

THOSE WHO STAY IN LIMBO: BALKAN IMMIGRANTS OF BURSA AND ITS ENVIRONS

ИЗОСТАВЕНИТЕ: БАЛКАНСКИТЕ ИМИГРАНТИ ОТ БУРСА И ОКОЛНОСТИТЕ ѝ

В настоящото изследване, след кратък исторически екскурс, посветен на ефекта от руската панславистка политика и националните движения на Балканите, авторът съсредоточава вниманието си върху заселването на Бурса и прилежащия ѝ район от преселници от Балканите. Взети са предвид взаимоотношенията между историографията и националната идеология при формирането на националната идентичност. Изследването е основано на *салнамета* и други документи от османските архиви.

Миграционни движения в резултат на руската имперска политика се наблюдават още през XVIII в. Националните движения на етнически малцинства в Османската империя се поддържат от Великобритания, Франция и Русия. В този контекст необходимостта да станеш мнозинство в определен район, за да създадеш своя държава, води до прехвърлянето, дори насила, на групи население от едно място на друго.

След Руско-турската война от 1877–1878 г. една велика балканска миграция започва по посока на османските територии в Анадола. Общо за периода 1829–1914 г. оценките са за 5 до 7 милиона бежанци, за които османската държава извършва необходимите институционални стъпки въпреки обхваналата я политическа и икономическа криза. На 5 януари 1860 г. проблемите на имигрантите са прехвърлени на **Muhacirun Komisyonu**, сформирана от османското правителство, за да посрещне нуждите на мюсюлманските бежански вълни от Крим и Кавказ. Част от тези бежанци са заселени от Комисията в района на Бурса, което дава основание на турците и днес да наричат Бурса „имигрантски казан“. Бежанците в Бурса, които са основно от Румелия и Крим, са настанени главно в слабо заселени квартали на града. След запълването на градските квартали са създадени и нови на запад от града..

Изправяйки се пред проблема с имигрантите, османската администрация извършва необходимите институционални промени и регулации. **Muhacirun Komisyonu** се стареа да действа систематично в условията на криза, но при прилагането на решенията си среща проблеми, произтичащи от недостатъчната информация и недостига на ресурси.

Ключови думи: Бурса, имигранти от Балканите, **Muhacirun Komisyonu**.

When nationality is put under discussion, the creation of “Other” has a practical benefit and ideological function in building the identities of persons and groups (Neuburger 1997: 18; Tekeli 1998: 86)¹. This state has been reflected into historiography as well. For example, the events in Bulgaria between 1875 and 1878 were named by the Ottoman historians “Bulgarian Revolt” and by the Bulgarian historians – “struggle for independence and self-proclamation”².

In the present study, the relationship between historiography and nation-state ideology and its function in creating national identity are always going to be taken into consideration. In the study, primarily, a brief historical background is going to be given about the effect of Russia’s Pan-Slavic policies on the national movements in the Balkans. Moreover, I would like to discuss the settlement procedure of the Balkan immigrants to Bursa and its environs. Then I’m going to focus on the immigrants’ settlement problems in Bursa and its environs based on Salnames and documents from the PM Ottoman Archives.

Migration movements resulting from Russia’s imperialist policies were observed even in the 18th century. Catherine II (the Great) (1762–1796) believed that in order Russia to become a more powerful state, it was necessary to capture Crimea, to have a port at the Black Sea coast, and even to capture the Straits. With Russia’s passing to the Mediterranean via the Baltic Sea also with the help of the British in the 1768–1774 Ottoman-Russian wars, revolts were observed in Karadağ, Mora and Crete, and some Aegean Islands. After the Çeşme incident, they threatened the Dardanelles Strait (Eren 1966: 29–33; Aghatabay 2007: 35).

The national movements of the minorities within the Ottoman State were supported by England, France and Russia (Babuş 2006: 37; Ipek 1994). Within this framework, the necessity of being the majority in a place, which is the fundamental element of establishing a state, led to the relocation of different groups present in a population by force (Ipek 1994: 15). At the beginning of the 19th century, the revolts beginning firstly in Serbia and Mora, resulted in Greece’s gaining independence in 1829, and with the 1878 Berlin Treaty, Rumania, Serbia and Karadap’s gaining independence and the appearance of the Bulgarian Principality (Altup 1991: 109; McCharty: 14)³.

Following the 1877–1878 Ottoman-Russian War, a population movement called Great Balkan Migration started towards the lands of the Ottoman Empire in Anatolia (Tekeli 2008: 151). The occupation of the banks of the Danube and Dobruja by the Russian army after the crossing of the Danube in July 1877, and the expansion of the Russian invasion to the south led the Bulgarians to rebel as well. The Russian advance led the Muslims to panic and move to the south (Şimşir 1968: 152). In this process, the number of the immigrants crowding between Edirne and Istanbul in March 1878 reached 300 000 (Ipek 1994: 10).

In the 1829–1914 process, it is estimated that the total number of immigrants were between 5-7 millions. The Ottoman State was able to make the necessary

institutional regulations for the settlement of the immigrants despite the political and economic crisis it was in (Karpat 1996: 87).

Works of Muhacirun Komisyonu, Settlement of Immigrants in Bursa and its Environs

Migration and immigrant affairs had been carried out by the Municipality of Istanbul until 1860. However, later, since migrations became intense and it became impossible to meet needs, it was decided to establish a special commission. On 5th of January 1860, this duty was transferred to the Muhacirun Komisyonu (Kasaba 2005: 164). The Muhacirun Komisyonu was established by the Ottoman government with the expectation to meet the needs of Muslim immigrant waves coming from Crimea and the Caucasus and to find solutions to the settlement problems of the immigrants (Cuthell 2005: 84). The functions of the commission were to put immigrants up, to determine settlement areas, to transport immigrants to these areas, to meet their land and residence needs, to provide immigrants not having produced any crops yet in the areas they had been settled with wages and other kinds of aids, to give winter wood, and to distribute aids given by the public and provided by the treasury. The first president of the commission was Hafız Pasha, the governor of Trabzon. During the migrations in 1864, for the Sinop, Sivas, Amasya-Canik, Ankara, Hüdavendigâr, Kocaeli, Kastamonu and Bolu sanjaks, six new functionaries charged with immigrants' affairs were appointed (Karpat 1996: 88).

Some of those having migrated to Anatolia were settled by the Muhacirun Komisyonu in Bursa and its environs so much so that the Turkish saying “Bursa is an immigrant pot” is still in use today.

As it was during the Russian war of 1877–1878, besides great immigration waves, migration continued in small groups⁴. About the migrations to Bursa, especially the salname dated 1889 provides detailed information (Salnâmesi 1886: 79–80).

Number of Those Migrating to Bursa and the Neighbourhoods They Settled (Salnâmesi 1889: 77)⁵

PLACE THEY CAME FROM	PLACE THEY WERE SETTLED	HOUSEHOLD	NUMBER
Rumelia	Ruşuk Quarter	61	232
Rumelia	Selimiye Quarter	202	703
Rumelia	Vidin Quarter	49	161
Rumelia	Timurtaş Quarter	61	234
Rumelia	Deveciler Quarter	37	143
Rumelia	Kanberler Quarter	19	62
Rumelia	Cuma-i Cedid Quarter	40	190

Batum and Rumelia	Yıldırım Quarter	110	385
Tatar	Mecidiye Quarter	100	443
Tatar	Hıdırlık, Yeni Köstence Quarter	97	321
Tatar	Vakfiye Quarter	84	325
Tatar	Molla Arap Quarter	102	414
Tatar	Namazgah Quarter	60	255
Tatar	İhsaniye Quarter	17	72
Tatar	Alacahırka Quarter	15	65
Settled individually in Bursa		11.104	
TOTAL		15.109	

The information given in the table above about the immigrants coming to the city provides important clues in understanding the reflection of migrations to the place. To Bursa were settled the persons coming especially from Rumelia and Crimea. They were settled primarily in the quarters which were relatively solitary in the city such as Yıldırım, Molla Arap and Namazgah. Today in these quarters, the mentioned groups are still continuing to live intensively. Moreover, new immigrant quarters such as Çırpan, Rusçuk and İntizam were established (Esin 1999: 14). After the quarters in the city had become full, the quarters like İhsaniye and Fethiye to the west of the city were established and those having come were settled in these places. These quarters were connected to the city via the Acemler-Karacabey Road opened in the Governor Celaleddin Paşa period (1891–1897).

To Yıldırım, one of the old quarters of the city, were settled Rumelian immigrants and Georgians (Ziya 1328: 39)⁶. In the city, for the immigrants, new quarters like Hoca Hasan, İntizam, Rusçuk and Çırpan were established.

Bursa city administration was obliged to meet the basic needs of this new population of approximately 20 000 such as food and clothes and to provide them with tents and permanent residences (Bursa Gazetesi 136: Number 136, 22 Safer 1311 /4th September 1893/, p. 3).

From the very beginning, the Ottoman administration did its best within the frame of the resources at hand not to treat the immigrants coming to Anatolia unjustly (BOA: File Number: 210, Jacket Number: 59, 21 Receb 1277 /2 February 1861/). However, most of the time, there was indefiniteness about the end of the immigrants sent to the mentioned places for settlement (BOA6: File Number: 7, Jacket Number: 45, 30 Zilkâde 1306 /28 July 1889/).

Although the Ottoman administration provided immigrants with land to build houses in suitable places and even necessary seeds to cultivate, the most important problem faced was the becoming of immigrants stable where they had been settled (Bursa Gazetesi 137: Number: 137, 29 Safer 1311, p. 4).

The reason for this behaviour was their unwillingness to separate people from their relatives and fellow countrymen and most of the time their being obliged to live in poverty (“hungry and homeless”) and the difficult conditions in places they had been sent (BOAa: File Number: 469, Jacket Number: 63, 22 Cumaziye’l-Evvel 1277 /6 December 1860/).

Besides the problems they brought, immigrants started to show their information, skill and mastery in a short period of time in the city they had come from. For example, immigrants coming from Rumelia achieved to develop car production and transportation with cars in the city (Ziya 1328: 16–17).

Facing migrations, the Ottoman administration realized the necessary institutional regulations, wanted to put decisions it had made into effect in a coordination, established the Muhacirun Komisyonu whose only duty was to deal with the immigrant problem, tried to act systematically before crisis, but encountered problems in implementation due to insufficient information, data and resources.

NOTES

¹ For cultural, intellectual and later political effects of the French Revolution on the Balkan Peninsula, see Hall 2000: 2–15.

² For about this attitude, see Crampton 2005.

³ For the Bulgarian Problem, see Inalcık 1992; Todorova 2009; Boyar 2007: 75.

⁴ For example, in 1861, from Crimean immigrants, 109 households composed of a total of 580 people were sent to the Bursa Governorship to settle in Bursa Sanjak and villages (BOA: File Number: 192, Jacket No: 78, 05 Safer 1277 /23 August 1860/).

⁵ On the same date, in villages of Bursa like Fethiye, Nilüfer and Geçit, too, 4130 people were settled (932 households). Source: Salname 1889: 77.

⁶ Within the present population component of Yıldırım Neighborhood, too, immigrants from Greece and Bulgaria occupy an important place.

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