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The fall of a city: Refugees, exodus and exile in Ernest Hemingway's Istanbul, 1922

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Abstract

Ernest Hemingway arrived in Istanbul on 30 September 1922 to cover the end of the Greek–Turkish War for the *Toronto Star*. From late October to mid-November 1922, Hemingway wrote 20 articles about the last days of the war and the re-constellation of political legitimacy in the region. There are four distinguishing features of Hemingway's reports from Constantinople. First, they provided an eloquent depiction of the city, suggesting the charm and squalor of old 'Constan' for the young writer. The second was a clear expectation of a 'second disaster', which was assumed to be a replica of Smyrna. Hemingway clearly observed the fears of non-Muslims and foreigners in the city, who were panicking over possible new massacres and pillage. Third, Hemingway quickly realized that the exodus of people – the desperate flight of Christian refugees – and Turkification of the country would be his main subject. His repeated emphasis on refugees *permanent* loss of a home is reminiscent of Hannah Arendt's famous essay 'We Refugees', as well as a precursor to Agamben's point that refugees are reduced to 'bare life'. Lastly, his prose relied on irony and cynicism, as a cover for his disappointment and shame for humanity and modern civilization. Juxtaposing his writing with contemporary local accounts, I intend to situate his witnessing into the larger historiography of 'Armistice Istanbul' and the homogenization policies of the winning Turkish nationalist leadership. Hemingway's critique of (homogeneous) nation-state formation after the war and the favourable involvement of the Allied countries and humanitarian agencies in the mass production of refugees was quite exceptional and ahead of his times.

Keywords

Allied occupation of Istanbul, Ernest Hemingway, forced migration, Greco-Turkish War, refugees, 'Smyrna Disaster'

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> The people who are getting the sickening, cold, crawling fear-thrill are the Armenians, Greeks . . . who cannot get away or who have elected to stay.[1]

> Constantinople is doing a sort of *dance of death* before the entry of Kemal Pasha.[2]

Ernest Hemingway arrived in Istanbul on 30 September 1922 to cover the end of the Greek–Turkish War and the victory of the Turkish nationalist forces for the *Toronto Star*.[3] Beginning with ‘British Can Save Constantinople’ (30 September 1922) to his last article, ‘Refugees from Thrace’ (14 November 1922), Hemingway wrote 20 articles about the last days of the war and the re-constellation of political legitimacy in the region. The articles were compiled and published much later as *Dateline*, *Toronto: The Complete Toronto Star Dispatches*, *1920–1924* (Hemingway, 1985). His beautifully written pieces primarily expressed the overwhelming panic and fear among the non-Muslims, who were faced with death and annihilation in the hands of ‘cut-throats, robbers, bandits, thugs’ (Hemingway, 1985: 230) – all assumed to be ready to kill the Armenians, Greeks and Jews, and loot their property just as soon as the nationalist troops marched in. ‘With a history of a thousand years of massacre behind them’ (Hemingway, 1985: 228–229), Hemingway paints a rich picture of the exodus of Christians – a ‘ghastly procession’ (1985: 232)– and the plight of refugees. The young Hemingway also sketched a tremendously evocative portrait of ‘old Constan’, which did not ‘look like the movies . . . not look like the pictures, or the paintings, or anything’ (1985: 227). A ‘dirty white’ city under a cloud of thick dust on dry days, and when it rained, under a thick pile of mud; a city in which rats and drunks swarmed the streets and alleys. Under the illusion of (past) imperial glory, post-war ecstasy, self-enjoyment and entertainment, Hemingway sculpted collages of the panic, loathing and misery that also reigned in the city.

The sources that I use for this analysis will be the 20 articles written for the *Toronto Star* (1922), his book *In Our Time* (1925), in which three vignettes and one short story, ‘On the Quai at Smyrna’ (added to the 1930 edition), focus on the Greek defeat (or Turkish ‘victory’) and the human exodus, the Constantinople flashbacks in the short story ‘The Snows of Kilimanjaro’ (1936), as well as reminiscences contained in letters. In that sense, the article has the originality of building upon a heterogeneous corpus composed of reportages and short stories, two forms whose limits are porous. Juxtaposing his writing with contemporary local accounts on the period, I intend to situate his witnessing into the larger historiography of ‘Armistice Istanbul’ (also called ‘Allied’ or ‘occupied’ Istanbul) and the homogenization policies of the winning Turkish nationalist leadership. My research methodology is largely interdisciplinary, drawing on literary studies, history and philosophical thought.

Hemingway’s critique towards the (homogeneous) nation-state formation after the First World War and the favourable involvement of the Allied (European) countries and humanitarian agencies (specifically the League of Nations) in the mass production of exiles and refugees offers a vision ahead of its time in a very lucid manner. In his classic essay, ‘Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals’, Edward W. Said starts his discussion by differentiating ‘exile’ or banishment as a well-established and temporary form of legal punishment for individuals who are perceived as threats, for disgraced officials or regime’s opponents within the political regimes of the pre-1914 Empires from

large-scale and one-way exile schemes employed during and after the First World War with the purposes of homogenizing populations in terms of religion, language and/or ethnicity (Said, 1993). The new world order that was being put in place after the First World War, based on the ideal of the nation-state and which massively produces exiles and refugees, whose care is impossible. All over the world, during the years roughly from 1914 to 1923, people were in mass transit of an involuntary nature.

As legitimate as it is, the scholarship on exile largely focusses on intellectual emigration from Germany in the 1930s (Burke, 2017). A closer look at Hemingway's writing from the period provides important primary source material to the fact that mass exodus and exile had its antecedents in the beginning of the twentieth century and migrations from Germany after 1933 were 'not the first, but the second, wave of migrations' (Fehervary, 2009). Given the fact that a critical historiography of forced human displacement schemes of the period has only be produced in the past few decades (Gatrell, 2008, 2017; Loizos, 1999; Tejel and Öztan, 2020) and that a postcolonial reading of humanitarianism in the Middle East is even younger (Okkenhaug and Sanchez Summerer, 2020; Rajaman, 2002; Rodogno, 2011; Watenpaugh, 2015), Hemingway's critical interpretation of the post-war international order from the viewpoint of exiles and refugees provides an impressively accurate forecast of the twentieth century.

The (delayed) end of the First World War in the Ottoman Lands

The First World War officially ended for the Ottoman Empire with the signing of the Mudros Armistice on 30 October 1918, even though 'peace' was not necessarily at the door. The Armistice not only heralded the partition of the Empire among the victorious Allied powers, but also the capital of the Empire, Istanbul was occupied by the British, French, Italian, Greek, the United States and Japanese from November 1918 to October 1923. Even though the Allied (British) fleet entered the Bosporus on 13 November 1918, the official military occupation was only declared on 20 March 1920. In the following period, the Military Command of the Allied Forces of Occupation with its British president was responsible with several functions, including passport control, civil police, inter-Allied tribunals, courts martial and prisons (Criss, 2015). Furthermore, there were French, British, Greek and Italian occupations of provincial cities in the southeast, south and western Anatolia from 1918 to 1919 to 1922. Between late 1918 and early 1919, British troops occupied and controlled Mosul, Iskenderun (Alexandretta); French occupied Mersin, Osmaniye, Adana, Kilis, Antep, Maraş and Urfa; Italians occupied Antalya, Fethiye, Marmaris, Kuşadası, Bodrum, Milas and Konya.

Former Ottoman subjects, particularly Armenians, Greeks and Kurds also had territorial claims. Greeks had a favourable position in this constellation, since the Hellenic Kingdom had been a member of the alliance during the latter stages of the war and contributed to the Allied victory on the Balkan front (Alexandris, 1992: 52–54). Greek Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1936), was invited to the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920) to put forward the territorial claims of his country over Northern Epirus, the Aegean islands, Smyrna and its hinterland and the whole of Thrace. He convinced the Supreme Council that they should be allowed to occupy Izmir. On 15 May 1919, the

Greek army disembarked in Western Anatolia, occupying Smyrna and the surrounding area. On 19 May 1919, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) landed in a Black Sea port, Samsun, to organize a nationalist resistance army against the occupation of European powers. Throughout 1919 and 1920, the Greek army advanced inland and took control of parts of western Anatolia, including the cities of Manisa, Balıkesir, Aydın, Kütahya, Bursa and Eskişehir. Sèvres Treaty, concluded between the Entente powers and the Ottoman Empire in July 1920 approved the Greek claims and, thus, the Ottoman borders were reduced to Central and Northern Asia Minor and Constantinople. However, there was by that time a strong nationalist resistance movement in Anatolia, which refused to recognize the Sèvres. The war changed its course in 1921 and 1922, when Turkish forces won against an over-stretched Greek army. The Turkish counter-attack of late August 1922 was catastrophic for both the Greek army and the Anatolian Greeks (Kolluoğlu Kırlı, 2005: 30). Greek commanders were taken as prisoners of war, and the Greek army was practically chased towards Smyrna.

The city was occupied by the Turkish nationalist forces on 9 September 1922. After the entry of the Turkish troops, a large-scale violence was unleashed by the Turks. G. Ward Price (1933: 443), British newspaper correspondent in Smyrna noted that on the morning of 9 September, scared Greeks and Armenians crowded the courtyard of the British Consulate and during the same night 'looting and murder broke out in various parts of the city'. After Mustafa Kemal arrived the next day, there were the bodies of several dead men in the gutter on the way, while the bodies of three murdered girls were reported floating in the sea. In 13 September, disparate fires, originating in different spots of the city eventually turned into a single conflagration, later called the Great Fire (Long, 2019). The fire was engulfing a large area, Christian refugees that recently arrived from Anatolia, as well as the inhabitants of the Armenian, Greek and Frank districts, were swept towards the waterfront. Hundreds of thousands of wailing Greeks, Jews and Armenians crammed the quay, and were forced to remain there under inhuman conditions and constant threat of brutality and violence for nearly 2 weeks. The city's entire non-Muslim population was turned into refugees. Observers reported atrocities being committed on the shore, casual murder in the streets, corpses floating out on the sea, daylight looting and back-street executions (Stewart, 2003).

The human suffering following the fire was exacerbated by the refusal of British forces, present in the harbour, to intervene. There was no military support for the non-Muslims, no diplomatic pressure on the Turkish government to stop the carnage, not even humanitarian aid (Clogg, 1979; Horton, 1926; Housepian, 1971; Lovejoy, 1927). Homeless Armenians and Greeks were only offered some relief when the first Greek ships arrived in the harbour on September 24 to evacuate them. On Saturday, October 3, Hemingway and other journalists began hearing stories about the evacuation of a quarter of a million Armenians and Greeks from Smyrna.[4] The fire and the resulting human disaster would permanently eliminate the Greek and Armenian population from the city.

Young Hemingway in Istanbul

Hemingway's job with the *Toronto Star* gave him freedom to travel and to write about the stories that interested him. He was not a foreign correspondent per se rather a feature

writer, who freely interpreted events and wrote them up in a form which resembled an essay, even a story. Hemingway wrote on the final acts of war, ceasefire meetings and peace conferences, on French Royalists, Italian Fascists and some other leading political figures. He also penned several articles on the social and economic circumstances in Europe, such as the cost of living, currency rates, inflation, fashion, nightlife, Russian emigres or bullfights, trout fishing and game shooting (Meyers, 1999: 91–94).

Hemingway's first major political assignment was the Genoa Conference (April–May 1922) – the first international gathering since the 1919 peace talks at Versailles.[5] The second assignment would be the end of Greco-Turkish War. On 15 September, Paris woke up to 'to the news that Smyrna was on fire'. John Bone, the managing editor of the *Toronto Star*, sent a telegram from Toronto on 18 September, to Hemingway in Paris assigning him to cover the developments in Asia Minor.[6] On 20 September, Hemingway received US$500 from John Bone to cover his trip. The next day, on 21 September, Hemingway chased visas at the embassies of Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Italy. Then, he reserved a sleeping compartment on the Simplon-Orient Express to leave on 25 September.

Hemingway arrived too late (on 30 September) to cover the fire in Smyrna. The defeat of the Greek army was also certain. Furthermore, he was one among many foreign reporters in the city, along with Clare Sheridan, Charles Sweeny, John Clayton, Constantine Brown, Edward J Byng and Frazier Hunt. He was then a young man of 23 – neither a well-published writer nor famous. What separated him from other American and British reporters in the city was the fact that he was sensitized to the rights of Ottoman non-Muslims because of his Paris experience, as he was in touch with post-war and post-imperial exiles from the Russian and Ottoman Empires. He was aware of the fact that Armenians and Greeks spoke up for the atrocities and injustices committed against them during the war. For instance, it is highly probable that he had followed Boghos Nubar's activities with regards to the recognition of the genocide and establishment of an Armenian national home (George, 2002: 184–185; Ghazarian, 1996).

Hemingway's very first dispatch from Constantinople, 'British strong enough to save Constantinople' (30 September 1922), anticipates his tone in his reports from Turkey in the weeks to come:

> Constantinople is noisy, hot, hilly, dirty and beautiful. It is packed with uniforms and rumors.
>
> British troops have now arrived in sufficient numbers to prevent any Kemalist invasion.
>
> Foreigners are nervous, however, remembering the fate of Smyrna, and have booked outgoing trains for weeks ahead (Hemingway, 1985: 211).

There are four distinguishing features of Hemingway's reports from Constantinople. First, they provided an eloquent depiction of the city, which the adjectives 'noisy, hot, hilly, dirty and beautiful' evoke. The article will, thus, start with the charm and squalor of old 'Constan' for the young writer.[7] The second was a clear expectation of a 'second disaster', which was assumed to be a replica of Smyrna. Hemingway clearly observed the fears of non-Muslims and foreigners in the city, who were panicking over possible

new massacres and pillage. Third, Hemingway quickly realized that the exodus of people – the desperate flight of Christian refugees – and Turkification of the country would be his main subject. Finally, as I discuss in the conclusion, his prose relied on irony and cynicism, as a cover for his disappointment and shame for humanity and modern civilization. Already apparent from the title of the dispatch – 'British strong enough' – his writings about the post-war settlement, were informed by what he saw as the 'end of meaning' in political and social expectations.

Old Constan

Hemingway typed and mailed the second dispatch on Istanbul, 'Constantinople, Dirty White, Not Glistening, and Sinister', on 1 October, and the *Star* published it on 18 October. It had a detailed portrayal of Istanbul and its contradictory characteristics. Describing his arrival in Sirkeci train station and his journey towards the *Hotel de Londres*, he paints a dirty, old city, which contrasts with typical romantic (Orientalist) portrayals. He stresses the contradiction of the notion of the exotic East and the 'real' East as he experienced it. Hemingway described the dearest city of Orientalist literature as old and ugly, where the food was no good, and insects were terrible.

> There may be a happy medium between the East of Pierre Loti's stories and the East of everyday life, but it could only be found by a man who always looked with his eyes half-shut, didn't care what he ate, and was immune to the bites of insects (Hemingway, 1985: 239).

In fact, Istanbul had also lost its charm for the winning nationalists too and was replaced with a new political centre that would soon to be the capital, in Ankara. Even after the withdrawal of the Allies in 1923, Istanbul would neither go back to its glorious days as the imperial capital of the Ottoman Empire nor would the new nationalist forces consider recognizing or reinstating the city's prestige. On the contrary, Ankara would represent the modern, homogeneous and loyal 'Turkish nation', whereas Istanbul would remain as the epitome of old, imperial, non-Muslim and cosmopolitan disloyalty (Evered, 2008; Kezer, 2015).

Discussing the nightlife in Constantinople, Hemingway described a post-war metropole on the verge of a nervous breakdown – its inhabitants, both local and foreign, constantly swung between endless parties, booze and entertainment at night and fear, misery and squalor during the day. His account builds into a more general discussion on the entertainment side of 'Armistice Istanbul'. Research on the war and post-war years in the city stresses a bourgeoning nightlife shaped by the opening of new restaurants, bars, *cafés chantant*s and nightclubs (MacArthur-Seal, 2017; Woodall, 2010). The massive exodus of Russians escaping the Civil War (1918–1921) had a huge impact on Istanbul, which sheltered about 200,000 civil and military refugees. The cultural life in the city took a new shape with performances, leisure activities and artistic events, such as Russian ballet, operetta and concerts. Writing about 'European Nightlife' in December 1923, Hemingway noted,

> Paris nightlife is the most highly civilized and amusing. Berlin is the most sordid, desperate and vicious. Madrid is the dullest, and Constantinople is, or was, the most exciting. . . . All of Constantinople was in a feverish sort of wildness (Hemingway, 1985: 404, 405).

Being a frequenter of the bars and nightlife himself, Hemingway connected exaggerated drinking to the fear of the supposed end of an era. In different dispatches, he noted the worry that Constantinople might soon be 'dry'. There were rumours that alcohol would soon not allowed to be imported, manufactured or sold. People were saying that with new regulations in Kemalist controlled cities, cardplaying and backgammon had been forbidden and the cafés were closed at eight o'clock (Hemingway, 1985: 220–221).

> No one who makes any pretense of conforming to custom dines in Constantinople before nine o'clock at night. The theaters open at ten. The nightclubs open at two – the more respectable nightclubs, that is. The disreputable nightclubs open at four in the morning.
>
> All night hot sausage, fried potato and roast chestnut stands run their charcoal braziers on the sidewalk to cater to the long lines of cabmen who stay up all night to solicit fares from the revelers. Constantinople is doing *a sort of dance of death* before the entry of Kemal Pasha, who has sworn to stop all booze, gambling, dancing and nightclubs (Hemingway, 1985: 240).

Clearly, Hemingway was aware of the prohibition debate that had taken place within days after the creation of a Grand National Assembly in April 1920. The new law, 'Men-i Müskirat Kanunu' (Alcohol Prohibition Law, February 1921), outlawed the consumption of alcohol, except for scientific purposes (Evered and Evered, 2016b). Prohibition, in that respect, was perceived as one of the nationalist leadership's first matters of governance in differentiating itself from Istanbul government (and society) (Evered and Evered, 2016a). Following the arrival Allied forces in Istanbul in November 1918, the alcohol sector blossomed to meet the ever-increasing demands of non-combatant and victorious soldiers of the arriving French, British, Italian and Greek armies (MacArthur-Seal, 2022). The association between Allied soldiers and alcohol consumption became quite strong at the time, such that, the image of the drunken European soldier appeared frequently in early Republican literature. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu entitled his 1924 novel about the occupation years of Istanbul *Sodom and Gomorrah*. Life in the city was depicted as filled with drinking, love affairs and debauchery (Karaosmanoğlu, 2003: 11–12).

The presence of over 50,000 Entente troops definitely contributed to the proliferation of sex work, with a new red-light district emerging on the Asian side of the city (Wyers, 2017). Nightlife flashbacks in Hemingway's 'Snows of Kilimanjaro' provide a glimpse into his experience of sex trade in the city. The narrator remembers how 'he had whored the whole time' in Turkey, terribly missing his wife and feeling 'hollow sick inside'. There is a fight over 'a hot Armenian slut', who 'slung her belly against him so it almost scalded' (Hemingway, 1997: 67). Hemingway's testimony unwittingly corroborated the views of Turkish nationalist commentators who often attacked European imperialism, as well as the influence of Entente and Russian inhabitants of the city, arguing that they had increased the amount of immoral entertainments not only in the form of alcohol consumption and gambling, but also in the form of prostitution. Mazhar Osman, president of the Green Crescent (*Yeşilay*) anti-alcohol organization founded in 1920, openly accused the non-Muslim elements of the Ottoman society for being the major actors and actresses of the prostitution sector.

> The armistice was signed, enemy armies spread like locusts through the streets of Istanbul, drunken American sailors in automobiles, Greek girls in their laps, parading through the main streets of Beyoğlu. In the bars, British soldiers, drunk on whiskey, molested anyone they came across. Especially the French colonial soldiers were doing everything they could. To these armies, exuberant with the love of the Greek and Armenian whores and overflowing with the joy of victory, the wreckage of the Tsar fleeing from the Bolsheviks was added (Osman, 1933: 781).

Both religiously formulated criticisms and eugenicist medical arguments attacking alcohol consumption and prostitution were directed more to discrediting Ottoman multicultural and cosmopolitan society than public health concerns.

Forced exiles: Panic and fear among non-Muslims

His dispatches primarily expressed the overwhelming emotions of panic and fear among the non-Muslims, who were faced with possible death and annihilation at the hands of ‘cut-throats, robbers, bandits, thugs and pirates’ (Hemingway, 1985: 230). Many people that he encountered were poor and hopeless, as a result they did or could not leave the city. Hemingway noted how non-Muslims were getting prepared, but felt safer when the British navy the ‘great, gray fleet’ arrived:

> Before the British fleet steamed into the Sea of Marmara, Constantinople was in a state of panic, the Turkish pound rocketing and falling, the European population panic-stricken, and ugly talk of massacres was blowing about everywhere.
>
> Then the great, gray fleet came in one day and the town settled back in relief (Hemingway, 1985: 246).

In his short dispatch on 30 September 1922 – ‘British Planes’ – Hemingway stressed the quickly changing political atmosphere. The non-Muslims were depicted as living next to an emergency exit door, trying to keep up with their everyday lives while keeping their suitcases packed on their bedside.

> The arrival of several thousand additional British troops has encouraged the Greeks and the Armenians here to discard their Turkish fezzes and resume conventional western headgear. *At the beginning of the present crisis every Greek and Armenian provided himself with a fez*, which he wore continuously until he thought the danger of Turkish occupation was past. . . . The continued arrival of British war units has lessened the danger of an uprising within the city and checked the *panicky flight of Christians* to neighboring countries (Hemingway, 1985: 216). [italics mine]

The ‘present crisis’ was the well-known Çanak crisis of late September and early October 1922, during which the triumphant Turks threatened to invade the Allied occupied zone of the Straits and to march towards Istanbul and Çanakkale. The British succeeded in maintaining the Allied military presence in Istanbul, mostly to calm the fears of a repetition of the Smyrna Disaster. Still, the long-term alternative for non-Muslims was to escape. Hemingway wrote that the Armenian Consulate can be distinguished from

others, with long lines of people waiting to get a passport or visas to leave the city (Hemingway, 1985: 228). Avedis Abrahamian, an Armenian survivor from Kharpert, who ended up in Istanbul in December 1920, was one of those who managed to get a passport from the Consulate of the Republic of Armenia, then a recently independent country. Though struggling for its own life, the new Republic was recognized by the Allied powers and had representatives in several European cities. In the Consulate in Istanbul, the passports were issued without much bureaucratic trouble and bilingually in Armenian and French (Abrahamian and Najarian, 2014: 78).

With the Lausanne Conference underway and the Allied Powers faltering, it had quickly become apparent that Christians would no longer be safe in Turkey. The Turks were openly demanding the expulsion of the non-Muslims, who for the past 3 years supported the Allied occupation of Ottoman territories. The Armenian Patriarch Zaven Der-Yeghiayan wrote in his memoirs that after October 1922, masses of Armenians had to leave the country 'in a state of terror' (Der-Yeghiayan, 2002: 240). Christians were terrified and their panic was further aggravated due to the miserable condition and helplessness of tens of thousands of refugee Greeks from Thrace and the Black Sea (Pontus) as well as *kaghtagan* (exile) survivor Armenians, who were sheltered in temporary refuges in Istanbul.

The letters of Sourpik Tekian, a Catholic Armenian woman survivor from Ankara existing as a *kaghtagan* in Istanbul, written in Armeno-Turkish (Turkish using Armenian letters) to her daughter Takouhi in the United States between 2 September and 27 November 1922, provide a detailed account of the impossibility of staying in the city as a non-Muslim (Suciyan and Sookiasian, forthcoming). Tekian noted that everyone around her had either left for France or the United States, or else they were making immediate plans to go into exile. People were trying to sell their property at any price to get out (Hemingway, 1985: 228). Unmovable assets that could not be liquidated at the time were simply left behind with the hope that the proprietors would come back one day to sell them or resettle. As an example of someone who stayed, Hemingway wrote about the Greek landlord of his hotel, who had invested his entire savings in this hotel. If he wanted to sell it, he would have to agree to a price that was next to nothing. Therefore, he said he was willing to fight the expected Turkish mob for his life, liberty and property (Hemingway, 1985: 230).

The Istanbul government was issuing statements urging them to remain calm, assuring them that all measures of protection would be taken. On the other hand, the Turkish nationalist cadres were asserting themselves in Istanbul. The Ankara government ordered the Turkish police in Istanbul to identify 'acts of treason' and 'traitors', especially those among the non-Muslims. On 25 September 1922, French intelligence reported that the Turkish police forces were assigned to identify all middle-class Greeks and Armenians in the city. It was obvious that the victorious Ankara government would sooner or later pressure the non-Muslim population out of Istanbul (Criss, 1999: 148). The non-Muslims were, therefore, not convinced of any assurances of protection, while they fearfully expected the official entry of the nationalist troops into the city.

> Armenians, Jews and Greeks cannot forget Smyrna. So they go. With a history of *a thousand years of massacre* behind them, it is hard for the racial fear to be quieted, no matter who makes the promises (Hemingway, 1985: 228–229). [italics mine]

What Hemingway described in a number of articles relied on an imagined replica of Smyrna. His ‘Hamid Bey’, published on 9 October 1922 noted that ‘toughs from the Crimea to Cairo are gathered in Constantinople hoping that the patriotic orgy of Kemal’s triumphant entry will bring a chance to start a fire in the tinder-dry, wooden tenements and begin killing and looting’ (Hemingway, 1985: 220). In fact, the commanding officer of the Allied forces in the East, Charles Harington, informed the War Office that ‘very dangerous elements’ had managed to infiltrate Istanbul and that about 20,000 Turks were reckoned to have been armed, airing threats of an approaching massacre (Alexandris, 1992: 79–80). Following closely the reports of the Allied officers, Hemingway wrote in his ‘Waiting for an Orgy: Constantinople Cut-Throats Await Chance for an Orgy’ (19 October 1922), that the ‘tough element of all the Near East, of the Balkans, and of the Mediterranean are gathered in Constantinople like jackals waiting for the lion to make his kill’ (Hemingway, 1985: 230). The piece portrayed a panic-stricken city.

> The people who are getting the sickening, cold, crawling fear-thrill are the Armenians, Greeks and Macedonians, who cannot get away or who have elected to stay. Those who stay are arming themselves and talking desperately (Hemingway, 1985: 230).

Ernest Hemingway wrote frequently about the possible consequences of Mustafa Kemal’s entry into Constantinople as a cataclysmic event that would trigger terrible violence and destruction. He wrote that he would not want to be Kemal, as his presence in the city would shake the ground. However, he assumed, ‘a peaceful entry’, keeping the troops in hand, and avoiding a reign of terror, would be of greater and permanent value to Turkey than many victories. Given the fact that Kemal postponed his ‘entry’ until July 1927 – this was 8 years after he first left for the nationalist resistance movement – one is inclined to think that Hemingway’s interpretation was in fact shared by others.

Human exodus and Greek refugees from Eastern Thrace

From the perspective of modern mass dislocations, there is less contemplation about ‘ordinary people’ as exiles. Said rightly warns us against romanticizing and Eurocentric views of exile in his 1984 essay, Reflections of Exile. He urges the researcher to go beyond cosmopolitan exiles in the 1920s Paris and think instead of ‘the uncountable masses’, ‘the refugee-peasants with no prospect of ever returning home, armed only with a ration card and an agency number’, of ‘unknown men and women’ all over the world (Said, 2001 (1984): 139). Hemingway’s observations in Istanbul are particularly rich in terms of capturing the lives of those ‘uncountable masses’. In his very first day in the city, on 30 September 1922, as Hemingway settled down in his hotel room looking over the Golden Horn, Galata Bridge and the harbour, he already could see an Italian steamer leaving the port, crowded to the rails with Greek refugees. Hemingway witnessed the escape from Istanbul already from late September 1922 onwards due to the fears discussed above.

> It all looked unreal and impossible. But it was very real to the people who were looking back at the city where they were leaving their *homes* and businesses, all their associations and their livelihoods . . . (Hemingway, 1985: 229).

In June 1922, following the deportation of numerous Greek residents in Western towns and villages under Turkish control, renewed genocidal fears led 40,000 non-Muslims to leave the country within a month (Behar, 2009: 49). In the coming months, the exodus did not abate, especially after the official victory of the Turkish forces and the burning of Smyrna. Between October and December 1922 about 50,000 non-Muslims, comprising the most prominent members of their communities, fled Istanbul (Alexandris, 1992: 82; Ekmekçioğlu, 2016: 82–83; Suciyan, 2016: 47). In a sermon written to be read in every church during mass in September, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch urged the congregation 'to control their nerves' and not to make hasty decisions. He reminded the influential members of the community of their responsibilities towards the interests of their society by providing moral leadership. The patriarch pointed out the danger that if they fled, they would create panic among all the Greeks and mobilize them to leave as well. Without sufficient funds, these journeys would 'lead people into the unknown, or rather into certain misery'.[8] The Armenian patriarch Der-Yeghiayan also noted that Armenians were 'bewildered in their struggle for physical and economic survival, were unable to do anything, and almost the entire nation was scattered to various parts of the world, like dust carried by the wind' (2002: 240). The arrival of the Kemalist General Refet Bele on 19 October 1922 terrified the non-Muslim population of the city even further. He and 126 gendarmes were to form the nucleus of the future nationalist administration in Istanbul and one of their first activities was the arrest of non-Muslims who overtly supported the Allied and Greek administrations (Alexandris, 1992: 78, 81).

The most important political development that Hemingway covered as part of his Istanbul stay was the Armistice of Mudanya, signed on 11 October 1922, under the terms of which Eastern Thrace was given to the Turks and the Greek army forced to evacuate. Hemingway was quite critical of international (Allied) diplomacy and noted that the Mudanya peace handed over what was not won on the battleground. Eastern Thrace was given by the Allies to the Kemalists as a 'gift' on the peace table.

> Might-have-beens are a sad business and the end of Greek military power is sad enough as it is, but there is no blame for it to be given to the Greek common soldier. Even in the evacuation the Greek soldiers looked like good troops. There was a sturdy doggedness about them that would have meant a hard time for the Turk if Kemal's army would have had to fight for Thrace instead of having it handed to them as a gift at Mudania (Hemingway, 1985: 244).

Diplomatic historians also stress that the Turkish nationalists were the chief beneficiaries of the Armistice (Psomiades, 1998). By organizing the meeting on nationalist-held territory, they presented themselves as the only official government of Turkey and thus declared the end of the Ottoman government in Istanbul. Furthermore, they convinced the Allies to abandon their hold on Turkey and withdraw from Istanbul, as well as obtaining Eastern Thrace without war. More critically, the question of protection of 'minorities' and amnesty were left outside the scope of the Armistice at the demand of the Turkish side. The result was the mass exodus of the Greek population of Eastern Thrace.

Hemingway's coverage of the Greek exodus in his dispatches from Muradlı and Adrianople were the high points of his journalist's assignment. The evacuation of Eastern Thrace began on 15 October 1922. Hemingway was quite sympathetic towards

Greek soldiers, underlining how they were tired, covered with lice and without any medical support around. He also covered the plight of Greek civilians writing that thousands of Christians were ‘leaving forever the homes’ where they had lived for years, many hungry and with their belongings packed on their backs or in ox carts (Hemingway, 1985: 226). The terms of the conference left them 15 days for the evacuation.

Roughly 250,000 Christians were expelled from eastern Thrace. As the Bulgarian frontier was shut against them, their sole destination was Greece. Hemingway walked for about 5 miles with the refugee procession along the road and described their exodus with sympathy. They marched without really knowing where they were going only that they must flee for their lives. These were ordinary people, who lived off the land; they were not rich or fortunate enough to escape by boat or by train. They had been driven on foot to seek safety across the Greek frontier.

> Adrianople – It is a *silent procession*. Nobody even grunts. It is all they can do to keep moving. Their brilliant peasant costumes are soaked and draggled. Chickens dangle by their feet from the carts. Calves nuzzle at the draught cattle wherever a jam halts the stream. An old man marches under a young pig, a scythe and a gun, with a chicken tied to his scythe. A husband spreads a blanket over *a woman in labor* in one of the carts to keep off the driving rain. She is the *only person making a sound* (Hemingway, 1985: 232).

The refugees were not treated with dignity: Turkey with the support of the Allies forcefully uprooted them and forced them to abandon their ‘home’; the Allies seemed to forget their former promises; Bulgaria closed its frontier to them; their lives were at danger and life prospects obscure. During this exodus, thousands died of dysentery, typhus and cholera. Hemingway specifically focussed on the victimization of civilians, with the images of ‘old men and women’ soaking through and walking along keeping the cattle moving, staggering and exhausted women and children ‘walking blindly’ in the rain (Barloon, 2005).

Hemingway’s account of a ‘woman in labor’ during the flight was taken up by other reporters and was repeated in other news reports (Meyers, 1999: 102). Hemingway himself also used it twice after his original dispatch, once in *In Our Time* and again in ‘On the Quai at Smyrna’ (1930).[9] An evocative and central issue in the Smyrna vignette is the imagination of a symbiotic relationship between women and their babies. There are women giving birth to babies under those circumstances, and there are women who do not let go of their long-dead babies.[10]

With the Greek evacuation dispatches, Hemingway completed his Turkey assignment on 18 October 1922. He wrote his last dispatch, ‘Refugees from Thrace’, with the subtitle ‘Refugee Procession is Scene of Horror’, for the *Toronto Star* on his way to Paris while riding through Bulgaria (Hemingway, 1985: 249–252). It was mailed on 23 October, and published on 14 November 1922.

> (Oct. 18, 1922) Sofia, Bulgaria – In a comfortable train [Simplon Orient] with the *horror of the Thracian evacuation* behind me, it is already beginning to seem unreal. That is the boon of our memories (Hemingway, 1985: 249).

This was brought home to him on 16 October when he met 'two moving picture operators' or newsreel cameramen, travelling with a car and a chauffeur, on his arrival in Adrianople. One told him about their terrible trip coming up from Rodosto (Tekirdağ), even though they got 'some swell shots of a burning village'. He confessed that he was tired of what he had witnessed in the past few weeks and that: 'This refugee business is hell all right. Man sure sees awful things in this country' (Hemingway, 1985: 250). But to Hemingway's surprise, 'in two minutes he was snoring'. The cameraman's learned numbness in the face of all this pain represented the global indifference towards human suffering and the tragedy of refugeedom (Kuyucu, 2013: 31).

In 1922, the horror of the post-First World War exoduses had not yet been recognized. In fact, international opinion was quite positive towards large-scale human displacement schemes. Hemingway was one of the few journalists who witnessed the expulsion of Greeks from Thrace and the shocking human misery it entailed. This is why the flashback of the refugee procession in the *Snows of Kilimanjaro* is openly critical of Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930), who is considered to be the mastermind behind the euphemistically named 'population exchange'.[11] In the story, the narrator recalls how he stops following the procession in Edirne (Adrianople) and instead takes the Simplon-Orient to Paris from Edirne-Karaağaç station at night. In the morning at breakfast, he realizes that Nansen is on the same train with him. Nansen's secretary asks someone if what they see is snow on the mountains in Bulgaria and Nansen finds it unlikely. 'But it was the snow all right', says the narrator, and adds 'he sent them on into it [snow] when he evolved exchange of populations. And it was snow they tramped along in until they died that winter' (Hemingway, 1997: 59). It is unlikely that Hemingway followed the specifics of Turkish-Greek 'population exchange'. However, he was well aware of the suffering of Thracian refugees. The Greek state that received them was in dire straits, it could not offer enough food, accommodation or employment for these exiles who had lost almost everything. Refugee camps were overcrowded and often infectious diseases broke out leading to the deaths of hundreds (Meyers, 1999: 101–102).

Hemingway's dispatches, as well as other writings from the following decade, described the exodus of the Christians from 'a timeless perspective' in line with his modernist aesthetic (Lecouras, 2001: 40). He consistently used the word 'home' and the phrase 'leaving home'. The 'force' that was pushing them out of their homes was not only the threat of the arriving Turkish nationalist forces, but also the complicity of the Allied forces and the League of Nations (Oğuz, 2019). His repeated emphasis on refugee's *permanent* loss of a home is reminiscent of Hannah Arendt's famous essay 'We Refugees', written in January 1943 after several years in exile in New York. The essay describes what it really means to be a refugee. Arendt stresses that European Jews like her who escaped the Holocaust no longer had a home to return to. They were a people who lost 'their homes' and with it the 'familiarity of daily life' (Arendt, 2007 [1943]).

Refugees as a mass phenomenon appeared at the post-First World War international order after the collapse of the Russian, Ottoman and Austria-Hungarian empires. The new order was based on the rule of the national state, such that the demographic and territorial structures of Europe and the Middle East had to be drastically altered. More than a million Russians, hundreds of thousands of Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Romanians and others had to leave their homes and become stateless persons

and refugees for longer periods of time. During the same period, many nation-states introduced laws that facilitated them to denaturalize and/or denationalize their own citizens. As Agamben (1995) stresses, these laws and the 'mass statelessness' that they caused should be seen as a decisive point in the biography of the modern nation-state, such that refugees reveal the limits of continuity between 'man' and 'citizen' in the nation-state system and emancipate the nation-state from the notion of 'the inalienable rights of man'. Refugees were a degraded form of humanity, as nation-states only offered rights to 'citizens'.

All these masses of rejected peoples had become the main occupation of the League of Nations High Commission for Refugees (1921–1930), which later evolved into Nansen International Office for Refugees (1931–1938), High Commission for Refugees coming from Germany (1933–1938), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees under the Protection of the League (1939–1950) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1951. The history and workings of international organizations, through which the states attempted to solve the 'problem' of refugees, assumed an apoliticized humanitarianism, which was at the heart of Hemingway's criticism. All those relief agencies and humanitarian organizations, including the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nansen himself, were unable to defend these people's 'right to a home', their citizenship rights. Instead, they would turn them into 'displaced people', refugees, stateless persons and would certify their inequality within the nation-state system, and therefore, misery for the decades to come. Hemingway's critique was a precursor to Agamben's (2000: 16) point that refugees are reduced to 'bare life', in which their deprivations (political as well as innumerable other freedoms) made them closer to 'animals in nature'. When 'refugee problem' is handled through international organizations as 'a mass phenomenon', then the individuality of each case, and the humanity of each refugee was lost in the process.

Conclusion: International peace as a joke

Hemingway, as a Europe-based American journalist and war veteran himself, followed the post-war settlements and the nascent international order closely. During his '3 very fine weeks'[12] in Constantinople, he became more knowledgeable about the 'Near East' and the war in Anatolia. He would later be present at the Lausanne Conference in November 1922. While covering the conference, Hemingway's scepticism regarding international diplomacy was at its peak. He defined 'peace' as a 'joke'[13] and made fun of the conference delegates. More importantly, he challenged the injustices of the international peace settlement by specifically referring to Ottoman Armenians and Greeks.

> ALL of the Turks are gentlemen and Ismet Pasha is a little deaf. But
>
> the Armenians. How about the Armenians?
>
> Well the Armenians.
>
> . . .
>
> Then there is Mosul

And the Greek Patriarch

What about the Greek Patriarch? (Hemingway, 1923: 20–21).

Hemingway’s *Toronto Star* dispatches from 1922, as well as his vignettes in *The Little Review*, depicted the human condition ‘in our time’, namely, the new world order that started in 1918 with the end of the First World War. Instead of a straightforward confession of horror, the narrative voice often relied on irony and sang-froid. Witnessing in a terrible situation, in a senseless and brutal world, emotions are suppressed with a stoic numbness (Smith, 1987: 159–162). Ernest Hemingway (1930), though did not witness the Smyrna Disaster of 1922 himself, wrote his vignette ‘On the Quai at Smyrna’ around 1926–1927 and included it in the 1930 edition of *In Our Time*. The closing image of the vignette, which haunted Hemingway and also recurred in ‘Death in the Afternoon’, perfectly represents this attitude, in which ‘horrible’ becomes ‘pleasant’.

> The Greeks were *nice* chaps too. When they evacuated they had all their baggage animals they couldn’t take off with them so they just *broke their forelegs and dumped them into the shallow water*. All those *mules with their forelegs broken pushed over* into the shallow water. It was *all a pleasant business*. My word yes a pleasant business (Hemingway, 1958: 9).

He conveys two powerful impressions in a single scene: cruelty done to animals and cruelty done to humans. The refugees were, in fact, not so different from their animals. They were also being treated like baggage animals, they were also dumped into shallow water and their forelegs were also broken by their own governments. For Hemingway, Smyrna was not a small scale event, it was a symbol of the entire world in ‘our’ time. Smyrna was representative of ‘our’ post-war condition, namely, international injustice caused by the new international order (Roessel, 2001: 172–73). Greek army’s retreat from Anatolia, destruction of Smyrna and forced exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece in 1923 were signal flares for the end of an era. Pre-war promise and possibility of cosmopolitanism, coexistence and imperial inclusion was entirely shattered by the victory of the nation-state ideal, which in return enforced population homogeneity through massacre, expulsion and displacement (Georganta, 2013). In that sense, irony was not used in a cynical or nihilist sense, but for the purposes of lamenting the absence of morality in his time. The vignettes of *In Our Time* express sympathy for victims of war, nationalism and state violence. He sympathized with exiled Russians, uprooted and refugee Armenians and Greeks, mutilated Frenchmen, ruined Germans and victims of Italian Fascism. Hemingway both wrote about ‘exiles’, who left their homes involuntarily, and also touched upon those ‘hostages’, who could not leave or half-heartedly decided to stay. Providing a background to social and political developments in ‘Armistice Istanbul’, Hemingway’s observations provided a rare picture of the moment, in which the birth of a new country was equal to Turkification of its population through massacres, exodus and exile of non-Muslims.

Notes

1. From ‘Waiting for an Orgy’, 19 October 1922 (Hemingway, 1985: 230).
2. From ‘Old Constan’, 28 October 1922 (Hemingway, 1985: 240).

3. The *Star* had a daily (*Toronto Daily Star*) and a weekly (*Toronto Star Weekly*) newspaper.
4. American High Commissioner, Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol, noted in his diary on 5 October 1922 that they 'had evacuated 220,000 [refugees] from Smyrna' (Roessel, 2009: 112).
5. This was a summit meeting of 34 states convened to promote the reconstruction of Europe and the restoration of diplomatic and economic relations between the West and Soviet Union.
6. Hemingway also sent cables to Frank Mason at the 'International News Service', so that he would publish his stories under the name John Hadley; while he wrote under his own name for the *Star* (Dearborn, 2017: 252–53).
7. Hemingway (1985: 239) said the 'Old-timers always call it Constan, just as you are a tenderfoot if you call Gibraltar anything but Gib'.
8. *Ekklisiastiki Alithia*, vol. 42, 24 September 1922, pp. 373–75.
9. Due to his father's profession (obstetrician) and his mother's continuous pregnancies, Hemingway witnessed numerous cases of painful birth scenes as he grew up. His biographer, Michael S. Reynolds (1999: 77) notes that 'Nowhere in his later fiction would babies ease gently into this world. There would be a baby born dead, a Caesarean baby, an unwanted baby, an aborted baby'.
10. Clare Sheridan (1923: 152) noted the 'cases of childbirth on the quay, amid the crippled and blind and very aged who were trying to get away'.
11. The 'population exchange', the expulsion of Orthodox Greek and Muslim populations from Turkey and Greece was an exceptionally large-scale exile scheme, involving more than a million people (Hirschon, 1989).
12. Hemingway (1981: 86), 'Letter to William D. Horne, June 17–18, 1923'.
13. Hemingway (1981: 104–106, here 105), 'Letter to Edmund Wilson, Toronto, 25 November, 1923'.

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