

Kitap Tanıtma:

MICHAEL REYNOLDS, *Shattering Empires*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xiii+303, 25 plates, 5 maps, select biblio., index. ISBN 978-0-521-14916-7 Paperback.

Shattering Empires is an expansion of Michael Reynolds' unpublished 2003 doctoral dissertation drafted at Princeton University under the supervision of Professor Şükrü Hanioglu. The book is about the story of the rivalry and fall of the Ottoman and Russian empires in 1908-1918. It argues that "geopolitical Competition and the emergence of a new global interstate order provide the key to understanding the course of history in the Ottoman-Russian borderlands in the twentieth century" (p. i).

The monograph is thematically rather than chronologically arranged and the descriptive-analytical account is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 traces the course of foreign relations between the Ottoman and Russian empires from the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 up to the July Crisis of 1914. Chapter 2 examines Russia's policies toward Eastern Anatolia and highlights the way interstate competition shaped local identities and politics through the introduction of the concept of the national state. Chapter 3 explores Russia's use of Muslim spies, Ottoman attempts to deal with Russia's "Muslim" and "Armenian" questions, and the flows of defectors across the borders. Chapter 4 covers the First World War from its outbreak until the Russian Revolution of 1917. Chapter 5 considers the interaction of war with the national idea and new concepts of state legitimacy and its impact upon the Ottoman-Russian borderlands. Chapter 6 analyzes the evolution of Ottoman policy toward Russia and the Caucasus from the breakdown of the Russian army in 1917 through the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Bolsheviks in March 1918. Chapter 7 looks at the development of Ottoman relations with the Transcaucasian Federation from its emergence in 1917 through negotiations of Trabzon and Batum, the Ottoman acquisitions of their former districts of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum, to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, and the North Caucasus. Chapter 8 follows the Ottoman advance into Azerbaijan and Dagestan. General observations and conclusions about various aspects of the clash and collapse of the Ottoman and Russian empires in 1908-1918 are summarized in the epilogue. About one-third of the book concerns the pre-war years, while the rest is evenly divided between 1914-16 and the remaining war years. All chapters are highly original and insightful. The author in every part manifests not only a command over the subject matter but also a profound understanding of the Ottoman and Russian positions.

Reynolds' approach is realistic and dispassionate; he eschews ideological explanations, but prefers instead to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the Ottoman and Russian empires, the stated purposes of their statesmen and the factors

which have influenced them in their decisions. The author's tone is judicious and nuanced, and his preference for facts over theories is commendable.

Shattering Empires is a serious and erudite inquiry. It is rigorously researched, and the arguments are proven by overwhelming evidence. To accomplish this, Reynolds has meticulously worked many years on his book and has enjoyed the use of the Prime Minister's Office Ottoman Archive in Istanbul, including the copious correspondence of the Ministry of the Interior and the Records Office of the Sublime Porte. He utilized the archive of the Turkish General Staff Military History and Strategic Studies Directorate, as well as the Enver Pasha and Kazım Orbay papers deposited in the Turkish Historical Society at Ankara. The author has benefited a wide array of document collections in the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, State Archive of the Russian Federation, the Russian State Military-Historical Archive and the Russian State Military Archive in Moscow and St. Petersburg. German Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives in Berlin is also consulted.

The author's objectivity and balanced judgment confer on this tome a top place among the works on the Ottoman-Russian relations during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The study nonetheless has some limitations.

First, although Reynolds does not categorize the Armenian events of 1915 as genocide, he mentions "the wholesale destruction of Ottoman Armenians during the First World War" (p. 20), refers to "the effective eradication of the presence in Anatolia of [Armenians]" (p. 155) and indicates that "the Unionists, acting in concert with local tribes in Anatolia, effectively destroyed the Armenian community" (p. 264). This is misleading. In fact, 1, 295, 000 Armenians lived in the Ottoman empire in 1914; 702, 900 of these were subject to relocations in 1915-16, and very large numbers of the displaced persons survived according to documents of the Directorate for Public Security and the Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants of the Ottoman Ministry of the Interior. Meanwhile, the chief British delegate, Lord Curzon, stated at the thirteenth meeting of the Territorial and Military Committee of the Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs on 12 December 1922 that there remained 138,000 Armenians in Turkish Asiatic territory; hundreds of thousands more were scattered about as refugees.¹ Further, the real intention of the Unionists, or the Ottoman government of the day was to exile the Armenians, not to kill them. The rulers were genuinely shocked when they heard what had befallen the Armenians. Of the masses of secret relocation directives seen to date, not one orders murder. Official circulars sent to the governors of the provinces from which Armenians were to be relocated made it clear that the relocation was not intended for the destruction of any individuals or groups; that lives should be protected; that any Ottoman troops engaged in murder, robbery, or rape should be severely punished; and

¹ Parliamentary Command Paper 1814. Treaty No. 1(1923) Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs, 1922-1923, *Records of Proceedings and Draft Terms of Peace*, p. 178.

that guilty public officials should be immediately removed from office and court-martialed. Indeed, strict instructions were issued that the relocations should proceed in an orderly manner and that the persons and property of displaced Armenians should be protected. Official circulars ordering relocations emphasized that care should be taken of vulnerable individuals and protection against attacks given to those being relocated, while Armenians left behind should not be taken from their places of residence². Beginning in 1915, appointed committees made inquiries into the excesses committed against the Armenians. On the basis of their reports efforts were made to restore order and end the killings and deaths and to punish all those responsible. Ottoman civilian and military officials tried and punished (including by execution) more than a thousand people who mistreated the Armenians. Altogether, 1, 376 individuals were given varying degrees of penalties for offenses ranging from minor violations of the military code to failure to adequately carry out the requirements to protect the displaced persons³.

Second, Reynolds argues that "in Istanbul during the first days [24 and 25 April 1915] they arrested 2, 345 Armenian leaders and thereby decapitated Armenians politically" (p. 148). This is not quite the case. These arrests were restricted to the ex-

² See, among many others, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Minister's Office Ottoman Archive), Istanbul (henceforth referred to as BOA), Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi (Ministry of the Interior Ciphred Correspondence Division) (henceforth referred to as DH ŞFR), No.54/10. Telegram to the Governor of Erzurum on the Necessity of Protecting the Armenians Sent from Erzurum on the Roads and to Punish Those Who Are Involved in Inappropriate Activities, 14 June 1915; BOA DH ŞFR, No.54/5, Telegram to the Governor of Erzurum on Ensuring the Safety of the Armenians During Their Transfer to Other Places, 26 June 1915; BOA, DH ŞFR, No.54/381, Circular to the Governors of Provinces and Sanjaks on the Protection of the Properties Belonging to the Relocated Armenians, 11 August 1915; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Arşivi (Archive of the Turkish General Staff Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies), Ankara (henceforth referred to as ATESE), Birinci Dünya Harbi Koleksiyonu (Collection of the First World War) (henceforth referred to as BDHK), Folder:361, File:1445, No.3-1. Circular to the Army and Army Corps Commands on the Protection of the Lives and Properties of Armenians, 22 July 1915.

³ ATESE, BDHK, Folder:2287, File:13, No.3, Communication from the General Command of Gendarmerie to the Ministry of War on the Investigation Committee Relating to the Officials and Gendarmes Who Abused Their Authority During the Armenian Relocations, 26 September 1915; BOA, DH ŞFR, No.58/38, Circular to the Governors of Provinces and Sanjaks on the Establishment of a Committee for the Prevention of Abuse Against the Armenians During Their Transfer, 16 November 1916; BOA, DH ŞFR, No.66/24, Telegram to the Governor of Aleppo on the Immediate Dismissal of the Officials Who Abused Their Authority During the Armenian Relocations, 19 July 1915.

pulsion of only 235 known activists and their accomplices to Ayaş and Çankırı in inner Anatolia. In light of actual events, Ottoman anxieties about the movements of Armenian revolutionary committees—always present before the war amid earlier uprisings—were especially justified now that the war was fully underway and Armenian collaboration with the Russian enemy was in plain sight.

Third, the assertion that “although the Soviet authorities justified the deportations [of the Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Kalmyks, Meskhetian Turks, and Crimean Tatars from their homeland to Central Asia and Siberia] with accusations of collaboration with the invading Germans, the fact that they conducted the deportations after German threat had been turned back suggests the real motive was likely related to demands Stalin made the following year for Turkey to surrender Kars and Ardahan and permit Soviet bases in the Black Sea Straits” (p. 262) is inaccurate. The chief motive of Stalin’s policy on the expulsions was primarily defensive—the removal of potentially disruptive ethnic groups on its sensitive southern border—rather than the pursuit of aggrandizement against Turkey.

A work full of factual detail as Reynolds’ cannot avoid few lapses. For instance, Enver Bey did not lead an armed group of Unionists in a raid on the Sublime Porte on 23 January 1912 but on 23 January 1913 (p. 37); Mahmud Şevket Pasha was not the son of Georgian parents but of a Dagestani father and an Arab mother (p. 97); Cemal Bey did not serve as chief of security of Istanbul in 1913 but as Military Governor (p. 97); Halil Bey (Menteşe) was not Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1918 (pp. 186 and 189); Nuri Pasha was not the nephew but the younger brother of Enver Pasha (p. 222).

The book has a selected bibliography and a fairly complete index. The footnotes are full and indicative of the extent of Reynolds’ research. The text is illustrated by well-chosen plates and five maps.

Shattering Empires will clearly be the standard work on the subject for many years to come. No serious student of the Ottoman-Russian history of the 1908-1918 period should ignore Reynolds’ outstanding book. It deserves to be widely read by specialists and concerned laymen alike. They will find this poignant and sophisticated study very useful. It will no doubt stimulate further consideration of its important theme. Libraries should have it in their collections.

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