

# The “Gardening States”: Comparing State Repression of Ethnic Minority Groups in Turkey and the Soviet Union, 1908-1945

Master’s thesis

Duco Heijs

3829677

Contact: [w.d.r.heijs@uu.nl](mailto:w.d.r.heijs@uu.nl)

RMA History, Utrecht University

Supervisor: dr. Uğur Ümit Üngör

Second reader: dr. Ozan Ozavci

Date: 23/06/2017

## **Abstract**

This thesis asks the question what the similarities and differences were in the state repression of ethnic minority groups in the Soviet Union and Republican Turkey during the first half of the twentieth century. It places this question in the recent development in the historiographies of these countries in which the concepts and approaches of political modernization, population policy, and social engineering are used as explanatory factors for state violence. Despite the comparative outlook inherent in this historiographic development, research comparing the policies of these two particular states is lacking in the debate. Hence, comparing the repressive policies of these two states can shed new light on our understanding of twentieth century political violence towards ethnic minority groups in Europe. The similarities and differences between the two respective regimes are addressed on three levels of analysis. On a formative level, the thesis discusses the way state repression and the forced settlement of population groups emerged and were institutionalized in the context of regime change during and after the First World War. On a strategic level of analysis, the thesis discusses political strategies that were formulated by political leaders in the new regimes in the first decades after their establishment, and demonstrates how alternating tendencies of inclusion and exclusion were present in these policies. On the empirical level, the thesis compares deportations and massacres that were deployed towards the Chechen-Ingush in the Soviet Union, and towards the Zaza Kurds in Republican Turkey. These two instances of mass state violence consisted of large-scale operations that were implemented by the state with a tremendous display of military or police power, occurring within a relatively limited timespan in a well-defined geographic area. Together, the research of the thesis shows that, in pursuit of very different ideological ends, both states exhibited a large degree of similarities in the ways they portrayed ethnic diversity in relation to the new political order, as well as in the political techniques they used to pursue forced internal population settlements in practice.

## Preface

The roots of this master's thesis lie in a combination of a boundless fascination with Russian and Soviet history and the fact that my own knowledge of the Russian language is too limited to allow for extensive research of primary sources. Taking use of the substantial freedom granted to students of this master's program, I extended my knowledge of the Stalinist in the Soviet Union as much as possible, while at the same time trying to pick up enough Russian to do at least some limited primary research. But there always remained that nagging thought of not being able to elaborately go to the actual sources whilst also not having enough time to develop the skills required to do so. Practical limitations, however, are the harbingers of creative solutions, so in the course of this master's program, I decided that my thesis would be a comparative one. During my exchange at the University of Toronto, a seminar discussion led me to the question to what extent the recent historiographic development that integrates Soviet history with overarching developments in twentieth century Europe could be re-oriented to that other, often overlooked, authoritarian regime that emerged out of the collapse of another multi-national empire: Republican Turkey. Thus it was that the subject of this master's thesis was born.

Of course, this thesis could not have been written without the help of a large number of people. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Uğur Ümit Üngör. His wide interest and knowledge allowed me to pursue my own interests during a research tutorial in the first year of this program, in which I laid the groundworks of my knowledge on the Stalinist 1930s. Moreover, his in-depth knowledge of both Turkish and Soviet history, careful reading of preliminary drafts, useful suggestions and commentary, and (not unimportant in a markedly uncheerful subject such as this) his humour were very helpful in achieving the realization of this thesis. I would also like to thank Lynne Viola from the University of Toronto, for her stimulating teaching during my exchange in Canada and for her kindness to take the time to read and comment upon an earlier draft of this thesis while I was no longer a student of hers.

I also thank my fellow students Alessandra, Hans, Jasper, Guus, and Paul for their company during the numerous coffee breaks on our mutual marathon writing sessions in the University Library. Of course, I also owe a lot of gratefulness to my family: my parents Lukas and Willy-An, and my two sisters Marleen and Lotte.

Most of my gratitude is however reserved for Esther, who always manages to fill the many days and hours we spend together with cheerfulness, optimism, and kindness.

## Contents

<b>Preface</b> .....	3
<b>List of maps</b> .....	5
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	6
<b>Introduction: the gardening states</b> .....	7
<b>Historiography, methodology, and concepts</b> .....	12
<b>Chapter 1: Regime change</b> .....	25
1.1 From Tsarist Russia to the Soviet Union .....	26
1.2 From Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey .....	34
1.3 Comparison and discussion.....	42
<b>Chapter 2: Governing ethnicity, conquering “backwardnes”</b> .....	44
2.1 Nationality policy in the Soviet Union .....	45
2.2 The nation and ethnic policy in Turkey .....	53
2.3 Comparison and discussion.....	60
<b>Chapter 3: The “punished peoples”</b> .....	62
3.1 Deportation of the Chechen-Ingush .....	65
3.2 The Dersim massacre and the deportation of the Zaza Kurds .....	74
3.3 Comparison and discussion.....	81
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	85
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	90

## **List of maps**

Map 1: The Russian empire, 1913.....	26
Map 2: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 1939.....	26
Map 3: From Ottoman Empire to Republic of Turkey, 1798-1923.....	34
Map 4: The Caucasus region in the Soviet Union.....	65
Map 5: Internal forced migrations in the USSR during the Second World War.....	71
Map 6: The Dersim region in Republican Turkey.....	74

## Abbreviations

ASSR- Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (*Avtonomnaya Sovetskaya Sotsialisticheskaya Respublika*)

CUP – Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*)

RPP- Republican's People Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*)

NKVD- People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*)

MVD- Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del*)

RSDRP- Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (*Rossiyskaya sotsial-demokraticeskaya rabochaya partiya*)

RSFSR- Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (*Rossiyskaya Sovetskaya Federativnaya Sotsialisticheskaya Respublika*)

SSR- Soviet Socialist Republic (*Sovetskaya Sotsialisticheskaya Respublika*)

## Introduction: the gardening states

He said it was important to get to know the East/

Said the people are a garden and we are gardeners/

Trees are not rejuvenated by grafting only/

First it is necessary to trim the tree

- Poem by Ziya Gökalp, in *The Red Apple*, 1914

Our Children blossom on the living trunk of our life; they are not a bouquet, they are a wonderful apple orchard. And this orchard is ours... Be so kind as to take on this job: dig, water, get rid of caterpillars, prune out the dead branches. Remember the words of the great gardener, Stalin.

- Anton Makarenko, *A Book for Parents*, 1937

These quotes reflect the “gardening mentality” that held sway in (Ottoman) Turkey and the Soviet Union in the first half of the twentieth century. In these countries, the social and ethnic realms of the state were reconceptualised as entities that required continuous cultivation in pursuit of an utopian vision of the future. This was manifested in state-sponsored interventionist programs favouring particular social or ethnic groups, whilst other groups came to be regarded as unwanted, undesirable, or in another way unfit to be a part of the new order. The result was the violent excision of the “weeds” of the gardening states, which were in many instances particular ethnic minority groups. As a result, in roughly the same time period, entire categories of these countries’ populations were deported and resettled on the basis of their perceived ethnic identity, or in some instances even massacred outright. This thesis compares such state repression of ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union and (Ottoman) Turkey as an aspect of state-led modernization and group-based population policy.

The Republic of Turkey and the Soviet Union shared a number of similar historical legacies and displayed a number of common characteristics in the first decades of their formation and exist-

ence.<sup>1</sup> Both states emerged on the geopolitical landscape of Europe out of the collapse of the imperial order on the continent during the First World War and its immediate aftermath. With the end of the war came the age of the nation state, an age that antiquated the political entities that were represented by the Ottoman sultan and the Russian tsar.<sup>2</sup> The collapse of these old dynastic land empires (it should not be forgotten that the colonial empires of the Western European powers outlasted the First World War, and some even the second) is a widely studied and elaborately discussed phenomenon. An important theme in these discussions is the emergence of new forms of political orders as a result of the growing geopolitical dominance of Western Europe and the concomitant rise of nationalism as a model for political organization. This development, in very different ways, had a strong impact on Turkey and the Soviet Union. Political leaders in Turkey increasingly strived for an ethnically homogeneous Turkish nation, whereas the Soviets incorporated national institutions, stimulated processes of nation-building, and for a limited time even granted some degree of national autonomy to its separate Soviet republics.

In both states, the violent epoch of the First World War was extended, and spilled into new conflicts. In the Soviet Union, the First World War was followed by the Civil War that ended in 1922 with the official establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In the Ottoman Empire, the First World War was preceded by the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and followed by the so-called “War of Liberation” of 1919-1923, ending with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. The ruling parties of these successor states (respectively the Committee of Union and Progress, and the Republican People’s Party in the Ottoman empire/Turkey and the Communist/Bolshevik Party in Tsarist Russia/The Soviet Union) seized and consolidated power in this period of conflict. This had a profound impact on the ruling style of these parties, in which war and politics came to be entwined.<sup>3</sup> After they consolidated their power, these parties embarked upon an ambitious agenda of state-led modernization, promising definitive and radical solutions to the problems that had haunted the late imperial era. Doing so, they both preached social and cultural revolution that was to unfold under their single-party leadership. To this end, they pursued mass mobilization, political centralization, and nation building. The ruling ideologies of the Bolsheviks and the Young Turks differed significantly, particularly with regard to the role of nationalism. Yet, they were similar in the way they proposed an utopian blueprint of what society should be like: socialist utopia in the case of the Bolsheviks, and an ethnically homogeneous Turkish nation in the case of the Young Turks and later the Kemalists.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adeeb Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 231–51; Uğur Ümit Üngör, “State Violence under Kemalism and Stalinism: Common Themes and Analogies,” *Utrecht University* Unpublished article (2017): 1–15.

<sup>2</sup> Karen Barkey and Eric Hobsbawm, eds., “The End of Empires,” in *After Empire: Multi-Ethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Üngör, “State Violence under Kemalism and Stalinism,” 5; David Shearer, “Stalin at War, 1918-1953: Patterns of Violence and Foreign Threat,” *University of Delaware* Unpublished article (2016): 1–25.



**The subject: state repression of ethnic minorities**

In many instances, state intervention assumed the form of outright mass violence, especially when those categories of people identified by the state as ideological or ethnic enemies of the new order were perceived to pose a threat to state security as well. In particular the levels of violence directed at ethnic minority groups is remarkable. A salient point is that the deployment of mass violence in the Soviet Union was by all means not limited to non-Russian ethnic minorities like Turkish violence was aimed almost exclusively against non-Turkish minorities. Still, the various episodes of violence in the Soviet Union often did have an ethnic dimension,<sup>4</sup> and can and should be analysed in the context of the sharp peak in the murder and deportation of minority populations all across Europe in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup>

Violent policies against ethnic minorities in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey spanned the period of the rule of the Committee of Union and Progress and its successor, the Republican People’s Party. During the First World War, deportation and execution policies against the Christian Armenian and Assyrian populations of the Ottoman Empire led to the death of about 1-1.2 million Armenians and 250,000 Assyrians.<sup>6</sup> A new wave of violence against non-Turkish minorities occurred during the Turkish “War of Liberation”, when under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal the Turkish army advanced into Western and Southern Anatolia and attempted to drive out the Greek expeditionary force that occupied this former Ottoman territory. The campaign went accompanied with attempts to rid this territory of its Greek civilians in the west and Armenian civilians in the south. During the “Catastrophe of Smyrna”, Armenians and Greeks were massacred by robbers, bandits, and brigands, and the Turkish army made no effort to control them. During the fire that broke out in the city, 150,000 to 200,000 Greeks and Armenians were evacuated. Another 30,000 were deported to the Anatolian interior. Many died or were executed on the way. After the Republic of Turkey was officially established, a “population transfer” between the Greek and Turkish states in 1924 led to the deaths of tens of thousands of Greeks.<sup>7</sup> Another ethnic group that suffered heavily under the new Turkish regime were the Kurds. In 1916, a year after the Armenian genocide, large groups of Kurds who were deemed “disloyal” because of their ties to the Russian Army or Armenian revolutionaries, were deported from the Ottoman Empire’s Eastern provinces. In the 1920s and 1930s, several Kurdish uprisings were violently repressed by the regime. The largest of these repressions occurred in the Der-sim region (current day Tunceli) in 1937-8, where operations of the Turkish army led to the deaths of

---

<sup>4</sup> Mark Levene, *The Crisis of Genocide: The European Rimlands 1912-1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 300.

<sup>5</sup> Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses, “Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing,” in *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 87–139.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>7</sup> Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 42–56.

thousands of Kurds and the deportation of thousands more.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, from 1927 to 1950, deportation of Kurds from their homelands to Western Anatolia became a well-established practice that stopped only when the RPP was ousted from power in 1950.<sup>9</sup>

State violence in the Soviet Union was both more diverse and quantitatively more extensive. Most significantly, Russians also fell prey to the policies of the Soviets. Still, there also was a decidedly ethnic element in repressive policies pursued by the Bolsheviks, as becomes evident from the numbers below. In 1932-33, 150,000 German and Polish families were deported to so-called “special settlements” that were part of the Gulag system.<sup>10</sup> During the Great Terror of 1937-8, a number of ethnic minorities were targeted in the so-called “national operations”. In these operations 335,513 individuals were sentenced. Of these, 247,157 were executed.<sup>11</sup> The Second World War and its immediate aftermath saw the most extensive repression of ethnic minorities. The “preventive deportation” of eight nationalities that were identified as “enemy nations” in the years 1941-2 alone resettled about 1.2 million people to the far east of the Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup> Another category of deportations were the so-called “punitive deportations”, which targeted populations in the Caucasus that had allegedly collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War. The largest of these operations targeted the Chechen-Ingush. During the war, 387,229 Chechens and 91,250 Ingushetians were deported to Central Asia.<sup>13</sup> Although after the war, the intensity of ethnic deportations decreased, they continued to be a persistent method of statecraft. In the period between 1946 and 1952, about 680,000 people were deported to the special settlements. They were mostly from the newly occupied regions of Western Ukraine, Belorussia, the Baltic Republics, and Moldavia.<sup>14</sup>

What were the similarities and differences in the way these newly established regimes deployed state violence toward ethnic minority groups, and how can these similarities and differences be explained? What are the analytical gains of placing these instances of ethnic repression in a comparative perspective? How did projects of state-led modernization that were in part inspired by, and in part a reaction to, European models of political organization and European practices and techniques of rule, feed into such violent episodes of ethnic repression? How were mass deportation and resettle-

---

<sup>8</sup> Hans-Lukas Kieser, “Dersim Massacre, 1937-1938,” *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, [Online], July 27, 2011, <http://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/dersim-massacre-1937-1938>.

<sup>9</sup> Uğur Ümit Üngör, “Seeing like a Nation-State: Young Turk Social Engineering in Eastern Turkey, 1913–50,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 10, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 15–39; Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 107–68.

<sup>10</sup> Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), 84.

<sup>11</sup> The numbers are taken from Terry Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (1998) 813-861, 855.

<sup>12</sup> Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), 139; Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 328–29.

<sup>13</sup> Polian, *Against Their Will*, 147, 152; Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 85–106.

<sup>14</sup> Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945-1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 18,177 (fn.4).

ment programs implemented in these states, and how did they play out “on the ground”? This Master’s thesis will take up the challenge to answer these questions.

The thesis starts with a review and discussion of the relevant historiography, concepts, and methodological tools to be used. This discussion leads to a motivation of the selection of different segments of the histories of the Soviet Union and the Republic of Turkey to be compared. The main body of the thesis consist of three historical chapters, each discussing the similarities and differences of the state repression of ethnic minority groups on a different level of analysis. Chapter 1 discusses state repression of ethnic minorities on what might be called a “formative” level. The chapter attempts to understand how the trajectory from multi-ethnic imperial order to successor state came to be connected to the state repression of ethnic minority groups. Chapter 2 addresses the “strategic” level, discussing the political strategies that were developed in both newly established states to deal with ethnic diversity, and attempting to understand alternating tendencies of inclusion and exclusion present in both states. Chapter 3 researches ethnic repression on an “empirical” level, describing and analysing two specific instances of mass repression in Turkey and the Soviet Union: the deportations and massacres of the Chechen-Ingush in the Soviet Union in 1944, and the Zaza Kurds in Republican Turkey in 1937-38. The conclusion formulates a comprehensive answer to the research question and gives some recommendations for possible further research.

## Historiography, methodology, and concepts

State violence in Turkey and the Soviet Union are widely studied topics, and the immense literature that developed in the separate historiographic traditions of these countries cannot possibly be reviewed at length here. Important to observe, however, is that a relatively recent development in the scholarship on state violence on both (Ottoman) Turkey and the Soviet Union is the application of the concepts and approaches of political modernization, population policy, and social engineering as explanatory factors for the mass violence that was deployed towards specific categories of people that were identified by the state.<sup>15</sup> This development entails a strong comparative outlook and is indebted to larger theoretical developments in scholarship on political modernity. In recent decades, theorists have introduced the concept of “multiple modernities”, which challenges the notion that all historical development eventually leads to the Western program of modernity.<sup>16</sup> Despite this parallel scholarly development, the similarities and differences of the mechanisms of state violence and repression of ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union and Republican Turkey is an under researched theme. Studies that place the Soviet Union in a comparative context, for example, limit the comparison to Western Europe, or more traditionally compare it under the denominator of “totalitarianism” with Nazi Germany.<sup>17</sup> A number of case studies of separate instances of “ethnic cleansing” and genocidal violence that include Turkish and Soviet cases do exist, but they do not take into account the larger structure of the regime, the variation of cases among different ethnic groups, the development of policy over a

---

<sup>15</sup> For the Soviet Union, see in particular Peter Holquist, “State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism,” in *Stalinism: The Essential Readings*, ed. Hoffmann (Oxford, 2003), 129–56; David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis, eds., *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); David Hoffmann, *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism, 1914-1939* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2011); Stephen Kotkin, “Modern Times: The Soviet Union and the Interwar Conjuncture,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2, no. 1 (March 26, 2008): 111–64; Amir Weiner, “Nature, Nurture, and Memory in a Socialist Utopia: Delineating the Soviet Socio-Ethnic Body in the Age of Socialism,” *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (1999): 1114–55; Amir Weiner, “Introduction: Landscaping the Human Garden,” in *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003); Üngör, “Seeing like a Nation-State”; Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey*; Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012); Nesim Şeker, “Demographic Engineering in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Armenians,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 3 (May 1, 2007): 461–74.

<sup>16</sup> Shmuel Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 1–29; Hoffmann, *Cultivating the Masses*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds., *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

longer period, or the concept of population policy.<sup>18</sup> Part of this disposition derives from a persistent tendency to stress the exceptionality of a particular instance of state violence, such as the Great Terror in the Soviet Union, or the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, these instances of state violence were remarkable and in some respects unlike other instances. Yet, they did not occur in isolation but should be seen as an expression of the systemic nature of these regimes. In this light, the question shifts from explaining the particularity of a certain instance of violence towards accounting for its systemic but episodic nature. Thus, by answering the question how the pursuit of population policy and the deployment of social engineering schemes led to state violence towards ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union and Turkey, this thesis will attempt, by means of comparison, to add to our understanding of mass state repression of ethnic minorities in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century.

In the separate historiographies of Turkey and the Soviet Union, the emergence of political violence has been the subject of extensive debate. In the case of Russia and the Soviet Union, an important theme in the discussions on this period is the emphasis by a number of authors on, on the one hand, Communist or Bolshevik ideology, or on the other hand Russian culture or “circumstances”, as being the key explanatory factor for political violence.<sup>20</sup> Proponents of the latter approach see violence as an essential attribute of Russian history, and argue that certain backward elements of Russian culture enabled the major upsurge in revolutionary violence in the twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> In the words of Orlando Figes, a renowned author of the Russian revolution, after 1917 the Russian people became trapped “by the tyranny of their own history”.<sup>22</sup> On the other end of the spectrum, authors arguing for the primacy of ideology look towards Marxism in general, or the revolutionary movement of the Bolsheviks specifically as the major cause for political violence in Russia’s twentieth century, seeing the revolution of 1917 as the major, if not only, watershed in Russian history.<sup>23</sup> Both approaches are somewhat outdated today, at least in part due to the pioneering scholarship of a number of authors

---

<sup>18</sup> Examples are Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), which includes a short section on the Armenian genocide, and a chapter on Bolshevik violence; Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, which includes case studies on ethnic cleansing of Armenians and Greeks in Anatolia, and Chechens-Ingush in the Soviet Union; and Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, which offers extensive typologies of ethnic cleansing, discussing a plethora of case studies including the Armenian genocide and Communist ethnic cleansing in the Soviet Union, China, and Cambodia.

<sup>19</sup> Üngör, “State Violence under Kemalism and Stalinism,” 9–10.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Holquist, “Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence, 1905–21,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 3 (August 29, 2003): 627–52; This debate to some extent echoed the intentionalist-functionalist debate in historiography on the Holocaust, see Michael David-Fox, “On the Primacy of Ideology: Soviet Revisionists and Holocaust Deniers (In Response to Martin Malia),” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 1 (March 18, 2004): 81–105.

<sup>21</sup> See for example V. P. Buldakov, *Krasnaia Smuta: Priroda i Posledstviia Revoliutsionnogo Nasiliia* [Red Troubles: the nature and consequences of revolutionary violence] (Moskva: Fond Pervogo Prezidenta Rossii B.N. El’tsin, 2010). Buldakov stresses the importance of an “imperial mindset” (*imperstvo*) in Russia, which consisted of an attitude that favoured authority, and additionally helped create a culture of violence.

<sup>22</sup> Orlando Figes, *A People’s Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1997), 808.

<sup>23</sup> Stéphane Courtois and Mark Kramer, eds., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), famously attributes violence in the Soviet Union to the Revolution and Russian ideology.

associated with the “modernity school” in Soviet studies. These authors firmly located Russian history in its twentieth century European context without losing out of sight the specific impact of its own history and the role of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideology. Peter Holquist is one of the major proponents of this approach for the transitional period of 1905-1923.<sup>24</sup>

A similar issue in the historiography of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire is the degree of continuity between those two regimes. This question is connected to the classification of the Turkish state under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal in relation to other political systems of interwar Europe. Official Turkish historiography stresses the novelty of the Kemalist era, portraying Atatürk as a saint-like leader endowed with superior intellect. In this view, the establishment of Republican Turkey constituted a definitive and total break with the Ottoman past.<sup>25</sup> Conversely, a number of Western historians has emphasized the continuity of Republican Turkey with the late Ottoman Empire.<sup>26</sup> Such scholars disagree about the degree of continuity, though, especially when it regards the levels of violence during the Kemalist epoch. Shmuel Eisenstadt, in comparing the Kemalist revolution with among others the Russian ones, concludes that the institutionalization of coercion was limited in Turkey.<sup>27</sup> Stefan Plaggenborg, similarly, comparing the levels of violence in Soviet Communism, Italian Fascism, and Kemalism in Turkey, argued that the latter was the least violent of the three because, quite simply, the Kemalists killed fewer people and had a “sensitivity for law and justice”.<sup>28</sup> Few would argue against the lower number of victims in Kemalist Turkey than in the Soviet Union, but there are a number of issues with such an interpretation. First, because Turkey simply had a much smaller population, meaning that statements about the lower number of victims need to be qualified. Second, the fact that the number of victims was comparatively lower in Turkey should not lead us from neglecting its violent aspects, which were manifold. Moreover, the history of Kurdish deportations remains somewhat hidden, and the historiography on it is comparatively much less developed than historiography on ethnic repression in the Soviet Union. Numerous classic studies of Republican Turkey, for example, do not

<sup>24</sup> Holquist, “Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism?”; see also Holquist, “State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism,” in *Stalinism: The Essential Readings*, ed. Hoffmann (Oxford, 2003), 129–56. Holquist himself uses the period 1905-1921.

<sup>25</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 3–4; Gavin D. Brockett, “Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era, 1923–38,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998): 1.

<sup>26</sup> Examples include Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, *The Making of the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1994); Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

<sup>27</sup> Shmuel Eisenstadt, “The Kemalist Revolution in Comparative Perspective,” in *Atatürk, Founder of a Modern State*, ed. Ergun Özbudun and Ali Kazancigil (London: C. Hurst, 1981), 127–40. Incidentally, this is the same Eisenstadt as the one who coined the term “multiple modernities”.

<sup>28</sup> Stefan. Plaggenborg, *Ordnung Und Gewalt: Kemalismus - Faschismus - Sozialismus* (München: Oldenbourg, 2012), quote on p. 258.

mention the Turkish repression of the Dersim rebellion in 1937-38, during which thousands of Kurds were systematically murdered by the Turkish army, and even more were deported.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, it can be argued that the historiographic traditions of the Soviet Union and Turkey can be merited by a comparative analysis. Most importantly, this particular comparative perspective is concerned primarily with the way European practices were implemented in two contexts that were more similar to each other than both were to Western Europe. This approach will show both the relevance of placing these countries firmly in their own historical contexts, as well as help in pinning down the nature of developments specific to Russia.

### **Comparing state violence: challenges, difficulties, and potentials**

Before moving on to a more elaborate discussion of the concepts of political modernization, population policy, and ethnic repression and their applicability to the present cases, some words on the use of the comparative method in historical research are in order. Comparative historical research has grown in popularity in recent decades, but comparative historians remain in a minority. Many historians eschew the comparative method, preferring to work with a substantive base of primary sources in the original language rather than with secondary academic material, specializing on topics in which they have accumulated considerable knowledge. I shall be the last to deny the value of such research, but it is my contention that using this specialized research and assembling it into a larger interpretative structure can be equally important. Doing this allows the comparative historian to ask “big questions”: defined by two scholars of comparative historical analysis as “questions about large-scale outcomes that are regarded as substantively and normatively important by both specialists and non-specialists”.<sup>30</sup> I believe it is not too controversial to declare the question why certain states choose to deport and even murder entire categories of their own population qualifies as a “big question”. Thus, comparative historians fulfil a somewhat marginalized, yet important and necessary role in an ever specializing field.

At the most basic level, comparison can be defined as the discussion of two or more historical phenomena with respect to their similarities and differences. In this context, it cannot be emphasized enough that to perceive of certain elements of the histories of (Ottoman) Turkey and the Soviet Union as being comparable is fundamentally different from arguing that they were essentially the same. Accounting for different variations on certain general processes can be of equal analytical value as the identification of similarities. According to Jürgen Kocka, comparison in general may have heuristic, descriptive, analytical, and paradigmatic purposes.<sup>31</sup> Heuristically, comparison can serve to identify new questions in a given field. Historians may observe certain processes in one case, and assume sim-

<sup>29</sup> See Martin van Bruinessen, “Genocide in Kurdistan? The Suppression of the Dersim Rebellion in Turkey (1937-8) and the Chemical War against the Iraqi Kurds,” in *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism versus Nation-Building States: Collected Articles* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), 67–98.

<sup>30</sup> James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, “Comparative Historical Analysis: Achievements and Agenda,” in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, ed. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Jürgen Kocka, “Comparison and Beyond,” *History and Theory* 42, no. 1 (February 1, 2003): 39–44.

ilar processes occurred in another.<sup>32</sup> Descriptively, comparison helps the scholar to see more clearly the profile of a certain case, and may serve to argue for the particularity of a case. Analytically, comparison is employed with the purposes of clarifying questions about the causality in certain processes. Paradigmatically, through practicing comparison, the scholar steps out of his intellectual comfort zone, allowing him or her to see his or her field in a new light. The degree to which the research of this thesis bears relevance for these purposes of comparison will be discussed in the conclusion.

In order to structure the comparison, it is necessary to decide upon a common category that can be used to classify events. This requires approaching the subject at hand with a considerable degree of abstraction. Without such a degree of abstraction there are no common denominators to be subjected to a comparison. Such abstraction can be applied with concepts that, as a tool in historical analysis, describe the general characteristics of certain developments and processes. The value of concepts should be judged above all by their utility for their analysis, not by their precise empirical correspondence to the subject material.<sup>33</sup> Hence, an essential step in the research of this thesis is to arrive at specific segments of the histories of Turkey and the Soviet Union to be compared. Attempting to compare the entirety of the histories of the Soviet Union and Turkey would be an endeavour that is optimistic to the point of futility. The definition of these segments is in turn dependent on the requirements of the concepts. In the case of the present thesis, the relevant segments to be analysed are those that are relevant to understanding state violence against ethnic minorities. The content of these segments will be discussed in more detail in the discussion on the concepts of population politics and social engineering below.

An additional problem in the case of the present comparison is posed by the sensitive nature of the subject material in normative, political, and emotional respects. Researching mass state violence requires an attitude of sufficient emotional distance to ensure that the analysis does not become hampered by moral involvement.<sup>34</sup> As is noted by Jacques Sémelin in his comparative analysis of mass violence in Nazi Germany, Bosnia, and Rwanda, both the tendency to declare the uniqueness or, on the other extreme, to equate instances of mass violence in moral terms should be avoided. Marking one regime, ideology, or the particular policy of one regime as more “evil” or “disreputable” than another has no analytical merit whatsoever, although this has been done frequently.<sup>35</sup> On the other end

---

<sup>32</sup> This is what gave birth to the present comparison. Studying Soviet history, I slowly started to wonder how processes of state formation and population policies as described in the comparative literature in that field unfolded in Turkey, which I knew had a roughly similar pre-history.

<sup>33</sup> Mattei Dogan and Dominique Pelassy, *How to Compare Nations, Strategies in Comparative Politics*, Second edition (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1990), 24.

<sup>34</sup> Uğur Ümit Üngör, “Studying Mass Violence: Pitfalls, Problems, and Promises,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 7, no. 1 (April 1, 2012): 68–80, doi:10.3138/gsp.7.1.68.

<sup>35</sup> In the field of Soviet studies, the *Black Book of Communism* infamously attributed state violence in the Soviet Union to the inherent violent tendencies of socialism, Stéphane Courtois and Mark Kramer, eds., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999).



of this axis, the tendency to equalize the crimes of different regimes in terms of immeasurable and hence incomprehensible human suffering is understandable, but has equally little analytical merit.<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, in the case of the Soviet Union and (Ottoman) Turkey, the topic of violence has often been seen through an orientalist prism. Especially with regard to inter-ethnic conflict, the media often refers to irrational “ancient hatreds”, a term that gained new currency with the conflict in the Balkans in the 1990s. A view of Turkish and Russian society as being inherently barbarous of which violence is a perennial and essential characteristic should be avoided at all costs.

The problem of moral and political involvement becomes more prominent because the violent policies of the Turkish and Soviet regimes do not calmly reside in a closed off past, but remain sensitive issues to this day. This is evident from the way the memory of state violence is treated by the contemporary Russian and Turkish states. The question of whether the wartime anti-Armenian policies of the CUP in Turkey should be dubbed genocidal, for instance, remains politically controversial, and the Turkish government denies the genocide up to this day.<sup>37</sup> In Russia, questions concerning the culpability of the state in the violent policies during the Soviet epoch are at worst denied and at best marginalized in official political discourse.<sup>38</sup> With regard to inter-ethnic relations, state violence of the past remains a sensitive issue as well. Up to this day, the Turkish state remains in open conflict with several Kurdish minority groups. Relations between the Turkish and Armenian states are no better, as no official diplomatic relations currently exist. Similarly, the relations of the current Russian state with territories inhabited by peoples who suffered heavily at the hands of the Soviets remain fraught with tension. Recent years have seen diplomatic and military conflict between Moscow and various ethnic groups in the Caucasus, the Baltic States, Ukraine, and Poland.

These challenges and difficulties notwithstanding, comparing the Soviet Union and (Ottoman) Turkey is a promising endeavour. First, because making such a comparison entails taking an important and necessary step towards confronting the significant historiographical gap identified above. Second, the comparison will allow for more detailed insight into the nature of the transfer of European political practices and ideals. Because both regimes shared a similar historical legacy and occupied a similar geographic position on the margins of the European continent, the comparison will provide another perspective then contrasting the history of either of those states with that of Western Europe. Third, because by understanding the variations in the relationship between population policy, social

---

<sup>36</sup> Jacques Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 380–82.

<sup>37</sup> Aida Alayarian, *Consequences of Denial: The Armenian Genocide* (London: Karnac Books, 2008); Agence France-Presse, “Turkey Cannot Accept Armenian Genocide Label, Says Erdoğan,” *The Guardian*, April 15, 2015, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/15/turkey-cannot-accept-armenia-genocide-label-erdogan>.

<sup>38</sup> Nanci Adler, “Reconciliation with – or Rehabilitation of – the Soviet Past?,” *Memory Studies* 5, no. 3 (July 1, 2012): 327–38; Anatoly M. Khazanov, “Whom to Mourn and Whom to Forget? (Re)constructing Collective Memory in Contemporary Russia,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9, no. 2–3 (June 1, 2008): 293–310; David Satter, *It Was a Long Time Ago, and It Never Happened Anyway: Russia and the Communist Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

engineering and violence towards ethnic minorities in these two cases, these variations tell us something new about the conceptual categories at hand. Fourth, the comparison might also serve as a means to illuminate cause and effect. If one is to say for example that the deportation of non-Turkish minorities in Anatolia was a result of nationalist homogenization campaigns of the Young Turkish and Kemalist elites, the occurrence of the deportation of ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union without open claims for ethnic homogenization along Russian lines might lead us to re-evaluate cause and effect in the first case.<sup>39</sup> Fifth, although the comparison is limited to the cases of Turkey and the Soviet Union, the result of my inquiries might lead to questions that are relevant to similar investigations and cases in other fields of research.<sup>40</sup>

### **Political modernity and population politics**

Above, I have mentioned the terms political modernity, population policy, and social engineering several times as the conceptual categories that will be used for the analysis in this research. What do these concepts entail? What is their relevance for the cases to be analysed? Which challenges need to be overcome before applying these concepts?

The term population policy is often used interchangeably with demographic engineering, which is applied more in social science oriented historical research. In the broadest sense, the terms population policy and demographic engineering refer to those actions, techniques, or programs adopted by the state that have the purpose of influencing demographic processes.<sup>41</sup> The methods by which states may attempt to achieve this include pronatalist policies, forced population movements, assimilation, and boundary alterations.<sup>42</sup> From a historical perspective, the emergence of population policy refers to a process originating in Europe, in which the population was reconceptualised as a social entity to be rationally studied and managed by the state, stimulating a new ethos of social state intervention.<sup>43</sup> This belief in the malleability of human nature was strongly related to the belief in the feasibility of creating a perfect, utopian society. A short discussion of the genesis of population policy and its connection to utopianism and state violence might serve to illustrate this.

According to Michel Foucault, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries a new conceptualization of politics and government emerged in Western European political theory.<sup>44</sup> The most im-

<sup>39</sup> This insight is taken from Geyer and Fitzpatrick, *Beyond Totalitarianism*, 22.

<sup>40</sup> Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, "Comparative Historical Analysis: Achievements and Agendas," 9.

<sup>41</sup> Paul Demeny, "Population Policy: The Role of National Governments," *Population and Development Review* 1, no. 1 (1975): 147.

<sup>42</sup> Milica Zarkovic Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power: The Political Economy of Demographic Engineering in the Modern World* (London: Routledge, 2013), 3; For another recent study on demographic engineering, see Paul Morland, *Demographic Engineering: Population Strategies in Ethnic Conflict*, International Population Studies (Farnham: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>43</sup> Holquist, "State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism," 111–12.

<sup>44</sup> Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87–104; For an application of Foucault's Governmentality to Republican Turkey, see Sergen Bahceci, "The 'Governmentality' of Kurds in the Early Republican Turkey" (University of Reading), accessed May 28, 2017, [http://www.academia.edu/7491667/The\\_Governmentality\\_of\\_Kurds\\_in\\_the\\_Early\\_Republican\\_Turkey](http://www.academia.edu/7491667/The_Governmentality_of_Kurds_in_the_Early_Republican_Turkey).

portant element of this “art of government” was the shift in the goal of politics from the maintenance of territorial sovereignty to the management of the population in its entirety. The demographic growth of the eighteenth century, linked to an expanding agricultural sector and increasingly available financial means, led to an understanding of the population itself as the goal of government. Hence, it became “the population itself on which government will act either directly through large-scale campaigns, or indirectly through techniques that will make possible, without the full awareness of the people, the stimulation of birth rates, the directing of the flow of population into certain regions or activities, etc.”<sup>45</sup> According to Foucault, this “art of government”- governmentality- entailed three interrelating aspects. First, the development of new institutions, techniques, and practices that target the population through the institutional apparatus of security. Second, the slowly developing pre-eminence of this form of political power in Western Europe. Third, the process by which the state and its institutions became “governmentalized”.<sup>46</sup>

Foucault does not explicitly use the term population politics, but his analysis of governmentality is crucial for understanding the transformation of politics across the European continent in the eighteenth century. An additional development that came to be entwined with this process was a growing scientific discourse on the malleability of human nature that was coupled to a strong belief in creating a perfect, utopian society. Maria Sophia Quine locates the emergence of population politics in such scientific discourse, which developed in nineteenth century Western Europe when concerns about the quality and quantity of the population were linked to the prospects for national prosperity and progress.<sup>47</sup> Dropping fertility rates from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, and the persisting “social question”, led to widespread fears of demographic degeneration. This in turn stimulated widespread discussions about the desired role of the state in managing its own demography. With the development of eugenics, scientists argued that governments should aim to improve the biological condition of human beings. Scientists, it was argued, could have a central role in this through steering the course of evolution towards a perfect society by cultivating certain “desirable” human qualities whilst exterminating certain “unsuitable” ones. The faith in science as the means to achieve utopia was widespread across Europe, and was linked to the social Darwinist belief in the inherent hierarchy among races. Growing concerns about the “health” of the population spread across Europe, and eugenicist discourse also found its way to Turkey and the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup>

From the moment of inception of the discipline of eugenics, there was a strong tension between proponents of positive, and of negative eugenics. On the one hand, those on the “positive” side argued for the extension of welfare and social security provision, the development of incentives pro-

<sup>45</sup> Foucault, “Governmentality,” 100.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 102–4.

<sup>47</sup> Maria Sophia Quine, *Population Politics in Twentieth-Century Europe: Fascist Dictatorships and Liberal Democracies* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> Ayça Alemdaroğlu, “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey,” *Body & Society* 11, no. 3 (September 1, 2005): 61–76; Nikolai Kremmentsov, “From ‘Beastly Philosophy’ to Medical Genetics: Eugenics in Russia and the Soviet Union,” *Annals of Science* 68, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 61–92.

moting larger families, etc. Advocates of “negative” eugenics, on the other hand, called for a diversity of measures ranging from the segregation of the handicapped from the “healthy” population, to sterilization and even outright mass murder of the “racially defective”.

### **Population politics and state violence**

Foucault’s concept of governmentality essentially entails a reconceptualization of the population that not only enabled increasing intervention state intervention in the social realm, but made it seem indispensable for the successful practice of politics. Quine’s discussion of population politics illustrates how this reconceptualization came to be combined with a scientific discourse of social engineering, illustrating the firm belief in the malleability of human nature and the human species in its entirety. Eugenicist advocacy makes the deployment of state violence already seem one step closer. Yet there is a strong difference between advocating the removal of certain elements of the population in scientific discourse and positively deploying the whole apparatus of the state to achieve this end. Hence, an additional step for explaining the relationship between population politics and state violence is necessary.

For the further development of population politics, the overseas empires of the European Great Powers were the first context where radical scientific ideas of population management were first implemented. Indeed, the practice of categorizing entire human populations had emerged as an aspect of colonialism in the first place.<sup>49</sup> But in the nineteenth century, the further developments of science and technology made it possible to act more radically on those categories. In her *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt spoke of 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism as a “preparatory phase” for the “coming catastrophes” of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>50</sup> James C. Scott also observed that, while at home government officials were tampered in their ambitions to uplift the lower orders, in the colonial setting government officials could pursue their plans without limitations, ruling with “greater coercive power over an objectified and alien population.”<sup>51</sup>

At home, it was the further development of state formation that was of crucial significance for the emergence of violent population politics. The notion of the relationship between the modern state, population policy, social engineering, and state violence is strongly indebted to Zygmunt Bauman’s pioneering study, *Modernity and the Holocaust*.<sup>52</sup> Bauman argued that Nazi violence towards the Jews during the Second World War should not be studied in isolation, as an aberration of modernity, but rather as emerging from it. One aspect of modernity that could according to Bauman lead to violence was the treatment of society as a realm in which the state could legitimately intervene with scientific means in order to shape, transform, and perfect the population. This process of state intervention with the aim of improving society is referred to by Bauman as social engineering, or “gardening”. A core

<sup>49</sup> Weitz, *A Century of Genocide*, 22–23.

<sup>50</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Inc, 1968), 123.

<sup>51</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 378.

<sup>52</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991).

element of this process was the identification and categorization of elements of the population that were deemed threatening, impure, or inferior: the “weeds” of society. It was this vision of society as an object of administration, and a collection of “problems” to be solved with the institutions of the modern state, that could according to Bauman make “Holocaust-style solutions not only possible, but eminently ‘reasonable’.”<sup>53</sup>

James C. Scott has placed the connection between state-led engineering of the population and violence in a larger comparative framework.<sup>54</sup> He connects utopian engineering schemes as diverse as the collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union, the Great Leap Forward in China, and villagization in Tanzania. He argues that from the early modern period onward, states attempted to make society “legible”. This occurred primarily through attempts at standardizing and rationalizing society. Combined with a “high-modernist” utopian vision of the future legitimizing the rational design of this social order, an authoritarian state willing to implement this vision, and a civil society incapable of resistance, ambitious projects that aimed to improve society could have disastrous and tragic consequences.

In this sense, the occurrence of state violence was strongly linked to an utopian vision of the future. Karl Popper argued that utopianism could lead to violence because when a utopian vision of the future would be imported to politics, all political actions would be deployed to attain a certain ultimate end. Thus utopian politics subjects all forms of political action towards realizing an ideal state of society. Because the feasibility of such ultimate ends change depending on the social context and social structure, and a certain ultimate end might seem less desirable at a certain point in time, Popper argues that actors that pursue utopianism can only resort to violence as a means to keep their project going.<sup>55</sup> More explicitly linked to population policy, some scholars have used utopian ideology as an explanatory factor in genocide. In this analysis, it is argued that perpetrators committed genocide on the basis of the promise that the destruction of a certain enemy group would lead to an utopian future. In several instances of genocide, the imagination of a homogeneous society in ethnic, racial, cultural, or political terms played a major role. This proved to be a particularly deadly combination when it came to be combined with mass-based revolutionary movements that saw the state as the critical agent of societal transformation.<sup>56</sup>

Hence, the development of the techniques and technologies of the modern state are essential for understanding violence in the twentieth century. The First World War was of monumental importance for the further development of state interventionism, population politics, racial thinking, and nationalism. With the rise of mass warfare in the First World War, the relevance of the “health” of the

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>54</sup> Scott, *Seeing like a State*.

<sup>55</sup> Karl R. Popper, “Utopia and Violence,” in *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 355–62.

<sup>56</sup> Eric D. Weitz, “Utopian Ideologies as Motives for Genocide,” in *Encyclopedia for Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, ed. Dinah L. Shelton, World History in Context (Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2005), 1124–27.

population became more pressing than ever, leading to increasing social interventionism.<sup>57</sup> In a sense, the First World War provided the context that brought imperial practices back home. Ottoman Turkey and Tsarist Russia also became the stage of extensive population politics during the war.

The development of modern state was essential for the origins of ethnic violence as well. According to Norman Naimark, ethnic cleansing, which he defines as the intentional removal of a certain people from a concrete territory, could only develop as the modern state started to organize itself according to ethnic criteria.<sup>58</sup> Naimark argued that although the origins of practices of ethnic cleansing emanate from the development of the modern state and its practices, its ultimate responsibility lies with political elites. Of course, such elites are not alone and are backed up by state and party apparatuses, police forces, militaries, and paramilitaries. Moreover, the policies of the modern state were often supported by professionals, who shared a desire of social transformation.<sup>59</sup> This makes it clear that a crucial aspect of analysing state violence is moving beyond the “evil machinations” of the political elite and recognizing how certain schemes for improving society were shared by broader strata of society.

### **Application of concepts**

Although the developments outlined above were of Western European origin, they rested on a general social logic that made a transfer of the implementation of these state practices viable in various political settings.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, according to Amir Weiner, social engineering possessed a capacity for violence irrespective of its ideological colouring.<sup>61</sup> Hence, these concepts can be applied to ethnic repression, understood as a technique of population policy, in the Soviet Union and (Ottoman) Turkey.

One of the great challenges in applying these concepts to the present comparison is accounting for the very distinctive role of nationalism and the way the categories of ethnicity and nationality were perceived by both regimes. The role of Turkish ethno-nationalism and attempts at ethnic homogenization of the former Ottoman territories have been widely accepted as key explanatory factors of Young Turk violence towards ethnic minorities. The same holds for repressive policies against the Kurdish population during the Kemalist one-party period which saw a more explicit pursuit of a nationalist political agenda. The Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union, on the other hand, did not pursue a similar agenda of Russian ethnic homogenization. They maintained the territorial integrity of their Tsarist predecessors, and ruled over a diversity of non-Russian ethnic minorities. Still, although the Bolsheviks were not nationalists the way the Young Turks were, they were immensely interested in the ethnic composition of their population. The resultant “nationality policy” that the Bolsheviks developed was an immensely complicated and often contradictory phenomenon, moving from practices

---

<sup>57</sup> Hoffmann, *Cultivating the Masses*, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 3,7.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>60</sup> Stephen Kotkin, “Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization,” in *Stalinism: The Essential Readings*, ed. David Hoffmann (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 121.

<sup>61</sup> Weiner, “Introduction: Landscaping the Human Garden,” in: *Landscaping the human garden: twentieth-century population management in a comparative framework* (Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 2003) 8.

of promoting elements of self-determination and distinct national culture to the ruthless persecution of ethnic minorities. Two components of this process stand out for this research. First, the Bolsheviks institutionalized nationality and nationhood, recognizing that the language and program of nationalism was essential for the objective of attaining and maintaining state control.<sup>62</sup> Second, nationality policy in the 1930s saw the emergence of the category of “enemy nations”, composed of a number of non-Russian ethnic minorities who were deemed inherently subversive of Soviet rule. Most particularly immediately before and during the Second World War, this meant that the Bolsheviks in several instances perpetrated violence towards specific groups on the basis of their ethnicity.<sup>63</sup>

The predominant form of ethnic persecution were forced population movements (in some cases also called forced migration, population settlements, ethnic cleansing, or simply deportations: for a discussion on this terminology, see the introduction of Chapter 3). Forced movements of the population is one of the strategies or techniques of social engineering.<sup>64</sup> As such, although the *goals* of the Bolsheviks and the Young Turks/Kemalists might have been very different, it appears that they deployed comparable *techniques and practices* of rule that sprang from a common historical source and common historical experiences. An important question in this regard is to what extent Bolshevik and Young Turks/Kemalist deportation policies were accompanied with practices of ethnic dilution, ethnic consolidation, and forced assimilation described in the literature on demographic engineering. Ethnic dilution can be defined as the territorial dispersion of populations in order to prevent them from organizing amongst themselves; whereas ethnic consolidation is the practice of bringing populations together with the purpose of strengthening the dominance of a particular group.<sup>65</sup> Forced assimilation can be defined as the pursuit of compulsive policies aimed at an ethnically defined group of people, which leads to the involuntary adoption of the dominant identity or ethnicity of the state.<sup>66</sup> Understanding how in both cases policies shifted from assimilation to deportation or outright mass murder is of fundamental importance for understanding the relationship between population politics and mass violence.

### Conclusion and outline for the rest of the thesis<sup>67</sup>

From this survey of concepts and theories, three salient points for understanding state violence towards ethnic minorities can be abstracted. These three points will be taken up separately in the conse-

<sup>62</sup> Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 9–10.

<sup>63</sup> Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides*; Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” 1998; Terry Martin, “Modernization or Neo-Traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism,” in *Stalinism: New Directions* (London: Routledge, 2000), 348–67; Weiner, “Nature, Nurture, and Memory in a Socialist Utopia.”

<sup>64</sup> Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power*, 121–45; John McGarry, “‘Demographic Engineering’: the State-Directed Movement of Ethnic Groups as a Technique of Conflict Regulation,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 4 (1998): 613–38.

<sup>65</sup> Morland, *Demographic Engineering*, 34; Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power*, chap. 6.

<sup>66</sup> Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power*, 105.

<sup>67</sup> The “formative”, “strategic”, and “empirical” levels that I refer to here are used only as a way to give insight into the reasoning behind the structuring of the research and results of this thesis. They are not meant to suggest that these are the only relevant levels of analysis for understanding ethnic repression.

quent chapters of this thesis. First, it is important to understand the history of the decline and fall of the imperial order in these countries and the consecutive establishment of successor regimes in the context of the First World War. In both the Soviet Union and Turkey, state power was seized by a single party during the extended conflict of the First World War. The administrative elites of these parties were the propagators of the new mentality of the gardening states, and they played the most important roles in episodes of state violence towards ethnic groups. The establishment and the workings of these regimes and their leading figures in the context of imperial decline and fall is crucial for understanding the population policies they pursued, and will be the subject of Chapter 1. An important question that underpins this first chapter is what the nature of the crisis that led to the fall of imperial authority and the establishment of new regimes tells us about the similarities and differences between the Soviet Union and Turkey. Doing so, the chapter will attempt to provide insight into ethnic repression in both states on a formative level.

Second, it has become apparent to relate the role of the state to the national idea and the practice of classifying people based on their ethnicity. In both regimes, nationalist ideology and the institutions of the nation state made their way into political discourse and political practice. Although nationalism and national institutions did not occupy the same place in the Soviet Union as they did in Turkey, the Bolsheviks did recognize the importance of the notions of ethnicity, nationality, and race as a means to categorize human difference. And it was upon the basis of this categorization that ethnic population policies were pursued by the state. Chapter 2 of the thesis will compare the development of nationalist ideology and national institutions by the Young Turks and the Kemalists to Bolshevik nationality policy. By doing this, the chapter aims to understand the similarities and differences on a “strategic level” by comparing political strategies for dealing with ethnic diversity that were developed in both of these states. How could a belief in the malleability of the social and ethnic body in both of these states become combined with the repression of entire ethnic minority groups?

Third, it is necessary to focus on the development of repressive policies towards ethnic minorities in practice to understand the unfolding of their constructive and destructive elements. To this end, Chapter 3 of this thesis will present a detailed empirical analysis and comparison of two important instances of mass repression in both regimes. In the Soviet Union, it looks at the mass resettlement of the Chechen-Ingush population to Central Asia in February 1944. In Turkey, it looks at operations of the Turkish Army in Dersim province that led to the massacring and deportation of thousands of native Zaza Kurds.



## Chapter 1:

### *Regime change*

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the geopolitical make-up of the European continent and its surrounding areas changed dramatically. Whereas a 1913 map of Europe would still portray the centuries old imperial monarchies of the Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman empires, ten years later, all three had disappeared and given way to new kinds of states. In Turkey and the Soviet Union, the process by which these states were established involved large-scale population policies and repression of ethnic minorities. Facing deep crises of authority in the years leading up to, and following the First World War, processes of state formation that were already long underway intensified and were steered in increasingly violent directions. In both countries, a single political party managed to assume and maintain leadership of this process, institutionalizing political practices that had emerged for the first time in the context of severe crisis and upheaval. As a result of the policies of these parties, the ethnic and demographic make-up of Turkey and the Soviet Union had been transformed dramatically by the 1950s.

This chapter discusses the similarities between Soviet and Turkish state violence towards ethnic minorities on a formative level. The chapter sketches the violent character of regime change in the period in which these countries transitioned from imperial states to respectively the Republic of Turkey and the Soviet Union. The emphasis is on the imperial crises that haunted the Ottoman and the Tsarist states at the beginning of the twentieth century and eventually, in the context of the First World War and its aftermath, led to their dissolution. I do not intend to give a full account of the specific causes of the collapse of these empires, nor do I claim that these causes were similar. Rather, by discussing these histories together, I aim to demonstrate the severity of the crisis of this period and the necessity of understanding the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922 and the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and the emergence of their violent population politics in this context of crisis.<sup>68</sup>

The chapter is divided in three parts: the first discussing Russia and the Soviet Union, the second the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, and the third comparing them. In the first two parts of the chapter, I start by describing the crises of the imperial order and the way these crises helped lead to the

---

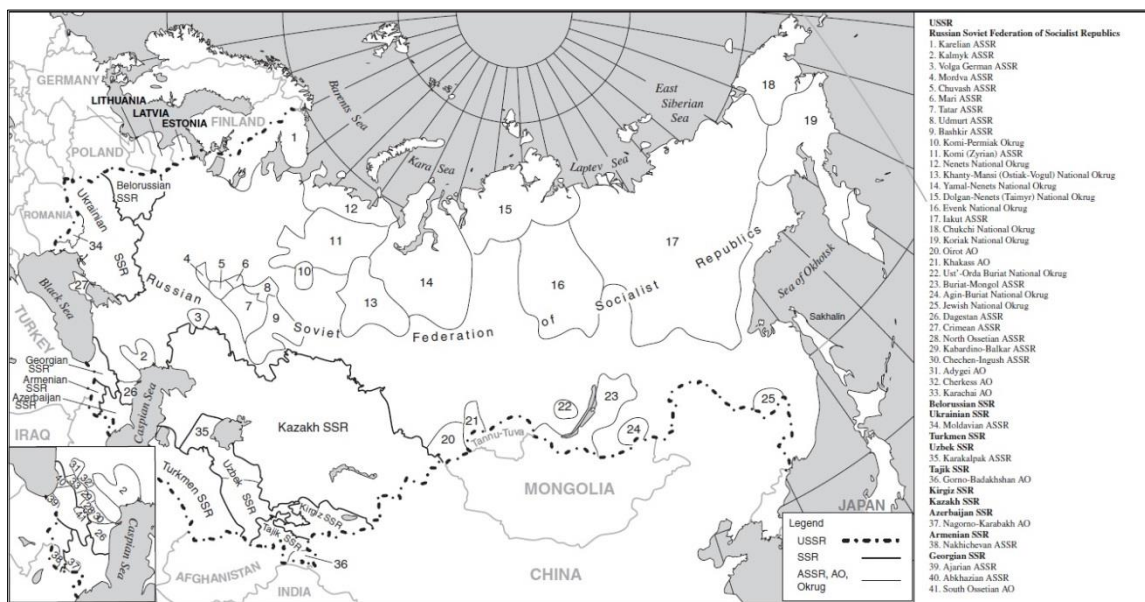
<sup>68</sup> The official establishment of Soviet Union occurred after the Civil War, on December 30, 1922. The declaration of Republic of Turkey took place on 29 October 1923.

establishment and consolidation of a new regime. Then, I discuss the continuities and discontinuities of the successor regimes in terms of political institutions. Finally, I connect these continuities and discontinuities and crises of the imperial order to the emergence of the state repression of ethnic minorities.

## 1.1 From Tsarist Russia to the Soviet Union



Map 1: *The Russian empire, 1913.*<sup>69</sup>



Map 2: *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 1939.*<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Source: Michael Kaser, and G.S. Smith (eds.) *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Russia* (1982).

<sup>70</sup> Source: Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations, ethnographic knowledge and the making of the Soviet Union* (2005), 303.

### 1.1.1 The crisis of the late Tsarist state

Adopting a bird’s-eye view on the first decades of twentieth century Russia, what is striking is the rate with which upheavals followed each other in the first decades of the twentieth century. Within a timespan of less than fifty years, the country experienced a major war in 1905, a revolution in the same year, the First World War, a double revolution in 1917, five years of Civil War, the far-reaching collectivization and industrialization campaigns of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Great Terror of 1937-1938, and the Second World War.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, severe internal and external political crises would help delegitimize the authority of the imperial regime, creating an atmosphere that was open to radical alternatives. Already since the nineteenth century, the military weakness of the empire had been exposed. Especially the British, French, and later Japanese naval powers posed a formidable threat to the empire. From the late nineteenth century onward, the rise of an unified Germany on the continent became a concern as well.<sup>71</sup> In 1904-1905 Russia went to war with Japan over competing territorial claims in China and Korea. The war soon turned into a disaster for the Russians, and ended in a complete victory for the Japanese. Being the first European power to lose a war against an Asian state, the defeat contributed strongly to the loss of legitimacy of the tsarist regime.

Yet, despite this military weakness, the empire experienced no severe territorial losses. Internal political upheaval in Tsarist Russia, however, posed a more fundamental threat to tsarist authority. Since the late nineteenth century, an increasingly vocal community of intelligentsia and professionals had advocated far-reaching social reform or “social renovation” of the empire. This community despised the “backward” predicament of Russia and urged for the need to “catch up” with the west. This catching up would have to take the shape of a complete refashioning of society.<sup>72</sup> Steeped in enlightenment notions of the malleability of human nature, these advocates of radical reform believed in the possibility to create an entirely new kind of person that was qualitatively different.<sup>73</sup>

Overlapping with the war against Japan was the 1905 revolution, during which large segments of the population expressed their opposition to the regime by organizing protests, strikes, demonstrations, assassinations, acts of vandalism, and other instances of violence across the whole empire.<sup>74</sup> The government responded with an unprecedented degree of state repression that was conducted by tsarist police forces. According to Stephen Wheatcroft, this harsh repression, evident from the steep increase in prison sentences, marked a departure from previous repressive practices and was a step in

---

<sup>71</sup> Dominic C. B. Lieven, “Russia as Empire and Periphery,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia. Vol. 2, Imperial Russia, 1689-1917*, ed. Dominic C. B. Lieven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13–14.

<sup>72</sup> Hoffmann, *Cultivating the Masses*, 1–16.

<sup>73</sup> Yinghong Cheng, *Creating The “New Man”: From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 15–20.

<sup>74</sup> Mark Steinberg, “Russia’s Fin Die Siècle, 1900-1914,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia. Vol. 3, The Twentieth Century*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 68.

the direction of the kind of state policing that would later be practiced by the Soviet regime.<sup>75</sup> This is an important observation, because it shows the pitfalls of over-emphasizing the exceptionalism of the Soviet Union, and demonstrates the importance of connecting the later history of the Soviet Union with larger processes of modern state formation.

Increased policing could not cage the growing anti-tsarist sentiment, and despite this harsh repression, revolutionary terrorism and anarchic political violence continued to contest tsarist authority. In Russia, absent any legal forum for political parties, revolutionary violence was a way of voicing a desire for political change. The radical political parties (anarchists, Social Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, and Bolsheviks) that organized terrorist activities, stood in a revolutionary tradition that stretched back to nineteenth century radical revolutionary movements such as *Narodnaya Volya* (People's Will). In the twentieth century, these revolutionary movements managed to gain a much wider constituency than their predecessors. In practice, this meant that there were now a whole range of social actors willing to commit revolutionary acts of violence.<sup>76</sup> According to Anna Geifman, already by 1905 terrorism had become "all-pervasive" and had to some extent become detached from its specific ideological colouring.<sup>77</sup>

### 1.1.2 The First World War and the revolutions of 1917

Despite continuing unrest, no major crisis situation occurred after 1905 until the breaking out of the First World War. Russia, part of the Allied Triple Entente with France and Great Britain, went to war against Germany, Austro-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire.

The tsarist government did not succeed in skilfully managing the war effort and effectively mobilizing the country's resources. Although the Imperial Army reached some successes against Germany, it was in retreat by 1917. In the context of this worsening war effort, large scale uprisings and strikes occurred in Petrograd, the empire's capital, in February 1917. The strikes were organized by industrial workers, but they were soon joined by deserting soldiers and the parliamentary opposition. On February 15, only three days after the first segments of the Tsarist army deserted, the tsarist monarchy was brought down and Nicholas II, Russia's last tsar, abdicated.

Within a few days, a Provisional Government was established, which was to organize elections and restore order. The Provisional Government, however, failed in putting to rest the domestic upheaval. It was in this period of social upheaval, war, and revolutionary violence that the Bolshevik party, by far the most radical of all the parties opposing the tsars and later the provisional government, managed to seize power on October 25 (old style; November 7 new style).

<sup>75</sup> Stephen G. Wheatcroft, "The Crisis of the Late Tsarist Penal System," in *Challenging Traditional Views of Russian History*, ed. Stephen G. Wheatcroft, Studies in Russian and East European History and Society (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2002), 27–54.

<sup>76</sup> Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Klaus Weinbauer, "Terrorism and the State," in *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 179–90.

<sup>77</sup> Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

The Bolshevik Party had emerged from the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDRP, est. 1898). On a 1903 RSDRP congress, the Bolshevik faction had split from the Menshevik faction, primarily over disagreements concerning the desired role of the party in realizing a proletarian revolution.<sup>78</sup> In the months following the February Revolution the legitimacy of the Provisional Government was undermined by deepening social and economic crisis, and a growing sympathy among large segments of the Petrograd population to transfer power to the “Soviets”. These Soviets had originated as *ad hoc* councils that directed worker strikes. In the course of the Revolution, though, they started to assume the function of a worker’s government, and were perceived by the lower strata of the population in Petrograd as a viable socialist alternative to the provisional government. The Bolshevik Party, although never a majority party in these Soviets, had witnessed a significant increase in its popularity during the course of the revolution, and eventually managed to seize power in the name of these soviets.<sup>79</sup>

After seizing power in 1917, the position of the Bolsheviks was still far from secure. Directly after the revolution, the Bolsheviks held sway over a territory the size of fifteenth century Muscovy, and their prime objective was expanding the territorial base of the revolution. During the Civil War, the Bolsheviks fought against the “Whites” (a loose alliance of monarchists, liberals, and other anti-Bolshevik parties) and the “Greens” (associated mostly with the Socialist Revolutionary Party). Most of the fighting took place in the non-Russian peripheries of former Tsarist Russia.

### 1.1.3 Securing the revolution, building a socialist state

Politically, the decades after the revolution were marked above all by an immensely high degree of party-based institutionalization and an almost complete restructuring of the relationship between state and society. According to Yoram Gorlizki and Hans Mommsen, the leading role of the party in state building had been a core aspect of Lenin’s adaption of Marxist ideas in the first place.<sup>80</sup> This set the Soviet Union apart from the major other totalitarian power in Europe, Nazi Germany, which did not embark upon a program of the wholesale restructuring of domestic state and society. The leadership strategy of the Bolsheviks had an enormous impact on the shape and structure of the state and its bureaucracy.<sup>81</sup> The main purpose of party-led state building was centralization and ensuring that local authorities at all levels would obey the line taken by the Politburo in Moscow. Driving this process was a perceived backwardness of Russia and the desperate need to “catch up”. In 1931, on a congress for industrial managers, Joseph Stalin held a famous speech that illustrates this sentiment:

---

<sup>78</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3–33.

<sup>79</sup> There are more books written on the Russian revolution than one could read in a lifetime. Authoritative scholarly accounts stressing different aspects of the Russian Revolution include: Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991); Figs, *A People’s Tragedy*; Rex A. Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>80</sup> Yoram Gorlizki and Hans Mommsen, “The Political (Dis)Orders of Stalinism and National Socialism,” in *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, ed. Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 41–86.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten. But we do not want to be beaten. No, we refuse to be beaten! One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered because of her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongol khans. She was beaten by the Turkish beys. She was beaten by the Swedish feudal lords. She was beaten by the Polish and Lithuanian gentry. She was beaten by the British and French capitalists. She was beaten by the Japanese barons. All beat her because of her backwardness, military backwardness, cultural backwardness, political backwardness, industrial backwardness, agricultural backwardness. [...] We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or we shall be crushed.<sup>82</sup>

This immense institutional upheaval also led to large-scale repression within the newly established institutions of the state itself. Bureaucratic purges run throughout the history of the party in the 1930s, and peaked during the Great Terror with the show trials throughout the entire country.<sup>83</sup> Additionally, through the sponsoring of immense reverence of the party, an institutional identity for itself and the mammoth state apparatus it had managed to set up was created. Hence, loyalty to the party increasingly equated loyalty to the state.

After Lenin's death in 1924, and an internal power struggle in the late 1920s, Joseph Stalin had emerged as the leading figure of the Bolshevik party by the 1930s. Throughout the remainder of the 1930s, Stalin managed to create an entirely new leadership elite that had severed all its ties with the pre-revolutionary ruling order.<sup>84</sup> Biographers of Stalin describe him as a smart, cunning, and relentless party *apparatchik*. He is said to have read ferociously, especially secret police reports and party correspondence. His leading style was highly interventionist, and he often interfered in the smallest details of party policy. Above all, when he deemed it necessary, Stalin did not hesitate to deploy the entire apparatus of the state against his own people.<sup>85</sup> Hence, Stalin's leading style was to leave an immense imprint on Soviet history.

---

<sup>82</sup> "Stalin on Rapid Industrialization - Documents in Russian History," accessed June 13, 2017, [http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Stalin\\_on\\_Rapid\\_Industrialization](http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Stalin_on_Rapid_Industrialization).

<sup>83</sup> For a classic and polemical, albeit somewhat outdated account stressing the bureaucratic aspect of the purges, see John Arch Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938*, Soviet and East European Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1985); John Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-39*, Annals of Communism (New Haven [etc.]: Yale UP, 2000); J. Arch Getty, *Practicing Stalinism: Bolsheviks, Boyars, and the Persistence of Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); For show trials on the provincial level, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, "How the Mice Buried the Cat: Scenes from the Great Purges of 1937 in the Russian Provinces," *The Russian Review* 52, no. 3 (1993): 299–320.

<sup>84</sup> Gorlizki and Mommsen, "The Political (Dis)Orders of Stalinism and National Socialism," 44.

<sup>85</sup> The two most recent and historiographically accurate biographies of Stalin are the immensely detailed Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin, Volume I: Paradoxes of Power* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014); and the more succinct Oleg Khlevniuk, *Stalin: New Biography of a Dictator*, trans. Nora Seligman Favorov (London: Yale University Press, 2015).

### 1.1.4 State repression of ethnic minority groups

How did population policies and repression of ethnic minorities become a part of the process during which Russia transitioned from imperial state to Soviet Union? Ethnic diversity had always been a defining aspect of Tsarist Russia, and in terms of the non-Russian populations that lived within its territories it was a highly complex political entity. According to a 1897 census, only 44.9 percent of the population’s native tongue was Russian, making the Russian majority in fact only the largest minority.<sup>86</sup>

Already in the last half of the nineteenth century, the idea that certain minority populations were more “dangerous” or “harmful” than others had taken root. With the rise of military statistics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was believed that social processes could be portrayed scientifically and, above all, that the ethnic position of the population had military relevance.<sup>87</sup> In the early twentieth century, the government had pursued a more aggressive Russian nationalist agenda, attempting to “Russify” non-Russian nationalities through language, education, and settlement policies. This policy was predicated upon a “civilizing mission” that was pronounced by Russian political leaders, who argued that the “civilised Russians” would bring order to the culturally “backward” non-Russians.<sup>88</sup> Later Bolshevik policies were predicated upon a similar “civilizing mission”, and implemented with similar, albeit much more radical and above all deadlier, practices.<sup>89</sup>

In the context of total mobilization for the First World War, various violent population policies towards ethnic minorities were implemented on a large scale for the first time. Hence, military authorities argued that certain historically sensitive border regions had to be “cleansed” from their “unreliable populations”.<sup>90</sup> During the war, the Russian government deported up to one million non-Russian subjects, mostly Jews and Germans, who played an important part in the economic life of the empire. This was one of the largest practices of forced migration up to the Second World War.<sup>91</sup> Although these policies originally stemmed from perceived military security threats from “enemy aliens”, they were also pursued with an agenda of nationalizing (or Russifying) the economy and territory of the empire through resettlement and expropriation practices. An important part of this process was the classification of the population into a simple hierarchy of nationalities that was ranked ac-

---

<sup>86</sup>Kotkin, *Stalin, Volume I: Paradoxes of Power*, 11–13. Steinberg, “Russia’s Fin Die Siècle, 1900-1914,” 89, the percentage of 44.9 percent comes from footnote 39, referring to the original census.

<sup>87</sup> Peter Holquist, “To Count, to Extract, and to Exterminate: Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 111–44.

<sup>88</sup> Steinberg, “Russia’s Fin Die Siècle, 1900-1914,” 89–93.

<sup>89</sup> Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization”; Douglas Northrop, “Nationalizing Backwardness: Gender, Empire, and Uzbek Identity,” in *State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 191–220.

<sup>90</sup> Holquist, “To Count, to Extract, and to Exterminate,” 124.

<sup>91</sup> Eric Lohr, “The Russian Army and the Jews: Mass Deportation, Hostages, and Violence during World War I,” *The Russian Review* 60, no. 3 (2001): 404.

ording to degrees of reliability.<sup>92</sup> The violence of the Bolsheviks in later decades should be seen as a radical extension of this practice.<sup>93</sup>

During the Civil War that followed the revolution, a basic pattern of governing that would mark political practice in the Soviet Union for the next decades crystalized, combining elements of violence, mobilization, and control of human resources.<sup>94</sup> Part of this pattern was the deportation of certain “elements” of the population. Thus, for example, in the midst of the Civil War, in 1919, the Soviet state embarked upon a policy of “Decossackization”, executing thousands of Don Cossacks, and deporting many more. This practice was related directly to the establishment of Soviet power in the region. In the words of one Soviet official, the objective of establishing Soviet power was unthinkable “until we slaughter all [the Cossacks] and resettle the Don with an external element.” Hence, deportation policies were from the start part of a larger scheme to refashion society through the excise of certain malign elements.<sup>95</sup>

Having maintained the territorial integrity of the tsars, the Soviet regime also inherited its complex frontier regions. This is also argued by Alfred Rieber, who identifies four complex frontiers in Russia that were particularly prone to conflict.<sup>96</sup> These were the Cossack steppe in the southern periphery, the Polish frontier, the Baltic region, and the southern and south-eastern frontiers from the Crimea to the Caucasus. Hence, it was inevitable that the revolutionary policies of the Bolsheviks would develop ethnic dimensions. Stalin’s personal position in this regard seems also to have been important, as he recognized that the periphery was a necessary resource base, but was also vulnerable to bourgeois nationalism and foreign interference (this subject will be taken up elaborately in Chapter 2.1).<sup>97</sup> Moreover, certain ethnic groups were more likely to fall prey to the political terror of the Soviet secret police. The dekulakization campaigns that were a part of collectivization for example, were harsher against ethnic minorities like Greeks, Bulgarians, and Germans who, being relatively wealthy, were a natural enemy of the Bolsheviks.<sup>98</sup> The Great Terror of 1937-8 consisted of three currents of violence: bureaucratic purges within the institutions of the state and party; mass policing operations against kulaks and other “anti-Soviet elements”; and national operations against minority populations.<sup>99</sup> The “national operations” were separate from the other “mass operations” (administratively at least, in the chaotic NKVD practice, they often overlapped). Moreover, the executive orders launching

---

<sup>92</sup> Eric. Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, Massachussets: Harvard University Press, 2003), 84,121-122,157, 164-165.

<sup>93</sup> Holquist, “State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism.”

<sup>94</sup> Donald J. Raleigh, *Experiencing Russia’s Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 418.

<sup>95</sup> Holquist, “To Count, to Extract, and to Exterminate,” 129.

<sup>96</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, “Civil Wars in the Soviet Union,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 1 (March 14, 2003): 129–62.

<sup>97</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, “Stalin, Man of the Borderlands,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (2001): 1651–91.

<sup>98</sup> Rieber, “Civil Wars in the Soviet Union,” 139–41.

<sup>99</sup> Nicolas Werth, “Stalinist State Violence: A Reappraisal Twenty Years after the Archival Revolution,” *Tijdschrift Voor Geschiedenis* 124, no. 4 (December 1, 2011): 480–91.

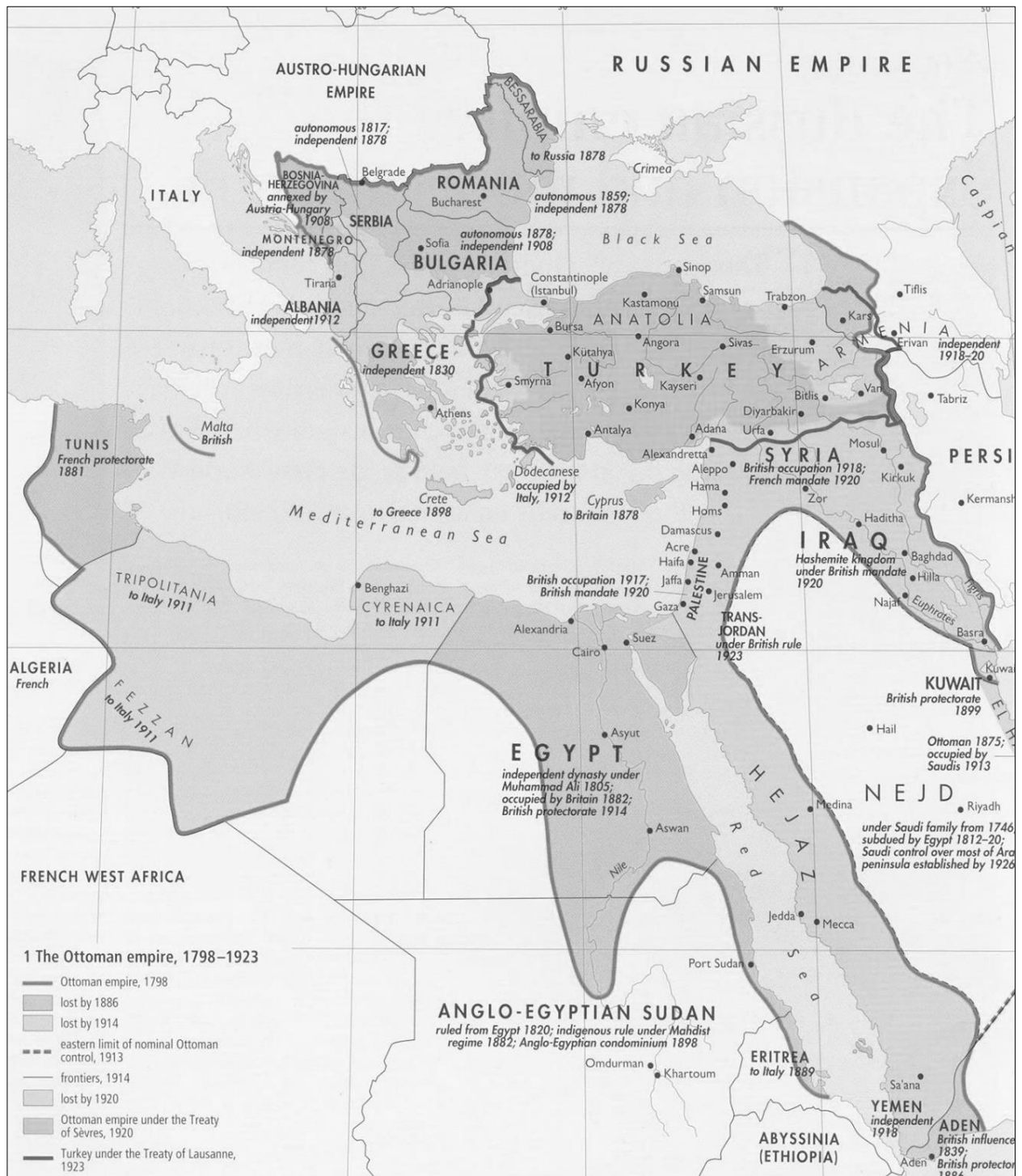


the “national operations” were phrased and legitimized distinctively from other orders.<sup>100</sup> This shows that the central government acted on the basis of perceived population categories, and that, by the late 1930s, some of these categories had come to be perceived unsuitable for the new Soviet order.

---

<sup>100</sup> See for example: Nikita Petrov and Arsenii Roginskii, “The ‘Polish Operation’ of the NKVD, 1937-8,” in *Stalin’s Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union*, ed. Barry McLoughlin and Kevin McDermott (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 153–72.

## 1.2 From Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey



Map 3: From Ottoman Empire to Republic of Turkey, 1798–1923.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Source: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/9d/b9/28/9db928b5c5c24efc77496ab455479b32.jpg>

### 1.2.1 Territorial decline and the fall of the Ottoman Empire

The first decades of the twentieth century in (Ottoman) Turkey were marked by crisis, upheaval, and violence as well. During the same period Russia was experiencing war and revolutionary upheaval but (roughly) maintained the former Tsarist borders, (Ottoman) Turkey experienced political revolution, severe territorial losses, the Balkan war, the First World War, the Armenian genocide, the “War of Independence”, and several rebellions and uprisings.

The predicament of the early twentieth century Ottoman Empire was a further extension of a process of imperial decline that had already started in the seventeenth century and accelerated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. After the Russo-Turkish war (1877-1878), the Ottoman Empire had lost a third of its imperial territories as well as a large part of its Christian population. Especially important was the crumbling influence of Ottoman power in Rumelia, as newly established states undermined the authority of the Ottoman government, European powers increasingly interfered with the purpose of destabilizing the region and diminishing Ottoman influence<sup>102</sup>, and ethno-nationalist and terrorist movements of the empire’s various populations threatened its territorial integrity. These movements sought to shake the foundations of the Porte (the central government of the empire), most notably by attacking elements of the Turkish army.<sup>103</sup>

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire spiralled into a number of crises that would sound its death knell. In 1903 the Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organization staged a large-scale uprising, proclaiming a “Republic of Krushevo” in Ottoman-ruled Macedonia.<sup>104</sup> After the uprising, the Austro-Hungarian emperor and the Russian tsar sponsored reforms favouring a new Macedonian state, to the great shame of the Porte.<sup>105</sup> 1908 was another year of territorial blood-letting, as the Ottoman state lost its sovereignty over several territories in Rumelia that had fallen under its dominion for centuries. On 5 October of that year, Bulgaria declared its independence. A day later, Austria-Hungary formally annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina. On the same day, the island of Crete, having been under Ottoman suzerainty from 1898 onwards, officially proclaimed union with Greece.

Disintegrating forces were at work on the eastern flank of the empire as well. There were several revolts in Yemen, and the Ottomans went to war against Italy’s newfound imperial ambitions over Libya in 1911-1912, and lost.<sup>106</sup> A little less further afield, the internal stability of the empire was

---

<sup>102</sup> Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 12–13.

<sup>103</sup> Haupt and Weinbauer, “Terrorism and the State,” 188.

<sup>104</sup> Richard C. Hall, “Ilinden Uprising, 1903,” in *War in the Balkans: An Encyclopedic History from the Fall of the Ottoman Empire to the Breakup of Yugoslavia*, ed. Richard C. Hall (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2014), 144–45.

<sup>105</sup> George W. Gawrych, “The Culture and Politics of Violence in Turkish Society, 1903–14,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no. 3 (July 1, 1986): 309.

<sup>106</sup> Ryan. Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate: The Great War and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 69–79.

undermined by clashes between Kurds, Armenians, and security forces in eastern Anatolia, although these were for the time overshadowed by developments in the European part of the empire.<sup>107</sup>

More trouble awaited the Ottomans with the breaking out of rebellions in Albanian territory between 1910-1912. The direct trigger for the rebellion was the imposition of reforms by the newly established Young Turk leadership of the Ottoman Empire (discussed below). The Ottomans managed to repress the rebellions, but relations with the Albanians and the Albanian nationalist movement deteriorated. Tensions with Albania were a thorn in the side of the Porte. Because the Albanian population consisted of both the largest Muslim population in Rumelia and a considerable Greek-Orthodox community, its separation from the empire would be demographically disastrous.<sup>108</sup> According to Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, it was the Albanian revolt in particular that made clear to the Turks that it was impossible to both accommodate different national interests as well as maintain the territorial integrity of the empire.<sup>109</sup>

The relations among the relatively young states in the Balkans were hardly friendly, but they did agree on the desirability of shaking of the “Turkish yoke”. Hence, in October 1912, the Balkan League, consisting of the allied Balkan states of Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria announced an ultimatum to the Porte, demanding reforms under foreign control in Macedonia. The Porte disagreed, and the tiny state of Montenegro declared war upon this refusal, soon joined by the other states of the Balkan League. Already by December, the Ottomans were forced to sign an armistice in London, which granted considerable gains of territory to the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Serbs in Macedonia and Thrace. Moreover, Crete’s union with Greece was now formalized, and also Albania officially declared its independence. Thus, during the period 1903-1913, the Empire had lost half of its territory, and about 5 million people out of its population of 24 million.<sup>110</sup>

The Balkan wars had not ended for a year when the First World War broke out in July 1914. After some hesitation, the Ottoman Empire joined the war effort of the central powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary). Its participation soon turned into a fiasco, especially on the Eastern front, where they were defeated heavily by the Russians.

### 1.2.2 Internal political upheaval and the Young Turk Revolution

According to George W. Gawrych, the persisting unrest, rebellion, and upheaval haunting the Ottoman order in the beginning of the twentieth century helped create a “siege mentality” among Ottoman Muslims, leading to a “culture of violence” in which the concept of “struggle” came to be accepted as

<sup>107</sup> Gawrych, “The Culture and Politics of Violence in Turkish Society, 1903–14,” 311.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>109</sup> Stanford Jay Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1977), 289; For a general study on the military and diplomatic aspects of the Balkan wars, see Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War*, Warfare and History (London ; New York: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>110</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*; Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate*, 79–90; Omer Taspinar, *Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey : Kemalist Identity in Transition* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 47.

a tool with which to defend and regenerate Ottoman and/or Turkish society.<sup>111</sup> It was in this political atmosphere that the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) seized power in 1908, deposing Sultan Abdulhamid and re-establishing constitutional rule after it had been suspended in 1878. Although the top of the CUP’s leadership would flee the country after the First World War, a large number of military and civil official elites that held sway until 1950 came to power here. The CUP originated from the “Young Turk” movement, which wanted to reform the Ottoman Empire. It organized itself under the Society of Ottoman Unity (*İttihad-ı Osmanî Cemiyeti*) that wanted to end the autocracy of the sultan and establish constitutional and parliamentary rule. During the years before they seized power, the Young Turks were persecuted by the sultan. They were deported to the empire’s peripheries, or forced into exile in Europe. According to Uğur Ümit Üngör, it is here that the roots of the violence of the Young Turk movement should be sought. Turning to more activist politics, the Young Turk movement began using revolutionary tactics such as terror, threats, and assassinations.<sup>112</sup> The society changed its name to Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) and, after years of internal division and conflict, succeeded in making a united front only in 1907 by merging with the Ottoman Freedom Society (*Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti*), established a year earlier.<sup>113</sup> Several diaspora movements that, due to the unfavourable political climate in the Ottoman Empire, had organized themselves elsewhere in Europe, were also included in this merger.<sup>114</sup>

The CUP had originated as a student movement, but soon grew into a revolutionary movement that recruited its members primarily from the ranks of the army, particularly among western-educated officers who were dissatisfied with the ailing state of the empire and wanted to modernize it by introducing westernizing reforms. Further members of the CUP consisted mostly of professionals, Muslim merchants, guild leaders, and large land owners. Initially remaining somewhat in the background and relying on their parliamentary majority, the CUP staged a coup in 1913 to gain dictatorial control over the government. This coup brought to power the famous Triumvirate (consisting of İsmail Enver Paşa, Mehmet Talât Paşa, and Ahmet Cemal Paşa), that would rule the empire during the First World War.<sup>115</sup>

In the years following its seizure of power, the CUP became more autocratic and violent, organizing assassinations of political opponents and establishing its own paramilitary wing: the so-called “Special Organization”.<sup>116</sup> Under the pressure of a threatening international environment and internal insecurity and instability, the Young Turks increasingly resorted to violent tactics with the purpose of addressing or pre-empting real or imagined dangers threatening the empire. It was this

<sup>111</sup> Gawrych, “The Culture and Politics of Violence in Turkish Society, 1903–14.”

<sup>112</sup> Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 28.

<sup>113</sup> 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), 13-15-42.

<sup>114</sup> M. Şükrü Hanoğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Washington, DC: Institute of Turkish Studies, 1995), 71–78.

<sup>115</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 95.

<sup>116</sup> Gawrych, “The Culture and Politics of Violence in Turkish Society, 1903–14,” 323–24.

mistrust of particular elements of the population of the empire that, in the words of Ryan Gingeras, “formed the basis of many of the most bloody and cruel episodes marking the end of the Ottoman state”.<sup>117</sup> According to Feroz Ahmad, a major facet of the Young Turk revolution was the “brutalization of political life”: “having seized power they meant to hold on to it. To do so they were willing to use all possible means, so that repression and violence became the order of the day. Nothing was sacred in the pursuit of power and those guilty of dissent must be prepared to pay with their lives.”<sup>118</sup>

A major aspect of the Young Turk movement was the “scientist” attitude of its adherents: the belief in the potentials of achieving progress through the application of science in politics. The Young Turks believed that society should be studied with the methods of social science, and crafted into a homogeneous entity. To this end, directly after they seized power, the CUP launched extensive ethnographic research into the eastern provinces of the empire. The population of the East was seen as “barbarous” and “backward” and contrasted with the “civilized” elite.<sup>119</sup> Yet, in their ideological mind-set, and moreover in the way they put their ideology in practice, the Young Turks were eclectic and pragmatic rather than dogmatic. Moreover, what bonded the Young Turks was not so much a coherent and clear-cut ideological programme or doctrine that purported to fundamentally transform society, but their distinctive approach to uplifting their country from its current predicament. Hence their dictum: “how can this state be saved.”<sup>120</sup>

### 1.2.3 The establishment of the Republic of Turkey and the Kemalist one-party state

The territorial disintegration of the Ottoman Empire helped the final abandonment of the idea to strive for unity among the different ethnic and religious groups of the empire. The establishment of a sovereign Turkish nation state was now, apart from the complete dismemberment of the territories of the Ottoman Empire, the only remaining option.

After the end of the First World War, the victorious allies demanded the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire along national lines. This was in accordance with United States President Woodrow Wilson’s principles of national self-determination and the now dominant notion that the age of poly-ethnic empires had come to an end, and that the world would now be divided up in homogeneous and sovereign nation states. The problem for the Ottoman Empire lay in the territorial delineation of the Turkish nation state. The Ottoman administration, the Greek Kingdom, and the newly established Democratic Republic of Armenia all made dubious claims on large swathes of former Ottoman territory. From the perspective of the Turks, especially the British backed Greek occupation of western

<sup>117</sup> Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate*, 7.

<sup>118</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 163.

<sup>119</sup> Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 33–34.

<sup>120</sup> Touraj Atabaki and Erik Jan Zürcher, eds., *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernisation in Turkey and Iran, 1918-1942* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 3.

Anatolia and the Armenian-Georgian seizure of the provinces of Kars and Ardahan were unacceptable.<sup>121</sup>

Meanwhile, the leadership of the CUP had fled the country to escape Allied conviction for the war crimes they had committed (discussed below). Mustafa Kemal (later known as Atatürk) used this power vacuum to organize a national independence movement by setting up councils for the “Defence of National Rights”. These councils were originally confined to Eastern Anatolia, but soon spread westward. They were not set up with the purpose of overthrowing the existing order, but to resist the partition of Turkish territory by the Allies and the Greeks.<sup>122</sup> Mustafa Kemal managed to rally the national independence movement behind his leadership, driving out the Armenians and Greeks, and establishing the Republic of Turkey in 1923. During this war of independence, extremely high levels of intercommunal violence behind the front lines occurred.<sup>123</sup>

According to Erik-Jan Zürcher and Touraj Atabaki, the proclamation of westernizing and modernizing reforms in Atatürk’s Turkey was a defensive reaction. The implementation of European rules and laws was above all meant to resist the ongoing pressures of foreign powers on Ottoman and later Turkish territory. Hence, the implementation of constitutional rule should above all seen as a means towards strengthening state power, not as an end in itself.<sup>124</sup> Şükrü Hanioğlu also notes that the Young Turks felt an “uncompromising loyalty to the state”, and that their goal was to save the empire from collapsing. Moreover, the Young Turks, he argues, were elitists at heart and their aim was not to empower disenfranchised social elements in order to overthrow the old order. On the contrary, they sought to strengthen that very order as a means to strengthen leadership over the masses.<sup>125</sup>

This held to a large extent for Kemalism as well. According to Gingeras, Atatürk was “the moral and political epitome of the Young Turk movement.”<sup>126</sup> Hanioğlu, moreover, recognizes that Atatürk’s attitudes and policies were shaped to a large degree by his experiences as an activist in the Young Turk movement.<sup>127</sup> Moreover, a large part of “the CUP’s most diligent social engineers ended up working for Mustafa Kemal’s Republican Party”.<sup>128</sup> Atatürk also saw himself as a sophisticated member of a cast with privileged Turkish nomadic roots, not as a rebel determined to overthrow the existing order. His background as the son of a bureaucratic official in 19<sup>th</sup> century Salonica might seem humble, but in the Ottoman Empire his Turkish-Rumelian roots amounted to a distinguished pedigree.<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>121</sup> Hanioğlu, *Atatürk*, 95.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>123</sup> Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate*, 239.

<sup>124</sup> Atabaki and Zürcher, *Men of Order*, 3.

<sup>125</sup> Hanioğlu, *Atatürk*, 43–44.

<sup>126</sup> Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate*, 5.

<sup>127</sup> Hanioğlu, *Atatürk*, 48.

<sup>128</sup> Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 121.

<sup>129</sup> Hanioğlu, *Atatürk*, 23–24.

Atatürk was a dictator, but his ruling style was not nearly as interventionist as that of Stalin. From 1928 onward he distanced himself more and more from daily politics, although he remained very much in control. Moreover, in the late 1920s a personality cult around him was developed, the remains of which are still visibly in contemporary Turkey. Atatürk's ambitions were relatively circumscribed, though, as he left the majority of the political institutions alone and did not embark on a wholesale restructuring of the state. In fact, institutionally there was a great degree of continuity with the late Ottoman Empire. Most particularly in the army, where the main body of officers supported the nationalist struggle. The civilian bureaucracy a similar picture. In the years of the national struggle, there were some small-scale purges. After 1923, such purges were almost absent, especially in the lower echelons of the bureaucratic apparatus. The show trials of 1926 were certainly dramatic and had huge political overtones, but they were limited to the (former) political leadership. Moreover, the show trials succeeded in breaking most organized opposition to the new regime.<sup>130</sup>

There was significant discontinuity in the religious institution, though, as it lost most of its autonomy and was subjected to the bureaucracy of the state. In this respect, the abolition of the caliphate in 1924 formed a huge break. In Kemalist ideology, religion was seen as backward and obstructing progress. Hence, the basic cohesive function that was performed by Islam in society was to be replaced by "Turkishness".<sup>131</sup>

The most novel aspect of the Kemalist regime was the importance of the party, although Atatürk denounced the idea that his Republican People's Party (RPP) would preach class struggle. According to himself, the working class in the whole of Turkey was only 20,000 strong anyway. The function of the party was above all to unite progressive elements in the National Assembly and to use it as a vanguard for the implementation for social and cultural revolutionary policies. It should be stressed, though, that contrary to the Bolshevik Party, the RPP did not develop into the main vehicle for implementing politics, as this was left to the regular state apparatus. Moreover, it was only in the 1930s that the Kemalist regime sought to use the party as an instrument of mass mobilization and to penetrate society. In the 1930s, the party started to develop a number of social organizations under its wings. Most important of these were the so-called "People's Houses", which were meant to preach the new Kemalist ideals to the peasant population of Anatolia. Although it seems that the success of the People's Houses in penetrating society were limited, they do mark a transition of the RPP from a relatively closed cadre party to one with totalitarian ambitions.

Atatürk died in 1938, but there were strong institutional continuities during the rule of his successor, İsmet İnönü. Yet, İnönü did block the process towards party-state fusion that was started in

<sup>130</sup> Erik Jan Zürcher, "Institution Building in the Kemalist Republic: The Role of the People's Party," in *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernisation in Turkey and Iran, 1918-1942*, ed. Erik Jan Zürcher and Touraj Atabaki (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 98–112.

<sup>131</sup> Welat Zeydanlıoğlu, "'The White Turkish Man's Burden': Orientalism, Kemalism and the Kurds in Turkey," in *Neo-Colonial Mentalities in Contemporary Europe? Language and Discourse in the Construction of Identities*, ed. Guido Rings and Anne Ife (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 5–7.



the late period of Kemal. Only in 1945, in the context of a new geopolitical balance of power, did Turkey turn to a system of multi-party politics.<sup>132</sup>

#### 1.2.4 State repression of ethnic minorities

How did the repression of ethnic minority groups form a part of the transition process in (Ottoman) Turkey? Especially the context of the First World War is important. Ottoman military failures in Eastern Anatolia left the area open to a Russian advance, and brought the “Armenian question” to the foreground. Armenian nationalists proclaimed plans to establish an independent state in the case of a Russian victory, and the large Armenian population of Eastern Anatolia now came to be regarded by Ottoman authorities as a dangerous “fifth column”. Eventually, Ottoman authorities decided to deport (relocate, or *tehcir*, in official language) the entire Armenian population from the war zone in the East to the Syrian desert. The campaigns went far beyond deportations, though, and thousands of Armenians were massacred outright. Historians still disagree about the exact number of people deported and killed. Recent estimates that are based upon extensive archival research indicate that the number of deportees lay between 850,000 and 1,200,000, of whom about 600,000 had perished by 1916.<sup>133</sup>

Deportation practices during the war were not limited to the Armenian population. In Eastern Anatolia, the violence was directed towards other non-Muslim groups as well, such as Yezidis and Syriacs. Kurdish groups, initially also joining in the massacre, were later deported as well.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, several segments of the Greek population were deported from the Aegean littoral to the hinterland of Asia minor. Many more fled. The motivations behind all of these specific operations cannot be discussed at length here. For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to point at the discourse of the perpetrators, which was ridden with the language of social hygiene and a quest for purity. Eşref Sencer Kuşçubaşı, one of the leaders of the “Special Organization”, the organization that was responsible for the implementation of the deportations, described Ottoman Greeks as “internal tumours” that had to be removed. The governor of Diyarbakir province, an area where Armenians suffered particularly under the policies of the Ottomans, argued that the Armenian question was a problem of choosing “between killing the disease and the patients or seeing the destruction of the Turkish nation at the hands of madmen.”<sup>135</sup>

Population policies aimed towards ethnic minorities were practiced by the later Kemalist state as well. Already in 1907, Atatürk proposed that “the Ottoman Empire should voluntarily dissolve itself in order to pave the way for population exchanges that would give rise to a Turkish nation

---

<sup>132</sup> Cemil Koçak, “Some Views on the Turkish Single-Party Regime During the İnönü Period (1938–45),” in *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernisation in Turkey and Iran, 1918-1942*, ed. Touraj Atabaki and Erik Jan Zürcher (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 113–29.

<sup>133</sup> The numbers depend partly on the varying estimates of the total Armenian population living in the Ottoman Empire in 1917, see Ronald Grigor Suny, “*They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else*”: *A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015), 354–55; Akçam, *The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity*, 258, gives a number of 1,200,000 casualties.

<sup>134</sup> Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 101.

<sup>135</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 346, fn 20.

state.”<sup>136</sup> To this end, a population exchange with Greece was organized, in which the remainder of the Greek Orthodox population (about 900,000 people) was exchanged against Muslims from Greece (about 400,000).<sup>137</sup> After this exchange, the Kurdish minority was the most significant non-Turkish group left. In the 1920s and 1930s, large sections of the Kurdish population were deported and resettled across Anatolia, where they were to be forcibly assimilated into Turks. These population policies against the Kurds will be discussed in more detail in chapters 2 and 3.

### 1.3 Comparison and discussion

The trajectory from (total) war to revolution and civil war that (Ottoman) Turkey and Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union followed during this period was not unique in Europe. Similar chains of events occurred in Finland, Ukraine, the Baltic region, Poland, Galicia, Hungary, and Romania.<sup>138</sup> Revolutionary violence in general occurred on an unprecedented scale on the European continent between 1917 and 1923.<sup>139</sup> This demonstrated a shift in political culture. In the words of Martin Conway and Robert Gerwarth: “violence was no longer an exceptional tactic, but had become integral to the modus operandi of the plethora of new and highly dynamic movements active on the extremes of the political spectrum.”<sup>140</sup>

In Russia and Turkey, these developments were bound up with a longstanding crisis, and eventually the collapse, of imperial authority. Out of the collapse, two new kinds of states emerged led by revolutionary movements that had been marginalized during imperial times, had lamented the predicaments of their societies, and tapped into the legitimizing framework of science and the Enlightenment as a way to “catch up” with the west. There were vast differences between these two regimes though, and the nature of their new state was shaped to a large extent by the nature of the crisis that had crushed the old. Whereas the Bolsheviks managed to maintain the territorial integrity of their tsarist predecessors, the Turkish Republic was forged in the crucible of territorial decline. The importance of demographic and territorial loss in the case of the Ottoman Empire cannot be overstated. Thus, whereas the Turks under Kemal struggled for the national, rather than multinational character of their new state, the Bolsheviks struggled over the political form of their government.<sup>141</sup> In this light the relative ideological flexibility of the Young Turks and the dogmatism of the Bolsheviks should be seen.

---

<sup>136</sup> Hanioğlu, *Atatürk*, 37.

<sup>137</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 164; For the population exchanges see Stephen Pericles Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York: MacMillan, 1932); Renee Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003).

<sup>138</sup> Holquist, “Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism?,” 644.

<sup>139</sup> Martin Conway and Robert Gerwarth, “Revolution and Counter-Revolution,” in *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 150.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>141</sup> Carter V. Findley, *The Turks in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 203.

In both states, a belief in the possibilities of the state as a means of achieving change and the party as an instrument of mass mobilization distinguished the new regimes from their predecessors. Institutionally, the almost total restructuring of the political order in the Soviet Union was a highly exceptional case, even when compared to the Nazi regime. At least part of the mass violence in the Soviet Union developed from this major institutional break with the past. In Turkey, the political institutions that had developed during the later period of the Ottoman Empire were largely left untouched. They were extended, strengthened, and put under the increasing authoritarian control of the RPP, but not restructured in essence. Although party and state increasingly converged in the 1930s, it seems that the Kemalists were comparatively circumscribed in their ambitions to control the totality of society. In this respect, it is important to stress the difference between the *totalizing* and *modernizing* ambitions of the state and the limited totalitarian and modern outcomes. Although the Stalinist regime managed to move further on the scale toward a totalitarian outcome, it always remained a modernizing and totalizing state.<sup>142</sup>

From the perspective of population policy, a strong degree of continuity can be discerned in both states. Violent population policies developed above all in a response to crisis and concerns about state security and, so it seems, were to some extent regime independent. For the emergence of population policies toward ethnic minority groups, the First World War was immensely important. Moreover, in the Soviet Union and Turkey they became institutionalized as a ruling method because they were so intricately bound up with the still fragile new order and a continuing crisis situation. Hence, despite the strong difference in the specific direction of state building and party based institutionalization, the ethnic make-up of the population over which the Kemalist and Soviet states came to rule would matter hugely to this process.

The obvious fact that the Young Turks, and later Atatürk, came to power in a period that a large part of Ottoman territory had been lost, made an homogenous Turkish nation state an ideal that could be realized in practice. The Bolshevik effort of establishing control over the ethnically non-Russian areas was necessary because of the presence of important resources in the borderlands. Yet, it did also mean that the Bolsheviks had to reconcile the message of national self-determination that they had trumpeted during the revolution with their desire to establish Soviet power and building a strong multinational socialist state. The Kemalists faced a similar challenge, as they wanted to construct a strong Turkish state, but were faced with the reality of ruling over a number of non-Turkish and non-Muslim groups. This meant that nationalism and nationality policy would be of immense importance for the future development of population policy toward ethnic minority groups. This subject will be taken up in the next chapter.

---

<sup>142</sup> As is argued by Lynne Viola, “The Question of the Perpetrator in Soviet History,” *Slavic Review* 72, no. 1 (2013): 1–23, 20.

## Chapter 2

### *Governing ethnicity, conquering “backwardness”*

#### *Nations, nationalism and population settlement in Turkey and the Soviet Union*

In the previous chapter, the process by which the Soviet Union and Republican Turkey were established was described. This chapter discusses ethnic repression on a strategic level, and investigates the strategies for dealing with ethnic diversity that were developed in both of these states and how these strategies related to the idea of the nation. In the Soviet Union and Turkey, political leaders espoused the ideal that irrespective of ethnic identity, various population groups inhabiting the territory of their state could join the new political order. In Turkey, the Kemalists believed that non-Turkish population groups, predominantly Kurds, could become “Turkified” through a process of (forced) assimilation. The Soviet regime also made painstaking efforts to prove that irrespective of ethnic background, every population group could participate in “socialist construction”.

Yet, despite the nurturist proclamations of these regimes, a trend towards exclusiveness on ethnic grounds can be discerned in both states. In the Soviet Union of the 1930s, non-Russian ethnicity had become a marker of unreliability, and enemies of the state were increasingly defined in ethnic terms.<sup>143</sup> By the mid-thirties, a whole range of “enemy nations” had been constructed that were perceived as “backward” and “anti-Soviet” by nature. Leaders in the Republic of Turkey oscillated on a similar scale. Several Turkish ideologues advocated the possibility of achieving Turkish nationality through education, and in 1921 Atatürk had even proclaimed the possibility of granting Kurdish groups local autonomy. Only four years later he discarded any possibility of giving minority groups equal rights.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, after several Kurdish rebellions, a picture of the Kurds was generated as being “Mountain Turks” that were “culturally backward”, incapable of giving up their “tribal identity”, and forming an internal threat to the territorial integrity of Turkey.<sup>145</sup>

These shifts toward increasing exclusiveness on ethnic grounds despite earlier pronouncements of nurturism and inclusiveness raise three crucial questions that will be tackled in the comparison of this chapter. First, how did political leaders in Turkey and the Soviet Union understand ethnicity and

---

<sup>143</sup> Levene, *Crisis of Genocide*, 348; Weiner, “Nature, Nurture, and Memory in a Socialist Utopia”; Eric D. Weitz, “Racial Politics without the Concept of Race: Reevaluating Soviet Ethnic and National Purges,” *Slavic Review* 61, no. 1 (2002): 1–29; Francine Hirsch, “Race without the Practice of Racial Politics,” *Slavic Review* 61, no. 1 (2002): 30–43.

<sup>144</sup> Yegen, “‘Prospective-Turks’ or ‘Pseudo-Citizens,’” 599.

<sup>145</sup> Zeydanlıoğlu, “‘The White Turkish Man’s Burden’: Orientalism, Kemalism and the Kurds in Turkey,” 8.

nationality, and how did they relate these categories to the fulfilment of their political goals? Second, what kind of policy strategies did they develop to deal with the diverse ethnic make-up of the population, and how did these strategies become accompanied with the ascription of backwardness to certain segments of the population? And third, how was the practice of forced population settlements deployed by the state as a means to fulfil the goals of their ethnic policies?

It should be stressed that the focus here is on understanding the kind of policies that were pursued in both states and how these policies related to the way political leaders understood the idea of the nation, *not* on giving a typology of these states as being a “civic” or “ethnic” nation state (the Soviet Union certainly was neither), empire, or some sort of combination of both.<sup>146</sup> Hence, an elaborate discussion of the manifold theories and models of nationalism is not in place here, though it should be stressed that these categories were not an expression of some sort of “natural” or primordial identity. Scholars have convincingly argued for the importance of elites have played in the manipulation and construction of national identity,<sup>147</sup> although this of course cannot be seen separate from the necessary mass support in order for categories of national identity to become successful. Ethnicity as well remains a sensitive concept, but it is used here primarily as referring to the way political leaders understood the diversity of their own populations, rather than as my own understanding of a coherent and objective identity of the groups of people under discussion.

## 2.1 Nationality policy in the Soviet Union

During the Civil War that followed the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917, the primary concern of the Bolsheviks was to expand the territorial base of the revolution. A large part of the fighting during the conflict occurred in the resource-rich borderlands formerly belonging to the Tsarist state, where the Bolshevik Red Army now had to counter mushrooming nationalist movements that threatened the precarious integrity of the new Communist state. Part of the Bolshevik strategy was to entice these movements by promising them national self-determination in the new state. Hence, by 1924, two years after the end of the Civil War, the newly established Union of Soviet Socialist Republics consisted of thirty-eight independent national territories.<sup>148</sup> The Bolsheviks now had to decide what the slogan of national self-determination they had trumpeted during the revolution and the Civil War could mean within their newly established state. This “nationality question” (*natsional’ny vopros*) was a highly complicated issue that was central to state formation in the Soviet Union for two key reasons. First, the national policy that was to form the output of this nationality question was tied to core issues

<sup>146</sup> The question whether nation building under Kemal followed “civic” or “ethnic” patterns is an important issue in Turkish historiography. For a discussion see Taspinar, *Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey*, 60–66.

<sup>147</sup> This insight has of course famously been pronounced in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>148</sup> Two federal republics, eight union republics, seventeen autonomous republics, and thirteen autonomous oblasts, see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 31.

of Marxist-Leninist ideology that preached international or even world revolution, but now became attached to the complex reality of ruling over borderland regions inhabited by populations who did not have the remotest understanding of class consciousness. Second, the number of officially recognized nationalities was much larger than the number of independent territories. A 1920 census counted fifty-five nationalities, and with the flowering of ethnographic and anthropological research, the number went up to a hundred and ninety in 1926.<sup>149</sup> Thus, the network of thirty-eight different independent national territories inhabited by at least fifty-five officially recognized nationalities produced a highly complicated problem of minorities in all the separate republics.

### 2.1.1 Stalin on the national question

What kind of strategies did the Bolsheviks develop to confront these challenges? The answer was in part provided by Stalin's theoretical approach to nationality. Stalin, proclaimed "master of the nationalities question", wrote numerous times on the issue, gave several speeches and policy recommendations on it on party congresses, and served as Commissar of Nationalities during the Civil War.<sup>150</sup> A number of Stalin's articles and policy recommendations on the nationality question have been published and translated in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*.<sup>151</sup> Of course, they should not be taken at face-value and the actual formation of nationality policy did not consist of a straightforward implementation of Stalin's recommendations. Yet, the articles provide an important starting point for understanding Stalin's personal understanding of the issue. Moreover, one of the texts in the collection, *Marxism and the Nationalities Question*, written upon personal request of Lenin to counter the position on nationalism of competing Austrian Marxists, became a Soviet standard and the basis for most of the policy implemented in the 1920s. In these collected articles, Stalin denies biological and racial conceptions of nationhood, and instead portrays the nation as a political form that is characteristic of the capitalist period. Stalin defined a nation as a "historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture".<sup>152</sup> Moreover, Stalin argued, although nations may have certain particularities or distinguishing characteristics, these are not fixed or unchangeable, but are subject to changing socio-historical circumstances.<sup>153</sup>

Stalin saw control over the borderlands and their populations as the most important key to achieving state security.<sup>154</sup> In 1920, in the midst of the Civil War, he directly related the significance of the national question to the success of the revolution: "unless Central Russia and her border regions

---

<sup>149</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 107.

<sup>150</sup> Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 3–4.

<sup>151</sup> Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question, a Collection of Articles and Speeches*, trans. A. Fineberg (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934).

<sup>152</sup> Joseph Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question (1913)," in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question, a Collection of Articles and Speeches*, trans. A. Fineberg (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 8.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Rieber, *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia*, 200.

mutually support each other the success of the revolution and the liberation of Russia from the clutches of imperialism will not be possible.”<sup>155</sup> In another article, he again stresses the importance of the problem, observing the fact that almost half of the Soviet population consists of non-Russians. The non-Russian populations inhabited mainly border regions, which were both politically and militarily vulnerable and “abound in raw materials, fuel and foodstuffs”.<sup>156</sup>

Thus, Stalin argued that an alliance should be forged between the Great-Russian centre and the periphery. This alliance should be based, he argued, on regional autonomy. This autonomy within the Soviet Union was of a variegated nature, and passed from a narrow administrative autonomy to a “supreme form of autonomy-contractual relations.”<sup>157</sup> Moreover, as becomes evident from a 1921 article, Stalin argued that the Party should help the “toiling masses” of the non-Great Russian peoples to “catch up” with the Russian core region. This should be done through the development of separate Soviet state systems that were “consistent with the national character of these peoples”; the organization of separate institutions (courts, administrative bodies, economic and government organs) that were to function in the native language; and the development of native cultural and educational institutions. Yet at the same time, Stalin warns of the danger of “careerists” or “petty bourgeois elements” that could infiltrate the party, a danger that was particularly immediate in “backward” border regions that did not have a developed proletariat.<sup>158</sup>

Hence, in Stalin’s theoretical treatment of the nationality question, a strong tension between the necessity of granting regional autonomy to different nationalities, and the potential dangers coming from historically unreliable borderland populations was identified. This tension became more pronounced with the actual implementation of nationality policy in the Soviet Union.

### 2.1.2 Nationality policy and population settlement

During the 1920s and the 1930s, the Bolsheviks launched a whole array of policies aimed at promoting the ethnic particularity of their population and at distancing themselves from the “Great-Russian” repression of their tsarist predecessors.<sup>159</sup> This was materialized in campaigns of so-called “indigenization” or “nativization” (*korenizatsiia*) that stimulated the development of national institutions, national languages, and national elites (as advocated by Stalin). Hence, although the Soviet Union was a unified state that institutionalized nationality, it did not strive to create an overarching national identi-

<sup>155</sup> Joseph Stalin, “The Policy of the Soviet Government on the National Question in Russia, (1920),” in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question, a Collection of Articles and Speeches*, trans. A. Fineberg (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 78.

<sup>156</sup> Joseph Stalin, “The October Revolution and the National Policy of the Russian Communists (1921),” in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question, a Collection of Articles and Speeches*, trans. A. Fineberg (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 117.

<sup>157</sup> Stalin, “The Policy of the Soviet Government on the National Question in Russia, (1920),” 78–81.

<sup>158</sup> Joseph Stalin, “Theses on the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Connection with the National Problem, Presented to the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P., Endorsed by the Central Committee,” in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question, a Collection of Articles and Speeches*, trans. A. Fineberg (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 88–98.

<sup>159</sup> Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” in *Stalinism: New Directions* (London: Routledge, 2000).

ty. There was no single official language, and no single national culture, even during the return to an increasing Russian nationalist discourse in the 1930s.<sup>160</sup>

The purposes of this policy have been elaborately debated in Soviet historiography, but it is widely agreed that in principle it was aimed at depriving nationality of its content by granting the forms of nationhood with the goal of delivering the message of the revolution in the Soviet Union's various languages.<sup>161</sup> Thus, nationality policy was as much a way of granting non-Russian populations a degree of autonomy as it was a means of achieving central control over the country's periphery. This is what Stalin meant to achieve with his famous formula of "national in form, socialist in content".

The extent of the *korenizatsiia* campaigns was remarkably vast, and the Soviet state financed the mass-production of cultural expressions in the non-Russian languages in books, journals, newspapers, folk music, etcetera.<sup>162</sup> Moreover, recognizing that nationalist grievances of non-Russian populations were rooted in a legitimate apprehension of "Great Russian chauvinism" and oppression of the Tsarist era, Russian nationalism was branded a dangerous form of "great-power chauvinism" by the Bolsheviks. Policies favoring minorities rather than the Russian majority were implemented. In the North Caucasus and Kazakhstan, for example, Russian land holders were expelled to free up land for the "native" populations.<sup>163</sup>

Seeing nationality as a natural and unavoidable stage of history, the Bolsheviks envisioned that, granting the forms of nationhood, class cleavages would develop naturally. This would moreover provide a pool out of which the Bolsheviks could recruit support for their revolutionary project. This policy of "state-sponsored evolutionism" was framed as a civilizing mission. By granting the forms of nationhood, the Bolsheviks argued they would speed up historical development and help backward regions "catch up" with the Great-Russian core. There was a foreign policy aspect to the affirmative action of the Bolsheviks as well. In what Terry Martin calls the "Piedmont principle", he argues that the Bolsheviks hoped that privileging ethnic minorities would attract diaspora populations living on the other side of the border to come to the Soviet Union and rally to their revolutionary cause. This would serve the additional goal of de-stabilizing these neighbouring states.<sup>164</sup>

These policies had a profound impact on the way people came to identify themselves in the new Soviet order. According to Francine Hirsch, whereas in the early twenties a large number of Soviet citizens had still identified themselves in terms of clan, tribe, religion, or place of origin, by the

---

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>161</sup> For a historiographic discussion, see Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, eds., *State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). 3-22

<sup>162</sup> Terry Martin, "An Affirmative Action Empire, The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism," in *State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 67.

<sup>163</sup> Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 73.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 8-9, 36, 225-27.



1930s nationality had become a prime marker of identity.<sup>165</sup> This was to a large extent a reaction to the program of the state. People learned that they had to identify themselves in terms of one of the official Soviet nationalities in order to voice their concerns.<sup>166</sup> Although this process needed mass support to succeed, this shows the importance of the strong role the state had in terms of *ascribing* identity.<sup>167</sup>

The new approach to nationality, however, generated a fundamental tension that related to how to deal with minorities within the regions that had been formed with the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1923. The Bolsheviks rejected the possibility of assimilating these minorities into the majority because of the association of assimilation with Great Russian chauvinism and because they feared this would lead to ethnic conflict and nationalism.<sup>168</sup> In 1929, Stalin stated that “it is well known that assimilation is categorically excluded from the arsenal of Marxism-Leninism as an antinational, counterrevolutionary and fatal policy.”<sup>169</sup> Additionally, already in Stalin’s *Marxism and the Nationality Question*, the strategy of “extraterritorial autonomy” developed by the Austrian Marxists Otto Bauer and Karl Renner was also rejected.<sup>170</sup> This idea advocated for the formation of institutions that represented the interests of specific nationalities but were not tied to a certain territory. This strategy was perceived as a major threat because any extraterritorial institution based outside of the territory of the Soviet Union could claim leadership over a certain ethnic group living within it. The answer provided by the Bolsheviks, in the 1920s at least, in line with Stalin’s recommendations, was one of extreme ethno-territorial proliferation and the creation of a large number of small national territories, extending down to the village level.<sup>171</sup> This strategy entailed a settlement policy that is striking for a regime that wanted to counter nationalist sentiments among its population. Instead of diluting the population, territorially dispersed populations, such as Assyrians, Kalmyks, Jews, Roma, and Gypsies were to be brought together in order to form a national territory, and so that they could be properly “serviced” as nationalities.<sup>172</sup>

This strategy of concentrating national groups also held for forced agricultural settlement during the collectivization campaigns of the 1930s. In essence, collectivization was intended to speed up the agricultural production of the country by employing the middle-class peasant population on col-

---

<sup>165</sup> Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 145.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 145–46.

<sup>167</sup> Martin, “Modernization or Neo-Traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism”; see also Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia,” *The Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 4 (1993): 745–70.

<sup>168</sup> Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 32, 43.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 408; Stalin, “Natsional’nyi vopros I leninizm [The Nationality Question and Leninism],” *Sochineniia*, vol. ii, 347.

<sup>170</sup> Stalin, “Marxism and the National Question (1913),” 26–35. Somewhat confusingly, in the original text Stalin refers to Renner under his pseudonym “Springer”

<sup>171</sup> Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 30–33.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 44.

lective state farms (*kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy*).<sup>173</sup> Yet, in practice, the campaign was also linked with the nationality question, as national collective farms were envisioned as functioning as a mechanism of acquiring nationhood.<sup>174</sup> Thus, official policy stipulated that national groups should be settled together on collective farms. The land that became available due to this forced out-migration was then to be settled by the in-migrating national majority.<sup>175</sup>

In the broadest sense, nationality policy entailed an attempt to standardize the entirety of the Soviet population with the purpose of delivering the revolutionary message of the Bolsheviks in a diversity of languages. Cultural diversity in the newly established national regions came to be seen as a sign of backwardness and a hurdle that had to be taken in order to standardize the population. In regions such as the *kresy* in Right Bank Ukraine for example, the incredible cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity of the population presented a formidable challenge to Bolshevik rule. More outward resistance to the forceful modernizing campaigns of collectivization and industrialization that were launched in 1929, was particularly persistent and widespread in the *kresy*.<sup>176</sup>

Also in Central Asia, where people often still identified based on their tribal or clan identities, the strategy of ethno-territorial proliferation created problems. In the Kirghiz and Kazakh SSR, for example, tribal leaders demanded to be organized as an independent unit along tribal lines. The response was to “nationalize” the territories they inhabited, most notably through the formation of a standardized language. This process would establish the amalgamation of several tribes and clans into a new nation. Hence, in the Turkmen republic, the population had to be “Turkmenized”, in Uzbekistan, “Uzbekified”, etc. This search for identity was for a large part instigated from above, by Soviet scientists and anthropologists, who marked certain social patterns as being characteristic of the newly established nation.<sup>177</sup> Yet, this policy created a whole array of contradictory and unwanted responses, such as the possibility for certain ethnic groups to wrap resistance to certain policies of the Soviet regime in the flag of newly acquired national interests.<sup>178</sup>

Thus, to sum up, although the Bolsheviks denounced assimilation, they stimulated the amalgamation of diverse population groups into different nationalities, which was seen to develop in tandem with socialist construction. Hirsch uses the term “double assimilation” to describe this process: people had to assimilate both into newly established nationality categories and into the Soviet state

---

<sup>173</sup> For an extensive and incredibly detailed history of collectivization, see R. W. Davies, *The Soviet Collective Farm, 1929-1930* (London: Macmillan Press, 1980); Robert Davies and Stephen Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>174</sup> Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 246–47.

<sup>175</sup> Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 44, 313.

<sup>176</sup> Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 98–101, 107–17.

<sup>177</sup> Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 173–74; see also Adeeb Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism, 1917-1920,” in *State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 145–64.

<sup>178</sup> See for example Northrop, “Nationalizing Backwardness.”

and society as a whole.<sup>179</sup> It should be stressed that the first was seen as a precondition for the second. The Bolsheviks believed that by turning the people of the Tsarist Empire into nationalities, socialist construction could be realized. The use of the term assimilation to denote this process can be criticized<sup>180</sup>, and perhaps it is better to speak of “double amalgamation”: into the nationalities, and into the unified confederate Soviet state.<sup>181</sup>

### 2.1.3 The 1930s and the development of the category of “enemy nations”

In a Politburo decree of December 1932, Stalin for the first time openly criticized the *korenizatsiia* campaigns. As has been noted in the discussion on Stalin’s approach to the nationality question, nationalism and the nation state were always regarded with some degree of suspicion by the Bolsheviks. They saw nationalism as a “masking ideology” that hid counter-revolutionary sentiments.<sup>182</sup> With resistance to the collectivization campaigns in the non-Russian periphery, a grain requisition crisis in 1932, and the mounting influence of the Ukrainian nationalist movement, such suspicions seemed to be confirmed and the 1932 decree attributed these problems to the failure of *korenizatsiia* in Ukraine.<sup>183</sup>

The abandonment of *korenizatsiia* should also be seen in connection to the completion of the collectivization campaigns and the proclamation that socialism had been realized through the destruction of class enemies. Class enemies of the regime were from that moment onward increasingly defined on an ethnic basis. When at the 1934 “Congress of Victors” Stalin celebrated the successes of the collectivization campaigns and the fulfilment of the first Five Year Plan, he also warned that “the survival of capitalism in people’s minds are much more tenacious in the sphere of the national problem than in any other sphere [...] because they are able to disguise themselves well in national costume.”<sup>184</sup> Indeed, the neat distinction between national in form and socialist in content had always been difficult to maintain in practice. Already during the Civil War and the collectivization campaigns, class and ethnically based categories of enemies had been conflated and Cossack, German, Polish, and Jewish minorities were regarded with suspicion and as “kulak by nature”.<sup>185</sup> This example illustrates what some theorists call the “intersectionality” of repressive categories used by the

<sup>179</sup> Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 146.

<sup>180</sup> The key question is to what extent people (beyond local elites) actually used their new national identities, and whether simply adopting a new official language amounts to assimilation. See Robert Kaiser, “Review: Francine Hirsch. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 1, 2006): 1635–36.

<sup>181</sup> Stalin himself uses the word amalgamation.; Stalin, *The amalgamation of the Soviet Republics, Report Delivered at the First Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics December 30, 1922*, 129–136

<sup>182</sup> Martin, “An Affirmative Action Empire, The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism,” 69.

<sup>183</sup> Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 302–8; Robert Davies and Stephen Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931–1933* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). 137–230, 400–441.

<sup>184</sup> Joseph Stalin, “Deviations Towards Nationalism, Extract from the Report on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. Delivered at the Seventeenth Party Congress, January 26, 1934,” in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question, a Collection of Articles and Speeches*, trans. A. Fineberg (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 267–68.

<sup>185</sup> Weiner, “Nature, Nurture, and Memory in a Socialist Utopia,” 1128–29.

state.<sup>186</sup> Ascribed class and ethnicity identity markers could overlap, and were in any case highly ambiguous and did not refer to social reality. Yet, interestingly, according to Stalin the “deviation” to Great Russian nationalism was equally dangerous and should be kept “under fire” as well. Thus, although the 1930s saw a mounting celebration of the Russian people as the “first among equals” and rising importance of the Russian language, this Russification of the revolution was not accompanied with policies of ethnic homogenization along Russian lines.

The ethnicization of class enemies did entail a gradual waning of nurturist ideals and a turn to an increasingly primordial understanding of nationality, though.<sup>187</sup> This process was only completed during the Second World War, with the deportation of the “punished peoples” and the full-fledged return to a Russian nationalist discourse.<sup>188</sup> The ethnicization of the state’s enemies is evident from the transformation of repressive forced settlement policies of the regime as well. Deportations during the 1930s were often territorially based and implemented in sensitive and strategically important border areas that were populated by the so-called “diaspora minorities”: populations such as Germans, Finns, and Koreans, who could be accused of being loyal to a foreign state. In the 1930s, the Soviets still embraced population resettlements as the method to simultaneously improve backward regions and get rid of spies and counterrevolutionaries that had “contaminated” the population.<sup>189</sup> This gave repression a strong prophylactic character that was related to the general fear of a potential threat to Soviet power in the form of a “fifth column” in the case of war.<sup>190</sup> Yet, the door to the possibility of redemption for these groups remained open, at least in theory.<sup>191</sup> During the 1930s, the Bolsheviks launched enormous ethnographic research projects to prove that all nationalities were capable of joining in socialist construction. This increased during the 1930s, with the rise of Nazi Germany and its racist politics as the ideological arch enemy of the Soviet Union. In official Soviet political discourse, “zoological” or racial thinking was loudly rejected as a “bourgeois” ideology.<sup>192</sup>

Another aspect of nationality policy in the 1930s was the sudden decrease in the official number of recognized nationalities living in the Soviet Union. Whereas the census conducted in 1926 counted a number of hundred and ninety officially recognized nationalities, the number had suddenly

---

<sup>186</sup> For a general discussion of the term intersectionality, see Patricia Hill Collins, “Intersectionality’s Definitional Dilemmas,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 41 (August 14, 2015): 1–20.

<sup>187</sup> Weiner, “Nature, Nurture, and Memory in a Socialist Utopia”; Martin, “Modernization or Neo-Traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism.”

<sup>188</sup> see David Brandenberger, “‘... It Is Imperative to Advance Russian Nationalism as the First Priority’: Debates within the Stalinist Ideological Establishment, 1941–1945,” in *State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 275–99.

<sup>189</sup> Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 91.

<sup>190</sup> For the argument that the Great Terror was unleashed against a potential fifth column, see in particular Oleg Khlevniuk, “Objectives of the Great Terror, 1937–1938,” in *Stalinism: The Essential Readings*, ed. David Hoffmann (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).

<sup>191</sup> Weiner, “Nature, Nurture, and Memory in a Socialist Utopia,” 1131–33.

<sup>192</sup> Weitz, “Racial Politics without the Concept of Race,” 3.

dropped by a hundred in a census conducted in 1937.<sup>193</sup> Accounting for the drop was the purging of tribal, clan, and regional names, as well as the amalgamation of smaller nationalities into larger ones.<sup>194</sup> This “purging” of different identities was to “scientifically prove” the success of the Soviet program of state-sponsored evolutionism.

During the war, this policy changed, and repression was increasingly perpetrated not territorially, but explicitly based on ethnic identity. For example, when in 1941 Stalin ordered the removal of ethnic Germans, the order was implemented not only in sensitive areas, but throughout the whole territory of the Soviet Union.<sup>195</sup> The Second World War also saw the rise of another type of resettlement policy dubbed “retributive resettlement” (Russian). This fate befell the Chechen-Ingush, Karachi, Kalmyk, and Balkar peoples of the North Caucasus and Crimea in 1943–44. They were accused of having collectively collaborated during the German occupation and had allegedly committed crimes against the Soviet state. The territorial aspect remained relevant, though, and these peoples were above all removed because their presence was deemed undesirable in a sensitive border region.<sup>196</sup> Moreover, it seems that the nurturist principle survived to some degree as well, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. But first, the remainder of this chapter will analyse Turkey’s own nationality question and policy.

## 2.2 The nation and ethnic policy in Turkey

After the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the key concern of the Kemalists was to strengthen the notion of Anatolia as the territorial unit of the Turkish fatherland (*vatan*). In Ottoman history, Anatolia had previously not been a place of particular importance, and the focus was instead on Rumelia.<sup>197</sup> Several factors leading to the rising importance of Anatolia stand out for understanding the ethnic policies later pursued by the Kemalist regime.

First of these factors was the CUP seizure of power in 1908 and their centralizing and Turkifying policies. Muslims in general and Turks in particular were perceived by CUP leaders as being more dependable allies than Christians. The nationalizing agenda of the CUP was initially kept hidden beneath the lip-service that was paid to ideal of Ottomanism, which proclaimed that the various nations constituting the empire could stay united in an indivisible homeland. Yet, the CUP’s actual policy was more exclusive and aimed towards the Turkification of the Ottoman state. In 1909, for example a “Law of Association” banned the use of political organizations based on ethnic or national identity.<sup>198</sup> Although the question whether the CUP immediately attempted to establish an ethnically ho-

<sup>193</sup> Rieber, *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia*, 107.

<sup>194</sup> Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 277.

<sup>195</sup> Polian, *Against Their Will*, 135–36.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 140–56.

<sup>197</sup> Hugh. Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf, and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (London: Hurst, 1997), 63–64.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 70, 80.

homogeneous nation is debatable, their pursuit of Turkifying policies has been demonstrated repeatedly.<sup>199</sup>

The second factor was the territorial decline of the empire and the loss of territories in Europe and the Middle East (described in chapter 1) and the resulting influx of a large number of Muslim refugees in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into Anatolia. These refugees originated from the newly established states in the Balkans, which regarded large Muslim populations as a threat to their newfound Christian national identity. Between 1821 and 1922, more than five million Ottoman Muslims were driven away from their homes in the Balkans, and another five and a half million died.<sup>200</sup> A large part of the people expelled from various parts of the Ottoman Empire fled to Anatolia (in total seven million by 1914).<sup>201</sup>

Third, these processes together led to the enlargement of the demographic weight of Turkish and Muslim groups in Anatolia at the expense of Christian or other non-Muslim groups and a simultaneous sense among Turkish and Muslim groups as being under constant threat. Nationalist sentiments among Ottoman-Turkish Muslims emerged and the significance of nationalism as a political force increased. “Turkishness” came to be regarded as an umbrella identity for Ottoman Muslims living in Anatolia.<sup>202</sup> The demographic dominance of Turkish groups and ethnic homogenization was further enhanced with the destruction of the Armenian population during the First World War, and the population exchange with Greece in 1923. By the late 1920s, the Kurds had become by far the largest remaining non-Turkish group in Anatolia, and Turkey had become almost 98% Muslim and 80% Turkish.<sup>203</sup> Other ethnic groups included Greeks, Circassians, Armenians, Albanians, Bulgarians, etc. From the point of view of the regime, these groups were less important than the Kurds, because they accounted for less than one percent of the population. Moreover, because the Kurds inhabited a large contiguous area in the southeast of Turkey, their adherence to the new regime was crucial for the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the state.

### 2.2.1 Ziya Gökalp on nationality

Given this situation, how was nationality defined in Kemalist Turkey, and how can this be related to the policy strategies that were developed regarding the ethnic diversity of the state? An important source for the study of Turkish nationalism is the work of Ziya Gökalp (himself of Zaza-Kurdish descent). Gökalp was one of the most important ideologues of the CUP and later the RPP, and in his work he focused on the formation of the Turkish nation and Turkish identity. In his famous work, *The*

---

<sup>199</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, “Writing Genocide: The Fate of the Armenians,” in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 34.

<sup>200</sup> Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>201</sup> Kemal Karpat, “Historical Continuity and Identity Change” in: *Ottoman past and today’s Turkey*, (Leiden E.J. Brill, 2000), 22.

<sup>202</sup> Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, 6–7.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

*Principles of Turkism* (1920), Gökulp rejects three approaches to the idea of the nation.<sup>204</sup> The first is the racist approach. Reminiscent of Bolshevik rhetoric, Gökulp states that “race is a term properly used only in zoology.”<sup>205</sup> The second approach he rejects is the idea that national identity is based on ethnic origin: “social traits are not transmitted through biologic inheritance but only through education, which means that ethnic origin plays no role whatever as regards national character.”<sup>206</sup> The third approach he rejects is the territorial and geographic one, and the idea that “a nation is the sum of persons who inhabit a given geographic area.”<sup>207</sup> According to Gökulp, the core flaw of the ideal of Ottomanism was the failure to admit that within the Ottoman empire distinct national cultures were present, an important difference with the Soviet promotion of ethnic diversity. Finally, Gökulp arrives at the following definition of a nation:

The above statements make it clear that a nation is not a racial or ethnic or geographic or political or volitional group but one composed of individuals who share a common language, religion, morality and aesthetics, that is to say, who have received the same education.<sup>208</sup>

Gökulp moreover saw the strengthening of national consciousness as being of vital importance in order to achieve progress, arguing that “national consciousness is not only the source of all progress but also the source and cornerstone of national independence”, and that “there is no way to end colonial life in the Islamic World except by strengthening the national consciousness.”<sup>209</sup> In this context it is important to remark that in his thinking, Gökulp drew a distinction between “civilization” and “culture”. The former he saw as western achievements in technology and bureaucratic administration, which could be imported to Turkey. The latter he saw as the values and beliefs that define a people. Thus, according to Gökulp, Islam was culture and should be separated from the state, and the political domination of religion had to end. Thus, Gökulp wanted to synthesize Islam and the state through three components: the “national” peasant culture of Anatolia, Islam as a matter of individual conscience, and European “civilization” with its material achievements and scientific methods as ruling mechanisms for the state.<sup>210</sup>

Gökulp’s nurturist definition of the nation with its emphasis upon language and education entailed the possibility, in principle, that non-Turkish ethnic groups living in Anatolia could be assimilated. Atatürk also on several occasions proclaimed that the new Turkey would be a state for all ethnic groups living in the Anatolian territory (thus bringing a territorial element in the conception of the nation).

---

<sup>204</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism: Translated from the Turkish and Annotated by Robert Devereux*, trans. Robert Devereux (Leiden E.J. Brill, 1968).

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 60–61.

<sup>210</sup> Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf, and Crescent*, 76–79.

Attatürk made several appeals to Kurdish-Turkish solidarity and in 1921 even argued that:

in accordance with our Constitution, a kind of local autonomy is to be granted. Hence, provinces inhabited by Kurds will rule themselves autonomously. [The] Grand National Assembly of Turkey is composed of the deputies of both Kurds and Turks and these two peoples have unified interests and fates.<sup>211</sup>

Yet, by 1924, he had reversed his stance and said that:

Our state is a nation state. It is not a multi-national state. The state does not recognize any nation other than Turks. There are other peoples which come from different ethnic groups and who should have equal rights within the country. Yet it is not possible to give rights to these people in accordance with their ethnic status.<sup>212</sup>

### 2.2.2 Ethnic policy in Turkey

How was the nurturist principle of nationality translated into political practice in Kemalist Turkey?

Although Atatürk repeatedly argued that Anatolia was the territory of the Turkish nation, not all people living within it were seen as belonging to it. Especially the Christian populations were regarded as hostile and not belonging to the nation.<sup>213</sup> This hostility to “Christian elements” is evident from Atatürk’s “Great Speech” (*Nutuk*) of 1927.<sup>214</sup> In this speech, delivered over a period of six days, Atatürk relates his personal account of the War of Independence and gives his vision for the Turkish Republic. He paints a picture of the Turkish nation (Atatürk uses the word as if it refers to a natural entity) as being under threat from a whole array of hostile foreign and internal forces, saying that “Christian elements were also at work all over the country, either openly or in secret, trying to realise their own particular ambitions and thereby hasten the breakdown of the state.”<sup>215</sup> Moreover, Atatürk several times dwells on the undesirability of granting privileges to minority populations: “the majority in the purely national districts of the country shall not be sacrificed in the favour of the minority”<sup>216</sup>; and “no privileges which could impair our political sovereignty or our social equilibrium shall be granted to the Christian elements.”<sup>217</sup>

The rejection of minority rights is of course most evident from the failure of the Treaty of Sèvres. In that treaty (signed 10 August 1920), the Allied powers had provided for the creation of a local autonomous administration of those regions where Kurdish groups were in a majority.<sup>218</sup> The treaty was never implemented, and in the treaty of Lausanne (1923) that provided for the official settlement of the conflict, the matter was dropped entirely. In Atatürk’s own words: “here [in the Treaty of Lausanne] such stipulations [the protection of rights of minorities] are to be found as they exist in

<sup>211</sup> Yegen, “‘Prospective-Turks’ or ‘Pseudo-Citizens,’ ” 599.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf, and Crescent*, 94.

<sup>214</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *The Great Speech* (Ankara: Atatürk Research Center, 2005).

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 602–3.



all international treaties made after World War I, as we have adopted them in our national pact; *they are only applicable to non-Muslims* [my emphasis].”<sup>219</sup>

Such obligations were not a heavy sacrifice to be made in a country where after the genocide on the Christian population in 1915, ethnic cleansing of Greek Orthodox Christians during the “War of Independence”, and the 1923 population exchange with Greece, the problem of the remaining “Christian elements” had been “solved” and the population was more than 97 percent Muslim.<sup>220</sup> Accordingly, there was no attempt to assimilate Christian population groups in Turkey in the 1920s, but they were instead marginalized.<sup>221</sup> Hence, a distinction should be made between those groups that by the time of the establishment of the Republic were seen as able to join the new order, and those who were excluded from the outset on the basis of their ethnicity or religion. As for the autochthonous non-Turkish Muslims living in Anatolia, such as Kurds, Arabs, Lazs, and Georgians the regime expected that they would assimilate naturally. This spouted from Gökalp’s nurturist approach to nationality, suggesting that Turkish nationality could be achieved through education.

Yet, contrary to the uprooted immigrants that had come to Anatolia in search of a new existence, the identity of the indigenous groups was firmly anchored in their place of residency, and they had no obvious direct stake in merging into the Turkish nation.<sup>222</sup> Resultantly, Kurdish resistance to assimilation came to be perceived through the lens of regional backwardness, and Kurds were seen as representing all “the evils of Turkey’s pre-modern past.”<sup>223</sup> Moreover, because the Kurds inhabited a large contiguous region, it was feared that the still precarious integrity of the Republic might be threatened. The Kemalist fears were not entirely irrational. Of the eighteen rebellions that broke out in Turkish territory in the period 1924-1938, sixteen of them were organized by Kurdish groups.<sup>224</sup> These rebellions were interpreted by the central government as the expression of a desire by Kurds to return to the old order, generating an image of the Kurds as simultaneously “culturally backward” and an internal threat to the territorial integrity of the state.<sup>225</sup>

Such rebellions were repressed ruthlessly by the regime, which feared the secession of the Kurdish provinces. The Sheikh Said rebellion of 1925 was crushed down with aerial bombing by the Turkish air force, although the extent of these operations has been put into question.<sup>226</sup> During the crushing of the rebellion, thousands of civilians were killed. After the rebellion was over, its leaders were hanged and their families deported to Western Anatolia. Leading Kurdish intellectuals were

---

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 605.

<sup>220</sup> Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, 16.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 18–19.

<sup>223</sup> Yegen, “‘Prospective-Turks’ or ‘Pseudo-Citizens,’” 599.

<sup>224</sup> Zeydanlıoğlu, “‘The White Turkish Man’s Burden’: Orientalism, Kemalism and the Kurds in Turkey,” 8; Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, refers to a book published by the Turkish Army Staff Headquarters, which lists thirteen disturbances in 1925-30.

<sup>225</sup> Zeydanlıoğlu, “‘The White Turkish Man’s Burden,’” 6–8.

<sup>226</sup> Robert Olson, “The Kurdish Rebellions of Sheikh Said (1925), Mt. Ararat (1930), and Dersim (1937-38): Their Impact on the Development of the Turkish Air Force and on Kurdish and Turkish Nationalism,” *Die Welt Des Islams* 40, no. 1 (2000): 67–94.

arrested and executed as well.<sup>227</sup> The Sheikh Said rebellion also convinced the central government that a more forceful and comprehensive programme tackling the “Kurdish Question” was needed.

In 1926, the central government formulated the *Şark Islahat Planı* (Eastern Regions Reform Plan), which stipulated a comprehensive approach to assimilate the Kurdish population.<sup>228</sup> Moreover, several Inspectorates-General were established. These were regional governments that were formed in several areas of eastern Anatolia. These were typically areas that had witnessed some form of Kurdish resistance or in other ways avoided central authority, and the Inspectorate-Generals were meant to incorporate these regions in the Turkish nation through implementing policies realizing Turkification.<sup>229</sup> Another development were increased efforts to make the Kurdish population “legible” to the state. From the late 1920s onward, the Directorate General for Resettlement conducted several censuses that took stock of the ethnic make-up of the population. A key concern in this research was the way the Kurdish population was distributed across the country.<sup>230</sup>

In order to achieve the strengthening of national consciousness among the Anatolian population in general, the Kemalists launched a comprehensive programme aimed at the replacement of Islam as the basis of Turkish identity with a “scientific” theory of Turkish peoplehood. This theory was exalted in the (in)famous “Turkish History Thesis”, developed in the 1930s by a number of leading Turkish scientists. This thesis, backed up with Darwinian social science and anthropological research, argued that the Turks stood at the basis of all human civilizations. The related Sun Language theory “proved” that the Turkish language was the first language of civilized humanity, and all other languages derived from it.<sup>231</sup> The Turkish history thesis also involved a denial of the ethnic identity of the Kurds. The Kurds were constructed as Turks who had “forgotten their Turkishness”. This “scientific fact” became part of the Turkish state’s official discourse, legitimizing a programme of forced Turkification that was to “integrate the Kurds into the Turkish core.”<sup>232</sup>

Settlement policies based on censuses were launched by the regime with the double purpose of enhancing the demographic weight of Turks and pacifying areas in which the Kurdish population was the majority. To this end, two important Resettlement Laws were passed in 1926 and 1934, which were to provide the legal framework for the settling of Turkish immigrants into non-Turkish areas and, reversely, for the moving of segments of the Kurdish populations out of these area’s and settling them into western Anatolia where they were to be “made into Turks”.<sup>233</sup> The Kurds that were deported to Western Anatolia were to be spread geographically to prevent their congregation in separate territo-

<sup>227</sup> Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 129–31.

<sup>228</sup> Yeşim Bayar, *Formation of the Turkish Nation-State, 1920-1938* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 51–52.

<sup>229</sup> Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, 22, 47–48.

<sup>230</sup> Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, 66–68.

<sup>231</sup> Hanioglu, *Atatürk*, 164–83.

<sup>232</sup> Zeydanlıoğlu, “‘The White Turkish Man’s Burden’,” 9.

<sup>233</sup> Erol Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies, Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, no. 7 (September 23, 2008): 1–19; Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, 86–90.

ries. This strategy of demographic dilution was already practiced by the CUP during deportations of Kurds in the aftermath of the Armenian genocide, testifying to the degree to which strategies of population resettlement were a defining aspect of both the Young Turks and the Kemalists.<sup>234</sup> In Chapter 3, I will discuss the massacres and deportations of Zaza Kurds in the Dersim area in 1937-8 in the context of these Resettlement Laws, and compare them with the deportation of the Chechen-Ingush in the Soviet Union.

---

<sup>234</sup> Akçam, *The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity*, 43–45; Üngör, “Seeing like a Nation-State,” 26.

## 2.3 Comparison and discussion

This comparison is structured according to the three questions posed at the beginning of this chapter.

1. *How did political leaders in Turkey and the Soviet Union understand ethnicity and nationality, and how did they relate these categories to the fulfilment of their political goals?*

This chapter has compared Stalin's and Gökalp's understanding of nationality. In both cases, their ideas can of course not be taken as representative of that of the entire political elite. Yet, because they both occupied an important position in their respective political systems, the comparison is valuable in terms of relating these understandings of nationality to the policies pursued in both regimes.

Stalin and Gökalp had a nurturist and non-essentialist understanding of ethnicity and nationality. Stalin and Gökalp both rejected biological racism and the idea that ethnic and national identities were fixed in time. Instead, they placed great emphasis on the importance of language and education in the development of national identities. Moreover, they saw the program of the nation state as the vehicle by which their new countries were to "catch up" and achieve modernization. The espousal of this nurturist conception of the nation enabled both regimes to pursue ambitious modernization programs that were aimed at forging a new identity among certain "problematic" or "backward" elements of the population. An important difference is that Stalin saw no problem in unifying different national cultures under the banner of state socialism, whereas Gökalp rejected the multi-national ideal of Ottomanism.

In the Soviet Union the nation state was seen as the means to achieve a certain end, and the policy of *korenizatsiia* was always seen as auxiliary to the establishment of a strong socialist state. In Turkey, the realization of a nation state was the end in itself. The fact that both in the Soviet Union and Turkey the necessity of a new, national identification was proclaimed as a way of overcoming (regional) backwardness testifies to the importance of the national idea in the post First World War context and helps in softening the distinction between the Soviet Union and other mid-twentieth century nation states.<sup>235</sup>

2. *What kind of policy strategies did these states develop in order to deal with the diverse ethnic make-up of the population, and how did these strategies become accompanied with the ascription of backwardness to certain segments of the population?*

In both regimes, ethnic diversity of the population was a major concern for the state and significant efforts were launched to make the population legible through ethnographic research and censuses. Science was instrumental in defining Turkish nationhood and in defining the various national identities of the Soviet Union. Although in the Soviet Union ethnic diversity was to some extent promoted through science and ethnography, the forceful amalgamation of pre-national (clan, tribal, religious)

---

<sup>235</sup> Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*, 9–10.

identities into new national categories was a process that was destructive of diversity. In this sense, in both cases elements of the national (nationalist in Turkey) homogenization of territorial space can be discerned. The “scientific” purging of tribal, clan, and other local identities from the list of officially recognized nationalities in the Soviet Union and the “scientific” denial of the existence of a separate Kurdish ethnic identity moreover testifies to the strong desires felt by both regimes to conquer difference and standardize the population. Thus, divergent ethnic groups were branded with a temporal identity. Their “backwardness” was not eternal, but would be erased and uplifted by their incorporation in the civilizing and modernizing program of the state.

There was a strong regional component in Bolshevik nationality policy and Kemalist ethnic policy. *Korenizatsiia* was designed to establish more efficient state control over the borderland regions of the Soviet Union, and in a similar way the assimilation of the Kurds was launched to effectively govern Eastern Anatolia. This regional and territorial component to the ethnic policy strengthens the argument that both regimes lacked biological racism as the founding element of ethnic policy, although in both states signs of a racist discourse were increasingly present.

### 3 *How was the practice of forced population settlements deployed by both states as a means to fulfil the goals of their ethnic policies?*

The practice of population resettlements was part and parcel to the establishment of national institutions and the organization of the state according to ethnic criteria. Through the 1920s and 1930s, both regimes were actively involved in replacing entire categories of the population, although the way they did so and with which purposes differed significantly. In Turkey, the settlement and demographic dilution of the Kurdish population served the key purpose of assimilation. In the Soviet Union of the 1920s and early 1930s, the concentration of territorially dispersed national groups in designated national territories served the purpose of efficiently broadcasting the revolutionary message of the Bolsheviks in all the languages of the population. In the 1930s, the constructive element in Soviet population settlements decreased, as these practices acquired a prophylactic character and served the prime purpose of maintaining the security of the state. Yet, the fact that these policies were by the late 1930s still implemented primarily on a territorial basis suggests the survival of the nurturist principle. Thus, it should be stressed that in both cases the increasing exclusiveness on ethnic grounds did not necessarily entail an abandonment of the nurturist principle, but rather a strengthening of it. It were most of all the ethnic and other pre-national identities that had to disappear, more so than the specific groups themselves. In the perception of the political elite, the ethnic identity of certain groups and resistance to the new order in several instances overlapped. This is all the more ironic because to a large extent it was the regime itself which had ascribed ethnic identity through the launching of efforts to categorize the population. Importantly, in the Soviet Union ethnic identity was not the only kind of identity that could overlap with resistance to the new order, and a whole range of people with trusted Russian ethnicity were deemed “anti-Soviet” by nature and fell subject to repression.

## **Chapter 3:** *The “punished peoples”*

*The deportation and resettlement of the Chechen-Ingush in the Soviet Union and the Zaza Kurds in  
Republican Turkey- a comparative case study*

In the previous two chapters, it has become clear how, through the processes of regime change and nation and state formation, the forced resettlement of ethnic population groups became an important ruling strategy in Turkey and the Soviet Union. This chapter discusses deportation policies on an empirical level, and through doing so attempts to understand how such policies were implemented and how they played out “on the ground”. To this end, the chapter describes and analyses two specific instances of mass resettlement programs that were implemented in the Stalinist Soviet Union and Kemalist Turkey. In the Soviet Union, it looks at operations of the Soviet secret police resettling the entire Chechen-Ingush population from the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) to Central Asia in February 1944. In Turkey, it analyses the operations of the Turkish army that resulted in massacres and mass deportations of the Kurdish population in the Dersim area between September 1937 and August 1938. The chapter starts with a brief discussion on terminology before moving on to the case studies.

The two case studies are separated into three paragraphs each, starting with a brief prehistory of the afflicted regions, then moving on to the direct context and official motivations for the deportations, then discussing the implementation of deportation, and finally the procedure of resettlement. The final part of the chapter will compare the two cases on a more abstract level with regards to six variables. These are the internal/external character of the deportation; whether they occurred during war or peace; the degrees of professionalization or mass mobilization in their implementation; accompanying degrees of mass murder; the total or partial character of the deportations; and finally analogous practices of ethnic dilution, ethnic consolidation and forced assimilation. Some additional comparative remarks will be made as well.

### **Motivation of case selection**

The ubiquity of the practice of resettling population groups within the boundaries of the state has become abundantly clear in the previous chapters. Here, it is important to elucidate what makes the comparison of these two particular cases a meaningful one. The problem of selection holds particularly for the Soviet Union where the Chechen-Ingush population was only one of a whole range of “enemy nations” that fell subject to the states’ repressive policies. During the Second World War alone,

the Soviets deported from their home areas Germans, Finns, Karachays, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Meshketian Turks, Kurds, and Khemsils, resettling them in so-called “special settlements” in Central Asia and Siberia. It is tempting to see all these deportations as the result of simple xenophobia with regards to everything foreign in wartime conditions, but it proves worthwhile to look at these specific instances more closely. First, because of the simple fact that there were numerous non-Russian ethnic minority groups that were not deported. Second, because the deportations were bound to a specific territorial area (the Chechen-Ingush ASSR for example), and were aimed at ridding this area of its population. Moreover, it is important to make a distinction between the resettlement of indigenous populations that were considered “backward” (Karachays, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Armenians) and those that belonged to the “diaspora nationalities” or were thought in some way to have had connections with a foreign state (Germans, Greeks, Bulgarians, Turks, Kurds).

This chapter compares the deportation and resettlement of the Chechen-Ingush and Zaza Kurds primarily for the reason that both instances of state repression were massive operations that were deployed with a tremendous display of military or police power, occurring within a relatively limited timespan in a well-defined geographic area. Additionally, these two cases give insight into the practice of forced population movements as deployed by these regimes as a strategy of rule from a position where their power was already consolidated. Also noteworthy is the comparable pre-history of clashes of the Dersim Kurds and the Chechen-Ingush populations with the centralizing state. This historically troubled relationship played an important role in the deportations, as will become clear below. Moreover, both population groups had a tribal or semi-nomadic background and as a result were considered by the state as “backward”.

A final incentive underpinning this particular comparison is a historiographical one. Although the Soviet deportations have been put in a number of comparative contexts, these do not incorporate the deportation of Kurds under Kemalism.<sup>236</sup> Comparative research on deportations that does include Turkey or the Ottoman Empire is generally limited to the case of the Armenians. Given the scarce material that is available on particularly the Kurdish deportations, this historiographic gap should not come as a big surprise. Yet, anno 2017, the body of available secondary literature is sufficiently developed to allow a first comparative overview and analysis, although the extent of this analysis is of course somewhat limited.

---

<sup>236</sup> Examples of influential comparative studies of deportations that do not incorporate a study of deportations of the Kurds include: Benjamin David Lieberman, *Terrible Fate: Ethnic Cleansing in the Making of Modern Europe* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006); Norman M Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (London: Harvard University Press, 2001); Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

### Terminology

Before moving on to a description and analysis of the cases, it is important to spend a few words on the terminology used to refer to these two instances of ethnic repression. In the scholarly literature, these episodes of mass violence, in particular the deportation of the Chechen-Ingush, have been referred to as instances of “ethnic cleansing”. Of course, in theoretical scholarship on political and ethnic violence, there is no definite agreement on the use of this term, and its meaning remains problematic and somewhat elusive. In the broadest sense, the term ethnic cleansing is used by scholars to refer to the purposeful removal of a specific population from a given territory. This is in line with UN Resolution 780 adopted in 1992. The resolution is based upon the ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia of the 1990s, and defines ethnic cleansing as a “purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas.”<sup>237</sup> Since the 1990s, the term has been used abundantly in scholarship, sometimes without a clear definition.<sup>238</sup>

Indeed, the deportations of Kurds and Chechens were instances of the forcible removal of a specific population group from a given territory, but for the purposes of this comparison, this term is too vague and inclusive. Most importantly, the goal of removal of population groups from a given territory might be pursued with very different means. When killing is the prime means by which the removal of a specific population is sought to be realized, it becomes too difficult to distinguish ethnic cleansing from genocide. As will become clear in this chapter, the deportation of Kurds and Chechens did go accompanied with outright massacres and killing, but the physical destruction of these groups was never the purpose of these operations. Additionally, the deportation of Chechens was, although based on ethnic grounds, not pursued by a specific ethnic group. Hence, for the sake of clarity, I choose to avoid the term ethnic cleansing. Instead, I refer to both instances of deportation as *forced internal population movements*, which can be defined as the removal and resettlement of a specific population group by the state and identified by the state within the boundaries of the state’s territory.<sup>239</sup> Such population movements were a distinctive type of repressive measure. They were of administrative nature, and perceived by the ruling groups in these regimes as a vital element of ruling the state. Moreover, their implementation was based on group identity that was, to a large extent, ascribed “from above” by the state. This is a fundamentally different repressive policy than measures taken on an individual basis, and individual loyalty to the regime could not help in avoiding deportation.

---

<sup>237</sup> “Letter Dated 24 May 1994 From the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council” (United Nations Security Council, May 27, 1994), [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/1994/674](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/1994/674).

<sup>238</sup> An example is Michael Mann’s detailed and sophisticated study, which nevertheless does not give a clear definition: Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*.

<sup>239</sup> Polian, *Against Their Will*, 1.



### 3.1 Deportation of the Chechen-Ingush



Map 4: *The Caucasus region in the Soviet Union.*<sup>240</sup>

The Chechen and Ingush populations (the names were given by Russians, based upon place names, they refer to themselves as *Vainakhs*, meaning “our people”) are two related<sup>241</sup> population groups that have lived in the North Caucasus region since ancient times. The northern part of the native region of the Chechen-Ingush consists of steppe flatlands, while the landscape of the south is mountainous and extremely isolated by the Greater Caucasus Range. Through the course of history, Russian settlers gradually occupied the northern lowlands, driving the Chechen and Ingush south. The Chechen population of the region adopted Islam during the medieval period, whereas the Ingush did so only in the nineteenth century. Together, they made up the largest Muslim group in the North Caucasus region. Tensions between especially the Chechens and the Great-Russian population predate Soviet rule, and

<sup>240</sup>Source: “Administrative Map of Caucasus in the USSR,” accessed June 2, 2017, <https://qph.ec.quoracdn.net/main-qimg-fc044bbbaa0009af5087c09d5825ca41.webp>.

<sup>241</sup> The main difference between the groups besides their demographic spread is that the Chechen seem to have been less accommodating towards Russian and Soviet rule than the Ingush, who remained Christian until the nineteenth century. This difference in attitude did not lead to a more benign policy towards the Ingush from the side of the Soviets, though.

the North Caucasus region was one of the so-called “complex frontiers” in Russia that was particularly prone to conflict (discussed in chapter 1).<sup>242</sup> The Tsars tried to rule over the area with policies of benign co-optation and granting of local autonomy alternated with more aggressive policies of assimilation. Substantive uprisings against tsarist rule occurred in the area during the Crimean War, and revolts continued throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>243</sup>

During Soviet rule, Chechnya and Ingushetia first became two separate autonomous provinces (*oblasti*), and were then united in 1934. In 1936, the region was elevated to the level of Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic (ASSR) within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFR). Together with the other autonomous national territories of the North Caucasus, the Chechen-Ingushetia ASSR became known as the “most backward” region of the RSFR.<sup>244</sup> This ascription of “backwardness” had much to do with the frustrations that resulted from attempts to incorporate the region in the Soviet body politic and various experiences of outward resistance from the region’s local population. During the Civil War following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, the Bolsheviks had enormous trouble to establish effective control over the North Caucasus area. In 1925, armed resistance to the Red Army was finally crushed with a colossal military operation during which the army reported that the “bandit element” was “extracted”.<sup>245</sup> In the later 1920s, during the hey-day of the *korenizatsiia* campaigns (see Chapter 2), several attempts at creating a unified language for the Chechen-Ingush region were launched, but accomplished virtually nothing.<sup>246</sup> Another element adding to distrust of the populations of the North Caucasus region was the widespread occurrence of resistance to the Soviet system of collective farms. Peasant resistance to collectivization was widespread across the entire Soviet Union, but particularly so in the border regions.<sup>247</sup> Chechnya was one of the regions to which Red Army troops were dispatched to put down large armed bands of peasants resisting collectivization. In Chechnya, a rebellion was recorded as late as 1932.<sup>248</sup> During the 1930s, the relationship between the Soviet authorities and the population of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR became more troubled. The Soviets suspected widespread activity of a network of “counterrevolutionary bands” that received

<sup>242</sup> The other three were the Cossack steppe in the southern periphery, the Polish frontier, and the Baltic region, see Alfred J. Rieber, “Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: An Interpretive Essay,” in *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. Hugh Ragsdale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 315–59; Rieber, “Civil Wars in the Soviet Union.”

<sup>243</sup> James S. Olson, Lee Brigance, and Nicholas C. Pappas, eds., *Ethnohistorical dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empire* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1994), 146–149, 291–294; J. Otto Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937–1949* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999) 79–83; (Alfred J. Rieber, *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 393.

<sup>244</sup> Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 171.

<sup>245</sup> Evan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2007), 188–206 Holquist, ‘To count, to extract, to exterminate’, 111; Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 93.

<sup>246</sup> Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 171.

<sup>247</sup> Of the 1,197 rural soviet officials that murdered in 1930, 438 occurred in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the Transcaucasus, the North Caucasus, Bashkiria, and Tatarstan, although these areas had only 18.5% of the population of the Soviet Union, see Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 110.

<sup>248</sup> Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 294.

mass support from the local population. Finally, with the outbreak of the Second World War, the North Caucasus region saw a serious armed uprising, and there were clashes between the NKVD and armed gangs. A large part of the gang members (17,563 in total) that were caught by the NKVD were of Chechen-Ingush nationality. Guerrilla and insurgent activities continued throughout the war, threatening the supply lines of the Soviet Red Army and thwarting its general military effort against the German Wehrmacht.<sup>249</sup> Moreover, during the early war years, the Soviets allegedly found out about the organization of a “nationalist-socialist” party among the Chechens that had planned to stage an uprising in co-operation with the Nazis.<sup>250</sup>

### 3.1.1 Official motivation and legitimization

In the summer of 1942, the German Wehrmacht launched operation *Edelweiß*, invading the Caucasus region. The German invasion and partial occupation of the North Caucasus provided the immediate background for the decision to deport the entire Chechen-Ingush, Balkar, Kalmyk and Karachay nationalities from the North Caucasus region. These deportations can be called “retributive” because they were all deployed with some form of reference to alleged wrongdoings of these peoples during the war.<sup>251</sup> Important here is that, unlike the Balkar, Kalmyk, and Karachai ASSR’s, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR had avoided a full-scale Nazi occupation. The Wehrmacht had been halted at the cities of Malgobek and Ordzhonikidze by September 1942, both laying within the territory of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR.

By January 1943, the Red Army had succeeded in driving out the Wehrmacht from the western part of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. Directly after the Red Army liberation of the northern Caucasus in the first months of 1943, plans of resettling the entire Chechen-Ingush population were made. The decision to deport and resettle the entire Chechen-Ingush population to Central Asia appears to have been made in December 1943 by Lavrentiy Beria, chief of the NKVD. In January 1944, Beria approved an “Instruction on the procedure of resettlement of Chechens and Ingush”.<sup>252</sup> On February 17, Beria sent a telegram to Stalin stating that the preparations for the operation were completed, and that 459,486 persons had been identified for resettlement. This included people of Chechen-Ingush nationality living in neighbouring Daghestan and in the city of Vladikavkaz in the Ossetian SSR.<sup>253</sup>

The official motivation and legitimization of the operation can be found in a March 7 1943 decree entitled “On the Liquidation of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and on the administrative reorgani-

<sup>249</sup> Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949*, 82–83.

<sup>250</sup> Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 94.

<sup>251</sup> Polian, *Against Their Will*, 140.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>253</sup> “Telegramma Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del L.P. Berii I.V. Stalinu o podgotovke operatsii po pereseleniyu chechentsev i ingushey” [Telegram of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) L.P. Beria to I.V. Stalin on the preparations of the operation resettling the Chechens and Ingush] (17.02.1944), in: *Stalinskie Deportatsii 1928-1953*, Dokument No 3.115, Fond Aleksandr Yakovleva (1997), url: <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/1022200>, accessed 24/05/2017.

zation of its territory”. It is important to note that the decree dates to after when the deportations were already finished, presenting them as a *fait accompli*. The decree read as follows:

“In connection with the fact that during the Patriotic War, especially during the actions of the German fascist troops in the Caucasus, many Chechens and Ingush betrayed the Motherland (*izmenili rodine*), sided with the fascist invaders, joined the ranks of saboteurs and scouts sent by the Germans into the rear ranks of the Red Army, created armed gangs to fight against Soviet power, and also considering that many Chechens and Ingush have participated in armed protests against Soviet power for years and for a long time have not been engaged in honest work (*chestnym trudom*), committed banditry raids on the collective farms of neighbouring regions, robbed and killed Soviet people- The presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR DECIDES [that] all the Chechens and Ingush peoples, living in the territory of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, and also those living in adjacent regions, shall be relocated to different regions of the USSR, and the Chechen-Ingush ASSR shall be liquidated.”<sup>254</sup>

Thus, despite the fact that the region had not been occupied, the population was still accused of having collaborated with the Nazis. Perhaps this was a mere administrative practicality, as the operational orders launching the deportation of Karachais, Kalmyks, and Crimean Tatars had almost the exact same wording. Interesting in the specific decree of the Chechen-Ingush in comparison with that of other nationalities, though, was the reference to the “armed protest” that had taken place in the region “for years” and the inability of the Chechen-Ingush to engage in “honest work”. These motivations were lacking in other wartime deportations, and underlines the important role long-felt frustrations of Soviet authorities with this region played in the decision to resettle its entire population.

### 3.1.2 Organization and implementation of the February 1944 deportations

The deportations were supervised by Beria, who remained in personal contact with Stalin through telegram during the entire length of the preparatory phase and later during the implementation. The NKVD chief travelled to Grozny, the capital of Chechen-Ingush ASSR, on February 20, 1944. It seems that Beria deemed this particular operation of larger importance than other mass evictions. He was accompanied by a police force counting an overwhelming 119,000 men. Of these, 19,000 were NKVD, NKGB (People’s Commissariat for State Security), and counter-intelligence agency Smersh (a contraction of *smert’ spionam*; literally “death to spies”) operatives. The remaining 100,000 were NKVD officers and soldiers.<sup>255</sup> The ‘mere’ 2,975 NKVD officers that had carried out the previous mass eviction and resettlement operation, that of the Karachais in December, pales in comparison.<sup>256</sup>

<sup>254</sup> ‘Ukaz PVS SSSR “O likvidatsii Checheno-Ingushskoy ASSR i ob administrativnom ustroystve ee territorii” ’ [Decree of the PVS SSSR (Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR) “On the liquidation of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and on the administrative reorganization of its territory] (07.03.1944) in: *Stalinskie Deportatsii 1928-1953*, Dokument No 3.123, Fond Aleksandr Yakovleva (1997), url: <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/1022223> , accessed 24/05/2017.

<sup>255</sup> The number concerned comes from a request from Beria to Stalin for remunerations for those participating in the operations, sent after the operation itself was completed; ‘Ukaz PVS SSSR’ (07.03.1944), *Stalinskie Deportatsii 1928-1953*, Dokument No 3.123.

<sup>256</sup> Polian, *Against Their Will*, 145. Admittedly, the number of deported Karachais was much lower (about 80,000), but relative to the population the NKVD force implementing the deportation of Chechens was still much higher.

Beria himself requested to stay on the site until the operation was completed given its gravity (*sereznost*).<sup>257</sup>

The operation was implemented in a very short time span. It started on February 23, 1943 and on the first day, 97,741 people had been “evacuated” by 11AM, of whom already 20,023 had been put on the train to the East.<sup>258</sup> By February 29, a mere seven days after the start of the operation, Beria reported that 478,479 people were evicted, of whom 91,250 were Ingush and 387,229 were Chechens.<sup>259</sup> This was an excess of almost 20,000 persons compared to the original plan. This swiftness was largely due to the incredibly sophisticated planning that preceded the operation. Everything was thought out in advance. The sudden appearance of a high number of troops was explained as training manoeuvres of the Red Army in mountainous regions.<sup>260</sup> “Anti-Soviet” elements that were most likely to actively resist were identified and arrested individually before the onset of the operations. Detailed intelligence on the area moreover convinced the NKVD to first sweep the more easily accessible foothills and lowlands in the first three days, and then use the remaining five days to remove the people from the more difficultly accessible mountainous areas.<sup>261</sup>

To ensure effectiveness, the NKVD recruited local party leaders, clerical leaders, and other local elites to cooperate. These local authorities were sent into all the districts to announce to the population that they would be deported for having betrayed the Motherland and collaborated with the Germans. These elites were promised certain “benefits” during their resettlement (most notably, they were permitted to bring more personal belongings upon deportation) and were shipped off on the last day of the deportations.

Although the operation was focused upon the specific territory of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, people were selected for deportation upon the basis of their ethnicity alone. Those of Chechen nationality that lived outside the territory of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR were hunted down by the NKVD throughout the entire Soviet Union and sent to the special settlements as well. Individual loyalty to the

<sup>257</sup> ‘Telegramma Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del L.P. Berii I.V. Stalinu’ (17.02.1944), *Stalinskie Deportatsii*, Dokument 3.115.

<sup>258</sup> ‘Telegramma Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del L.P. Berii I.V. Stalinu o nachale operatsii po pereseleniyu chechentsev i ingushey’ [Telegram of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) L.P. Beria to I.V. Stalin on the first operations resettling the Chechens and Ingush] (23.02.1944), in: *Stalinskie Deportatsii 1928-1953*, Dokument No 3.117, Fond Aleksandr Yakovleva (1997), url: <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/1022206>, accessed 24/05/2017.

<sup>259</sup> ‘Telegramma Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del L.P. Berii I.V. Stalinu, o khode operatsii po pereseleniyu chechentsev i ingushey’ [Telegram of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) L.P. Beria to I.V. Stalin, on further operations resettling the Chechens and Ingush] (24.02.1944) in: *Stalinskie Deportatsii 1928-1953*, Dokument No 3.118, Fond Aleksandr Yakovleva (1997), url: <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/1022207>, accessed 24/05/2017.

<sup>260</sup> ‘Telegramma Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del L.P. Berii I.V. Stalinu’ (17.02.1944), *Stalinskie Deportatsii*, Dokument 3.115.

<sup>261</sup> ‘Telegramma Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del L.P. Berii I.V. Stalinu’ (17.02.1944), in *Stalinskie Deportatsii*, Dokument 3.115; ‘Telegramma Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del L.P. Berii I.V. Stalinu o podgotovke operatsii po pereseleniyu chechentsev i ingushey’ [Telegram of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) L.P. Beria to I.V. Stalin on the preparations of the operation resettling the Chechens and Ingush] (22.02.1944), in: *Stalinskie Deportatsii 1928-1953*, Dokument No 3.116, Fond Aleksandr Yakovleva (1997), url: <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/1022201>, accessed 24/05/2017.

state also had nothing to do with the deportations, as loyal members of the party, the Komsomol (the youth movement of the Bolsheviks), and soldiers of the Red Army were removed from their function or demobilized and deported as well.<sup>262</sup>

The operations went accompanied with instances of violent excesses from the part of the NKVD. Of course, these were “excesses” only in the sense of a deviation from an already violent standard. The “normal” procedure was that people were forced into military trucks at gunpoint, driven to train stations, and huddled into overcrowded train carriages like cattle. A point of tragic irony is that many of the used trucks were American Studebakers, lend by the United States in the Lend-Lease program to support the Soviet war effort against the Germans.<sup>263</sup> In several villages in the mountains that were difficult to access by truck, the entire civilian population was massacred. One armed NKVD unit that was delayed in the mountains locked hundreds of villagers into a local barn, set it on fire, and shot those trying to escape. This occurred in the village of Khaybakh.<sup>264</sup> Although Beria’s report evaluating the operation states that no “serious cases of resistance or other incidents” occurred, a total of 2,016 persons of “anti-Soviet” nature were arrested (although this also includes arrests before the onset of the deportations) and 20,072 firearms were appropriated.<sup>265</sup> The deportees also suffered extreme hardship during their journey to Central Asia. There were many instances of typhoid during the transportation. Moreover, people that strayed more than the permitted distance from the trains when it stopped for a break were shot outright.<sup>266</sup>

### 3.1.3 Compensatory settlement of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR

An understudied element of these deportations is the resettlement of the abandoned land of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. These “compensatory settlers” were originating from the neighbouring areas, primarily Ossetians, Daghestani and Russians that were resettled in the abandoned areas. The new settlement population amounted to about 40% of the local population. By May 1945, this amounted to the settlement of about 10,200 households (compared to the 28,375 households that had been deported or killed). The resettlement process was far from effective as tens of villages remained completely or partly empty, and significant numbers of livestock died (or were deported in the other direction, to Ukraine). The districts in which the incoming population settled were incorporated into Daghestan ASSR, following the disbandment of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. These “compensatory migrations” were hardly voluntary. The decision that a household was earmarked for deportation would be declared at local village meetings, after which people were transported to their new place of residence

<sup>262</sup> Pohl, “Stalin’s Genocide against the ‘Repressed Peoples,’” 273–74.

<sup>263</sup> Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949*, 84.

<sup>264</sup> Amir Weiner, “Saving Private Ivan: From What, Why, and How?” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, no. 2 (2008): 332; Polian, *Against Their Will*, 147; Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 97.

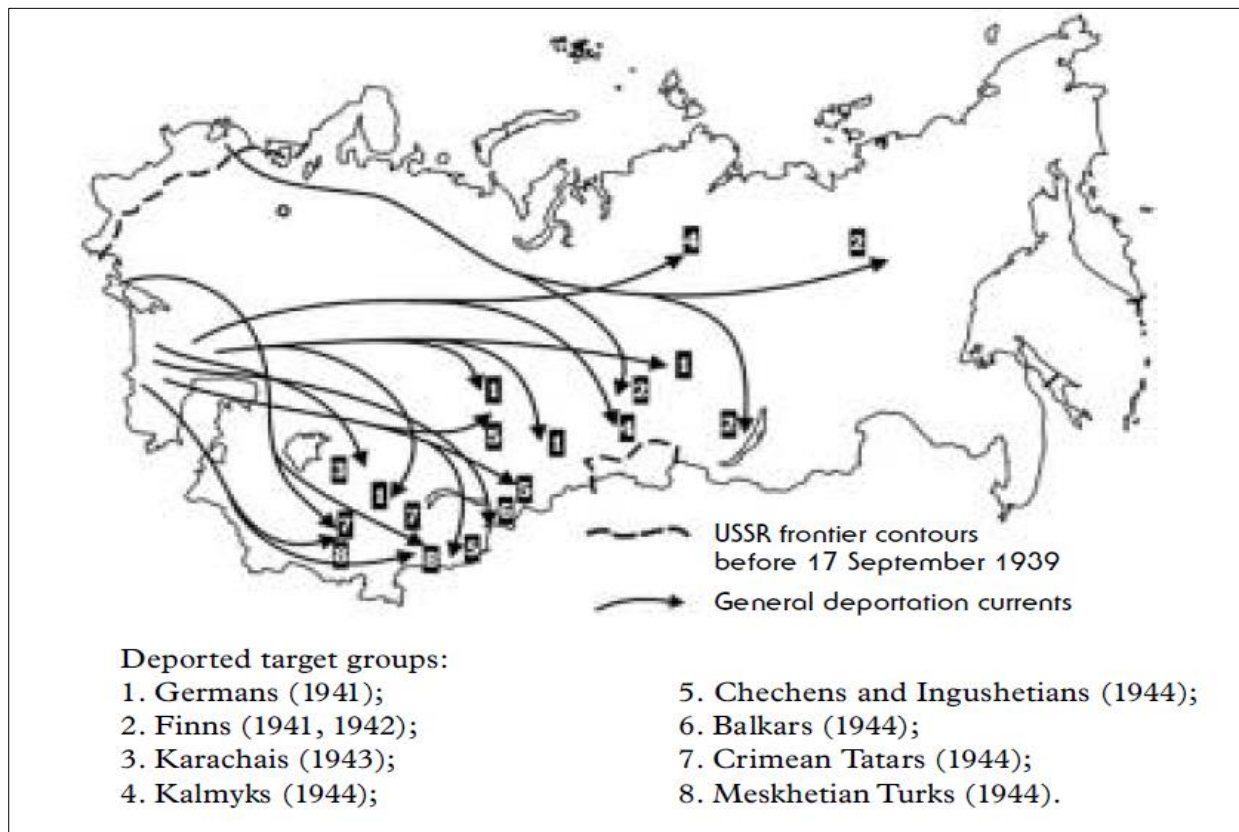
<sup>265</sup> ‘Telegramma Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del L.P. Berii I.V. Stalinu o zavershenii operatsii po vyseleniyu chechentstev I ingushey’ [Telegram of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) L.P. Beria to I.V. Stalin, on the completion of the operations to evict the Chechen and Ingush] (29.02.1944), in: *Stalinskie Deportatsii 1928-1953*, Dokument No 3.121, Fond Aleksandr Yakovleva (1997) url:

<http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/1022221>, accessed 24/05/2017.

<sup>266</sup> Pohl, “Stalin’s Genocide against the ‘Repressed Peoples,’” 284.

that was assigned to them without their own influence. Upon arriving on their destination, they would find themselves in an unfamiliar geographic and cultural environment. As part of the administrative disbandment of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, the original place names that were populated by new settlers were erased and changed to the name of the place of origin of new settlers.<sup>267</sup>

Explicit evidence that the Daghestanis and Ossetians were considered to be politically more reliable than the Chechen-Ingush has not been found. Rather, during the 1930s, the Daghestan region had seen resistance to collectivization and rebellion.<sup>268</sup>



Map 5: Internal forced migrations in the USSR during the Second World War, 1941-1944<sup>269</sup>

### 3.1.4 The special settlements

The Chechens and Ingush were sent to so-called “special settlements” (*spetsposelenia*) in Central Asia and Siberia. By the end of 1945, a total of 967,085 families, or 2,342,506 people were registered at special settlements. This included the other deported nationalities, and exiled Kulaks, Poles, Koreans, and other groups that had been deported to these settlements in the 1930s during collectivization and the Great Terror. This meant that about one percent of the total Soviet population was living in inter-

<sup>267</sup> Polian, *Against Their Will*, 157–64.

<sup>268</sup> Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 294.

<sup>269</sup> Map taken from: Polian, *Against Their Will*, 135.

nal exile. The total population of Kazakhstan was made up of special settlers by a quarter.<sup>270</sup> The Chechens and Ingush were sent primarily to the Kirgizh SSR and the south-eastern provinces of the Kazakh SSR. They were often mixed with other groups of deportees, and colonies typically consisted of a maximum of four different ethnic groups.<sup>271</sup>

Although administratively these special settlements fell under the Gulag (acronym for *glavnoe upravleniye lagerey*; “main camp administration”) system, they were distinct from the “archipelago” of prison labour camps. There was no barbed wire, neither were there permanent guard stations. The special settlements were villages built in the 1930s by exiled peasants. They were located in resource rich but inhospitable areas. In theory, the special settlements were to function as a mechanism for the “re-education” of “anti-Soviet elements”. This practice, it seems, remained superficial in practice.<sup>272</sup> The special settlers fell under the supervision of a “special regime” of a specific NKVD *spetskommandant*. The *spetskommandant* visited the settlement each month and was responsible for monitoring typically four to five settlements. These settlements were widely separated from each other. Hence, it appears that this “special regime” was designed above all to both prevent escapes and population movements within the republics where deportees were sent into exile. More constant monitoring was achieved with the help of a network of spies among the local population. In each settlement, one person, typically a party member, or simply someone who spoke Russian, was assigned to communicate with the *spetskommandant*. By 1949, only 609 of *all* of the deported nationalities had managed to escape their settlement. The number of attempts was probably much higher.<sup>273</sup>

An important element of the settlement was the territorial dispersion of deportees. The Kazakhstan *oblast'* of Akmola, for example, received about 60,000 Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars, but their number in small district towns, villages, and farms never exceeded more than a few dozen families. This territorial dispersion of deportees prevented them from effective communication and internal organization.<sup>274</sup> On the settlements, only limited housing was available, and many had to spend the first harsh winter nights outside. Throughout the 1940s, there were continuing food shortages despite pleas from local authorities to provide more foodstuffs.<sup>275</sup> Due to these harsh conditions, the number of recorded deaths among North Caucasian deportees outnumbered that of recorded births in the years directly after the deportation. In total, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (renamed from NKVD to MVD

---

<sup>270</sup> 136,625 out of a total population of 508,000, see Michaela Pohl, “‘It Cannot Be That Our Graves Will Be Here’: The Survival of Chechen and Ingush Deportees in Kazakhstan, 1944-1957,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 4, no. 3 (September 1, 2002): 401.

<sup>271</sup> Polian, *Against Their Will*, 181–91.

<sup>272</sup> See Lynne Viola, “Stalin’s Empire: The Gulag and Police Colonization in the Soviet Union in the 1930s,” in *Stalin and Europe: Imitation and Domination, 1928-1953*, ed. Timothy Snyder and Ray Brandon (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 18–44, for a concise discussion of the Gulag and special settlement system.

<sup>273</sup> Pohl, “‘It Cannot Be That Our Graves Will Be Here,’” 406–9.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 403–4.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 404–5.



in 1946) recorded 163,790 deaths among North Caucasian exiles in this period. This amounted to almost thirty per cent of the deported population.<sup>276</sup>

Relations with the local population were strained. Most importantly, the Chechen-Ingush had to confront a great deal of prejudices from the local population. Before arriving, the NKVD spread rumours that the Chechens were “enemies of the people”, “traitors”, “bandits”, or even “cannibals”. As a result, a lot of deportees had tremendous difficulties landing a job on the collective farms or on industrial enterprises. Still, this differed by region by family, and there were instances of compassion and kindness from the part of the local population as well.<sup>277</sup>

In the special settlements, the Chechens were officially forbidden to express their culture. Chechen art, folklore, music, and history were “extinguished” and important Chechen national figures were “purged” from the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia*.<sup>278</sup> Moreover, a policy of linguistic Russification of these peoples was pursued. Besides Russian, the children of deported groups were allowed to receive education in the Kazakh, Uzbek, or Kirghiz. It appears that these policies were hardly successful. In 1926, 99,7 % of Chechen-Ingush spoke their native language, and by 1959 the number had dropped a mere one percent to 98,7%.<sup>279</sup> Interesting in this regard is that linguistic Russification policies were generally much more successful among those deported immigrant groups (Greeks, Germans, Bulgarians, etc.) than among people that were deported from their indigenous areas.<sup>280</sup>

---

<sup>276</sup> Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949*, 285.

<sup>277</sup> Pohl, graves, 406.

<sup>278</sup> Francine Hirsch, “Race without the Practice of Racial Politics,” *Slavic Review* 61, no. 1 (2002): 40.

<sup>279</sup> Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 395–96.

<sup>280</sup> Pohl, “Stalin’s Genocide against the ‘Repressed Peoples’,” 288.

### 3.2 The Dersim massacre and the deportation of the Zaza Kurds



Map 4: *The Dersim region in Republican Turkey.*<sup>281</sup>

Dersim (in 1935, the name of the region was Turkified to Tunceli, its present name) is a region in east-central Anatolia, comprising an area of about 6,000 square kilometres. The region is surrounded by high mountains, making it difficult to access, and has a harsh climate with scorching hot summers and freezing cold winters. Presently, it remains one of the least populated areas of Turkey. Its population during the Kemalist era was mostly made up of Zaza Kurds that spoke a unique form of the Indo-European Zaza language, and adhered a specific branch of Alevism. By the 1930s, the region had a population of 65,000 to 70,000 people, spread over about sixty different tribes. The population was poor and mostly employed in agriculture.<sup>282</sup>

Tensions between the population of the region and central(izing) authorities date back to at least the nineteenth century, when some of the tribes living in the area had sided with the Russians in the Russo-Ottoman war.<sup>283</sup> In 1920, during the War of Independence, some tribes living in Dersim had demanded Kurdish autonomy from the newly established Turkish government.<sup>284</sup> The Kemalist regime had substantial difficulties establishing effective government control over the region, which was known for its “backwardness”, “lawlessness”, and “tribalism”. In 1926, a government official described the region as “an abscess that needed an urgent surgeon from the Republic.”<sup>285</sup> The Kemalists propagated that the population of Dersim had once been Turkish, but had by a fault of history

<sup>281</sup> Source: <http://kurdistantribune.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/dersim.png>

<sup>282</sup> Nicole Watts, “Relocating Dersim: Turkish State-Building and Kurdish Resistance, 1931–1938,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23 (2000): 11.

<sup>283</sup> Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*, 194.

<sup>284</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 185–86.

<sup>285</sup> Hans-Lukas Kieser, “Dersim Massacre, 1937–1938,” *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, [Online], July 27, 2011, <http://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/dersim-massacre-1937-1938>.

“assimilated into Kurdishness”.<sup>286</sup> By the early 1930s, the government had still not managed to establish control over the region. Moreover, by that time, the Turkish minister of Interior, Şükrü Kaya had been led to believe by a number of reports that the region was prone to resistance, well-armed, and, worst of all, “Kurdifying” instead of Turkifying.<sup>287</sup>

### 3.2.1 Official motivation and legitimization: the 1934 Resettlement Law

It was partly the “Dersim problem” that convinced the Kemalist administration to adopt an overarching approach expediting the assimilation of Kurds into Turks through forced resettlement policies. The legal framework for this policy was provided by the 1934 Resettlement Law, which should be seen as the immediate context for the later operations of the Turkish army in the Dersim area. It should be noted here that the forced resettlement and demographic dilution of Kurds among the Turkish population was not a novel practice, and its genesis has been described in chapters 1 and 2.

Although not an entire novelty, compared to earlier instances of demographic engineering, the 1934 Resettlement Law was remarkably broad in scope, intention, and administrative detail. Most significantly, the Resettlement Law divided the country into three types of zones. These were: (1) zones where the concentration of populations with “Turkish culture” was desired, (2); zones allocated for the relocation and resettlement of people that needed to assimilate into Turkish, and (3); zones unavailable for settlement due to “sanitary, economic, cultural, political, military, and security reasons”.<sup>288</sup> Hence, to clarify, regions with a predominant Kurdish population were labelled “Zone 1” areas and became subject to a policy of moving Kurds out (to Zone 2) and immigrating Turks in. Thus, the law provided for the depopulation of certain Kurdish districts and for the consecutive demographic dilution of the “Kurdish element” by settling them in purely Turkish communities across Anatolia. Kaya, who was responsible for the implementation of the law, put it bluntly and argued that the law would “create a country speaking with one language, thinking in the same way and sharing the same sentiments.”<sup>289</sup> The total number of Kurds that were deported to Western Anatolia under the auspices of 1934 Resettlement Law amounted to 25,831 people in 5,074 households.<sup>290</sup> The practice of forcibly resettling Kurds ended only after 1950, with the disbandment of the Kemalist one-party state. Only after that date, previously resettled Kurds could return to their home region.

The two-fold element of the law (moving Kurds out, and Turks in) has led Joost Jongerden to argue that the intentions of the 1934 Resettlement Law should not exclusively be sought in the depor-

<sup>286</sup> Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, 109; Watts, “Relocating Dersim,” 11–12.

<sup>287</sup> Watts, “Relocating Dersim,” 12.

<sup>288</sup> Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey,” paras. 19–21; Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, 88. For the original law, see “Birinci İskân Mıntıklarında Toprak Tezviatına dair olan Talimatnamenin Kabulü hakkında Kararname” [Decree Concerning the Adoption of the Executive Act on Land Distribution in the First Resettlement Zones]. Nr 2/12374. November 24, 1939. In *Eski ve Yeni Toprak, İskân Hükümleri Uygulaması Kılavuzu* [Guide to the Application of Old and New Land and Resettlement Decisions], Ed. Naci Kökdemir, 166–70. Ankara: 1952.

<sup>289</sup> Quoted in Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey,” para. 7.

<sup>290</sup> Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, 90; Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 162.

tation of rebellious Kurdish tribes. Arguably, the law had a constructive and more component to it as well in the sense of creating a “homeland” for the thousands of Turks that had immigrated from former Ottoman territories fleeing persecution. Hence, the assimilation of Muslim migrants that came from former Ottoman territories was an equal concern of the law.<sup>291</sup> This might have been correct to some extent, but it seems incredibly important to the different ways the settlement of these population groups was pursued. The Turkish government used soft power to allure Turkish immigrants to settle in Eastern Anatolia by offering financial rewards, educational opportunities, and other kinds of facilities.<sup>292</sup> Moving Kurds out of their native regions, however, required the hard power of violence, intimidation, and persecution.

Moreover, it seems impossible to deny the strong element of the desire to create state security and territorial control evident from the promulgation and implementation of the law. For example, a closer look at the types of “Zone 1” areas that were specified by the resettlement law reveals the component of state security that was attempted to fulfil with this law. These areas included strips of land along railways, bridges, border regions, rivers, and roads. According to Erol Ülker, this practice of singling out the Muslim-Turkish population of the state as a more “reliable element”, points at the possibility that the homogenization or Turkification of the population was not a primary goal in its own right, but was instrumental in achieving the security of the state.<sup>293</sup> Finally, the application of the law to the Dersim area marks how easily the constructive component (constructive in the sense of assimilating Kurds into Turks) of the law could blend into mass violence.

### 3.2.2 Implementation

The need for radical measures to establish government control over the Dersim area was phrased explicitly in terms of bringing “civilization” to a “backward” region. Already in 1931, in a report by the Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish army, Fevzi Cakmak, it had been argued that “an armed military intervention with massive violence will make a great impression on the people of Dersim and make sure that they let themselves being civilized.” Moreover, it was argued that the Kurdishness of the local population had to be “melted down and destroyed in order to transform Dersim into a purely Turkish region.”<sup>294</sup> Interesting in the report is also that besides the “usual” deportation of local elites (which was official state policy), it was also argued that, in general “a large part of the population needs to be deported to very distant places in the country and placed in pure Turkish communities.”<sup>295</sup>

Thus, the Dersim region was one of the first regions where the resettlement law was to be applied. Dersim was placed in the third category, that of zones that had to be evacuated and were una-

<sup>291</sup> Joost Jongerden, *The Settlement Issue in Turkey and the Kurds: An Analysis of Spatial Policies, Modernity and War*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia (Leiden: Brill NV, 2007), 173–217, particularly 177.

<sup>292</sup> Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 154.

<sup>293</sup> Ülker, “Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey,” para. 154.

<sup>294</sup> Özgür Inan Boztas, “Did a Genocide Take Place in the Dersim Region of Turkey in 1938?,” *Papers of the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 2015, 8–9.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

available to settlement due to “sanitary, economic, cultural, political, military, and security reasons”.<sup>296</sup> The application of the law was framed, by Kaya in particular, as a necessary “radical treatment” that would cure the “backwardness” and “lawlessness” of the region and bring it “civilization”.<sup>297</sup> In 1935, the Parliament passed the “Tunceli Law”, which provided for the application of the Resettlement Law to the Dersim area. Moreover, military rule over the area under the leadership of Abdullâh Alpdoğan, head of the Fourth Inspectorate-General was established in 1936.

Soon after the establishment of the Fourth Inspectorate-General, the government declared a state of siege over Dersim and started a three-pronged policy of marching in military authorities, educating the younger population “into Turkishness”, and deporting local elites out of the region. An important element of the renewed efforts to establish government control over the region was the creation of an extensive military infrastructure.<sup>298</sup> The population of Dersim manifested a range of responses to these “civilizing” policies of the government. There were instances of accommodation as well as resentment and outright resistance. In any case, the response was not co-ordinated and differed by tribe and even family.<sup>299</sup> Moreover, there were no signs at all that the population of Dersim was demanding Kurdish autonomy in the region, like it had done in the early 1920s.<sup>300</sup>

Nevertheless, several military and government officials feared foreign intervention and foreign contamination of the region. In a 1934 report the lack of government control over “bandits” in the Dersim area was noted, stating that “it has been reported that pro-Kurdish propaganda is being carried out among the Dersimlis and that various foreign spies have been in touch with this region”.<sup>301</sup> By 1937, the authorities were convinced that a rebellion from the population of the Dersim Kurds against the reform program was imminent. This fear was of course not entirely fabricated, and under the leadership of the prominent tribal leader Seyit Rıza, several tribes had declared their intention to resist government intervention in the Dersim area. Still, a number of other tribes had confederated and made clear they would cooperate with the government and distanced themselves from Rıza, while others simply declared neutrality. If one is to believe the military reports, it seems that the number of people involved in the confederation of tribes amounted to about 22,700, of whom 4,200 were armed.<sup>302</sup>

### 3.2.3 Military operations and resettlement

The direct trigger for military intervention came in March 1937, when a strategic bridge was burned down and several telephone lines were cut. It seems that the incident may as well have been an in-

<sup>296</sup> Åsa Lundgren, *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 44.

<sup>297</sup> Bruinessen, “Genocide in Kurdistan?,” 81.

<sup>298</sup> Kieser, “Dersim Massacre, 1937-1938,” sec. B.

<sup>299</sup> Lundgren, *The Unwelcome Neighbour*, 44.

<sup>300</sup> Watts, “Relocating Dersim,” 22.

<sup>301</sup> Quoted in Cagaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*, 110.

<sup>302</sup> Watts, “Relocating Dersim,” n. 24.

stance of local intertribal conflict.<sup>303</sup> By now, this hardly mattered though, and by the spring of 1937, about 25,000 military troops had assembled around Dersim and started to move in the area. Unsurprisingly giving this astounding mobilization of military force, Riza and other Kurdish activists were caught in a matter of months and hanged several days after their capture. Additionally, five powerful tribes were killed off almost entirely.<sup>304</sup> In more remote areas, resistance remained and the rebels refused to surrender. The army responded with more force, bombing the area, and demolishing entire villages.<sup>305</sup>

The army could have ceased its operations after the capture of Riza and his associates, but it resumed the campaign with even greater vigour in a second operation commencing in 1938. Whereas the first operation had been launched with the goal to capture those who were inciting direct resistance against the state, the second operation was of much broader intention than the first. By August 1938, the armed forces in the Dersim area had doubled in size and counted about 50,000 troops.<sup>306</sup> These troops were to “completely cleanse the Tunceli [Dersim] region of tribes”. Moreover, the rhetoric of civilizing and re-education now became accompanied with statements that the army had started to carry out a “punishment campaign” against the local population.<sup>307</sup> The army was granted even larger autonomy in the second operation, and now routinely combed the area, burning entire villages, fields, and seizing livestock, ammunition, and weapons. Army units reported on their progress daily. On 19 August, 1938, one army division reported that it had “annihilated [*imha etmiş*] 69 more people in its last cleaning operation it performed in the region, and moved a 381-person column consisting of men, women, and children to Elaziğ [a city just outside Dersim province] to be transported to the west.”<sup>308</sup> The press reported that throughout the operation, 12,000 guns and rifles had been expropriated by the army.<sup>309</sup>

Due to a strongly limited availability of primary sources, only very little is known about the actual implementation of the deportation policies during in the Dersim area, although it seems that currently quite a lot of material is currently available in Turkish.<sup>310</sup> A few scattered articles and case studies do exist in English, though, of which one by Özgür Inan Boztas gives insight into developments during the second operation.<sup>311</sup> Based on this study, it seems that, in the second operation commencing in 1938, the army declared the very core of the Dersim region (probably the part of Dersim that was most difficult to access) a “forbidden” zone, and purged this area from its population

<sup>303</sup> Bruinessen, “Genocide in Kurdistan?,” 72.

<sup>304</sup> Boztas, “Did a Genocide Take Place in the Dersim Region of Turkey in 1938?,” 9.

<sup>305</sup> McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 208.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>307</sup> Boztas, “Did a Genocide Take Place in the Dersim Region of Turkey in 1938?,” 9.

<sup>308</sup> Quoted in Watts, “Relocating Dersim,” 26.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>310</sup> Turkish author İsmail Beşikçi has studied the massacre at great personal cost (he spent more than a decade in prison for his writings on the state’s anti-Kurdish policies); See İsmail Beşikçi, *Tunceli Kanunu (1935) ve dersim Jenosidi* [the 1935 law concerning Tunceli and the genocide of Dersim] See moreover Kieser, “Dersim Massacre, 1937-1938,” sec. F for a short oversight of works available in Turkish.

<sup>311</sup> Boztas, “Did a Genocide Take Place in the Dersim Region of Turkey in 1938?”

entirely. The army entered the villages, marched off the local population, and left after burning down their houses and fields. A substantial part of the population in the forbidden zone was killed outright. Villagers were assembled in central square, where they were told they would be deported, and then marched off. When outside the forbidden zone, they were tied to their hands, told to stand in a line, and shot by machine gun fire. Their bodies were burned. The part of the population that survived the cleansing of the forbidden zone was expelled and settled in more easily accessible (and as a result, more easily to control) areas of Dersim.

Other sources include a limited number of eye-witness testimonies. Writing about the massacre fourteen years after the event, the Kurdish activist Nuri Dersimi describes how women and children hid themselves in caves in order to escape the wrath of Turkish army groups: “thousands of these women and children perished because the army bricked up the entrances of the caves. These caves are marked with numbers on the military maps of the area. At the entrances of other caves, the military lit fires to cause those inside to suffocate. Those who tried to escape from the caves were finished off with bayonets. A large proportion of the women and girls of the Kureyshian and Bakhtiyar [two rebel tribes] threw themselves from high cliffs into the Munzur and Parchik ravines, in order not to fall into the Turks’ hands.”<sup>312</sup> Tribes that had declared they would cooperate with the government were not spared deportation or even murder. Tribes that responded to calls of the army that amnesty would be granted upon surrender were entirely annihilated in the spring of 1938.<sup>313</sup> More evidence for the massacres and mass deportations in Dersim comes from the British Vice Consul in Trabzon, who reported in September 1938 that:

It is understood from various sources that in clearing the area occupied by the Kurds, the military authorities have used methods similar to those used against the Armenians during the Great War: thousands of Kurds including women and children were slain; others, mostly children were thrown into the Euphrates; while thousands of others in less hostile areas, who had first been deprived of their cattle and other belongings, were deported to villayets in central Anatolia.<sup>314</sup>

There would be no foreign interventions or aid missions though, and the Zaza Kurds of Dersim were left entirely at the hands of the Turkish armed forces. After the campaign was over, the government presented the mission as a successful struggle of the Turkish army against the backwardness of the Dersim area:

The tribal chieftains, the mischievous religious leaders and their accomplices have been caught and deported to the west. The successful military operations have once and for all uprooted any possibility for a future bandit movement in Tunceli. Dersim is from now on liberated and saved. There remains no place

---

<sup>312</sup> Quoted in Bruinessen, “Genocide in Kurdistan?”, 73; the original source is M. Nuri Dersime, *Kürdistan tarihinde Dersim* [Dersim in the history of Kurdistan] (Aleppo, 1952) Van Bruinessen remarks that Dersimi was not an eyewitness of the massacre because he left the area before the army entered it. According to van Bruinessen, his account seems factually correct, but the figures he gives seem exaggerated.

<sup>313</sup> Quoted in Bruinessen, “Genocide in Kurdistan?”, 74.

<sup>314</sup> Quoted in McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 209.

in Dersim now where the army has not set foot, where the officers and commanders have not applied their intelligence and energies. Once again the army has, in performing this great task, earned the eternal gratitude of the Turkish nation.<sup>315</sup>

The official state of emergency in the Dersim area was lifted only in 1946, after which date deported families were allowed to return home.

The number of deaths and deportees as a result of the army’s operations has not been established clearly among those few Western authors that have written about the massacre. David McDowall counts 40,000 killed and 3,000 “notables and others” deported, but adds that the number of those killed might be exaggerated.<sup>316</sup> Martin van Bruinessen argues that anywhere “between three and seven thousand” were killed, basing himself upon official military reports, but does not cite the number of deportees.<sup>317</sup> Nicole Watts cites a military source that speaks about the removal of 7,954 people (“dead or alive”) but this does not include the casualties and deportees from earlier operations.<sup>318</sup> Kieser is a bit more precise, and cites a source published in 2009 that counts 13,160 civilian casualties and 11,818 deported. The relevant source is a report by Abdullah Alpdoğan, the head of the General Inspectorate that was in charge of “pacifying” the region.<sup>319</sup> Based on these sources, we can confidently say that this was one of the largest, if not the largest, instances of mass deportations from a specific geographic area in Kemalist Turkey.

A few additional remarks might be made based upon the in-depth case study of deportations of Kurds between 1913-1950 by Ugur Ungor.<sup>320</sup> It should be marked that this study focuses on Diyarbakir region, about two hundred kilometres south-east of Dersim, and its findings cannot be directly applied to the deportation of the Dersim Kurds. Ungor’s analysis shows that, in Diyarbakir region, the government used an inventory of tribes that were classified as either “loyal” or “disloyal” to decide which tribes would be subjected to deportation. Most importantly, the decision for deportation was decided on a tribal basis, and people were deported together with their family. Typically, the house of a certain family would be surrounded by army troops, and people were given about an hour to assemble their personal belongings. Then, they were put on the train, still guarded by gendarmes, and shipped off to their destination that was chosen beforehand. They were territorially dispersed across Turkey, and Kurdish deportees were never to exceed ten per cent of the local population. The experiences of deportees on their destinations differed by family. Some deportees experienced kindness and openness from the local population, and were able to lead a relatively normal life. Yet, they also had to deal with prejudices, bigotry, racial stereotypes, and violence.

---

<sup>315</sup> Quoted in Bruinessen, “Genocide in Kurdistan?,” 75.

<sup>316</sup> McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 209.

<sup>317</sup> Bruinessen, “Genocide in Kurdistan?,” 75.

<sup>318</sup> Watts 27

<sup>319</sup> Kieser, “Dersim Massacre, 1937-1938,” sec. C. Originally published in the Turkish newspaper *Radikal*, 20 November 2009. The newspaper was shut down by the Turkish government in 2016, but the article was still available online at the time of writing: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/resmi-raporlarda-dersim-katliami-13-bin-kisi-olduruldu-965187/>

<sup>320</sup> Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, chap. 3.



What is remarkable about the Dersim deportations is the relatively high percentage of the population that was killed or deported compared to other regions (between 35 and 40%, based on the most recent statistics). It is not clear what happened to the abandoned territory, because Dersim was declared a Zone 3 area, meaning it was unavailable to settlement. It seems likely that the entirety of the “forbidden zone” was left devoid of its population for some years, while the periphery of the region might have partially been repopulated with people from neighbouring areas, but this remains a matter of speculation.

### 3.3 Comparison and discussion

In this conclusion, I will use a number of variables that accompany instances of forced population settlement, as identified by Terry Martin in his survey of Soviet ethnic deportations.<sup>321</sup> It should be noted that the word “variables” is used here only as a tool to structure the comparison in narrative terms, and not to suggest any sort of correspondence to a purely objective positive/negative dichotomy. Phrased as questions, these variables are:

- (1) Did the forced population movements occur in war or peace time?
- (2) Did the forced population movement consist of the internal resettlement of population groups or the removal from the group outside of the state’s boundaries?
- (3) Were the practices of the state aimed at the total or partial removal and resettlement of the subject group?
- (4) Were the operations carried out by professionals or did they involve popular mass mobilization?
- (5) To which degree did the population removals become accompanied with mass murder?
- (6) Did the forced population movement become accompanied with practices of ethnic dilution, ethnic consolidation, and forced assimilation?

As to (1) and (2), a short answer may suffice. The Soviet deportation of the Chechen-Ingush occurred in war time, whereas the Kemalist massacres and deportations of the Zaza Kurds occurred during peace time. It is important to note that the Soviet regime did deploy enormous resettlement programs during peace time as well, and the Young Turk and Kemalist regimes had committed such practices during the First World War and the War of Independence too. Hence, perceived minority “collaboration” with a foreign enemy in wartime could not have been the only element leading to mass resettlement programs in both regimes. As regards variable (2), both population movements were internal. This internal aspect of the deportations and resettlement is incredibly important, because it shows that the affected populations were still deemed capable of being (forcefully) incorporated into the state.

---

<sup>321</sup> Terry Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (1998): 821–22. Although Martin uses the term “ethnic cleansing”, which I criticized earlier, this does not mean that the variables are not relevant.

Regarding variable (3), it can be observed that the Soviet deportation of the Chechen-Ingush was total in intent as well as implementation. Even Chechen-Ingush residing outside the area of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR fell subject to deportation and resettlement. The massacre and deportation and resettlement of the Zaza Kurds was partial, but still involved a larger part of the population of this particular region than other instances of Kurdish resettlement. There was a simple geographic element to this difference as well. The availability of enormous swathes of resource-rich but underpopulated territories in the Soviet Far East enabled the regime to perpetrate the total deportation of various population groups in the first place. The Kemalists, on the other hand, had lost most of the territories belonging to the Ottoman Empire and their range of options for resettlement was much more circumscribed in geographical terms.

For variable (4), it can be clearly said that both operations were extensively professionalized and involved only very limited mobilization of the local population. The NKVD did use local elites and religious leaders, but only as strategic pawns with the purpose of expediting the process. Mobilization of professional armed and police forces was substantial in both cases: about 50,000 soldiers in Turkey and 120,000 NKVD and other operatives in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. Relative to the population of the particular regions, the mobilization of armed forces was even larger in Turkey than in the Soviet Union. Both cases were preceded by substantial planning as well, and in this sense as well the case of the Soviets is striking for its efficiency. Planning under the leadership of Beria had lasted for about a year, whereas the operation itself was completed in only a week. In the case of Dersim, operations lasted much longer, and it is more difficult to directly point at the implementation of a plan. Central authorities had certainly wanted to suppress and cleanse the region in the context of their general intention to abolish both Kurdish territories and Kurdish identity as such since the late 1920s, with the formulation of the Eastern Regions Reform Plan (see chapter 2.2.2). Moreover, placing the massacres and deportations in the context of the Resettlement Law of 1934, it is impossible to deny that a substantial degree of planning that must have been involved, although it remains unclear how hasty the decision to actually start the operations was finally made.

(5) The deportation of the Zaza Kurds from the Dersim area went accompanied with a far greater degree of mass murder in relative and absolute terms, although the NKVD operations in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR saw horrendous atrocities as well. It seems that the large degree of mass murder in Dersim was at least partly due to the occurrence of the resettlement program in the direct context of conflict between the state and local tribes, which can perhaps account for some of the army’s aggression. Yet, in both cases, negative stereotyping of population groups that were “backward” by nature certainly helped lead to widespread atrocities and the beastly treatment of these people. Moreover, the lack of resistance in the case of the Chechen-Ingush seems to have been largely due to the extensive preparations and planning of the NKVD, relating to variable (3).

(6) The deportation of Chechens went accompanied with practices of ethnic dilution and forced assimilation<sup>322</sup>, whereas the deportation of Kurds in Turkey went accompanied with both of these practices as well as ethnic consolidation. Ethnic dilution can be defined as the territorial dispersion of populations in order to prevent them from organizing amongst themselves; whereas ethnic consolidation is the practice of bringing populations together with the purpose of strengthening the dominance of a particular group.<sup>323</sup> The Chechen-Ingush were territorially dispersed across the Kazakh and Kirghiz ASSR's. This primarily served the goal of preventing the population to organize itself, and not the goal of strengthening the demographic base of another group. Forced assimilation can be defined as the pursuit of compulsive policies aimed at an ethnically defined group of people, which leads to the involuntary adoption of the dominant identity or ethnicity of the state.<sup>324</sup> With regard to this practice, it can be argued that the very act of removal and resettlement was an attempt to achieve assimilation. It can also be argued that frustrations with earlier failed attempts of forced assimilation and incorporation were the ultimate motivation for both of these operations. The Chechen-Ingush and Zaza Kurds were settled in areas where they could more easily be monitored and controlled by the state. In Dersim, this happened within the region itself as well, where people were removed from a difficultly accessible “forbidden zone” and settled in the less isolated periphery of the region.

Besides these variables, a number of additional comparative remarks regarding these cases can be made. In particular, both practices aimed to “excise” those “harmful” elements from areas that were seen as polluted and by extension the people that lived within it. Both regions were seen as historically unreliable and a threat to the territorial as well as the cultural hegemony of their states. In this context, the experience with armed resistance is interesting as well. In both cases, entire population groups fell subject to “punishment” campaigns because they bore the same ethnicity of those who had dared to actively resist the new political order. This was only possible in a state that had become used to classifying its population in distinctive groups and ranked it according to reliability. Also interesting are partially successful attempts by both states to exploit local competition between tribes and clans, and co-opt the local population before and during the operations. The NKVD assembled local authorities to implement the deportations, and some tribes of the Dersim areas had announced they would support the regime. Tragically, such expressions of loyalty did not prevent these groups to fall subject to deportations and massacres as well. Finally, the experience of armed resistance and the appropriation of a substantive number of firearms looms as an important element in both cases. This is reminiscent of Max Weber's classic remark that a “state claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory.”<sup>325</sup>

<sup>322</sup> Note that the Soviets had practiced ethnic consolidation earlier, see chapter 2.1.2

<sup>323</sup> Morland, *Demographic Engineering*, 34; Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power*, chap. 6.

<sup>324</sup> Bookman, *The Demographic Struggle for Power*, 105.

<sup>325</sup> Max Weber, “‘Politik Als Beruf’, *Gesammelte Politische Schriften* (Muenchen 1921 [1919],” in *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. H.H Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York, 1946), 77.

Finally, the Soviets and the Kemalists both possessed the operational capacity to murder the entirety of these population groups, but they did not do so. It was the cultural identity of these two groups that had to be eradicated from the face of the earth, not the people as physical beings. This can only be explained by the absence of a motivation of biological racism and the primacy of nurturist thought.

## Conclusion

This thesis started with the identification of Republican Turkey and the Soviet Union as “gardening states” in which the “weeds” and “harmful elements” of society were “excised” by the regime. The thesis set out to compare the gardening itself, and asked the question what the similarities and differences were in the way the Soviet Union and Turkey deployed violent population policies toward ethnic minority groups in the first half of the twentieth century. This question has been addressed on three different levels of analysis (a formative, strategic, and empirical level), discussed in the three respective chapters of the thesis.<sup>326</sup> In this conclusion, I will bundle and summarize the results of these chapters, give a comprehensive answer to the research question, and end with some suggestions for further research

Chapter 1 discussed the trajectory from total war to revolution and civil war that led to the fall of the imperial order and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and the Soviet Union. The chapter gave insight into population policies and repression of ethnic minority groups on a formative level by discussing how such practices emerged in this context of crisis and upheaval. Of course, in both states violence towards ethnic groups had occurred before, but in this period they were implemented as pseudo-scientific “excisionary” operations targeting certain harmful “elements” in sensitive borderland regions. Moreover, during the continuing conflict situation after the First World War, practices of forced population movements were institutionalized as an administrative method of rule. These developments were related to an increased belief in the capacity of the state to achieve revolutionary change in order to overcome “backwardness”. The desire for such change, in turn, was voiced by radical parties that were initially on the margin of the political spectrum, but managed to seize power and implement their revolutionary agenda of achieving state socialism in the Soviet Union and ethnic homogeneity in Turkey. The most important difference between the two states is the severe demographic and territorial loss in the case of (Ottoman) Turkey, and the maintenance of the boundaries of the Tsarist state in the case of the Soviet Union. This structural difference helps account for the multi-national and multi-cultural aspect that was incorporated in the state-building practices of the Bolsheviks, and the demise of the multi-national ideal of Ottomanism in the case of Turkey. Another important difference is the ideological dogmatism of the Bolsheviks and the ideological flexibility of the Young Turks and later the Kemalists. This can be related to the fact that the Bolsheviks struggled

---

<sup>326</sup> As noted earlier, it should be stressed that these “formative”, “strategic”, and “empirical” levels that I refer to here are used only as a way to give insight into the reasoning behind the structuring of the research and results of this thesis. They are not meant to suggest that these are the only relevant levels of analysis for understanding ethnic repression.

for the political form of their government, whereas the Young Turks/Kemalists were focused on preserving the state. Finally, the institutional continuities of the Kemalist regime were far greater than in the Soviet Union, which can in turn be related to a much higher degree of violence and persecution within the apparatus of the state in the Soviet Union.

Chapter 2 discussed the political strategies that were formulated by political leaders in order to deal with ethnic diversity in both new regimes in the first decades after their establishment, and related this to alternating tendencies of inclusion and exclusion observed in official policy towards ethnic minority groups. This chapter showed the double-edged nature of the notion of “backwardness” in both states. On the one hand, it were the states as a whole that were to “catch up” with the West under the auspices of a political elite that was presented as civilized and omnipotent. On the other hand, “backwardness” was used to refer to particular regions that were considered as notoriously uncivilized and an impediment to development in general. In any case, “backwardness” was a discursive vehicle for implementing radically transformative policies. The possibility of overcoming regional backwardness was proclaimed in both states, and was predicated upon the espousal of nurturist and non-essentialist conceptions of nationality of political leaders such as Stalin and Gökbalp. Stalin and Gökbalp also both discarded ideas of biological racism to the realm of “zoology”, although in Turkey this discourse was devoid of proclamations of cultural or national diversity. This nurturism shows the impossibility of neatly distinguishing between constructive and destructive components of the policies pursued in both states. Instead, these components collapsed into each other as it was repression itself that was perceived to lead to the incorporation of ethnic groups. The practice of forced population settlements was instrumental in this regard, but of course served markedly different ideological goals in both regimes. The Soviets at first settled ethnically dispersed groups together in order to more efficiently broadcast their message of revolutionary socialism, whereas the Turks dispersed the Kurdish population over Anatolia in order to expedite their assimilation into Turks. On a more abstract level, similarities re-emerge as in both states ethnic policies were presented and implemented as a top-down, state-sponsored process with the purpose of standardizing the population of the new order. As a result, the new regimes encountered difficulties with this policy in regions where people’s identifications were diverse and local, accounting for the increasing shift towards exclusiveness in both states in later years. It is no coincidence that it were such areas that were defined in terms of “backwardness” that came to be predominantly subjected to violent state repression.

Chapter 3 gave insight into the similarities and differences of violent population policies toward ethnic minority groups on an empirical level. The chapter discussed the massacres, deportations, and resettlement of the Chechen-Ingush in the Soviet Union and of the Zaza Kurds in Republican Turkey. These were two large scale operations that occurred with a tremendous display of military or police power, within a well-defined geographical area in a limited time span. It is important to note that in the Soviet Union, the deportation of Chechen-Ingush was only one of many instances of ethnic repression during the Second World War. Although in Turkey a comprehensive program of deporta-

tion practices against Kurds existed, the operations in Dersim seem to have been exceptional in magnitude and number of people affected. This case study of the deportations and massacres of the Chechen-Ingush population in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR of the Soviet Union and the Zaza Kurds in the Dersim region in Republican Turkey demonstrates a veritable host of practical similarities. Both cases involved a high degree of mobilization of professionals relative to the subjected population, saw instances of cruel mass murder, and went accompanied with practices of ethnic dilution and forced assimilation. Perhaps most importantly, both instances of mass violence were framed and legitimized as “punishment” operations against peoples resisting the political order and incapable of giving up their “backward” identity. It is important to recall that, despite the inexcusable use of violence and cruelty, these were still operations of resettlement as much as of removal. It were the regions that had to be incorporated into the state, and it were the cultures and languages of the people inhabiting it that had to die out, rather than the people themselves.

To sum up: in both states state violence towards ethnic minority groups emerged in the context of (total) war mobilization, was institutionalized as an administrative practice by the newly established authoritarian political parties, and continued to be used throughout the rule of these parties for various goals that differed by regime but were similar in the sense that they consisted of frustrated attempts to incorporate regions perceived as “backward” that were inhabited by ethnic minority groups that had historically resisted central state authority.

### **Implications, recommendations, and limitations of the research**

In the conceptual framework of this thesis, I identified possible heuristic, descriptive, analytical, and paradigmatic purposes of comparative research, based on the work of Jürgen Kocka. How do these purposes of comparison relate to the research of this thesis? Heuristically, the comparison of this research can serve to identify questions in other fields. One of the implications of this study has been to underline the importance of regime change in order to understand violent population policies towards ethnic minorities. Hence, a possibility for further research would be to extend the analysis to other states that experienced regime change and in which ethnic minority groups made up a significant part of the population, such as for example post-colonial India or Communist China. How did these new states represent ethnic diversity? To what extent was resettlement of population groups practiced by these states? Were notions of “backwardness” used to refer to the predicament of the country as a whole, or particular regions of it, used here as well? How did this relate into the treatment of ethnic minority groups?

Descriptively, by discussing the histories of the Soviet Union and Turkey on an equal level of analysis with reference to the same conceptual categories, the comparison has helped to discern more clearly the profile of both respective cases. As such, the research can contribute to discussions in the separate historiographies of these countries. In the case of the Soviet Union, the comparison strengthens the rejection of the notion of Soviet exceptionalism, and offers the suggestion that it is not only

important to integrate the history of the Soviet Union with general developments in Western Europe, but to compare it in-depth with other states as well. In the case of Turkey, the comparison shows the relevance and necessity of including Turkey in analyses of twentieth century authoritarian regimes and the importance of including the deportations of Kurds in comparative research on forced population movements. Moreover, by highlighting the large array of practical similarities with the Soviet Union, the research of this thesis offers a substantial challenge to the idea that Kemalist Turkey was a more successful and less violent state than the Soviet Union because it embraced westernization. In fact, the argument could be made that the embrace of westernizing techniques of statecraft itself helped lead to the violent policies pursued by the Kemalists.

Analytically, the high degree of practical similarities identified in the case studies of Chapter 3 raises important questions about the causal mechanisms underlying the application of forced internal population movements as a method of statecraft. Both regimes practiced ethnic dilution, ethnic consolidation and forced assimilation (see page 23 for definitions of these terms). The ubiquity of state violence in rural and isolated geographical areas is also striking. In his monumental study on political violence in civil wars, Stathis Kalyvas argued that “rurality” is one of the determining factors in the level of violence during civil war conflicts. He argues that rural areas are often more difficult to access and hence to control by the central government. Moreover, rural populations might have a higher tolerance to threats of violence, and a rebellious tradition might be present that enables largescale anti-state activities. Most importantly, Kalyvas argues, the dispersion of the population in rural environment impedes policing activities of the state.<sup>327</sup> The analysis in this thesis, and in particular the two case studies, suggest that Kalyvas’s insight might be extended and that in totalizing authoritarian regimes as well rural areas might be more susceptible to the violence of the state. Not only had Kemalist and Soviet authorities experienced resistance and rebellion from the Chechen and Dersim regions, the practice of resettlement shows that these populations were moved to areas that were easier to police and control. This raises the question to what extent the ultimate motivation for these deportations was ethnicity itself, and exactly how important ethnicity was in the decisions of these states to launch these operations. Would the Zaza Kurds of Dersim have encountered the same degree of mass violence if they had lived in less isolated, urban areas? And would the northern Caucasus regions not have fallen subject to NKVD operations if it had been inhabited by Russians? The Soviet regime during the Stalin era certainly had no qualms about persecuting Russians. Certainly, a large array of contemptuous animosity towards these groups existed, and the selection of people earmarked for deportation certainly occurred on the basis of ethnicity. But this occurred only after this ethnic identity had in the eyes of the regime become synonymous with armed resistance and “backwardness”.

Several limitations of this thesis and possible ways to confront these in future research should be noted. Most important is the predominant reliance on English-language secondary sources, and the

---

<sup>327</sup> Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 135–36.



absence of analysis of Russian and Turkish material, although a limited number of Russian sources has been used in Chapter 3. In Chapter 1, the lack of Russian and Turkish material has minimal impact given the broad outlook and the abundance of secondary material. In Chapter 2, primary sources in Turkish and Russian could give a more comprehensive and varied picture of competing approaches towards nationality in the two states. In the third chapter, the inclusion of a more substantial body of primary sources could also yield important new insights. Especially the question how the Turkish army alternated between practices of massacring and deporting the Zaza Kurds and why this differed by group, is in need of additional research. Moreover, the fate of the Chechen-Ingush on the special settlements and on the Kurds in Western Anatolia deserves more attention. Of course, given the fact that the primary purpose of the thesis was synthetic, the lack of primary sources and material in Turkish and Russian need not necessarily impede the conclusions made above. Another limitation of the research is the restriction of the analysis in the case of Turkey to the relationship between the central state and the Kurdish minority. This was motivated by a lack of material on other groups, and the fact that the Kurds were the only sizeable minority group left by the time of the establishment of the Republic. Moreover, a preliminary study of the secondary literature suggested that the policy towards non-Muslim minorities in the Republic were aimed less at assimilation, and more at marginalization. A possible way to solve this problem would be to reorient the comparison in time, and focus on the policies of the Ottoman and the Tsarist government during the First World War. To my knowledge, no comparative study of Tsarist First World War deportations and the Armenian genocide has been written.

A final line of analysis that has not been incorporated in this thesis due to time considerations is the aftermath of the Chechen-Ingush and Kurdish deportations in terms of memory. It would be an important contribution to analyse the way the memory of state violence has played a role in more recent conflicts between the Russian and Turkish states and Chechen and Kurdish minorities. Such research could give more insight into how policies aimed at the incorporation of these ethnic groups in the state have had the long-term adverse effect of creating new enmities that continue leading to conflict until this very day.

## Bibliography

### *Published primary sources*

Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal. *The Great Speech*. Ankara: Atatürk Research Center, 2005.

Stalin, Joseph. *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question, a Collection of Articles and Speeches*. Translated by A. Fineberg. Moscow: Partizdat, 1934.

“Stalin on Rapid Industrialization - Documents in Russian History.” Accessed June 13, 2017.  
[http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Stalin\\_on\\_Rapid\\_Industrialization](http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Stalin_on_Rapid_Industrialization).

Gökalp, Ziya. *The Principles of Turkism: Translated from the Turkish and Annotated by Robert Devereux*. Translated by Robert Devereaux. Leiden E.J. Brill, 1968.

*Stalinskie Deportatsii. 1928-1953*, Fond Aleksandr N. Yakovleva, 1997. Accessed May 24 2017.  
[www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues/62150](http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues/62150)

Documents No : 3.115 ; 3.116; 3.117; 3.118; 3.121; 3.123; 3.124

### *Secondary sources*

Adler, Nanci. “Reconciliation with – or Rehabilitation of – the Soviet Past?” *Memory Studies* 5, no. 3 (July 1, 2012): 327–38.

Ahmad, Feroz. *The Making of Modern Turkey*. The Making of the Middle East. London: Routledge, 1994.

———. *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

Akçam, Taner. *The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Alayarian, Aida. *Consequences of Denial: The Armenian Genocide*. London: Karnac Books, 2008.

Alemdaroğlu, Ayça. “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey.” *Body & Society* 11, no. 3 (September 1, 2005): 61–76.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Inc, 1968.

- Atabaki, Touraj, and Erik Jan Zürcher, eds. *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernisation in Turkey and Iran, 1918-1942*. London: I.B.Tauris, 2004.
- Bahceci, Sergen. "The 'Governmentality' of Kurds in the Early Republican Turkey." University of Reading.  
[http://www.academia.edu/7491667/The\\_Governmentality\\_of\\_Kurds\\_in\\_the\\_Early\\_Republica\\_n\\_Turkey](http://www.academia.edu/7491667/The_Governmentality_of_Kurds_in_the_Early_Republica_n_Turkey)
- Barkey, Karen, and Eric Hobsbawm, eds. "The End of Empires." In *After Empire: Multi-Ethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Bayar, Yeşim. *Formation of the Turkish Nation-State, 1920-1938*, New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2014.
- Bloxham, Donald, and A. Dirk Moses. "Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing." In *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe*, edited by Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth, 87–139. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Bookman, Milica Zarkovic. *The Demographic Struggle for Power: The Political Economy of Demographic Engineering in the Modern World*. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Boztas, Özgür Inan. "Did a Genocide Take Place in the Dersim Region of Turkey in 1938?" *Papers of the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 2015, 18.  
<http://commons.clarku.edu/chgspapers/18>
- Brandenberger, David. "'... It Is Imperative to Advance Russian Nationalism as the First Priority': Debates within the Stalinist Ideological Establishment, 1941-1945." In *State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, edited by Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry. Martin, 275–99. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Brockett, Gavin D. "Collective Action and the Turkish Revolution: Towards a Framework for the Social History of the Atatürk Era, 1923–38." *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998): 44–66.
- Brown, Kate. *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Bruinessen, Martin van. "Genocide in Kurdistan? The Suppression of the Dersim Rebellion in Turkey (1937-8) and the Chemical War against the Iraqi Kurds." In *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism versus Nation-Building States: Collected Articles*, 67–98. Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000.
- Buldakov, V. P. *Krasnaia Smuta: Priroda I Posledstviia Revoliutsionnogo Nasiliia*. Moskva: Fond Pervogo Prezidenta Rossii B.N. El'tsina, 2010.
- Cagaptay, Soner. *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who Is a Turk?* Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern History 4. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.
- Cheng, Yinghong. *Creating The "New Man": From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009.

- Collins, Patricia Hill. "Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41 (August 14, 2015): 1–20.
- Conway, Martin, and Robert Gerwarth. "Revolution and Counter-Revolution." In *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe*, edited by Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth, 140–75. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Courtois, Stéphane, and Mark Kramer, eds. *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- David-Fox, Michael. "On the Primacy of Ideology: Soviet Revisionists and Holocaust Deniers (In Response to Martin Malia)." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 1 (March 18, 2004): 81–105.
- Davies, Robert. *The Soviet Collective Farm, 1929-1930*. London: Macmillan Press, 1980.
- Davies, Robert, and Stephen Wheatcroft. *The Years of Hunger : Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Demeny, Paul. "Population Policy: The Role of National Governments." *Population and Development Review* 1, no. 1 (1975): 147–61.
- Dogan, Mattei, and Dominique Pelassy. *How to Compare Nations, Strategies in Comparative Politics*. Second edition. Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1990.
- Eisenstadt, Shmuel. "Multiple Modernities." *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 1–29.
- . "The Kemalist Revolution in Comparative Perspective." In *Atatürk, Founder of a Modern State*, edited by Ergun Özbudun and Ali Kazancigil, 127–40. London: C. Hurst, 1981.
- Figes, Orlando. *A People's Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution*. New York: Viking, 1997.
- Findley, Carter V. *The Turks in World History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. "Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia." *The Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 4 (1993): 745–70.
- . "How the Mice Buried the Cat: Scenes from the Great Purges of 1937 in the Russian Provinces." *The Russian Review* 52, no. 3 (1993): 299–320.
- Foucault, Michel. "Governmentality." In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, 87–104. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Gawrych, George W. "The Culture and Politics of Violence in Turkish Society, 1903–14." *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no. 3 (July 1, 1986): 307–30.
- Geifman, Anna. *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Getty, J. Arch. *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938*. Soviet and East European Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

- . *Practicing Stalinism: Bolsheviks, Boyars, and the Persistence of Tradition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.
- Getty, J. Arch, and Oleg V. Naumov. *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-39*. Annals of Communism. New Haven [etc.]: Yale UP, 2000.
- Geyer, Michael, and Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds. *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Gingeras, Ryan. *Fall of the Sultanate: The Great War and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1922*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Gorlizki, Yoram, and Oleg Khlevniuk. *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945-1953*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Gorlizki, Yoram, and Hans Mommsen. "The Political (Dis)Orders of Stalinism and National Socialism." In *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, edited by Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, 41–86. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Hall, Richard C. "Ilinden Uprising, 1903." In *War in the Balkans: An Encyclopedic History from the Fall of the Ottoman Empire to the Breakup of Yugoslavia*, edited by Richard C. Hall, 144–45. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2014.
- . *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War*. Warfare and History. London ; New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Hanioglu, M. Şükrü. *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- . *The Young Turks in Opposition*. Washington, DC: Institute of Turkish Studies, 1995.
- Haupt, Heinz-Gerhard, and Klaus Weinhauer. "Terrorism and the State." In *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe*, edited by Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth, 176–209. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Hirsch, Francine. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge & the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- . "Race without the Practice of Racial Politics." *Slavic Review* 61, no. 1 (2002): 30–43.
- Hirschon, Renee. *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2003.
- Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Hoffmann, David. *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism, 1914-1939*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Hoffmann, David, and Yanni Kotsonis, eds. *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

- Holquist, Peter. "State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism." In *Stalinism: The Essential Readings*, edited by Hoffmann, 129–56. Oxford, 2003.
- . "To Count, to Extract, and to Exterminate: Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia." In *A State of Nations : Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, edited by Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, 111–44. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- . "Violent Russia, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence, 1905-21." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 3 (August 29, 2003): 627–52.
- Jongerden, Joost. *The Settlement Issue in Turkey and the Kurds : An Analysis of Spatial Policies, Modernity and War*. Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia. Leiden: Brill NV, 2007.
- Kaiser, Robert. "Review: Francine Hirsch. Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union." *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 1, 2006): 1635–36.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Khalid, Adeeb. "Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective." *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 231–51.
- . "Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism, 1917-1920." In *State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, edited by Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, 145–64. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Khazanov, Anatoly M. "Whom to Mourn and Whom to Forget? (Re)constructing Collective Memory in Contemporary Russia." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9, no. 2–3 (June 1, 2008): 293–310.
- Khlevniuk, Oleg. *Stalin : New Biography of a Dictator*. Translated by Nora Seligman. Favorov. London: Yale University Press, 2015.
- Kieser, Hans-Lukas. "Dersim Massacre, 1937-1938." *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, [Online], July 27, 2011. <http://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/dersim-massacre-1937-1938>.
- Koçak, Cemil. "Some Views on the Turkish Single-Party Regime During the İnönü Period (1938–45)." In *Men of Order : Authoritarian Modernisation in Turkey and Iran, 1918-1942*, edited by Touraj Atabaki and Erik Jan Zürcher, 113–29. London: I.B.Tauris, 2004.
- Kocka, Jürgen. "Comparison and Beyond." *History and Theory* 42, no. 1 (February 1, 2003): 39–44.
- Kotkin, Stephen. "Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization." In *Stalinism : The Essential Readings*, edited by David Hoffmann, 111–26. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
- . "Modern Times: The Soviet Union and the Interwar Conjuncture." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2, no. 1 (March 26, 2008): 111–64.

- . *Stalin, Volume I: Paradoxes of Power*. New York: Penguin Press, 2014.
- Krementsov, Nikolai. "From 'Beastly Philosophy' to Medical Genetics: Eugenics in Russia and the Soviet Union." *Annals of Science* 68, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 61–92.
- Ladas, Stephen Pericles. *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*. New York: MacMillan, 1932.
- Levene, Mark. *The Crisis of Genocide: The European Rimlands 1912-1938*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Lewis, Bernard. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Lieberman, Benjamin David. *Terrible Fate: Ethnic Cleansing in the Making of Modern Europe*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006.
- Lieven, Dominic C. B. "Russia as Empire and Periphery." In *The Cambridge History of Russia. Vol. 2, Imperial Russia, 1689-1917*, edited by Dominic C. B. Lieven, 7–26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Lohr, Eric. *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- . "The Russian Army and the Jews: Mass Deportation, Hostages, and Violence during World War I." *The Russian Review* 60, no. 3 (2001): 404–19.
- Lundgren, Åsa. *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Mahoney, James, and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. "Comparative Historical Analysis: Achievements and Agendas." In *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, edited by James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Mann, Michael. *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Martin, Terry. "An Affirmative Action Empire, The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism." In *State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, edited by Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, 67–90. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- . "Modernization or Neo-Traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism." In *Stalinism: New Directions*, 348–67. London: Routledge, 2000.
- . *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- . "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing." *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (1998): 813–61.
- Mawdsley, Evan. *The Russian Civil War*. New York: Pegasus Books, 2007.

- McCarthy, Justin. *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*. Princeton, New Jersey: Darwin Press, 1995.
- McDowall, David. *A Modern History of the Kurds*. 3rd rev. and updated ed. London: I.B. Tauris, 2004.
- McGarry, John. “‘Demographic Engineering’: the State-Directed Movement of Ethnic Groups as a Technique of Conflict Regulation.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 4 (1998): 613–38.
- Morland, Paul. *Demographic Engineering: Population Strategies in Ethnic Conflict*. International Population Studies. Farnham: Routledge, 2014.
- Naimark, Norman M. *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe*. London: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Naimark, Norman M. *Stalin’s Genocides*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Northrop, Douglas. “Nationalizing Backwardness: Gender, Empire, and Uzbek Identity.” In *State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, edited by Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, 191–220. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Olson, James S, Brigance, Lee, and Pappas, Nicholas C., eds. *Ethnohistorical dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empire*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1994
- Olson, Robert. “The Kurdish Rebellions of Sheikh Said (1925), Mt. Ararat (1930), and Dersim (1937-38): Their Impact on the Development of the Turkish Air Force and on Kurdish and Turkish Nationalism.” *Die Welt Des Islams* 40, no. 1 (2000): 67–94.
- Petrov, Nikita, and Arsenii Roginskii. “The ‘Polish Operation’ of the NKVD, 1937-8.” In *Stalin’s Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union*, edited by Barry McLoughlin and Kevin McDermott, 153–72. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Pipes, Richard. *The Russian Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.
- Plaggenborg, Stefan. *Ordnung Und Gewalt: Kemalismus - Faschismus - Sozialismus*. München: Oldenbourg, 2012.
- Pohl, J. Otto. *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999.
- . “Stalin’s Genocide against the ‘Repressed Peoples.’ ” *Journal of Genocide Research* 2, no. 2 (June 1, 2000): 267–93.
- Pohl, Michaela. “‘It Cannot Be That Our Graves Will Be Here’: The Survival of Chechen and Ingush Deportees in Kazakhstan, 1944-1957.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 4, no. 3 (September 1, 2002): 401–30.
- Polian, Pavel. *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004.
- Popper, Karl R. “Utopia and Violence.” In *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, 355–62. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.



- Poulton, Hugh. *Top Hat, Grey Wolf, and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic*. London: Hurst, 1997.
- Quine, Maria Sophia. *Population Politics in Twentieth-Century Europe: Fascist Dictatorships and Liberal Democracies*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Raleigh, Donald J. *Experiencing Russia's Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917-1922*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Reynolds, Michael A. *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Rieber, Alfred J. "Civil Wars in the Soviet Union." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 1 (March 14, 2003): 129–62.
- . "Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: An Interpretive Essay." In *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*, edited by Hugh Ragsdale, 315–59. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- . *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- . "Stalin, Man of the Borderlands." *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (2001): 1651–91.
- . *The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: From the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Satter, David. *It Was a Long Time Ago, and It Never Happened Anyway: Russia and the Communist Past*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.
- Scott, James C. *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Şeker, Nesim. "Demographic Engineering in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Armenians." *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 3 (May 1, 2007): 461–74.
- Semelin, Jacques. *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Shaw, Stanford Jay, and Ezel Kural Shaw. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1977.
- Shearer, David. "Stalin at War, 1918-1953: Patterns of Violence and Foreign Threat." *University of Delaware* Unpublished article (2016): 1–25.
- Simon, Gerhard. *Nationalism and Policy toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991.
- Slezkine, Yuri. "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism." In *Stalinism: New Directions*. London: Routledge, 2000.

- Steinberg, Mark. "Russia's Fin Die Siècle, 1900-1914." In *The Cambridge History of Russia. Vol. 3, The Twentieth Century*, edited by Ronald Grigor Suny, 65–93. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor. *The Soviet Experiment : Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- . *"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else": A History of the Armenian Genocide*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- . "Writing Genocide: The Fate of the Armenians." In *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, edited by Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek, and Norman M. Naimark, 15–41. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor, and Terry Martin, eds. *State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Taspinar, Omer. *Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey: Kemalist Identity in Transition*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Ülker, Erol. "Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934." *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, no. 7 (September 23, 2008): 1–19.
- Üngör, Uğur Ümit. "Seeing like a Nation-State: Young Turk Social Engineering in Eastern Turkey, 1913–50." *Journal of Genocide Research* 10, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 15–39.
- . "State Violence under Kemalism and Stalinism: Common Themes and Analogies." *Utrecht University Unpublished article* (2017): 1–15.
- . "Studying Mass Violence: Pitfalls, Problems, and Promises." *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 7, no. 1 (April 1, 2012): 68–80. doi:10.3138/gsp.7.1.68.
- . *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Viola, Lynne. *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- . "Stalin's Empire: The Gulag and Police Colonization in the Soviet Union in the 1930s." In *Stalin and Europe : Imitation and Domination, 1928-1953*, edited by Timothy Snyder and Ray Brandon, 18–44. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- . "The Question of the Perpetrator in Soviet History." *Slavic Review* 72, no. 1 (2013): 1–23. doi:10.5612/slavicreview.72.1.0001.
- Wade, Rex A. *The Russian Revolution, 1917*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Watts, Nicole. "Relocating Dersim: Turkish State-Building and Kurdish Resistance, 1931–1938." *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23 (2000): 5–30.

- Weber, Max. "Politik Als Beruf", *Gesammelte Politische Schriften* (Muenchen 1921 [1919].) In *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated by H.H Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 77–128. New York, 1946.
- Weiner, Amir. "Introduction: Landscaping the Human Garden." In *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- . "Nature, Nurture, and Memory in a Socialist Utopia: Delineating the Soviet Socio-Ethnic Body in the Age of Socialism." *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (1999): 1114–55.
- . "Saving Private Ivan: From What, Why, and How?" *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, no. 2 (2008): 305–36.
- Weitz, Eric D. *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- . "Racial Politics without the Concept of Race: Reevaluating Soviet Ethnic and National Purgues." *Slavic Review* 61, no. 1 (2002): 1–29.
- . "Utopian Ideologies as Motives for Genocide." In *Encyclopedia for Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, edited by Dinah L. Shelton, 1124–27. *World History in Context*. Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2005.
- Werner, Michael, and Bénédicte Zimmermann. "Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity1." *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (February 1, 2006): 30–50.
- Werth, Nicolas. "Stalinist State Violence: A Reappraisal Twenty Years after the Archival Revolution." *Tijdschrift Voor Geschiedenis* 124, no. 4 (December 1, 2011): 480–91.
- Wheatcroft, Stephen G. "The Crisis of the Late Tsarist Penal System." In *Challenging Traditional Views of Russian History*, edited by Stephen G. Wheatcroft, 27–54. *Studies in Russian and East European History and Society*. Palgrave Macmillan United Kingdom, 2002.
- Yeğen, Mesut. "'Prospective-Turks' or 'Pseudo-Citizens': Kurds in Turkey." *The Middle East Journal* 63, no. 4 (October 1, 2009): 597–615.
- Zeydanlıoğlu, Welat. "'The White Turkish Man's Burden': Orientalism, Kemalism and the Kurds in Turkey." In *Neo-Colonial Mentalities in Contemporary Europe? Language and Discourse in the Construction of Identities*, edited by Guido Rings and Anne Ife, 1–17. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008.
- Zürcher, Erik Jan. "Institution Building in the Kemalist Republic: The Role of the People's Party." In *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernisation in Turkey and Iran, 1918-1942*, edited by Erik Jan Zürcher and Touraj Atabaki, 98–112. London: I.B.Tauris, 2004.
- . *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1905-1926*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984.
- . *Turkey: A Modern History*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004.