflicted with Ankara’s larger strategic interests. After voicing his opposition to signing any peace agreement with France and Great Britain, Bekir Sami was forced to resign from his post and was sent into retirement.⁶¹ In the months following the assertion of Red Army control over the region in June 1920, Ankara relinquished direct interest in North Caucasian independence. With the signing of the Treaty of Moscow on 16 March 1921, all issues pertaining to the North Caucasus remained off the table.⁶²
- 47 Ankara’s renunciation of any support for independence among the people of the North Caucasus was only one element of the concessions made in the hopes of receiving political and material assistance from the Soviet Union. The Kemalist government also renounced all claims to the strategic province of Batum, which had been seized by imperial Russia in 1878. In the lead up to the First World War, calls for Batum’s return to Ottoman control was among the more powerful rallying cries of Young Turk government.⁶³ When war with Russia began in late 1914, a number of Circassian officers played a direct role in Ottoman attempts at liberating the region from Russian control. Many, for example, actively organized guerrilla bands among the native Ajari population in the region.⁶⁴
- 48 With the withdrawal of Ottoman forces from the Caucasus at the end of the First World War, Batum briefly fell under British occupation. In the midst of the British occupation, Nationalist agents continued to maintain contact with sympathetic Ajari notables (although, according to one British report, Mehmet Kişkinzade, a local Ajar leader, turned down direct contact with Mustafa Kemal and refused to become embroiled in the

Nationalist conflict).⁶⁵ When Nationalist troops finally entered Batum in March 1921, Ankara's continued need for Soviet support ultimately trumped long held territorial interests.⁶⁶ After the Menshevik government of Georgia, which laid claim to Batum, was overthrown by the Red Army, Ankara agreed to cede any claim to Batum but compelled the Soviets to grant special administrative and cultural status to the Muslims of Ajaria.⁶⁷

- 49 There is some evidence that suggests that elements of the North Caucasian elite in Anatolia were thoroughly displeased with this turn of affairs and distrustful of Moscow's intentions. In an article published in *Tehvir-i Efkar*, one anonymous observer argued that the Soviet occupation of the North Caucasus would assuredly mark a return to the sort of oppression that defined Russian imperial rule in the region.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, another commentator writing a few days later reminded North Caucasians that while North Caucasians should certainly be "pondering their fatherland's freedoms in the Caucasus," they should also "recognize their duty to the Turkish fatherland's freedom."⁶⁹
- 50 In short, in assessing the role of elite Ottoman North Caucasians in confronting the future of their ancestral lands, it is clear that there were limits to which their personal interests and aspirations could be expressed or realized. As the beneficiaries of the reformed Ottoman state and as devotees of the Young Turk-turned-Nationalist cause, the North Caucasians who threw in their lot with Mustafa Kemal understood that there was a defined order that limited their ability to affect the course of Ankara's dealings with the Soviet Union. Despite a long legacy of activism and, in certain cases, direct personal involvement, Nationalist Circassian officers, officials and notables understood (or were made to understand) that their primary loyalty resided in Anatolia. In other words, the struggle over the survival of the adopted fatherland ultimately overshadowed affairs in their ancestral lands.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, as men with roots and personal passions invested in the future of the Caucasus, they allowed themselves to be used as an instrument of those new prerogatives and directives.

Conclusion: North Caucasians, Republican Politics and the Suspension of "Minority" Activism

- 51 It is difficult to overstate the profound impact the violence of the Turkish War of Independence had upon the early Turkish Republic. The sheer devastation wrought by the conflict transformed the Anatolian countryside. Millions of people throughout Anatolia, both Muslim and Christian, were displaced as a result of both the fighting and the "population exchanges" that followed the end of the war. The Nationalist victory over the Greek expeditionary army, as well as the departure of British, French, Italian and Armenian forces, cemented Mustafa Kemal's rise as the powerful and legitimate political leader in Anatolia. The Greek defeat, coupled with the mass eviction of native Orthodox Christians from throughout Asia Minor, affirmed the Nationalist supposition that Anatolia was a supremely Muslim land and could not be partitioned or divided. Localist resistance to the Nationalist government in eastern Anatolia among Muslim Kurds cast similar doubts regarding their loyalty to a singular and unified Anatolia under Ankara's control. Following the şeyh Sait rebellion of 1925, the Kemalist regime took increasingly more violent and stringent steps to eliminate the slightest possibility of a Kurdish separatist movement.⁷¹

- 52 The close of the Turkish War of Independence also had a chilling effect upon the politics of the North Caucasian diaspora. The departure of Greek troops from western Anatolia, for example, led to a brief, and largely isolated, outbreak of rebellion among Circassian communities along the southern coast of the sea of Marmara. Ankara greeted with these acts of insurrection (which were by largely undertaken by a few hundred fighters) with a campaign of mass deportation targeting Circassian communities in the regions of Gönen and Manyas.⁷² One scholar has suggested that Nationalist acts of collective punishment direct at Circassians greatly unsettled North Caucasian leaders in Ankara. According to İzzet Aydemir, Rauf Orbay and others personally intervened on the behalf of the Circassian deportees from Gönen and Manyas. Eventually, it appears that the deportees were allowed to return home.⁷³
- 53 Several North Caucasians in the upper ranks of the early Kemalist state would face a similar fate as the first decade of Republican rule progressed. An aborted assassination attempt on Mustafa Kemal in Izmir in 1926 eventually led to the prosecution and conviction of many of the most powerful Circassian figures to emerge out of the late Ottoman regime, including Rauf Orbay, Bekir Sami Kundukh, İsmail Canbulat and Ali Fuat Cebesoy.⁷⁴ Arsen Avagyan argues that the prosecution of these individuals not only comprised a direct attack upon Mustafa Kemal's personal opponents, but was an attempt to marginalize influential Circassians in the Turkish Republic. During a period of time when Ankara was increasingly suspicious towards all potential centers of political resistance to the imposition of one-party Republican rule, the Kemalist regime, according to Avagyan, came to view elite North Caucasians, arguably like Kurds, Greeks and Armenians before them, collectively as a "special threat."⁷⁵
- 54 The rigid and uncompromising imposition of Turkish nationalism during the 1920s and 1930s excluded any possibility for even the suggestion that a North Caucasian diaspora existed in Anatolia (let alone that North Caucasians could be found in positions of power). Adige and other North Caucasian languages, as well the usage of the epithet *Çerkes*, were banned in Turkey.⁷⁶ Kurds and other "minorities" in early Republican Turkey contended with similar policies restricting or forbidding ethnic or religious difference from the "Turkish" norm.⁷⁷
- 55 The Democratic victory of 1950 marks an important point in the restoration of North Caucasian politics in Anatolia. With the relaxation of overt political suppression of popular movements, Ankara did allow for the establishment of the first Republican era "cultural association [*dernek*]" that catered to diaspora North Caucasian interests in 1954.⁷⁸ The size and influence of North Caucasian diaspora organizations has continued to increase since then. Unlike the elite politics of the late Ottoman period, the activist groups that exist today reflect a far more popular base of support. Moreover, since the 1980s, the opening of the Turkish political process has allowed for greater internal differentiation along political, ideological and regional lines within Turkey's North Caucasian population.⁷⁹ Increasingly, North Caucasian diaspora groups, like the Caucasian Association (*Kafder*), have come to play a role as an advocate for Turkish foreign policy in the Caucasus. However, as in the 1920s, the individual interests of these organizations appear in tune with overall Turkish national interests.⁸⁰
- 56 News coverage of recent North Caucasian popular demonstrations in favour of expanded cultural and political rights has drawn comparisons with contemporary Kurdish nationalist activism in Turkey.⁸¹ The two movements, for example, share similar demands with respect to their respective positions on language rights. Yet the contemporary

maturity of North Caucasian activism differs sharply from the kind of struggles Kurdish activists have encountered during the last sixty years. No Circassian insurgency emerged in the wake of the oppressive policies of the Kemalist period. Recent events in Istanbul further suggest that outward displays of North Caucasian activism are not popularly, nor officially, met with violence or consternation.⁸² The relatively generalized acceptance of North Caucasian activism contrasts sharply with the ongoing travails facing proponents of Kurdish rights in Turkey. Violence, oppression and mistrust continue to plague Ankara's relationship with its Kurdish constituents despite recent reforms and promises.⁸³

- 57 This stark contrast appears more understandable against the backdrop of Ottoman politics between the years 1918 and 1923. The visibility and acceptance of North Caucasian identity in Turkey today is a testament to the historical integration of Circassians into upper echelons of political power in Anatolia. Indeed the very notion of a Circassian identity in Turkey, one that amalgamates and sublimates the diversity found among the diverse descendants of immigrants from the North Caucasus, is an artefact of the activism of the late Ottoman period. One could argue that North Caucasians in Turkey today owe much to the officers, politicians and activists who remained loyal to the Ottoman state and the Nationalist cause between the years 1914 and 1922. The fealty and direct participation of so many notable Circassian figures helped to spare the North Caucasian diaspora at large from accusations of treasons or general suspicions of separatism. Even the severity of the Kemalist policies during the first two decades of the Republic's history have not spoiled North Caucasian standing within Turkish body politic. Both then and now, certain limits define the expressions of North Caucasian identity or exclusivity. Attachment to their native lands or support for the independence movements in the North Caucasus have historically been channelled through elitist support of the Ottoman or Turkish state. North Caucasian and Turkish aspirations, in other words, are not separate or exclusive; as "close relatives," Circassian political interests compliment the machinations and the continuation of the Turkish state.⁸⁴

NOTES

1. Ayşe Afetinan, *Medeni Bilgiler ve M. K. Atatürk El Yazıları* (Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1968), p. 23.
2. This is an excerpt from a speech from Şükrü Kaya, then Minister of the Interior, in a speech before the Grand National Assembly in 1934. It is cited in Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 176.
3. See for example Hamit Bozarslan, *Conflict kurde: Le Brasier oublié du Moyen-Orient* (Paris, Autrement, 2009).
4. Here I have opted to use the terms "Circassian" and "North Caucasian" interchangeably. Admittedly "North Caucasian" is a more suitable term to describe the full range of peoples from the lands north of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan (Chechens, Adige, Dagestanis and so forth). The term "Circassian," both historically and in contemporary usage, has been used to apply to all peoples of the North Caucasus. Nevertheless, in terms of its original meaning, "Circassian"

admittedly has been a term that has also been specifically applied to the Adige and Kabardinian peoples of the northwestern Caucasus. For further discussion on North Caucasian identity and naming issues, see George Hewitt, "Abkhazia, Georgia and the Circassians (NW Caucasus), in *Central Asian Survey* 18.4 (1999), p. 465.

5. It should be noted that a select number of Azeri and Tatar migrants did play a role in the forging of both Ottoman and Turkish politics. However, unlike Circassians in Anatolia, Azeris and Tatars did not play as visible a role as individual mass movements. See for example Hakan Kirimli, *National Movements and National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars, 1905-1916* (Leiden, Brill, 1996); James H. Meyer, "Immigration, Return and the Politics of Citizenship: Russian Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, 1860-1914," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39 (2007), pp. 15-32; James Meyer, "Turkic Worlds: Community Representation and Collective Identity in the Russian and Ottoman Empires, 1870-1914," Ph.D. diss. Brown University, 2007, pp. 218-255; A. Holly Shissler, *Between Two Empires: Ahmet Ağaoğlu and the New Turkey* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2003).

6. J.C. Garcin, "The Regime of the Circassian Mamluks," in C.F. Petry, ed., *The Cambridge History of Egypt I: Islamic Egypt, 640-1517* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 290-317; David Morgan, *Medieval Persia, 1040-1797* (London, Longman Press, 1988), pp. 129, 130, 134; P. Oberling, "Georgians and Circassians in Iran," in *Studia Caucasica*, vol. 1 (1963), pp. 127-143.

7. Kemal Karpat, "The Status of the Muslim under European Rule: The Eviction and Settlement of the Çerkes," *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, ed. Kemal Karpat (Leiden, E.J. Brill Press, 2002), pp. 651-652; Michael Reynolds, "Myths and Mysticism: A Longitudinal Perspective on Islam and Conflict in the North Caucasus," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 41.1 (January 2005), pp. 37-41. Conversion to Islam, which first began during the seventh century but intensified during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, varied among the many groups in the North Caucasus. Many Adige peoples converted after local notables accepted the suzerainty of the Crimean Khanate. Others (most notably Chechens and Dagestanis) were more influenced by Sufi missionaries (particularly Nakshibandis). There also remains a very large Christian Adige population in the North Caucasus, which was not expelled by Russian forces in the mid-nineteenth century. Other Christian groups in the North Caucasus include numerous Ossets and Georgian speakers (not to mention transplanted Cossacks).

8. Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 57, 69.

9. For relevant statistics on Circassian settlement of Anatolia during the mid-nineteenth century, see Arsen Avagyan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Kemalist Türkiye'nin Devlet-İktidar Sisteminde Çerkesler* (Istanbul, Belge Yayınları 2004), p. 71.

10. Dror Ze'evi, "Kul and Getting Cooler: The Dissolution of Elite Collective Identity and the Formation of Official Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 11.2 (1996), pp. 177-196.

11. Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım, Cilt II* (Istanbul, Atındağ Yayınevi, 1968), pp. 468-469.

12. The most common context where one finds individuals who designate themselves as something other than Çerkes is in reports emanating from provincial offices of the Ottoman Empire. State officials do mention bandits, low-ranking office holders and other "provincials" who appropriate the epithet Abkhazian or Abaza. One sees too a far lesser extent cases where an individual, of either high or low birth, uses epithets like "from Dagestan [Dağıstanlı]" or "the Chechen [Çeçen]."

13. Sabri Yetkin's study of banditry in the Aegean region of Anatolia describes in detail the recruitment methods of two well-known (and later notorious) Circassian notables turned gendarmerie officers, (Kuşçubaşı) Sami and Ahmet Anzavur. See Sabri Yetkin, *Ege'de Eşkiyalık* (Istanbul, Türk Tarih Vakfı, 2003), pp. 161-171.

14. Sefer Berzeg, *Türkiye Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda Çerkes Göçmenleri, Cilt II* (Istanbul, Ekin Yayıncılık, 1990), pp. 12-13.

15. Avagyan, pp. 132-135.
16. Eşref Kuşçubaşı, *Hayber'de Türk Cengi* (İstanbul, Araba Yayınları, 1997), p. 221.
17. Mehmet Fetgerye şoenu, *Çerkesler* (İstanbul, Nacım İstiqbal Matbaası, 1922); Mehmet Fertgerye şoenu, *Çerkeslerin Asılı* (İstanbul, şams Matbaası, 1922); Mehmet Fetgerye şoenu, *Çerkes Mes'alesi* (İstanbul, Bedir Yayınevi 1993), pp. 7-8.
18. Aziz Meker, *Les Russes en Circassie, 1760-1864* (Bern, 1919); Muhittin Ünal, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Çerkeslerin Rolü* (Ankara, Takav Matbaası, 2000), p. 41.
19. Cemal Kutay, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Yüzyılıımızda bir İnsanımız, Hüseyin Rauf Orbay, 1881-1964* (İstanbul, Kazanç Kitap Ticaret, 1995), p. 59.
20. Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905-1926* (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1984), p. 117.
21. "Rauf Orbay'ın Hatıraları," *Yakın Tarihimiz* 1.6 (5 April 1962), p. 179; For a wider account on the building of the National Movement, see Zürcher, *Unionist Factor*, pp. 68-117.
22. Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 55-77.
23. Avagyan, p. 155.
24. It should be noted that it is noted that it is not clear how many representatives actually attended the Sivas congress. According to Erik Jan Zürcher, the total number of participants in attendance by the end of the proceedings ranged anywhere between 29 and 38. See Erik Jan Zürcher, "Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists: Identity Politics 1908-1938," in *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, ed. Kemal Karpat (Leiden, E.J. Brill Press, 2000), p. 166.
25. Ünal, p. 67.
26. Avagyan, pp. 176-177.
27. Berzeg, *Çerkes Göçmenleri*, pp. 5-6; Mitat Çelikpala, "From Immigrants to Diaspora: Influence of the North Caucasian Diaspora in Turkey," in *Middle East Studies* 42.3 (2006), p. 427; Metin Sever, *Kafdağı'nın Bu Yüzü* (İstanbul, Doğan Kitapçılık, 1999), pp. 39-53; Ünal, *passim*.
28. See Howard Eissenstat, "The Limits of Imagination: Debating the Nation and Constructing the State in Early Turkish Nationalism," diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2007, pp. 67-127.
29. Rauf Orbay, Cemil Cahit Toydemir and Hakkı Behiç were each under the age of forty. Bekir Sami (Kunduk), who was 54, and Tanbiy Ömer Mümtaz, age 60, were among the oldest of the North Caucasians to join Mustafa Kemal at Sivas.
30. The intensity and pervasiveness of anti-Ottoman sentiments among both native Greeks and Armenians in the immediate aftermath of the war was a phenomenon well documented in both Ottoman and non-Ottoman sources. For just a few examples, PRO/FO 371/4159/144275, 22 October 1919; PRO/FO 608/103/10733, 22 May 1919; Adnan Sofuoğlu, *Kuva-yı Milliye Döneminde Kuzeybatı Anadolu, 1919-1921* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basım Evi, 1994), pp. 37-41.
31. Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking Towards Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 124-132.
32. See Andrew Mango, "Atatürk and the Kurds," in *Middle East Studies* 35.4 (October 1999), p. 9.
33. Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* (London, Zed Books, 1992), p. 279.
34. See Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2004), p. 126.
35. Özoğlu, 126; Türk Cumhuriyet Genelkurmay Başkanlığı Harb Tarihi Dairesi. *Türk İstiklal Harbi: VI'ncı Cilt, İç Ayaklanması (1919-1921)* (Ankara, Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1964), pp. 151-172.
36. Ryan Gingeras "Notorious Subjects, Invisible Citizens: North Caucasian Resistance to the Turkish National Movement in the South Marmara, 1919-1923," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 40.1 (February, 2008), pp. 96-99.
37. British intelligence suggested in 1920 that French authorities in southern Anatolia were offering local North Caucasians a "little Circassia" in Cilicia. See PRO/FO 371/5048/5042, 20 May 1920.

38. See Çerkes Ethem, *Hatıralarım* (Istanbul, Berfin Yayınları, 1998), p. 133.
39. Gingeras “Notorious Subjects, Invisible Citizens,” pp. 99-102. While it is clear that many within Nationalist circles interpreted this act as a manifestation of Circassian “treason”, the motivations and aims of the Association for the Strengthening of Near Eastern Circassian Rights were provincial rooted and unpopular.
40. “Çerkesler’in Dünkü İctimai,” in *Vakit* 29 November 1921.
41. “Çerkeslerle Türkler arasında Münasebet,” in *İkdam*, 29 November 1921; “Türkler ve Çerkesler Kütle ve Ahdedarlar,” in *Vakit*, 30 November 1921.
42. Düzce Çerkesleri,” *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, 12 December 1921.
43. Ünal, *Çerkeslerin Rolü*, pp. 140-141.
44. T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi Cilt 24. (Ankara, TBMM Matbaası,1960), p. 367.
45. Mango, “Atatürk and the Kurds,” 10-11. In one telegram sent to Kurdish representatives, Mustafa Kemal described “Turks” and “Kurds” as “two brothers joining hands in their determination to defend their sacred unity.”
46. Marie-Claire Bergere, *Sun Yat-Sen* (Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 2000); Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. and Its Enemies* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000); Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia’s Continuum in Crisis, 1914-1921* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002); Timothy Snyder, *Sketches of a Secret War* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2007).
47. Michael Reynolds, “The Ottoman-Russian Struggle for Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus, 1908-1918: Identity, Ideology and the Geopolitics of World Order,” diss. Princeton University, 2003, p. 5.
48. Mustafa Butbay, *Kafkasya Hatıraları* (Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1990), pp. 1-2.
49. Reynolds, “The Ottoman-Russian Struggle,” pp. 518-532. Chechens and Dagestani leadership more antagonistic towards Russians, Circassians seemingly less so.
50. Reynolds, “The Ottoman-Russian Struggle,” pp. 560-561. As the war was drawing to a close, representatives of the North Caucasian Republic lobbied both the Central Powers and members of the Entente for recognition. See PAAA, R 11061, Telegram from Bernstorff, 14 October 1918.
51. Reynolds, “The Ottoman-Russian Struggle,” pp. 561-593.
52. Butbay, *Kafkasya Hatıraları*, pp. 6-7.
53. See Butbay, *Kafkasya Hatıraları 19-23*; Sefer Berzeg, *Kuzey Kafkasya Cumhuriyeti, 1917-1922:II Cilt, Bağımsızlık Mücadelesi* (Istanbul, Birleşik Kafkasya Derneği, 2004), p. 279. In November 1920, Korkmazof became the chairman of the pro-Soviet Dagestan Revolutionary Committee.
54. T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları, Cilt: I (Ankara, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1985), pp. 3-4.
55. Stanford Shaw, *From Empire to Republic: The Turkish War of National Liberation, 1918-1923: A Documentary Study* (Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2000), 1455; Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor*, p. 121.
56. Berzeg, *Kuzey Kafkasya Cumhuriyeti*, pp. 306-307.
57. Berzeg, *Kuzey Kafkasya Cumhuriyeti* 366-367; Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım, Cilt II* (Istanbul, Atındağ Yayınevi, 1968), p. 589.
58. Berzeg, *Çerkes Göçmenleri*, pp. 34-35.
59. Avagyan, *Çerkesler*, pp. 234-235; Berzeg, *Kuzey Kafkasya Cumhuriyeti*, pp. 328-329, 352; PRO/FO 371/4947/12888, 19 October 1920.
60. Avagyan, *Çerkesler*, pp. 236-237.
61. Avagyan, *Çerkesler*, p. 237.
62. Shaw, *From Empire to Republic* 1556-1560; Gotthard Jaeschke, “Die Elviye-i Salase Kars, Ardahan und Batum,” *Welt des Islams* 18.1-2 (1977), pp. 35-36.
63. Aksakal? Reynolds, “The Ottoman-Russian Struggle,” p. 160.
64. Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), 151; Reynolds, “The Ottoman-Russian Struggle,” p. 222.
65. PRO/FO 371/5169/7554, 2 July 1920.

66. PRO/FO 371/6269/3304, 15 March 1921.
67. Shaw, *From Empire to Republic*, pp. 1552-1556.
68. "Çerkes Cumhuriyeti," *Tehvir-i Efkar* 30 November 1921.
69. "Çerkeslerin Nokta-ı Nazarı," *Tehvir-i Efkar* 2 December 1921.
70. Ankara's dispossession of the North Caucasian independence movement did not deter some exiled members of the Mountaineer Republic from using the Republic of Turkey as a base to lobby and agitate for North Caucasian rights during the interwar period. However, it is clear that this small cadre of activists did not see themselves as extensions of Turkish foreign policy (if anything, Turkey was painted as a historic "occupier" in the region). See Mitat Çelikpala, "The North Caucasian Emigres Between the Two World Wars," in Kemal H. Karpat with Robert Zens (eds.), *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities and Political Changes* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), pp. 287-314.
71. Hans-Lukas Kieser, "Alevi, Armenians and Kurds in Unionist/Kemalist Turkey (1908-1938)," *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview*, eds. Paul J. White and Joost Jongerden, (Leiden, Brill Press, 2003), pp. 177-196; Robert W. Olson and William F. Tucker, "The Sheikh Sait Rebellion in Turkey (1925): A Study in the Consolidation of a Developed Uninstitutionalized Nationalism and the Rise of Incipient (Kurdish) Nationalism," in *Die Welt des Islam* 18.3/4 (1978), pp. 195-211.
72. Şoenu, *Çerkes Mes'elesi*, pp. 62-77
73. See İzzet Aydemir, "Gönen-Manyas Çerkeslerinin Sürgünü," *Nart* No. 15 (November-December 1999).
74. Zürcher, *Unionist Factor*, p. 148.
75. Avagyan, p. 256. One of the few North Caucasian officers to survive the 1926 purges was Recep Peker, a veteran of the War of Independence of Dagestani descent. He would serve as minister of defense, finance, education and the interior over the course of Mustafa Kemal's tenure as president.
76. Zürcher, "Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists," p. 174.
77. For a recent perspective on the historical continuities related to Kurds, see David Romano, *The Kurdish National Movement* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 31-39; For a perspective on non-Muslims in post-Ottoman Turkey, see Yahya Koçoğlu, *Hatırlıyorum: Türkiye'de Gayrimuslim Hayatlar* (Istanbul, Metis Yayınları, 2003).
78. Çelikpala, "Immigrants to Diaspora" pp. 428-429; Erol Taymaz, "Kuzey Kafkas Dernekleri," in eds. Stefanos Yerasimos et al., *Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik*, (Istanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2001), pp. 452-455.
79. For a comparison with Balkan diaspora groups in Turkey, see Alexandre Toumarkine, "Kafkas ve Balkan Göçmen Dernekleri: Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik," in eds. Stefanos Yerasimos et al., *Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik*, (Istanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2001), pp. 425-450.
80. The close relationship to North Caucasian organizations and the Turkish state were most clearly on display during the Abkhazian crisis of 2008. See Abhazlar'dan 'Bağımsızlık Yürüyüşü,' *Vatan* 1 September 2008 (http://haber.gazetevatan.com/haberdetay.asp?detay=Abhazlardan_bagimsizlik_yuruyusu_196548_1& tarih=01.09.2008&Newsid=196548&Categoryid=1), consulted 12 September 2008; Şafak Timur, Turkish Abkhazians Enjoying Independence of Their Faraway Country, *Turkish Daily News* 2 September 2008 (<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=114208>), consulted 12 September 2008; Ercan Yıldız, "Oset ve Abhazlara Mitingli Destek," *Sabah* 1 September 2008 (<http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2008/09/01//haber,FF488955A1304EBE80C078E9EBF4F27C.html>), consulted 12 September 2008.
81. See for example Ertan Altan, "Çerkesler de Anadilde Eğitim İstiyor," *Taraf*, 10 March 2011 (<http://taraf.com.tr/haber/cerkesler-de-anadilde-egitim-istiyor.htm>), consulted 20 August 2011; Hüseyin İstemil, "Çerkeslerin de Artık bir T.C.'si Var," *Taraf*, 18 April 2011 (<http://taraf.com.tr/haber/cerkeslerin-de-artik-bir-t-c-si-var.htm>), consulted 20 August 2011.

82. See Enver Sağlam, "Beyaz Türk Çerkesler Tasfiye Mi Oluyor," *Taraf*, 25 May 2011 (<http://taraf.com.tr/haber/beyaz-turk-cerkesler-tasfiye-mi-oluyor.htm>), consulted 20 August 2011.

83. Gareth Jenkins, "Turkey's 'Kurdish Opening': Faces New Challenges," *Turkey Analyst* 2.19 (26 October 2009), (<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2009/091026b.html>), consulted 14 August 2011.

84. For an in depth study on popular attempts at integrating North Caucasian identity into the framework of Turkish nationalism see Bayan Ertem, "Dancing to Modernity: Cultural Politics of Cherkess Nationhood in the Heartland of Turkey," diss. University of Texas at Austin, 2000.

INDEX

Mots-clés : Anatolie, Circassiens, diaspora, Nord Caucase, Turquie

Keywords : Anatolia, Circassians, North Caucasus, Turkey

AUTEUR

RYAN GINGERAS

Naval Postgraduate School