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*'The Little Brother of the Ottoman State': Ottoman technocrats in Kabul and Afghanistan's development in the Ottoman imagination, 1908–23**

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Abstract

By charting the activities of Ottoman experts in Afghanistan from 1908–23, this article demonstrates how their arrival precipitated a series of state-building practices rooted in the particular historical experience of Ottoman reform projects. The country thus became the object of an Ottoman *mission civilisatrice* and the beneficiary, in the eyes of certain figures within the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress, of an avowedly Ottoman-Turkish modernity. Sharing this conviction were members of the Afghan royal family and its chief ministers, especially Maḥmūd Ṭarzī, who first invited the Ottoman advisers to Kabul. The provision of Ottoman technical assistance took a variety of forms, but is most evident in military, educational, and public health reforms enacted in Kabul in this period. Through the study of previously unexamined Ottoman, Afghan, and British sources, the aim here is to incorporate these events into discussions of Ottoman informal empire, Afghan developmentalism, and pan-Islam.

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Introduction

In the 1948 edition of the Turkish *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Abdülvehhab Ṭarzī, a professor at Istanbul University and son of the Afghan statesman Maḥmūd Ṭarzī, contributed an entry on Afghanistan. Ṭarzī's family had lived in Istanbul since 1929, when his late father left Afghanistan following the swift overthrow of Amir Amānullāh. This was the start of a second period of exile for Maḥmūd Ṭarzī, who had previously spent 25 years as a political refugee in the Ottoman Empire after his own father was expelled by the Afghan amir in the 1880s.[1] According to Abdülvehhab, after his late father's return to Kabul in 1904, he had attempted to persuade the new amir, Ḥabībullāh, to accept a 'Turkish delegation' to help reform the country. Eventually, the elder Ṭarzī gained royal consent 'to bring to Afghanistan five [or] six individuals from among the enlightened Turkish patriots who were fugitives in Egypt, including a doctor, engineer, financier, artist and printer'. 'These Turks,' Abdülvehhab continued, 'who first introduced Turkey to Afghanistan, with their trustworthiness, their labours, and the monumental works that each one of them left in their own field, established an affection for the Turks among Afghans.'[2] Ṭarzī was referring to a group of Ottoman experts, all members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), who travelled from Cairo to Kabul in 1907–8 at the invitation of the Afghan court.

One of their number was Meḥmed Fażlı, an Ottoman cartoonist and printer, whose travelogue *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı* (Illustrated Afghan Journey) was printed in Istanbul in 1909 by the press of Aḥmed İhsan.[3] As Fażlı made plain in his introduction, he and

[1] Thomas Wide, 'Around the World in Twenty-Nine Days: The Travels, Translations, and Temptations of an Afghan Dragoman', in Roberta Micallef and Sunil Sharma (eds), *On the Wonders of Land and Sea: Persianate Travel Writing* (Boston: Ilex, 2013), pp. 89–113.

[2] 'Efganistan. [Tarih] Son Devir', *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 4 (İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Basimevi, 1948), p. 169. With the exception of proper nouns most often transliterated with modern Turkish spelling in Ottoman historiography, I have transliterated foreign words into either Ottoman Turkish or Persian depending on the geographic origin of the source material.

[3] Meḥmed Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Ahmed İhsan, 1325 [1909]). Fażlı was the main editor of a satirical periodical, *Lâklâk* (a play on the Turkish words for banter and stork), which had first been published in Cairo in 1907 and relocated to Istanbul after the 1908 revolution. A talented caricaturist, he was also a contributor to several other prominent Young Turk journals. For more, see Palmira

his comrades saw for themselves 'the conditions and status of [Afghanistan's] army, education, and industry and the feeling of proximity its people nurtured towards the Ottomans'. He anticipated that with the publication of his work a permanent relationship would flourish between the Ottomans and Afghanistan, and that his account of 'Asia's young and vigorous government' would offer an alternative to the legends often heard about the country. More than this, he cherished the notion that lay readers would acquaint themselves with Afghanistan's military and political situation and foster bonds of affection for the country.[4] His appeal seems to have been taken up, for between 1908 and 1923 Fażlı and his companions were joined in Kabul by Ottoman printers, soldiers, engineers, doctors, and *ʿulama* (religious scholars). The arrival of these Ottoman technocrats at the Afghan court precipitated a series of state-building practices rooted in the particular historical experience of Ottoman reform projects. Integral to this process was the conceptualization of Afghanistan as a disconnected appendage of the Ottoman state, and therefore the beneficiary of an 'Ottoman *mission civilisatrice*', not unlike Ottoman Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq.[5]

In fact, as various Ottoman, Afghan, German, and British sources have established, Afghanistan represented a laboratory for imperial revival and social experiment for many figures within the Committee of Union and Progress, and presents a unique case in late Ottoman history in which Ottoman Muslims gained inordinate influence in a country beyond the borders of the empire. Both before and after the First World War, some in the Committee of Union and Progress even saw Afghanistan as the only place where the Ottomans could initiate a global restructuring of power. Not only would developing Afghanistan do much to bolster the image of the Ottoman state among Muslims around the world,[6] it would also supply the Ottomans with an ally whose frontiers straddled Russian Central Asia and British India, and

Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908–1911* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 2000); Turgut Çeviker, *Gelişim sürecinde Türk karikatürü, II, Meşrutiyet dönemi, 1908–1918* (İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1988), pp. 116–7.

[4] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, pp. 1–2.

[5] Ussama Makdisi, 'Ottoman Orientalism', *American Historical Review*, 107:3 (June 2002), p. 788; Thomas Kuehn, *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849–1919* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012).

[6] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), p. 135.

a base for the dissemination of pro-Ottoman propaganda. These men were sensitive to the detrimental effects foreign meddling had had on Afghanistan's development, and they thus sought to distinguish their own endeavours from the malicious influence of European powers. Whereas the Russians and British had interfered in Afghanistan's internal affairs and rendered it weak, these Ottoman advisers saw their work as a patriotic duty that would help Afghanistan emerge out of economic and political desolation. This conviction was neatly encapsulated by the pan-Turkist writer Celāl Nūrī, who, in an excerpt titled 'Afghanistan's opening' ('Afgānistānın iftitāḥı') from his work *İttihād-ı İslām*, blamed Russian and British policies for keeping the country isolated and backward, but expressed hope that the 'severing of oppression can revivify a country worthy of progress such as the Afghan'.[7]

For Nūrī and Faẓlı, Afghanistan was simply several steps behind on the path of development, and now needed help to attain political maturity. They were semi-conscious of the fact that in the previous century Afghanistan had experienced its own endogenous processes of state-building that introduced the extensive range of administrative and technical structures associated with modernity.[8] Throughout this period, Qajar Iran and British India were often a point of comparison for the court in Kabul, but the Ottoman model became something of an archetype only in the final decades of the nineteenth century. This was facilitated in part by the sizable number of Ottoman officers who trained Yaqub Beğ's army in neighbouring Kashgar in the 1870s and a series of other informal diplomatic exchanges between Kabul and Istanbul.[9] As Faiz Ahmed has recently shown, from the 1880s Amir ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān had commissioned works on the character of the Ottoman state that served as blueprints for administrative and juridical reforms during his reign.[10] However, with the accession of Amir Ḥabībullāh in 1901 and the return of Afghan political exiles

[7] Celāl Nūrī, *İttihad-ı İslam ve Almanya* (İstanbul: Yeni Osmanlı Matbaa ve Kütüphanesi, 1333 [1917]), p. 54.

[8] Hasan Kawun Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979); Christine Noelle-Karimi, *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997).

[9] Hodong Kim, *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864–1877* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[10] Faiz Ahmed, 'İstanbul and Kabul in Courtly Contact: The Question of Exchange between the Ottoman Empire and Afghanistan in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları: The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 45 (2015), pp. 265–96.

from the Ottoman lands, the recruitment of Ottoman advisers became part of a larger strategy to build up Afghanistan's military and infrastructural capabilities and to expand the reach of a state whose remit had only recently been brought to bear on regions outside of Kabul. The Ottoman expatriates, respected for their technical expertise and knowledge of political science, were appointed to key positions by Amir Ḥabībullāh and, with the support of sympathetic groups in Istanbul, engaged in a broad range of activities to enlist Afghanistan's support for the Ottoman cause in the First World War. Their relationship with the amir often proved to be more fractious than fraternal, and many were expelled from Kabul in 1913 and 1916 for sedition. It appears that the amir was happy to collaborate with his Ottoman consultants so long as they did not jeopardize his own sovereignty, or his delicate arrangement with the British. Though they were marginalized in Kabul from 1916, these same Ottoman expatriates continued to use Afghanistan as a base to mobilize support for the Khilafāt movement and Mustafa Kemal's nationalist campaign. Many remained in Afghanistan for decades, where they had a significant role in Amir Amānullāh's reform programme in the 1920s.[11]

Through the analysis of previously underutilized Ottoman Turkish sources, articles contributed by Ottoman advisers to Maḥmūd Ṭarzī's *Sirāj al-Akhbār-i Afghāniye* (The Torch of Afghan News), and British archival materials, the aim here is to challenge accepted narratives of Ottoman and Afghan modernity by drawing attention to 'subnational and transnational actors whose histories have never been told', and to further implicate Afghanistan in histories of inter-imperial competition, pan-Islam, and pan-Turkism.[12] Above all, this article seeks to be another addition to a historiographical enterprise that aims to, as Nile Green puts it:

> [recover] the multiple transnational sources of Afghan modernism as the product of an imaginary that was at once global and multi-local, national and diasporic, through which in the opening decades of the twentieth century a

[11] A group of former Ottoman advisers left Afghanistan for Turkey in 1925. British Library, India Office Records/L/PS/11/256 P 515/1925.

[12] Nile Green, 'Locating Afghan History', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 45 (2013), pp. 132–4; R. D. McChesney, 'On Mobility in Afghan History', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 45 (2013), pp. 135–7.

multiplicity of ideological investors regarded Afghanistan as a unique space for the grand Muslim experiment of *tajaddud*, or 'renewal'.[13]

The schemes undertaken by these Ottoman technocrats in Afghanistan thus attest to a radically different genealogy of Afghan defensive developmentalist projects, which valorized not only European models, but instead saw the Ottoman archetype as an example for all of Asia to follow.[14] It further connects this project to a parallel Ottoman attempt to frame the peripheries of the empire 'as metaphorical spaces in which Istanbul-centered reformers elaborated a notion [of] what Ottoman modernity was, i.e. rational, scientific, and civilized, attributes which were defined against a notion of a premodern periphery'.[15] In a similar vein, Afghanistan was understood as an underdeveloped space where a project of Ottoman modernity could be implemented that was impossible to enact at home because of European interference. Integrating Afghanistan into the larger umbrella of transnational Ottomanism was a labour that bore all the hallmarks of post-Tanzimat reform agendas in the Arab provinces.[16] The central point of deviation was that the Ottoman technocrats in Kabul enjoyed only sporadic assistance from the Ottoman state. Despite this, Afghanistan was envisioned as a space equivalent to a detached periphery of the empire and posed challenges similar to those Ottoman reformers grappled with in Trablusgarb and Yemen. Although this developmentalist agenda did share much in common with Hamidian pan-Islamism, the technocrats in Kabul were also fully committed to both constitutionalism and pan-Turkism, and these preoccupations considerably coloured their objectives in Kabul. The circulation of constitutional revolutionaries from the Ottoman Empire in Afghanistan thus provides a new trajectory for writing the history of Afghanistan's own constitutional movement in the early twentieth century and its connection with contemporary constitutional

[13] Nile Green, 'The Trans-Border Traffic of Afghan Modernism: Afghanistan and the Indian "Urdusphere"', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 53:3 (2011), pp. 481, 479–508.

[14] I borrow the phrase 'defensive developmentalism' from James L. Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*, Third Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[15] Ussama Makdisi, 'Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism: Modernity, Violence and the Cultural Logic of Ottoman Reform', in Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (eds), *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Ottoman Empire* (Beirut; Würzburg: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 2002), p. 30.

[16] Zeynep Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City: French-Ottoman Encounters, 1830–1914* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), pp. 15–18.

revolutions.[17] More pointedly, Afghanistan was a forum where the anti-colonial politics of various groups coalesced, a unique place where divergent visions of a future world order were debated by Afghan, Ottoman, and Indian intellectuals.[18]

Two concepts are crucial for understanding the nature of Ottoman-Afghan interactions in this period, both of which are bound up with recent attempts to situate the Ottoman Empire in comparative studies of nineteenth-century imperialism and state-formation. The first is technocratic governance. As developed in the writings of Timothy Mitchell, techno-politics represents the assemblage of institutional and infrastructural practices carried out by the experts of the modern state.[19] Excellent work has recently drawn attention to the 'Hamidian technopolitical turn' within the Ottoman Empire, particularly in regards to the frontier development and hydraulic management in the Hijaz. Michael Christopher Low has shown how the administrators of the Hamidian regime conceived of these measures as an imitation of European colonial policies.[20] What is novel in the current case is how that peculiar Ottoman model of defensive developmentalism was applied in a territorial space outside the empire. In many ways, the Ottoman technocrats in Afghanistan were mimicking those European military advisers and engineers who were employed by the Ottoman state in its own infrastructural projects. In the period under review, they often rubbed shoulders with the range of consultants from Europe, the United States, and India who were also employed by the

[17] Faiz Ahmed, *Rule of Law Experts in Afghanistan: A Socio-Legal History of the First Afghan Constitution and the Indo-Ottoman Nexus in Kabul, 1860–1923*, PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2013. Unfortunately, I have not been able to acquire a copy of this thesis; Houri Berberian, 'Connected Revolutions: Armenians and the Russian, Ottoman, and Iranian Revolutions in the Early Twentieth Century', in François Georgeon, *L'ivresse de la liberté: La Révolution de 1908 dans l'Empire ottoman* (Paris: Preeters, 2012), pp. 487–510; Farzin Vejdani, 'Crafting Constitutional Narratives: Iranian and Young Turk Solidarity 1907–1909', in H. E. Chehabi and Vanessa Martin (eds), *Iran's Constitutional Revolution: Popular Politics, Cultural Transformations and Transnational Connections* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 319–40.

[18] For a sophisticated discussion of such spaces cf. Kris Manjapra, 'Introduction', in Sugata Bose and Kris Manjapra (eds), *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones: South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas* (London: Palgrave, 2010), pp. 1–19.

[19] Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 15.

[20] Michael Christopher Low, 'Ottoman Infrastructures of the Saudi Hydro-State: The Technopolitics of Pilgrimage and Potable Water in the Hijaz', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 57:4 (2015), pp. 942–74.

Afghan court in Ḥabībullāh's reign, all the while seeking to pull the country deeper into an Ottoman orbit. Nevertheless, the extent to which the Ottoman technocrats in Kabul conceived of their activities as distinct from European archetypes opens up a debate about whether their actions were a carbon copy of similar Western projects, merely cloaked in a veneer of Ottoman iconography and reformist language, or a more radical attempt to formulate an alternative political imaginary that would be implemented in both Afghanistan and the Ottoman Empire in the wake of the new possibilities ushered in by the 1908 Constitutional Revolution.

Ottoman expatriates operated so openly in Kabul in part because of Afghanistan's indeterminate and fickle status within the British Empire. Historians have recently drawn attention to areas where Ottoman and British developmentalist schemes impinged upon one another, such as in Yemen and Palestine, though in these instances there was both a spatial and temporal distinction between the two.[21] It is useful to see the Afghan case as analogous, with the crucial caveat that in Afghanistan each developmentalist package vied with the other in the same geographic space. Put another way, rival Ottoman and British developmentalist programmes encountered one another in Afghanistan in the guise of forward agents contending for extraterritorial eminence and official patronage. This creation of an Ottoman extraterritorial sphere of influence in Afghanistan thus prompts a discussion of informal empire, the second analytical tool employed in this article. Although typically under-theorized and mistakenly reified as a category distinct from formal empire, informal empire is useful here for it conveys how these Ottoman advisers, through the privileged access and collaborative structures provided by the Afghan court, obtained disproportionate power in Kabul without ever assuming outright political control, much like the Japanese and Europeans in late Qing China.[22] 'Informal empire' has been used to describe the imbalanced political relationship between the Ottoman Empire and European powers throughout the nineteenth century, but new work has drawn attention to Ottoman policies in Africa after the

[21] John M. Willis, *Unmaking North and South: Cartographies of the Yemeni Past, 1857–1934* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 15–24.

[22] Peter Duus, 'Japan's Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937: An Overview', in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (eds), *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. xiv–xix.

Conference of Berlin in 1884–5, and how the Ottomans participated as a player, however marginal, in great-power politics in the lead up to the First World War.[23] The character of the Ottoman–Afghan relationship, however, was quite distinct from other manifestations of contemporary informal empire and may better resemble what Şevket Pamuk once distinguished as the category of inter-imperialist rivalry, even if Afghanistan's state apparatus was weak by comparison to the other examples he provides.[24] While the Ottoman advisers in Kabul jockeyed with the British Resident for political leverage, the Ottoman economic relationship with Afghanistan was never as sustained or immense as that pursued by the British. Nevertheless, that both the amir and the Ottoman residents spoke of Afghanistan as a 'disconnected appendage' of the Ottoman state suggests that the pattern of cooperation extended beyond customary diplomatic relations. Like the Japanese in China in the same period,[25] the Ottoman mission sought to take advantage of vulnerable points in Britain's informal empire to push their way in as the hegemonic foreign power in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan and the discourse of Ottoman modernity

Fażlı's account best reflects these processes at their point of gestation. *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı* has been discussed briefly in the context of contemporary Ottoman travel accounts,[26] but has escaped a systematic reading that attests to its larger significance in the historiographies of the Ottoman Empire and Afghanistan. Notwithstanding a monograph on the history of Turkish–Afghan relations, another concerning Mustafa Kemal's relationship with Afghanistan, and an excellent study of the connections between Indian Muslims and the Ottoman Empire in this period, Afghanistan has

[23] Mostafa Minawi, 'Lines in the Sand: The Ottoman Empire's Policies of Expansion and Consolidation on Its African and Arabian Frontiers, 1882–1902', PhD thesis, New York University, 2011.

[24] Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820–1913: Trade, Investment and Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 6.

[25] Duus, 'Japan's Informal Empire', pp. xxiv–xxv.

[26] Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika, 'Orientalism "alla turca": Late 19th/Early 20th Century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim "Outback"', *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, 40:2 (July 2000), pp. 139–95.

largely been the fodder of footnotes in Ottoman historiography.[27] In fact, so marginal is Afghanistan in the historiography of the late Ottoman Empire that three anecdotes are all one finds in standard narratives. The first is the famous incident in which Colonel Hüseyin Rauf Orbay, a highly decorated naval officer, was summoned to the War Ministry in 1914 and asked by Enver Pasha, 'Would you go to Afghanistan at the head of a delegation to promote closer relations with this highly strategically placed country and to advise on modernization of the Afghan army?'[28] Rauf supposedly replied, 'All I know about Afghanistan is the name. How does one get there? By way of America?'[29] The second recurring story concerns the German general in Ottoman service, Liman von Sanders, who recorded in his memoirs that Enver Pasha had once 'contemplated marching through Afghanistan to India', a fantastical scheme that the count found ludicrous.[30] The Ottoman-German mission to Kabul in 1915 constitutes the third common trope, and is typically portrayed as a romantic derring-do dreamed up in Berlin and Istanbul at the outset of the war.[31] The sources consulted here demonstrate that far from being radical departures from previous Ottoman diplomatic efforts, these episodes were part of a prolonged, yet intermittent, Ottoman engagement with Afghanistan from the reign of Abdülhamid II that gained added intensity after the Committee of Union and Progress seized power in 1908. A crucial element of this project is distinguishing the ways in which these post-1908 measures differed from their antecedents.

The influence of the Young Turks upon Maḥmūd Ṭarzī and the Constitutional Party has long been a platitude in the literature on Afghan nationalism, but the nature of this influence has tended to

[27] Mehmet Saray, *Afganistan ve Türkler* (İstanbul: Kitabevi 1997); Bilâl N. Şimşir, *Atatürk ve Afganistan* (Ankara: ASAM, 2002); Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain, 1877–1924* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997).

[28] Syed Tanvir Wasti, 'The Political Aspirations of Indian Muslims and the Ottoman Nexus', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 42:5 (September 2006), p. 712.

[29] Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin–Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 219. Incidentally, Rauf's actions as commander of the cruiser *Hamidiyye* were praised in Ṭarzī's paper, *Sirāj al-Akhbār-i Afghāniye*, complete with his portrait— cf. yr. 2, no. 10, p. 8.

[30] Michael Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 126.

[31] Thomas L. Hughes, 'The German Mission to Afghanistan, 1915–1916,' *German Studies Review*, 25:3 (October 2002), pp. 447–76.

be hinted at rather than demonstrated.[32] Fortunately, May Schinasi's classic study of Ṭarzī and *Sirāj al-Akhbār-i Afghāniye* provides important references to the activities of Ottoman experts and the articles they wrote for Ṭarzī's newspaper.[33] The newspaper's multitude of pieces on the state of the Ottoman Empire are an evocative illustration of this assertion, as are the many articles copied from newspapers printed in Ottoman Istanbul, Damascus, Beirut, and Baghdad, or contributions by the Ottoman expatriates who worked with Ṭarzī in Kabul.[34] However, more attention must be paid to the range of activities undertaken by Ṭarzī and leading members of the court in this period that bore a distinct Ottoman imprint, and in which Committee of Union and Progress advisers participated. It must be emphasized that Faẓlı and his companions were merely the most recent arrivals among the many foreign experts who came to Afghanistan in Ḥabībullāh's reign. These included the Indian and Ottoman teachers who staffed the Aligarh-modelled Ḥabībīyya College after 1903, and Maḥmūd Sami Efendi, a fugitive from Baghdad and former colonel in the Ottoman army, who became the director of the war college in 1909.[35] Before 1908, Afghanistan had also been on the receiving end of Abdülhamid II's efforts to kindle pan-Islamic solidarity, but little came of the Ottoman mission to Kabul in 1877.[36] The Ottoman government's attempt to award Amir Ḥabībullāh the prestigious Mecidiye Nişanı in 1904 had only been preempted by British interference. Even so, that same year Ḥabībullāh began to show strong pro-Ottoman tendencies,

[32] Faridullah Bezhan, 'Pan-Islamism in Afghanistan in the Early Twentieth Century: From Political Discourse to Government Policy, 1906–22', *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* (2014), pp. 1–18.

[33] May Schinasi, *Afghanistan at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: Nationalism and Journalism in Afghanistan: a Study of Seraj ul-Akhbar, 1911–1918* (Naples: Istituto universitario orientale, 1979).

[34] Schinasi, *Afghanistan at the Beginning*, pp. 75–81.

[35] Ludwig Adamec, *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1974), p. 13. Sami, a gymnastics instructor who had fled Baghdad under mysterious circumstances, only held the position intermittently, as he was dismissed by Ḥabībullāh for maladministration and mistreatment of the cadets. Schinasi, *Afghanistan at the Beginning*, pp. 129–30; 130, n. 4.

[36] Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); S. Tanvir Wasti, '1877 Ottoman Mission to Afghanistan', *Middle Eastern Studies* 30:4 (October 1994), pp. 956–62; Robert McChesney and Mohammad Mehdi Khorrami (eds), *The History of Afghanistan: Fayż Muḥammad Kātib Hazārah's Sirāj al-tawārīkh*, vol. 2 (Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 339–40.

as evidenced by his introduction of the fez in Kabul, his support of the Hijaz Railway, and his recruitment of Ottoman teachers and mullahs.[37] The Ottoman archives point to sporadic contacts between the Afghan amir and the Porte in this period, and also reveal that prominent members of the Afghan *ʿulama* were scattered throughout the empire and received stipends from the Ottoman government.[38]

By comparison, it appears Afghanistan received spare treatment in the world of Ottoman print.[39] Şirvānlı Aḥmed Ḥamdi Efendi completed a trip to India, Swat, and Afghanistan in the 1870s and his travelogue was printed in Istanbul in 1883.[40] This was followed in 1898 by Yeñişehirlizāde Halid Eyüb's abridged history of Afghanistan, replete with illustrations.[41] Finally, in 1905 Aḥmed İhsan's press printed a brief report on Afghanistan that originally appeared in *Servet-i Fünun*.[42] As panegyrics of Ottoman reformism and industrial modernity, these texts share much in common with those composed by Fażlı and other Committee of Union and Progress men. Nevertheless, these similarities must not obscure how Committee of Union and Progress commentaries objectified Afghanistan as a space that would one day emerge into full modernity with Ottoman help. Whereas earlier accounts had, in keeping with the features of the *seyāḥatnāme* (travelogue) genre, catalogued Afghanistan's peoples, cities, and landscapes and stressed religious ties, none featured the programmatic statements and suggestions for reform set forth by Fażlı. Nor did any of the previous Ottoman travellers have recourse to the extended patronage of the Afghan court as Fażlı and his companions did. Earlier Committee of Union and Progress

[37] Ludwig Adamec, *Afghanistan: A Diplomatic History, 1900–1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 81.

[38] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, Istanbul), DH.MKT. 17/M/1321 (Hicrî), File No. 687, Group Code: 22; BEO 18/Za/1325 (Hicrî), File No: 3214, Group Code: 241044. These two documents are petitions for a salary sent by the son of a famous Naqshbandī sheikh from Afghanistan who died in Mosul.

[39] A 1898/9 edition of *Servet-i fünun* mentioned Afghanistan briefly in connection with the Second Anglo–Afghan War and General Lockhart. *Nevsal-i Servet-i fünun. 5. sene* (İstanbul: Âlem Matbaası, 1898/99), pp. 85–6.

[40] Şirvānlı Aḥmed Ḥamdi Efendi, *Hindistān ve Svāt ve Afgānistān Seyāḥatnāmesi* (İstanbul: Maḥmūd Bey Matbaası, 1300 [1883]).

[41] Yeñişehirlizāde Halid Eyüb, *Tarihçe-i Afgānistān* (İstanbul: Tahir Bey Matbaası, 1316 [1898]). This was preceded by *Tarih-i Afgān* (Dersaâdet: Ceride-i Havadis Matbaası, 1277 [1860 or 61]), a rerun of *Tarih-i seyyāh* by J. T. Krusiński, originally printed by İbrahim Müteferrika.

[42] *Afgānistān* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Ahmed İhsan, 1321 [1905]).

journals give a better sense of how Committee of Union and Progress publications departed from previous Ottoman writings on Afghanistan. As early as 1904 the Committee of Union and Progress journal, *Türk*, ran an article titled 'Turkish in Afghanistan' wherein its author extolled the reemergence of 'this dominant nation's language (which ranges from the borders of China to Bukhara, Khiva, Afghanistan, the province of Tabriz in Persia, Kurdistan, Asia Minor, European Turkey, and Russia)'.[43] This periodic engagement with other Muslim powers in the Ottoman press was indicative of a larger preoccupation with modernity and pan-Islamic activity. After 1905, much of this discourse was bound up with Ottoman reactions to the Japanese triumph in the Russo–Japanese war.[44] Renée Worringer has argued that the preoccupation with Japan among Ottoman intellectuals was 'an attempt to seek an alternative to Western-dictated norms of modernization, though the empire ultimately was not able to reject Europe as the underlying standard by which to measure progress'.[45] If mimicking Japan's military and industrial achievements was the end goal to which many Committee members aspired, Afghanistan represented a locus where a specifically Ottoman reform programme could be implemented, one that was compatible with Committee conceptions of Islam, progress, and industrialization, and which valorized the Ottomans as the standard-bearers of modernity and development.

By 1908 the discourse of Ottoman modernity and the specific 'culture of nationalism' in the empire, both the product of widespread institutional and structural transformations of the nineteenth century, had been harnessed in the effort to integrate peripheral areas of the empire and to inculcate the empire's peoples into an official Ottoman nationalism.[46] Increasingly, self-described Turks in the governing structure assumed the 'burden' of raising the empire's Arabs and Kurds, who were seen as 'backward' by virtue of being

[43] 'Afgānistān'da Türkce', *Türk*, 7, p. 1; quoted in M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 69.

[44] Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), ch. 4–5.

[45] Renée Worringer, '"Sick Man of Europe" or "Japan of the near East"?: Constructing Ottoman Modernity in the Hamidian and Young Turk Eras', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 36:2 (May 2004), p. 208.

[46] Regarding the 'culture of nationalism' as it developed in the Ottoman Empire cf. James Gelvin, 'Modernity and its Discontents: On the Durability of Nationalism in the Arab Middle East', *Nations and Nationalism*, 5:1 (1999), pp. 71–89.

'not-yet Ottomanized', to a civilizational plane commensurate with their own. Undergirding these processes was a reoriented notion of time, in which a new temporal endpoint and teleology of progress was mapped out.[47] The approximately three dozen Ottoman experts who resided in Kabul from 1908–23 were enthusiastic proponents of these ideas, long exposed to them through the various schools, learning societies, and government institutions that created men of their temperament.[48] This served as the blueprint for their endeavours in Afghanistan, which they regarded in a similar fashion to how later Japanese ideologues of empire saw Manchukuo—as a morally robust domain 'less beholden to the capitalist West and more in tune with Asian societies and traditions',[49] a pristine condition that could be preserved only with the assistance of a specifically non-Western road map to modernity. Like the Japanese in Manchukuo, the Ottoman professionals brought to bear upon the country all the accoutrement of 'a uniquely technocratic view of twentieth-century empire and the confidence in social engineering'.[50] Conditioned by the specific historical experience of Ottoman reform projects and the international system of nation-states, these advisers believed the state's expansion to be the cornerstone of broader social change. Integral to that growth in their minds was the propagation of an official ideology that bound citizens to the nation.[51] This was the particular discursive field in which Fażlı was writing and the prism through which he and other Ottoman technocrats viewed Afghanistan.

From Cairo to Kabul: Russian despotism and Iranian backwardness

Three years before the publication of *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, Fażlı and his companions, all members of the outlawed Committee of

[47] Ussama Makdisi, 'Ottoman Orientalism', *The American Historical Review*, 107:3 (June 2002), pp. 768–96.

[48] Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[49] Bill Sewell, 'Reconsidering the Modern in Japanese History: Modernity in the Service of the Prewar Japanese Empire', *Japan Review*, 16 (2004), p. 229.

[50] Thomas David DuBois, 'Local Religion and the Imperial Imaginary: The Development of Japanese Ethnography in Occupied Manchuria', *The American Historical Review*, 111:1 (February 2006), p. 56.

[51] My remarks here take inspiration from James L. Gelvin, 'Secularism and Religion in the Arab Middle East: Reinventing Islam in a World of Nation States', in Derek R. Peterson and Darren Walhof (eds), *The Invention of Religion: Rethinking Belief and Politics in History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), pp. 115–30.

Union and Progress, were in a Cairo cafe. Of the many political refugees in Cairo, Ottoman exiles and journalists figured prominently, and the city's many coffee shops served as forums of interaction among revolutionaries of many stripes. Afghanistan was most likely not a common topic of discussion, though the Cairo-based journal, *al-Muqtaṭaf* did feature a piece on the country in 1907.[52] As Fażlı remembered, that day in the cafe was marred by a pervasive sense of despair brought on by 'the pains of despotism and exile'. Among their number, a certain Ḥüsnü Beğ, who 'sacrificed everything he had and was forced to take refuge [in Cairo] in order to save his life', felt these sentiments most profoundly. Ḥüsnü Beğ soon struck up conversation with an unknown man, to whom he expressed his sorrow for the 'dear homeland' beset by depression. Struck by the magnitude of Ḥüsnü Beğ's grief, this man replied:

> If you go to Afghanistan, dynamic men like you will render a great service to the government, and the ruler will particularly welcome you. The Islamic government of Afghanistan needs men of knowledge and ability such as yourself and will bestow veneration and honour upon you. If you wish, with the help of Maḥmūd Beğ Ṭarzī, you can make a request to the amir of Afghanistan. I assure you that you will be instantly successful.[53]

Having entertained such a scheme previously, Ḥüsnü Beğ wrote to the Afghan government, requesting an opportunity to visit the country. After a year's delay he received a letter from Maḥmūd Ṭarzī, who sent word that 'if there still are Turks at that level of knowledge and morality, he would be happy to send them to Afghanistan'.[54] Ever since his return to Afghanistan, Ṭarzī had been attempting to recruit Ottoman experts for service in the country, but to no avail.[55] It is not known whether Ṭarzī also sent out feelers to recruit Ottoman advisers from other parts of the empire, such as Greater Syria, where he had spent the majority of his time in exile, or if he deliberately

[52] 'Amir Afghānistān', *al-Muqtaṭaf*, 32:1 (1907), pp. 52–5.

[53] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, pp. 4–5. Though Fażlı did not expose the identity of this man, Ludwig Adamec states that the Ottoman mission was brought to Afghanistan through the agency of the nephew of the naqib of Baghdad. This was Sayyid Hasan Jilani, an Ottoman subject and Qadiri Sufi who arrived in Afghanistan in 1905, cf. Ludwig Adamec, *Afghanistan, 1900–1923: A Diplomatic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 81; For more on Jilani, cf. Amin Tarzi and Helena Malikyar, 'The Jilânî Family in Afghanistan', *Journal of the History of Sufism* (Paris), 1–2 (2000), pp. 93–102.

[54] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, p. 5.

[55] Schinasi, *Afghanistan at the Beginning*, p. 55.

recruited men from the outlawed Committee of Union and Progress. Despite its underground status, the Committee was active in Ottoman Syria throughout the 1890s,[56] and Ṭarzī may have had contacts with the party's agents. With the arrival of Ṭarzī's letter in Cairo, three additional Committee members also submitted applications to join the mission.[57] The response to this letter was substantially postponed by Amir Ḥabībullāh's stay in India. In the amir's absence, Ṭarzī had presented the letter to the Ḥabībullāh's brother and vice-regent, Naṣrullāh Khan, 'with the motivation of strengthening the homeland and carrying out a patriotic duty to protect Islam', as Fażlı asserted. More bullish in his anti-British sentiments and less sceptical than his brother towards reformist movements, Naṣrullāh Khan, as Ṭarzī expressed in his letter, 'knows that there is no other nation except for the Ottomans who can help the Afghan government in its ascent and progress, and he would be very pleased were you to come for the sole purpose of serving'.[58]

Despite Ṭarzī's and the vice-regent's enthusiasm, another year passed before the amir sent an official reply to the group in Cairo. Along with an expense report, Ṭarzī now requested something of much greater import, writing: 'Should there be anyone else well-versed in political science whom you would also like to come, if possible send a translation of their biography and under their signatures include a seal of the credentials and expertise that they have acquired until now.'[59] The receipt of this letter flung the travellers into a rush of activity. With Ḥüsnü Beğ at the lead, they set out to a local office of the

[56] David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 94.

[57] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, pp. 4–5; ʿAlī Fehmī Beğ had earlier been the editor of the most important Young Turk newspaper in the Balkans, *Muvazene* (The Balance), but had been forced to flee to Geneva after the Ottoman representative in Varna had requested that the Bulgarian authorities deport him. As discussed below, during his time in Afghanistan he corresponded intermittently with Committee officials in İstanbul; M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, pp. 73–4.

[58] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, p. 7. Naṣrullāh had earlier gone on a tour of Europe and the Ottoman Empire and had met the Ottoman consul-general in Bombay in 1895. Robert McChesney and Mohammad Mehdi Khorrami (eds), *The History of Afghanistan: Fayż Muḥammad Kātib Hazārah's Sirāj al-tawārīkh*, vol. 3 (Boston: Brill, 2012) pp. 1075–6, 1147–8. He was also featured in *Nevsal-i Servet-i fünun. 3. sene* (1896/97), p. 58.

[59] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, p. 7.

Thomas Cook Company.[60] Believing they could journey directly from Cairo to Baku or Merv, the group was told that no such ticket existed, and it was thus recommended that they travel second-class from Cairo to Vienna, and make further arrangements at the company's Vienna branch. In Ḥüsnü Beğ's subsequent letter to the Afghan court he estimated that one could travel to Afghanistan for 50 lira, and per Ṭarzī's instructions, Fażlı sent a résumé of his credentials and technical expertise as an addendum.[61] Some months later a *ferman* (imperial decree) composed in the name of Naṣrullāh Khan arrived from Kabul, along with 350 Ottoman lira, an act Fażlı took as a symbol of 'their trust and confidence towards the Ottoman Turks'.[62]

As Nile Green has argued, when Muslims made use of the global transport infrastructure of the early twentieth century their 'geographies of comparison were constrained by the imperial itineraries' of various shipping and rail companies.[63] The route taken by Fażlı and his associates was markedly different from that taken by Maḥmūd Ṭarzī upon his return to Afghanistan, which consisted of a seaward passage from Port Said to Karachi and an overland journey to Kabul.[64] For political reasons the Ottoman exiles were barred from travelling across Ottoman Greater Syria and Iraq, though this would have been an impossibility because of the dearth of rail networks in these regions.[65] In 1914, the Ottoman Empire boasted only 5,759 kilometres of railway lines, as compared to Austria Hungary's 22,981 and Russia's 62,300.[66] Any overland route that circumvented the Ottoman lands would thus have to rely upon this infrastructure, and with the supply of Ottoman lira provided by the Afghan court, the travellers were able to visit prominent cities in Europe, the Caucasus, and Iran. The importance of this itinerary should not be

[60] On the company's activities in Egypt, see F. Robert Hunter, 'Tourism and Empire: The Thomas Cook & Son Enterprise on the Nile, 1868–1914', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40:5 (September 2004), pp. 28–54.

[61] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, pp. 7–8.

[62] Ibid., p. 9.

[63] Nile Green, 'Anti-Colonial Japanophilia and the Constraints of an Islamic Japanology: Information and Affect in the Indian Encounter with Japan', *South Asian History and Culture*, 4:3 (2013).

[64] Schinasi, *Afghanistan at the Beginning*, p. 55.

[65] For contemporary Ottoman infrastructural developments in the region, see Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan 1850–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), especially Chapter 2.

[66] Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), p. 66.

understated. The author's preoccupation with concepts like progress (*teraḳḳī*), civilization (*medīnīyet*), patriotism (*vaṭanperver*), and despotism (*istibdâd*) made him an effusive panegyrist for the industrial and intellectual sophistication of Trieste and Budapest, and a virulent critic of the corruption, backwardness, and degeneracy he saw in the Russian Empire and Iran. The cumulative effect of this dialectic would considerably colour his perceptions of Afghanistan.

At the Russian consulate in Cairo the would-be travellers were told that foreigners were barred from travelling through the Caspian Sea or Russian Turkestan. For this reason, they registered for visas that read 'pilgrimage to Mashhad'. It was as pilgrims, then, that Fażlı and his companions would make their trip, and like contemporary hajjes, it was the steamship and the railroad that would take them there.[67] As holders of Ottoman passports, the travellers would be subjected to strict surveillance, quarantine, and arbitrary searches throughout their trip.[68] Departing from Cairo to Port Said, Fażlı thought little of the discomfort that awaited him and later recalled: 'In the train station it was heart-wrenching to part with our friends with whom we had endured all the struggles and calamities that befell us for several years.'[69] Though they were setting out for the 'abode of Islam, which was throughout our life our main reason for being', they were also 'leaving, perhaps forever, the country which by embracing us had given us shelter for years and which had been for us our homeland in exile'.[70] But once in Europe, the author was quickly seduced by the architecture of Brindisi, Trieste, and Budapest. In the latter he recalled:

> all is very eye-catching. There were several of the most perfect examples of wide streets, colossal and perfect squares, tramways, coffee houses, suspension bridges—especially the 400 metre delegates' bridge that straddles the Danube—and the most modern art. In a word, the theatres and all the municipal works of this new country were a little Paris.[71]

[67] Michael Christopher Low, 'Empire and the *Hajj*: Pilgrims, Plagues, and Pan-Islam under British Surveillance, 1865–1908', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 40:2 (May 2008), pp. 269–90; Nile Green, 'The Rail Hajjis: The Trans-Siberian Railway and the Long Way to Mecca', in Venetia Porter (ed.), *Hajj: Collected Essays* (London: British Museum, 2013), pp. 100–7.

[68] For more on Ottoman passports and quarantine, see Birsen Bulmuş, *Plague, Quarantines and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 130–80.

[69] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, p. 10.

[70] Ibid., p. 12.

[71] Ibid., p. 14.

Taking the train from Budapest to Lemberg, the group then passed into Russia, where they lived in a state of constant fear and exasperation. Though they were lucky to avoid being murdered in Odessa, the harassment from the Russian authorities was incessant. Of particular frustration was the inspection of passports, a procedure Fażlı found singularly irksome: 'As is the rule in every tyrannical government, in Russia extreme importance has been given to passport inspection.' To add insult to injury, the Russians also confiscated the travellers' French newspapers and even subjected the doctor, Münīr İzzet Beğ's medical books to scrutiny.[72] A momentary reprieve was found in the mosques, minarets, and Circassian villages they saw after Rostov, which had the effect of 'reviving cheerfulness and joy in our soul; it caressed our devotion to Islam'.[73] That bucolic landscape was very soon interrupted by spires of an entirely different order—the massive oil refineries of Baku.

The group's arrival in Baku brought back many of the old certainties long absent since entering Russia. Fażlı took note of not only the low population of Russians in the city, but also the multitude of Turkish-language newspapers printed there:

> Through the influential enterprises of some honourable men, the Islamic sciences have made great progress in Baku. Here and there, the special activities of learning and teaching societies amazed us. In Baku several Turkish newspapers are being published. There are men of patriotic spirit and sentiment such as Doctor Hüseyin Beğler, Aḥmed Beğ Ağayef, Doctor Qara Beğ, among others, respected entrepreneurs and pioneers of the knowledge and progress activities of these newspapers.[74]

At a banquet with these figures, Fażlı and his associates were treated to speeches on the 'future of Islam, the visible (*pedā*) and invisible (*nāpedā*), the aims of our ideology which illuminates from time to time'. The travellers and their hosts even signed an accord that, henceforth, 'We deem this date that of the unification of the Turks. From now on the waters of Ottoman knowledge began to flow directly to Asia.' The signatories included some of the most important Azeri and Ottoman intellectuals of the period, including Aḥmed Kemal and Aḥmed Ağayef.[75] As these men understood it, closer connections with the peoples of Asia would ensure that the floodgates of Ottoman

[72] Ibid., p. 16.
[73] Ibid., p. 20.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid., pp. 22–3.

progress would open, redeeming in its wake all the peoples of Asia downtrodden by despotism, and foster among them a recognition of the Ottomans as the ultimate arbiters of civilization. To the author's mind then, the Ottomans were to be the prime movers in bringing about progress east of its borders, and ultimately would serve as an archetype for all of Asia to emulate. The Muslims of the Russian Empire and Afghanistan would almost certainly follow the lead of their co-religionists in Baku by fostering connections with their Ottoman brethren. To Fażlı and his kinsmen, these contacts were a prelude to a burgeoning network of Ottoman formal and informal empire.

Taking the ferry to Krasnovodsk (today's Türkmenbaşy), and then travelling to Merv via the Transcaspian railway, the Ottoman travellers passed through an area dotted with Turkmen huts that the author called 'our motherland'. This segment of their journey ignited 'deep national sentiments' and threw them into despair by reminding them that 'this great and wonderful land remains suffering and subjugated in the hands of a tyrannical government like Russia'.[76] Fażlı made a special point of remarking that the Turkmen 'always speak Turkish and very few know Russian'.[77] Rather than being backward and uncivilized, the Turkmen had maintained a prelapsarian state of virtue, and were not judged by Fażlı on the basis of a civilizational spectrum where *teraḳḳī* was the ultimate end. Their primitiveness was their great attraction for the Ottoman travellers, a view that contrasted with the author's disparaging remarks for the Cossacks and Iranians the group met. When the group finally did pass into Qajar territory, Fażlı condemned the wretched and decayed Iranian customs official they encountered at the border crossing.[78] Their time in Iran was full of such episodes, and as the group's time in Mashhad would make plain, the Iranians had only been half-hearted in their embrace of *teraḳḳī* and had none of the enthusiasm for reform and progress shared by the Ottoman and Afghan elite. Fażlı disparaged much of what he saw in Mashhad—its filth, the poor condition of its streets, its dilapidated buildings, and its corrupt clerics. He wrote, 'our ideas about the civilization of this holy Mashhad, had taken on a hopelessness and despondency, a silent suffering'.[79] Against the

[76] Ibid., p. 24.
[77] Ibid., p. 25.
[78] Ibid., pp. 30–1.
[79] Ibid., p. 33.

standards of Ottoman progress, Iran was tested and found wanting, a conclusion Ṭarzī would later voice in his paper.

An appraisal of Afghan civilization

While in Mashhad, the travellers learned there was an Afghan commercial officer present in the city. Fażlı found him wholly incompetent. The man was not only suspicious of the travellers' royal *ferman*, but also vetted their credentials as devout Muslims.[80] After a seemingly endless inspection, the group was given the documents necessary to cross into Afghanistan. Once they entered the country, Fażlı devoted the lion's share of his writing to documenting the infrastructural and military capacities of the country. Over the next week they trekked by horse through a demilitarized zone and into western Afghanistan, passing several minor towns along the way.[81] Fażlı recounted how in Haydarkhan the locals 'came out of their houses to inspect us, as if they had never seen anything like it before'.[82] Though they appreciated the hospitality of a local cavalryman, the Ottomans were less impressed by the entertainment, especially a performance by male dancers dressed in women's clothing, of which the author wrote, 'in the meantime one should mention that such stupid entertainers are in great demand in the lands of Afghanistan and are in accordance with their level of civilization'.[83] Presumably, with the help of Ottoman tutelage, Afghanistan would soon recognize the absurdity of such spectacles.

Naturally, such scenes warrant a comparison with earlier and contemporary European travelogues on Afghanistan. The works of Zeynep Çelik, and Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika have forced historians to think critically about Ottoman representations of non-Ottoman Muslims and the politics underpinning Ottoman travel writing and photography. All of these authors have stressed the multifaceted quality of Ottoman depictions of non-Ottoman Muslims and have been mindful of the problems involved in

[80] Ibid., p. 39.
[81] On the creation of the Afghan–Persian border in the nineteenth century, see B. D. Hopkins, 'The Bounds of Identity: The Goldsmid Mission and the Delineation of the Perso-Afghan Border in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Global History*, 2:2 (2007), pp. 233–54.
[82] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, p. 42.
[83] Ibid., pp. 42–3.

conflating such representations with European colonial writings.[84] This should be remembered when evaluating Fażlı's remarks on Afghan Muslims. Certainly absent from his work is any larger 'Elphinstonian episteme' that Benjamin Hopkins has identified in British writings on Afghanistan in the nineteenth century.[85] This episteme became rooted in a series of institutional structures that substantially moulded both British policy in Afghanistan and endogenous Afghan political organization. Though Fażlı's work may have shared similar affinities and assumptions about modernity, his observations lacked the institutional underpinning that linked the writings of British writers to broader structures of imperial power.[86] Even so, his portrayal of the Afghans was rooted in its own politics of knowledge, namely those of Ottoman reformism and the revolutionary ferment of post-1908 Ottoman Istanbul. It was crucial that he show the Afghans as possessed of a modicum of civilization, however backward they might be, for only then could an Ottoman gentleman such as himself make a positive contribution to the country's progress and justify stronger contacts with the Afghan court. As will be discussed below, some Afghans resented this heavy-handed and patronizing tone.

Before arriving in Kabul, the travellers spent several weeks touring the country. Herat, their first port of call, was a strategic artery for occupying armies going from Khorasan to Russia and India, and was only a day's journey from the Russian fortifications at Kushak.[87] Venturing out from the fortress with the local governor, the travellers observed local battalions of uniformed and well-ordered soldiers drilling, and were treated to a speech by Muhammad Server Khan, from whose 'high mindedness and munificence . . . one can deduce the military style of the magnificent Afghan Muslim government'.[88] A man of education and military experience, Server Khan represented for Fażlı the archetypal Afghan soldier-bureaucrat committed to *teraḳḳī* and reform. But for the caricaturist, the amir himself best represented Afghanistan's capability to attain rank among the civilized nations of the world. In his discussion of Afghanistan's royal family, Fażlı

[84] Herzog and Motika, 'Orientalism alla turca', p. 195.
[85] Benjamin Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
[86] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 3–15.
[87] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, p. 44.
[88] Ibid., p. 46.

chronicled the rise of the Afghan state from the time of Aḥmad Shah Durrānī. The current amir, Ḥabībullāh, he described as:

> a young, laborious, and intensely patriotic *padishah* (great king), approximately 35 years in age. Medium sized and dark in complexion, he possesses a healthy body. Under his just administration, Afghanistan enjoys a new progress and acquires civilization every day. The existing libraries were all developed by His Majesty Ḥabībullāh Khan and have worked towards the perfection of factories and roads. Aside from his native Afghan, he also is fluent in Persian, Turkish, and English. He is a competent soldier, a visionary ruler, and a political genius.[89]

Ḥabībullāh's vigour was matched by the people of Afghanistan, who were 'from the Aryan stock, tall, dark in complexion, light-eyed, proportional of limb, a brave nation, with a strong irascibility and capacity for endurance. Regarding oppression, they are definitely intolerant. As can be seen in all primitive people, they are incredibly generous.'[90] Though aware to some extent of the country's religious and ethnic diversity, it is curious to find in Fażlı's account a description of the Afghan people as a unified *ḳavm* (*qawm* in Persian).[91] In British accounts, tribalism was seen as a perennial feature of Afghan society, and *ḳavm* the primary marker of identity.[92] On the contrary, Fażlı appears to regard tribal loyalties of secondary importance to a supra-tribal Afghan identity, the defining features of which were a more or less homogeneous physiognomy, a shared religious fervour, and a universal physical hardiness, whose exemplar was the amir himself. Perhaps this can be connected with a similar desire among certain Committee of Union and Progress men, and their prewar collaborators, to see the heterogeneous populations of their own empire as Ottomans first, and members of tribes and ethnic groups second.[93]

When Fażlı does describe tribal divisions in Afghanistan his remarks are quite limited. For example, he writes, 'The language of this *ḳavm* that is called Pashtun (*pereştu*) is Afghan' and then describes the

[89] Ibid., p. 68.
[90] Ibid., p. 70.
[91] The term *qawm* is a particularly loaded one in Afghanistan historiography and has been translated variably as community, tribe, or nation. See Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 25.
[92] Cf. Hopkins, *Making of Modern Afghanistan*.
[93] Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2014), pp. 5–7.

popularity of works written in Persian.[94] This is immediately followed by fulsome praise for the martial spirit of the Afghan people, with no ethnic or linguistic distinction, and a description of male and female clothing. Similar sentiments ring out from his account of the two Anglo–Afghan wars, which he takes as a sign of the Afghans' 'degree of patriotic feeling'. He was also keen to point out that even 'women and the greyest of *pirs* (Sufi elder)' had participated in the struggle.[95] What is more, the Afghans are shown in his text as extraordinarily pious and religious-minded, reserving special veneration for sheikhs and other men of the cloth.[96] In fact, it is in religion, rather than tribalism, that Fażlı finds the greatest point of conflict among Afghans. Though most Afghans were devout Sunnis, he wrote, adherence to Shiism was prevalent among the Hazaras and along the border with Iran. Despite being the victims of intense discrimination and inhabitants of an inhospitable region, the Hazaras had remained the best wool weavers in Afghanistan. Fażlı did lament that 'because of religious bigotries, such as Shiism and Sunnism, there has been animosity and discord among the Afghans', and he reserved particular and unexpected opprobrium for Amir ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān's campaigns against the Hazaras, decrying his destruction of their fortresses and his selling of young girls and women into concubinage. Unlike the Iron Amir, Ḥabībullāh had prohibited slavery for he 'regarded it as a cause of shame to Islam and humanity to sell people'.[97]

A full month passed in Kabul before the group received a royal audience at the amir's palace.[98] Donned in a black frock coat, Ḥabībullāh greeted his guests, and after kissing the amir's hand, the Ottoman visitors were permitted to sit. ʿAlī Fehmī Beğ, their representative and translator, delivered the following speech:

I implore from His Majesty to not have any doubt regarding the feelings of affection and friendship that all Ottomans maintain towards Afghanistan. And solemnly these sentiments and sincere affections, which have prompted us to work together with our Afghan brothers and to become acquainted with this second homeland that is part of the caravan of Islam, motivated

[94] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, p. 70.
[95] Ibid., p. 90.
[96] Ibid., p. 74.
[97] Ibid., p. 51.
[98] With the Ottoman mission's arrival in Kabul, *The Times of India* made much of the dissonance their presence created between the amir and his brother. For more details, see 'Afghanistan: Dr. Winter Interviewed, Prince Nazrullah's Intrigues, Anglo-Russian Agreement', *The Times of India*, 23 May 1908, p. 9.

us humble servants to journey to this land of the religion of the Prophet of God.[99]

The amir replied:

> Afghanistan maintains a position as the sublime Ottoman state's little brother and serves as the right flank in its eastern policy. If Afghanistan acquires power, it might be a fundamental reason for Turkey to multiply its magnificence and might. Naturally, every single Ottoman will make sincere efforts to the utmost extent for that mission to be accomplished. I have full confidence regarding this matter. I have long been in great grief from the fact that the Islamic nations have been immersed in this sleep of negligence. Let us not be so. I assure you that in order for Islam and the Islamic world to progress and spread Islamic civilization and truth, I shall not spare any necessary effort and labour. My nation is the nation of Islam. Let us work together. The pre-eternal divine success is contingent upon labour.[100]

This extraordinary statement encapsulates the character of Ottoman–Afghan collaboration in these years. For both the amir and his guests, cooperating with one another was seen as a mutually beneficent enterprise that would recast the global balance of power. With the Ottomans leading the way and the Afghans dutifully following in tow, all Islamic peoples would find succour in the example set by these two nations. Implicit within this statement was a desire to find a new model for development that saw 'Islamic civilization' as the crowning yardstick of progress. It also acknowledged Afghanistan as a junior partner in a relationship that bore all the hallmarks of contemporary informal empire. The cession of administrative and military posts to Ottoman expatriates was but one manifestation of this process, although Afghans remained numerically superior in the court and the army.

The tenor of this clandestine and unofficial Ottoman mission to Afghanistan changed suddenly with the Constitutional Revolution in 1908. Overnight, the Committee of Union and Progress was swept into the corridors of political power and began to implement new policies throughout the empire. In December 1908, on the heels of these developments, Meḥmed ʿAlī Fehmī Beğ, the group's translator and formerly the head of the Committee of Union and Progress cell in the Balkans, sent a telegraph to the recently reconvened Ottoman Chamber of Deputies. Since his arrival, he had become an adviser to the Afghan Ministry of Finance and had kept in contact with Dr

[99] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, p. 93.
[100] Ibid., p. 94.

Bahaeddin Şakir.[101] His telegraph *Afgānistān'dan bir ṣadā* (A Voice from Afghanistan) was read in full in the Chamber. The author lamented that he and his colleagues had been unable to participate in that year's revolution. He admonished the delegates, bidding them to be mindful of those, now unmourned, who sacrificed their lives in the struggle against despotism. And then he turned to the crux of the matter—working to unite with the Turkic peoples of the East and concluding a formal alliance with Afghanistan. After encouraging the deputies to determine a central policy concerning Turkistan and bidding them to send political officers to Kabul, he wrote:

> By being here for a year, and by serving the divinely ordained state of Afghanistan, our religious brothers and partially our ancestral brothers, we have the sincere opinion and strong assumption that we are serving our own government and nation. We are working from the bottom of our heart to transform the religious connection already existing between the two nations into a political relationship. His Excellency the Amir and his brother, His Excellency Naṣrullāh Khan already spoke of the religious and political bonds between the two governments. Even His Majesty the Amir stated that 'Afghanistan is the arm of the Ottoman state, in the case that this arm becomes paralyzed, the Ottoman state will become debilitated too.' ... Beneficially utilizing this small, yet brave and strong, outlying appendage means taking the strength and support from the original source, against the tutelage, incitement, and interfering policies of our enemies that they have been implementing for ages ... Where else shall we retaliate and show our power against the attacks and ambushes that we have faced[?] Therefore, under any circumstances, and as soon as possible, acquiring friendly relations and meeting the demands of the three Turkistans and Afghanistan should be the first and foremost task of the parliamentarians. In order for this to happen, it is sufficient and a guarantor to send a letter formally to the Amir and a letter of credential to me so as to establish the first step. With the declaration of our constitution and the opening of our parliament, England took a friendly step with the Ottoman state, and its interference should not be expected.

Fehmī Beğ's telegraph was printed in two Young Turk journals, *Şûra-yî ümmet* and *Taḳvīm-i Veḳāyiʿ*,[102] and fondly remembered three years later in Istanbul's French-language daily, *La Jeune*

[101] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution,* p. 74.

[102] 'Afgānistān'dan bir ṣadā, Meclis-i Mebʿusân Müzâkeratî', *Taḳvīm-i Veḳāyiʿ*, 75 (25 December 1908), pp. 1–2; and 'Meclis-i Mebʿusânîn Dördüncü Ictimaʿî Müzâkerâtî: Afgānistān'dan bir ṣadā', *Şûra-yî ümmet* (24 December 1908). These pieces are referenced in M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, p. 361, n. 269.

Turquie.[103] It is indicative of a conviction, prevalent among certain Committee of Union and Progress members, that an imperial renaissance was dependent upon the active pursuit of a new vision of the global order. Within that vision, Afghanistan and Turkistan would be the laboratory of a grand experiment, the locus of Ottoman imperial revival, and allies in a common struggle against despotism and imperialism. Under assault on all sides by their imperial rivals, the Ottomans, so the thinking went, had no opportunity along their own borders to retaliate and to demonstrate their strength. Only in Afghanistan, a far-off appendage of the Ottoman state, was that possible. The conclusion of a treaty with Afghanistan and the dispatch of additional experts to Kabul were the most pressing issues at hand for the deputies of the Chamber. Henceforth, the character of Ottoman–Afghan collaboration was transformed, and the ragtag, marginalized, and wearied group that arrived in Kabul that year could boast the support of an Ottoman state apparatus eager to alter the empire's standing in the world.

Ottoman technocrats and the project of reform

Fażlı and the others were immediately put to work by the Afghan court, and they began to implement reforms that had close parallels with contemporary Ottoman practices. Notably, the activities of Husnü Beğ remain unknown, while those of ʿAlī Fehmī Beğ remain relatively obscure. Material from the Ottoman archives reveals that while in Kabul the latter applied for permission to return to Istanbul. Emphasizing his credentials as a graduate of the Mekteb-i Mülkiye and director of Afghanistan's financial affairs, he asked to return either by his own means or those of the Ottoman consulate in Bombay.[104] In contrast, during his years in Kabul, Fażlı was among the most active of Ottoman expatriates. He established a school of zincography, installed typographic machines for use by Ṭarzī and the Afghan government, and contributed articles to *Sirāj al-Akhbār-i Afghāniye*.[105] A picture of the

[103] Bibliothèque nationale de France, *La Jeune Turquie: Organe des intérêts généraux de l'Empire ottoman*, 1911/05/17 (A2,N20).

[104] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, Istanbul), MF. MKT 61/1138 (01/Ş/1327); BEO 3268/272077 (17/Ş/1327).

[105] Schinasi, *Afghanistan at the Beginning*, pp. 67–8, 139.

two men discussing the newspaper can be seen in Figure 2. His most notable piece was a discussion of aeronautics, where he outlined a brief history of flight from the time of the Montgolfier brothers in 1783. Here he not only gave detailed explanations of motors, air resistance, and gasoline, but also explained German zeppelins and the Italians' use of airplanes against Ottoman troops at Trablusgarb.[106] These pieces epitomize how the Ottoman expatriates in Kabul consecrated themselves as the educators of an Afghan readership in the ways of industrial and political modernity. Ṭarzī's paper therefore became the mouthpiece for this new technocratic governance and the soapbox for its implementers.

Among Fażlı's other undertakings in Kabul was his membership on the Educational Council, chaired by Prince ʿEnayātullāh and staffed by himself, an Ottoman subject named Ḥasan Ḥilmī Efendi, ʿAlī Khan, four Indians, and two Afghans.[107] In 1913, the Council prepared and published regulations (*niẓāmnāma*) for Ḥabībīyya School, founded a teacher training college, and inaugurated five primary schools. The character of both religious and secular education in the reformed school system had patent similarities with the Ottoman educational establishment. During the reign of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān, the Afghan court had already begun to centralize Islamic education by co-opting *ʿulama* into the government, but from 1912 a considerable expansion of madrasas in Kabul and other major cities occurred under the auspices of the Education Council. Parallels with measures undertaken by the Ottoman state after the 1908 revolution to reduce the autonomy of madrasas are manifold.[108] Military reforms carried out under the auspices of the Ottoman advisers and the Afghan court were also extensive.[109] From 1909, it is undeniable that the organizational aspects of the Afghan army began to bear a striking

[106] Meḥmed Fażlı, 'maʿlūmāt-i faniyya', *Sirāj al-Akhbār-i Afghāniye*, yr. 1, no. 12, pp. 9–10.

[107] Schinasi, *Afghanistan at the Beginning*, p. 139, n. 26.

[108] Amit Bein, 'Politics, Military Conscription, and Religious Education in the Late Ottoman Empire', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 38:2 (May 2006), pp. 283–301.

[109] A year after the telegraph was read in the Ottoman parliament, *The Times of India* reported that the Ottoman government had vehemently denied receiving a petition from the amir requesting Ottoman army officers. Another report by *The Times* in 1912 related that the amir's troops in Kabul were being drilled by Ottoman instructors. 'Officers for Afghan Army', *The Times of India*, 31 December 1909, p. 9; 'The Afghan Army', *The Times of India*, 10 August 1912, p. 9.

resemblance to the Ottoman.[110] Kabul's military academy, like its equivalent in the Ottoman lands, sought to breed men of education who could 'civilize' their subalterns. Whether it be a peasant from Nuristan or Anatolia, Afghan officers and their Ottoman counterparts faced the same challenges, namely to mould their troops into pious Muslims, devout citizens, and disciplined soldiers.[111] By such means, it was reckoned, peasant soldiers could be introduced to the elite's vision of progress and identify with the state.[112] For a man ever-preoccupied with martial struggle, it was the country's military academies and the recent expansion of the armed forces that captivated Fażlı.[113] He reserved special praise for Colonel Maḥmūd Sami Beğ, an Ottoman battalion commander and head of the war college.[114] By means of his instruction, the author revealed, Maḥmūd Sami Beğ 'had succeeded in uncovering [the cadets'] feelings of patriotic knowledge'.[115] In later years, Sami Beğ produced works on military tactics, drilling, cookery, arithmetic, and weights and measures, each of them drawing from the customs of the Ottoman military (see Figure 1 for his portrait, which was included in Fażlı's work).[116]

Parallels with the Ottoman experience are also seen in the Afghan court's tribal policies. The convening of the Loya Jirga in Ḥabībullāh's reign had all the trappings of the Raj *durbar* (imperial assembly),[117] but it also may have drawn its inspiration from contemporary Ottoman efforts to integrate tribes into the hierarchies of state. The Afghan court's creation of tribal units also had its analogue in the Ottoman army's own tribal militias. By creating such units, the intention was, as in the Ottoman case, to 'gradually "civilize" subject populations into espousing the value system of the centre'.[118] Tribal sons were also

[110] On the Afghan army in the reign of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān, see Kakar, *Government and Society*.

[111] Yücel Yanikdağ, 'Educating the Peasants: The Ottoman Army and Enlisted Men in Uniform', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40:6 (November 2004), pp. 92–108. In *Sirāj al-Akhbār-i Afghāniye*, yr. 2, no. 12, p. 7 one can find an image of troops in Jalalabad practicing gymnastics, the mainstay of training at the military academy from the time of Maḥmūd Sami, himself a gymnastics instructor.

[112] Yanikdağ, 'Educating the Peasants', p. 105.

[113] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, pp. 72–3.

[114] Ibid., unnumbered page between pages 80 and 81.

[115] Ibid., p. 73.

[116] A full list of his works can be found at the Afghanistan Digital Library, New York University.

[117] M. Jamil Hanifi, 'Editing the Past: Colonial Production of Hegemony through the "Loya Jerga" in Afghanistan', *Iranian Studies*, 37:2 (June 2004), pp. 295–322.

[118] Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, p. 110.

Figure 1. Portrait of Maḥmūd Sami Beğ.
Source: *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*.

given positions at the Civil School of the Chieftains,[119] just as they were in Istanbul at the state-run School for Tribes (Mekteb-i ʿAşiret), which integrated a tribal elite into the Ottoman administrative structure.[120] The fact that there were very few tribal uprisings in this period, with the exception of the Mangal rebellion in 1912, owes to a tribal policy dating back to Amir ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān and

[119] Yahia Baiza, *Education in Afghanistan: Developments, Influences, and Legacies since 1901* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 45. For Nuristanis there was the Military School of the Newly Converted to Islam. Ibid., p. 51.

[120] For more on the tribal school and Ottoman tribes more generally at the end of empire, see Resat Kasaba, *A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees* (University of Washington Press, 2009); Yonca Köksal, 'Coercion and Mediation: Centralization and Sedentarization of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 42:3 (May 2006), pp. 469–91; Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, pp. 101–4; Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), p. 207.

to innovations by Ḥabībullāh pre-dating the arrival of the Ottoman mission.[121] With that said, it appears these developments gathered pace after 1909, though it remains uncertain to what extent they owed to Ottoman-inspired initiatives. What is certain is that incorporating tribal elements into the state was in every way a 'civilizing process' undertaken to shore up the power of the state apparatus, and serves as an illustration of how the tribal policies pursued by Afghan rulers had parallels with contemporary Ottoman practice.[122]

For Fażlı, facilitating the Afghans' recognition of their own national spirit was to be among the greatest services bestowed by the Ottomans. Connecting Afghanistan with the rest of the world was another, and yet again an Ottoman subject was on hand to carry out the task. According to Fażlı an Ottoman subject from Trabzon, Ḥasan Ḥilmī Efendi, had organized Afghanistan's national post office, the arrangement of which was so excellent that it was 'almost identical with Ottoman regulations'.[123] Fażlı's only complaint was that the Afghan government lacked a viable communications network linking the capital to the hinterland. Though a telegraphy optic had recently been built by the Afghan army, only the government offices, factories, and palaces in Kabul had telephone lines and electricity.[124] Nonetheless, there had recently been an expansion in industry and the fine arts, including the foundation of a printing press and lithography studio.[125] In the economic sector important changes were also carried out. According to the author, despite being abundant in stone, masonry in Afghanistan was in a poor condition, but because Ḥabībullāh 'never left his country deprived of any kind of progress, and anyway never satisfied with such a condition, masonry caught his excellency the Amir's patriotic attention, and he invited stone masters and removed this stagnation and inaugurated progress and productivity in its stead'.[126] Particularly impressive to Fażlı's mind were the newly created factories, including a textile factory along the riverbanks of Kabul which boasted

[121] Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995).

[122] Examples may have also been taken from the tribal policies of the Qajar government. Arash Khazeni, *Tribes and Empire on the Margins of Nineteenth-Century Iran* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).

[123] Ludwig Adamec, *Historical and Political Who's Who of Afghanistan* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1975), p. 159. He was a dye manufacturer and a printer of stamps.

[124] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afġān Seyāḥatı*, pp. 82–3.

[125] Ibid., p. 74. Fażlı would later become head of the school.

[126] Ibid., p. 78.

4,000–5,000 workers and which had been organized by the amir after his return from his tour of India. An Englishman, Thornton, had organized the country's leather tanning, a commercial enterprise 'that protected the country from the invasion of foreign products' and 'has reached the highest degree of perfection in Afghanistan'.[127] Besides this, Fażlı persisted, the country also specialized in the production and export of two types of lambskin and had a valuable market for precious stones.[128] The presence of viable domestic industries was commended by members of the Committee of Union and Progress such as Fażlı who despised the fact that their own homeland suffered so greatly from the competition of foreign goods and the machinations of foreign capitalists. In his paper, Ṭarzī himself would later warn his readers of the dangers involved in granting capitulations to foreigners and building railways that would only facilitate an external invasion.[129] But the dearth of liquid capital within the country would certainly bar the implementation of many of the developments Fażlı and the others envisioned. One solution the caricaturist offered was to boost the fruit trade, Afghanistan's most vibrant industry, by suggesting 'this trade will increase fifty-fold if the transport is made by automobiles and trucks, for then the fruit can be sent to India without rotting and from this the country will acquire great wealth', yet another idea echoed later by Ṭarzī.[130] The existence of these cottage industries reinforced the tantalizing belief that Afghanistan could remain autarkic and resist the very economic forces that had robbed the Ottoman state of its sovereignty.

Other members of the mission held prominent posts at the Afghan court. The doctor Münīr İzzet Beğ is said to have become a favourite of Amir Ḥabībullāh. He was dispatched to Istanbul in 1912 to report on the progress of the war in the Balkans and upon his return to Kabul became 'the chief agent in fostering pan-Islamic feeling in Afghanistan'. He was promoted to Mulki colonel in 1917, and appointed head of the civil and military hospitals in December 1919.[131] His assistant was another Ottoman citizen, Aḥmed Faḥima, who had

[127] Ibid., p. 77.
[128] Ibid., pp. 76–7.
[129] Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan, Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880–1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 359–60.
[130] Fażlı, *Resimlī Afgān Seyāḥatı*, pp. 81–2; Gregorian, *Modern Afghanistan*, p. 360.
[131] Senzil Nawid, *Religious Response to Social Change in Afghanistan, 1919–29: King Aman-Allah and the Afghan 'Ulama* (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 1999), p. 75, n. 7; Adamec, *Who's Who of Afghanistan*, p. 203.

Figure 2. Ṭarzī and Fażlı discussing *Sirāj al-Akhbār-i Afghāniye*.
Source: *Sirāj al-Akhbār-i Afghāniye*.

trained in Istanbul and been recruited by İzzet Beğ while in Egypt. He became royal physician in 1919.[132] İzzet Beğ, who had earlier graduated from the Medical School of Istanbul and studied in Paris, substantially reformed the public health regime in Kabul by initiating a large-scale vaccination programme for smallpox and even produced a vaccine for the disease himself. He sent extensive medical reports

[132] Adamec, *Who's Who of Afghanistan*, p. 110

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to Ṭarzī which detailed the medical operations he and his assistants performed at the hospital. When a cholera epidemic swept through Kabul in 1915, he imposed a quarantine regulation on the country in close cooperation with Prince ʿEnāyatullāh.[133] Pictures of the medical procedures carried out by İzzet Beğ—among them the rectification of a cleft palate, the setting of broken bones, the removal of tumours, and the provisioning of prosthetic limbs—were included in Ṭarzī's newspaper and brought home to readers the full gravity of Ottoman modern medicine and its implications for the health of Afghanistan's subjects (see Figure 3).[134]

Yet for all this cooperation, other sources suggest that Faẓlı and his collaborators may not have been as popular within Afghanistan as they liked to believe. In 1913, a number of Ottoman officials were swiftly expelled by the amir for sedition.[135] A sharper picture of this dissension is seen in *ʿĀlem-i Islām*, by the Tartar scholar ʿAbd ur-Reshīd Ibrāhīm. Here he included an anecdote titled 'A Conversation with an Afghan in Bombay', where he recounted a meeting with a certain Raḥīm Bakhsh, an Afghan whom he met in a local mosque. The two discussed the reign of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Khān, Ḥabībullāh's qualities as a ruler, Afghanistan's military capacities, the rise of the Young Turks, and the repercussions of the Ottoman experts' arrival in Kabul.[136] On the latter point, the conversation went as follows:

Raḥīm Bakhsh: Afghanistan should not be expected to perform any service for the Islamic world for now; that is to say, Turkey is the only hope for the Islamic world. So because of this thought, I was expected to acquire some information regarding Turkey from you. By all means, I want to understand what sort of idea you have about the Young Turks. I am sure you have an opinion about them.

ʿAbd ur-Reshīd Ibrāhīm: In Afghanistan I assume there are some people from the Young Turks. Most likely if you see them, you will get an idea.

Raḥīm Bakhsh: Yes, some have come to us. I did not meet them, but according to what I heard there are some imbeciles among them. Even they cannot get along with each other and they don't have any respect for the religion. There is a journalist who is said to be shameless (*edebsiz*). Naturally, proper men would not come to such a remote country. The country itself will obtain goodness

[133] Schinasi, *Afghanistan at the Beginning*, p. 145.
[134] *Sirāj al-Akhbār-i Afghāniye*: yr. 4, no. 10, pp. 6, 11.
[135] British Library, India Office Records/L/PS/11/62, P 3560/1913.
[136] *ʿĀlem-i Islām*, vol. 2 (İstanbul: 1329–31), pp. 156–60.

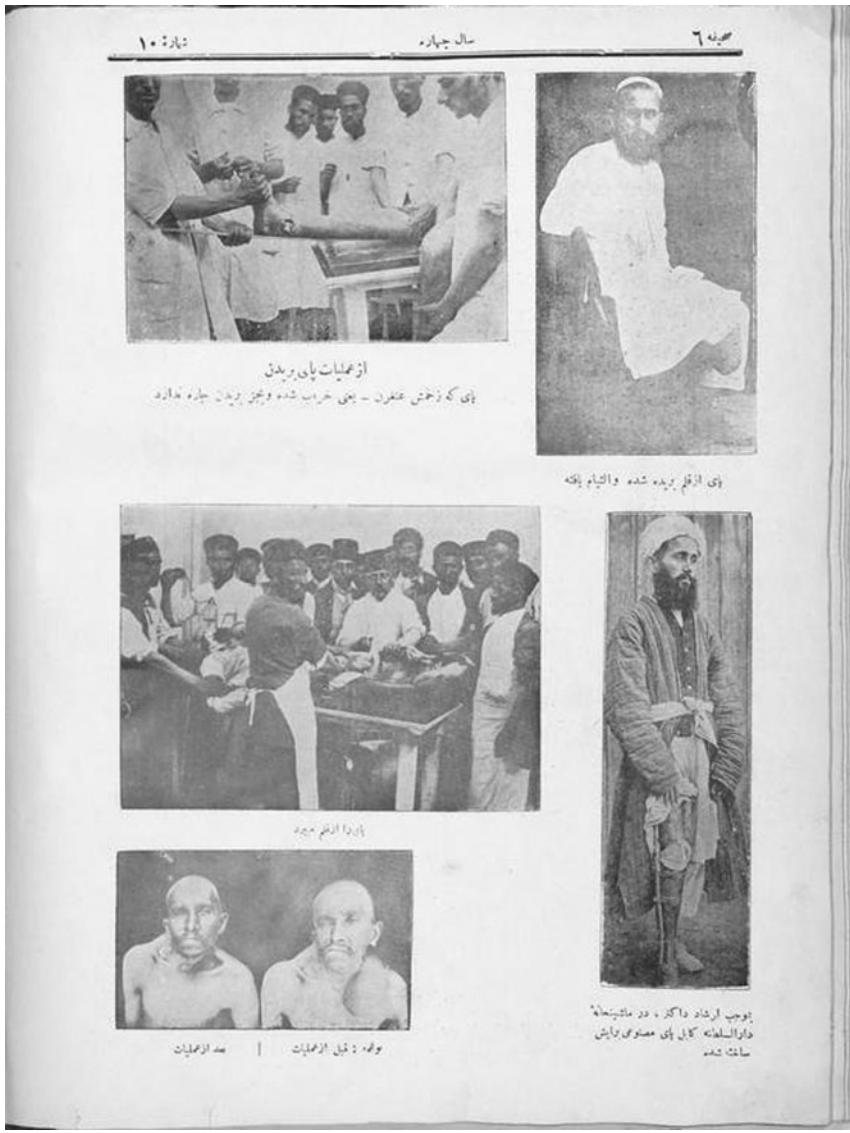

Figure 3. Medical procedures carried out by Münīr İzzet Beğ.
Source: *Sirāj al-Akhbār-i Afghāniye*.

from decent people. However, I believe there are some in the presence of the Amir; one of them even opened the military school. Already, I have heard the instructors are Turks, but I'm not certain about it.[137]

[137] Ibid., p. 159.

Raḥīm Bakhsh's remarks demonstrate that although the Ottoman Empire was recognized by some as the only salvation for the world's Muslims, the personal traits of Committee of Union and Progress advisers in Kabul—their apparent disregard for religion in particular—were seen by some Afghans as deplorable. Undoubtedly, Fażlı was the unnamed journalist condemned for his lack of manners. One can safely assume that part of the resentment towards him owed to his derogatory views of Afghans, mentioned above. He and the others may have also been resented for their derogatory opinion of the former Ottoman sultan-caliph. In fact, ʿAbd ur-Reshīd Ibrāhīm and Bakhsh descended into a verbal altercation over the Young Turks' decision to overthrow Abdülhamid II. After discussing the current state of the caliphate, the two abruptly parted ways. The author ended this section with: 'Though I have had discussions with many Indian Muslims, I didn't learn much. Still Afghanistan is quite a power. May God protect it. As for Amir Ḥabībullāh Khan, I heard plenty of good things from people. His existence is an asset for Muslims. May God protect him.'[138] Even in the mosques of Bombay contacts between Ottomans and Afghans were being cultivated. Nevertheless, if this episode is any indication, this relationship was sometimes riven with an antagonism that became more pronounced in the course of the First World War.

The First World War and Ottoman designs in Afghanistan

After 1908, Afghanistan's triumph over backwardness and ignorance became something of a trope in the Ottoman press.[139] No definitive proof exists, but the publication of Fażlı's work in 1909 may have influenced this. He had returned to Istanbul sometime in 1909, where over a series of ten issues, he printed excerpts from his travelogue in his newspaper, *Lâklâk*.[140] There are considerable discrepancies surrounding his ultimate fate, with one author conjecturing that he was possibly murdered or unexpectedly carried away by an illness after

[138] Ibid., p. 160.

[139] As a representative example, the publication *Sebilü'r-Reşad* ran a piece detailing the activities of the Afghan *ʿulama*, who had made great contributions to Islamic thought, despite the fact that 'In previous times the country was in a great state of ignorance and incredibly backward.' Zeydān Efendi, 'Afgānistān'da ḥareket-i 'ilmīyye', *Sebilü'r-Reşad*, 20:509 (Ankara, 13 Temmuz 1338), pp. 172–4.

[140] *Lâklâk*: *Haftalık resimlī mizâh gazetesidir*, nos. 4–14 (İstanbul, 1908–9).

his return to Istanbul.[141] Alternatively, May Schinasi has remarked that Fażlı became stranded in Paris with the outbreak of war in 1914. Regardless of his end, many subsequent Committee of Union and Progress writings and policies echo his visions for Afghanistan's future. Pan-Islamist journals such as *Beyānülhak and Sebīlü'r-Reşad* featured numerous articles on Afghanistan, concerning everything from 'Afghanistan's revival' to 'The Ottomans and Amir Ḥabībullāh Meḥmed Khan'.[142] *Servet-i Fünūn* ran its own short piece in 1911 on 'Afghanistan's progress and education'.[143] In a memorandum dedicated in part to a discussion of British and Russian imperialism and presented to the Committee of Union and Progress from Salonika in 1912, Celāl Nūrī noted Afghanistan's strategic location in between the two empires.[144] A similar stance is taken in *Muḥārebeden ṣoñra: Hilāfet siyāsetī ve Türklük siyāsetī,* a work written by İsmā'īl Naci after the conclusion of the Balkan wars and printed in Istanbul in 1915. The author condemned the Ottoman elite's preoccupation with European affairs and bid his readers to forget Europe and work towards building relations with the Muslims of Asia. Naci saw Afghanistan as a key part of Ottoman foreign policy and he hoped the country would evolve into an 'industrial and neutral Belgium of Asia'.[145] Because of British and Russian interference in Afghanistan, he argued, the Afghan people 'had remained under the debris of archaic civilization'.[146] Only closer ties with the Ottoman Turks would remove the detritus of backwardness and lead Afghanistan into a progressive future. This sentiment became something of a covert policy over the years before and during First World War. The Committee of Union and Progress government dispatched additional agents to Afghanistan throughout

[141] Çeviker, *Gelişim sürecinde,* pp. 116–7; cf. A. C. Jewett, *An American Engineer in Afghanistan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), p. 258.

[142] References to all these articles are too numerous to cover here. As a representative sample, see: 'Afgānistān'da İntibah', *Sebīlü'r-Reşad* [Sırat-ı Müstakim], 1–8, 8–190 (12 Nisan 1328), p. 147; Kale-i Sultaniyeli İbnürrahmi Ali Tayyar, ''Ālem-i İslam - Afgānlılar - Osmānlılar ve Amir Ḥabībullāh Meḥmed Han', *Beyānülhak,* 6:144 (9 Kānunusāni 1327), pp. 2581–3.

[143] İsmā'īl Suphi ve Meḥmed Fu'ād (eds), *Sālnāme-i Servet-i Fünûn* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Ahmed İhsan, 1327 [1911]), pp. 175–6.

[144] Celāl Nūrī, *1327 senesinde Selânik'te mün'akid Ittiḥad ve Terakḳī ḳongresine taḳdīm olunān muḥṭıradır* (İstanbul: Müşterek ül-Menfaa Osmanlı Şirketi Matbaası, 1327 [1911 or 1912]), p. 7.

[145] Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia*, pp. 105–6.

[146] Hābil Ādem [pseud.], *Muḥārebeden ṣoñra: Hilāfet siyāsetī ve Türklük siyāsetī* (İstanbul: İkbal Kütüphanesi, 1331 [1915]), p. 125.

this period. In fact, the Teşkilât-ı Mahṣūṣa, the secret service branch of the Committee of Union and Progress, carried out extensive operations in Afghanistan.[147] As per Fehmī Beğ's instructions, in 1910 the Committee of Union and Progress sent three more agents to Afghanistan and dispatched emissaries to Ḥabībullāh and the amir of Bukhara. At the end of the Balkan wars in 1913, Enver Pasha sent more men to Kabul, bringing their total number to 15.[148] In 1913 another Ottoman soldier, ʿAlī Khan, and his two assistants, a professor of artillery and inspector of higher military studies, joined the staff at the military college in Kabul. ʿAlī Efendi, an original member of Faẓlı's trip, was promoted in 1917 to the school commandant and left Afghanistan in 1919 for Karachi and later Damascus.[149]

In an August 1914 telegram to the German ambassador in Constantinople, Baron von Wangenheim, Enver stated that Ottoman officers in Kabul had contact with Indian Muslims, and he even dispatched ʿUbeydullāh Efendi, a parliamentary deputy from Smyrna, and Basra's governor, General Süleyman Pasha, to the amir's court.[150] This was the antecedent for the famous Hentig-Niedermeyer expedition, which has tended to be depicted as an isolated incident. Proof that it was not comes clearly from the events surrounding the delegation's arrival on the outskirts of Kabul in September 1915, when ten men from the Turkish community in Kabul rode out to meet them.[151] The Turkish community probably did not exceed two dozen men, but their influence at court was considerable enough for Ḥabībullāh to imprison Hayreddīn, a professor at Ḥabībīyya College and commander of the military school, after he welcomed Hentig and Niedermayer's retinue with a full parade by the cadets.[152] In their memoirs both Oskar von Niedermayer and Emil Rybitschka mention the role played by Ottoman technocrats in the city's political life, and

[147] Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 52; Polat Safi, 'History in the Trench: The Ottoman Special Organization — *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* Literature', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 48:1, pp. 89–106; reference to Afghanistan on p. 93. Unfortunately, I have not had access to the Turkish Military Archives, which likely contains more information on these activities.

[148] Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, pp. 50–2.

[149] Adamec, *Who's Who of Afghanistan*, p. 116.

[150] Ludwig Adamec, *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century: Relations with the USSR, Germany, and Britain* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), pp. 16, 21; Ömer Hakan Özalp, *Mehmed Ubeydullah Efendi'nin Malta, Afganistan ve İran hatıraları* (İstanbul: Dergâh, 2002), pp. 204–23, 238–9.

[151] Adamec, *Afghanistan's Foreign* Affairs, p. 31.

[152] Ibid., p. 31; Adamec, *Who's Who of Afghanistan*, p. 176.

in fact were treated for illnesses by Dr Münīr İzzet Beğ.[153] Despite the mission's ultimate failure, Ottoman factors continued to engage in propaganda activities within Afghanistan, and in time Herat became the most important base of operations for Ottoman agents. The head of the Teşkīlât-ı Mahṣuṣa in Tehran, Ömer Fevzī, sent a certain ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Pişehvarī to Turkistan and Afghanistan, but he was later imprisoned in Herat on charges of espionage.[154] There was another Ottoman agent in Herat, Kasım Beğ, who worked with the Turkish colony in the city, and later moved into Soviet Turkestan as a political agitator.[155]

Meanwhile in Kabul, clandestine activities in support of the Ottoman war effort continued. A British report from 1916 noted that Ottoman *ʿulama* had been sent to Afghanistan to carry out pro-Ottoman and German propaganda.[156] The amir's brother, Naṣrullāh Khan, seems to have been chiefly responsible, and the British India Office reported in 1919 that Naṣrullāh had allegedly travelled to the Ottoman Empire sometime during the war.[157] He had earlier dispatched two Ottoman officers, Harīd Beğ and ʿAbbās Abidīn, to Tirah in 1916 to recruit men, mostly deserters from the Indian army, into a unit variably called the 'Turkish Army' or the 'Amir's Army',[158] and he also worked openly with tribes of the frontier.[159] Ottoman agents also travelled to Peshawar, Lahore, Delhi, and Bombay in these years,[160] while the amir sent an Ottoman engineer to Europe to buy cordite in 1914.[161] From 1914, Ṭarzī's paper also closely followed the Ottoman war effort and printed glowing articles on the Ottoman defence of the Dardanelles and Enver Pasha. In 1916, the professor of

[153] Oskar von Niedermayer, *Unter der glutsonne Irans; kriegserlebnisse der dentschen expedition nach Persien und Afganistan* (Dachau: Einhornverlag, 1925), pp. 146, 148; Emil Rybitschka, *Im gottgegebenen Afghanistan als gäste des emirs* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1927), p. 42.

[154] Touraj Atabaki, 'Going East: The Ottomans' Secret Service Activities in Iran', in his (ed.), *Iran and the First World War: Battleground of the Great Powers* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), pp. 38–9.

[155] Adamec, *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs*, pp. 58, 67–8.

[156] British Library, India Office Records/L/PS/11/113, P 4687/1916.

[157] British Library, India Office Records/L/PS/11/149, P 1304/1919.

[158] Lal Baha, 'Activities of Turkish Agents in Khyber During World War 1', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, XIV:2 (August 1969), p. 189.

[159] Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, pp. 103–4; Sana Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 105–6.

[160] Syed Tanvir Wasti, 'The Political Aspiration of Indian Muslims and the Ottoman Nexus', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 42:5 (September 2006), p. 712.

[161] British Library, India Office Records/L/PS/11/70, P 115/1914.

Turkish at Ḥabībīyya College and the Military College, Muḥammad Naẓīf, printed a two-volume Ottoman Turkish grammar and reader.[162] At the same time in Istanbul, works were published by the military press on the political geography of Afghanistan and Iran.[163]

Ottoman defeat in 1918 imbued Afghanistan with an even more romantic hue and afforded a convenient getaway for many Committee of Union and Progress stalwarts, least of all Cemal Pasha and Enver Pasha. As is well-known, when Enver Pasha fled to Turkmenistan in 1921 and became head of the Basmaçı revolt, he hoped to create a pan-Turkish confederation comprising Chinese Turkestan, Afghanistan, and Turkey, and was supplied with weapons by Amir Amānullāh, the union's prospective leader.[164] Again this relationship did not arise out of thin air, but was tied to a series of contacts pursued among Afghans and Ottoman technocrats from Bombay to Cairo in previous years. With Amir Ḥabībullāh's assassination in 1919 and the accession of Amānullāh, pro-Turkish sentiment in Kabul became something of an official government policy, especially after Afghanistan's sovereignty was recognized following the Third Anglo–Afghan War. The evidence gathered to date is too slim to make any categorical statements, but it appears that Ottoman military training played a pivotal role in Afghan successes in the war. As a case in point, Hayreddīn, the aforementioned professor of Turkish at Ḥabībīyya College, was sent in April 1919 as head of a mission to Turkey with orders to secure experts for the Afghan army.[165] In fact, a dossier on the Anglo–Afghan war was prepared by the Turkish military press in Istanbul in 1925, complete with maps of the major fighting.[166] But before the deposition of the sultan, this flurry of activity was initially connected to the Khilafāt movement. In 1919, the Ottoman envoy to Afghanistan, Captain Meḥmed Kasım, circulated leaflets throughout Central Asia which called upon all Muslims to rise up to 'save Turkistan and assist in freeing the Holy Islamic [centres] and the Ottoman dominions'.[167]

[162] Muḥammad Naẓīf, *Maṭbu'a-i* (Kābul: Maṭba'ah-'i 'Ināyat, 1336 [1917]); *Qirā'at aṣar-i Muḥammad Naẓīf* (Kābul: Maṭbuʾa-i 'Ināyat, 1336 [1917]).

[163] Nazmi binbaşı, *Ḳafḳāsya ve Āsya-yi vustā ve Türkistān vilāyetleri [ve] Buhārā ve Ḥiva hānlıḳları* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i askeriye, 1334 [1916]), pp. 56–69; *İrāna dā'ir ʿaskerī raporlar* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i âmire, 1332 [1915]).

[164] Martha B. Olcott, 'The Basmachi or Freemen's Revolt in Turkestan 1918–24', *Soviet Studies*, 33:3 (July 1981), pp. 358–9.

[165] Adamec, *Who's Who of Afghanistan*, p. 176.

[166] *1919 Afgān-İngiliz harbi* (Dersaâdet: Matbaa-i Askeri, 1341 [1925]).

[167] Landau, *Pan-Turkism*, p. 55.

Amānullāh's support for these activities is incontestable, and as Afghanistan increasingly became a safe haven for Ottoman political agents, they were employed by the Afghan court to continue the reforms long ushered in by Ottoman experts in the country.

Throughout the period of the Allied occupation of Anatolia, Mustafa Kemal also had regular contact with the Afghan court, and delegations were repeatedly exchanged between Ankara and Kabul, often with Soviet cooperation. The Turkish–Afghan treaty of 1921, signed in Moscow, echoed many of the assertions long made in Fażlı's text, Fehmī's telegraph, and the Ottoman press, including the conviction that 'This treaty means that Turkey begins to have a share in Asiatic policy, with which she had not hiterto been able to concern herself. There is no doubt that Turkey, like other Eastern states, must draw her force from the East, and that only by this force can she stand up against the colonising mentality of Europe.'[168] A month later, at the Afghan embassy in Ankara, the Afghan ambassador and Mustafa Kemal both gave speeches emphasizing the fraternal ties between the two nations and the necessity of continued cooperation against imperialism.[169] The publication of an Ottoman Turkish textbook in Kabul in 1920, complete with Amānullāh's portrait on the flyleaf, is a further testament to these affinities.[170] That connection, whose genesis can be dated to Fażlı's mission, had been cultivated throughout the previous dozen years by the continued presence of Ottoman advisers in the country. The conclusion of a formal treaty between the Republic of Turkey and Afghanistan in 1921 thus formalized a diplomatic relationship between two newly sovereign nation-states which had informally collaborated against imperial rivals for years.[171] In turn, the state-driven reform projects pursued by Mustafa Kemal and Amānullāh in the 1920s shared a common social imaginary drawn initially from Ottoman precedents implemented in both countries. In league with most countries in the post-Ottoman Middle East, each

[168] The original text of the treaty was published in *Hakimet-i Millī* in Ankara on 24 March 1921. A translation prepared by the British Foreign Office can be found in Bilâl N. Şimşir, *Ingiliz belgelerinde Atatürk, 1919–1938, Ocak-Eylül 1921*, vol. 3 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1979), pp. 293–4.

[169] 'Enclosure in No. 199', in ibid., pp. 487–9. This is also based on an English translation of a *Hakimet-i Millī* article from 10 June 1921.

[170] *Kitāb-i alifbā-yi Turkī* (Kābul: Maṭbuʿa-i Niẓārat-i Maʿārif, 1299 [1920]).

[171] *Türkiye-Afgānistān ittifaḳ mu'āhadenamesi* (Moskovada 1 Mart 1338 tarihinde imza edilmiştir) (İstanbul: Hariciye Vekaleti, 1339 [1921]); *Savād-i mu'āhadah-'i dawlatayn-i 'alīyatayn Afghānistān va Turkīyah* (Kabul?, s.n., 1301 [1922]).

relied upon former officers from the Ottoman army to bring these reforms to fruition, a reality which inculcates narratives of Afghan state-building into a larger transnational context of anti-colonial nation-making in the interwar period.[172]

Conclusion

While in recent years studies have analysed the domestic dynamics of Ottoman reform projects, this article testifies to the international dimension of these undertakings and brings Afghanistan into discussions of state-building in the late Ottoman and post-Ottoman Middle East.[173] Like the peripheral regions of the Ottoman Empire, Afghanistan was conceived as a backward space desperately in need of a programme of reform carried out by self-proclaimed Ottoman Turkish experts. In important ways, Afghanistan was seen by this group as a site where a uniquely Committee of Union and Progress project of reform could be implemented that was so elusive within the confines of the empire itself. Moreover, as a extraterritorial sphere for informal Ottoman empire, Afghanistan's experience was quite unique from other regions of the globe where the Ottomans sought to exercise influence in their final decades. Nowhere else were these contacts as sustained as in Afghanistan, likely due to the fact that the country enjoyed an ambiguous status within Britain's informal empire, and because Ottoman advisers were employed by the Afghan leadership in important ministerial capacities. Moreover, this article reflects the need to look beyond the rhetoric and ideology of Ottoman pan-Islam to the networks and individuals active beyond the empire who mobilized support for various Ottoman causes and who made pan-Islam a material and political reality.

[172] Michael Provence, 'Ottoman Modernity, Colonialism, and Insurgency in the Interwar Arab East', *International Journal Middle East Studies*, 43 (2011), pp. 205–25.
[173] Makdisi, 'Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism', p. 30.