

courage, and charm. Some children on the deportation road figured out ways to make money, barter, and steal in order to eat better. Others figured out heroic ways to travel long distances to find family members. They held on to life despite the surrounding trauma. Maksudyan backs up her argument with rich survival narratives, but does not engage deeply with the politics of memory.

A growing critical mass of books on children and youth in the Middle East (Beth Baron, Heidi Morrison, Benjamin Fortna, Ahmed Fekry Ibrahim) opens the door for engagement with issues that crisscross the field of children's studies. Maksudyan's book is a great launching point, for example, to problematize the concept and experience of children's agency in the context of the Middle East. The popularity of uncovering children's agency must not belie important questions such as: What authority do historians have to accord or refuse agency to the subjects of their work? What role do racial, gender, and class politics play in limiting or privileging different forms of agency? What exists between and across the binary categories of powerful vs. powerless (adult vs. child)? What is at stake when adults try to "liberate" children? How do we define agency in different times and places?

Maksudyan's book also provides exciting new material to put in dialogue with Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian's new concept of "unchildling," or "a violent racial regime of control that actively maintains the machinery of dismemberment always and everywhere" (Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Incarcerated Childhoods and the Politics of Unchilding* [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019], 22). Whether it be Armenian children in early-20th-century Ottoman lands or Palestinian children in contemporary Israel and the Occupied Territories, young people's relationship to power structures is a rich area of research.

Maksudyan's book pushes the boundaries of historiography by viewing World War I through the eyes of children and youth. Additionally, she focuses on orphans, some of the most vulnerable groups in this period. It will be a great day when distinguished scholars such as Maksudyan do not have to dedicate a portion of the book's introduction to justifying the inclusion of young people in historical research.

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Ottoman Women During World War I: Everyday Experiences, Politics, and Conflict. Elif Mahir Metinsoy, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Pp. 290. \$99.99 cloth. ISBN: 9781107198906

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Saliha, Elif, Nakiye, Zümürd, Fatma, Hamdiye—these are only a few of the "ordinary" women, who, for the first time, appear as participants, negotiators, sufferers and victims during total war in the Ottoman Empire. Filed away in the Ottoman archive, cataloged not as women but as "the family of men, as civilians, or as soldiers" (p. 7), and overshadowed by their literate upper-class sisters, a women's press—often penned by men—that cared little about poor and working-class women. Ordinary Ottoman women's experiences on the home front until now, with a few notable exceptions, have been a non-topic. While there are uncountable monographs about working-class women's experiences on the European home front, Ottoman women's separate and gender-specific wartime encounters have inspired less than a handful of books. Among these, Elif Mahir Metinsoy's *Ottoman Women During World War I* stands out for its capable methodology in accessing ordinary women's hidden lives; its colorful, varied, and beautifully abundant archival evidence; and its meticulous attention to the everyday experiences that can highlight the "conflict between ordinary women and the Ottoman state," and "nationalist forces, women's discontent with wartime, propaganda, and socio-economic conditions or women's appropriation of these for their self-interest" (p. 4). Relying on reports from Ottoman officials, women's petitions, and telegrams, as well as popular folk songs and poetry, Metinsoy argues that ordinary Muslim (although

this is not a label she consistently applies) women's everyday politics influenced immediate wartime state policies and actions, as well as the "formation of women's citizenship right in the long run" (p. 3).

First and foremost, it needs to be said that this is a book that long needed to be written. In the last ten years, Ottoman historians have moved to study the empire's home front during World War I. Still scholars of the empire have largely ignored women, especially illiterate working-class women, as a sole research subject. While historians have neither completely neglected gender relations nor women in wartime, women's experiences, for the most part, have been woven into broader narratives. Metinsoy, placing her work at the intersection of feminist scholarship focused on World War I in the European context, such as the work of Kathleen Canning, and the long tradition of *Alltagsgeschichte* (*everyday history*), makes the empire's Muslim women her principal historical actors.

The book consists of eleven chapters arranged in four parts, an introduction, and a conclusion. The first two chapters provide important general historiographical framing pertaining to women and war (Chapter 1) and the historical context of the Ottoman home front (Chapter 2) that was plagued by famine, food shortages, high civilian mortalities, and deportations. Understandably, the author seeks to establish a conversation with women's, home front, and Ottoman history, but for the informed reader these two accounts may well have been shortened and woven into the otherwise short introduction. Muslim Ottoman women are considered in earnest starting in part two under the heading "Women's Negotiation of Wartime Social Policies." It is here where the book begins to shine in its originality and the riches brought from the Ottoman archives. Metinsoy excavates Ottoman women's *responses* to the flaws and failures of the state's legal and practical measures to eliminate food shortages and hunger (Chapter 3) as well as provide monetary (Chapter 4), housing (Chapter 5), and child welfare aid (Chapter 6). Sending telegrams, petitioning, and weeping in public, women, the author argues, strategically exploited the state's religious-nationalist discourses. Herein, Metinsoy illustrates not only how women's bodies became subject to the state's disciplinary and regulatory powers, but also how women maintained, cultivated, and asserted their right to protest and work against, among other things, irregular or non-payments of pensions, civil servants' rude behavior, at times even physical and sexual violence, and embezzlements (p. 84). It becomes clear that women's wartime work lives (Part 3), often seen as a marker of female emancipation as women increasingly entered the workplace and the public, were characterized by both opportunities and restrictions (Chapter 7). For example, the Ottoman Women's Employment Islamic Society, founded in 1916, provided jobs for thousands of women as post office clerks, secretaries, street cleaners, and garbage collectors (p. 120). Women entered into the theater and manufacturing jobs, were instructed in nursing and sewing to serve the army, and many served as army construction workers (p. 123). Still, Metinsoy is careful to alert her readers to the problems women faced, such as "unemployment, low or unpaid wages, sexual harassment, hard working conditions, absence of social security" (p.135), and Ottoman society's ongoing suspicion of "women's work outside the home" (p. 125). Women's resistance to the state's wartime demands of forced labor, taxes, the mobilization of their men, and the control of their sexuality motivated by conservative "gender codes" concludes this vibrant and inspiring monograph. World War I has often been cited for its emancipatory power. Women enter into the public sphere and into the workplace as an unprecedented number of men leave for the front. It is a good story, but not the full story. Metinsoy complicates the discourse of female emancipation propagated by Turkish nationalists, by highlighting the general social and cultural restrictions that were not undone by the war as well as women's everyday wartime struggles, such as unemployment and exploitation.

Ottoman Women During World War I is a laudable accomplishment; there is one major point of contention. It is clear that Metinsoy writes mainly about Muslim women. While the author is sensitive to women's differential wartime experiences based on class, she ignores the fact that ethnic differences were a clear determinant of how women lived the war. The disproportionate suffering of the empire's Christian minorities is absent, in particular the mass murder and the systematic sexual violence against Armenian women, who, after all, were also Ottoman subjects. Hence the book's title, *Ottoman Women*, is hard to justify. A couple of minor points are to be noted: First, Metinsoy writes that the Ottomans had "no choice but to ally with Germany" (p. 1). This may be true but it is important to note that the Ottomans, according to Mustafa Aksakal and others, had agency in the decision making process. Second, Metinsoy cites Muslim women patient numbers in a women's hospital as evidence for their

high number of infections with venereal disease (p. 186). The reasons for Muslim women's hospitalization, however, are unclear. Given the increase of infectious diseases, like typhus and tuberculosis, in wartime, more generally, it would be challenging to isolate venereal diseases as the main reason unless one examines individual patient records.

Criticism withstanding the book fills a gaping void in the historiography and is an essential contribution to Ottoman history, the history of World War I, and women's history more generally. Metinsoy has broken open the seal to the archive and presents a narrative filled with exemplary and original archival evidence. The material is positively overwhelming in its details and the author herself writes that she has only touched the tip of the iceberg. As such, *Ottoman Women During World War I* will not only serve as a stepping stone, a form of inspiration for many years to come, but also will be an encouragement that the "ordinary woman" is not a historical dead end as some scholars might still believe.

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Statecraft by Stealth: Secret Intelligence and British Rule in Palestine. Steven B. Wagner, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019). Pp. 333. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781501736476

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In recent years a re-evaluative historiography on Mandatory Palestine has emerged, not only on Palestinian Arab–Jewish/Zionist dynamics but on the British imperialist context as well. Based principally on archival deep-mining, but acknowledging new theoretical approaches, this canon has gone beyond, or deeper into, denunciatory first-generation conclusions, notably of Tom Bowden, Michael Cohen, Bernard Wasserstein, and Martin Kolinsky, which emphasized culpable British cynicism, incompetence, pro-Arab appeasement, and betrayal of the Jewish National Home; their *schadenfreude* over Britain's downfall suggests a vindictory predisposition towards Zionist national liberation mythologies. The "new historians" of the late-1980s had little time, space, or inclination, when exposing Israel's subsequent "ethnic cleansing of Palestine," to revisit this "chose jugée" of originating British sin. Later treatments, notably by Sahar Huneidi, countered strongly that rather than appeasing Arab Palestine, the Mandate fundamentally enabled Zionist proto-statehood, implicitly heralding the *nakba*.

Subsequent new histories of British administration, among which Steven Wagner's monograph properly resides, have tried to follow-up empirically on its character, and failings. Overall, Britain remains an ill wind, blowing nobody in Palestine any good, rendered essentially impotent by the implacably conflicted demands of its subjects. Among other spheres, internal security has elicited much new attention. The noted small-wars historian Charles Townshend resumed where his predecessors left off, asserting weakness, vacillation, and pro-Arab appeasement from the 1929 Buraq riots onwards. Gad Kroizer was more nuanced, on competing civil versus paramilitary policing philosophies, with the latter made ascendant by the great Palestine Arab rebellion of 1936–39. Martin Thomas's pioneering Foucault-influenced account of British and French "intelligence states" in the interwar Middle East correspondingly emphasizes surveillance and punishment, albeit with British colonial knowledge more the domain of scholar-bureaucrats than police commissars. On Palestine particularly, Matthew Hughes, Georgina Sinclair, Jacob Norris, and John Knight cumulatively suggest an impoverished, procrustean British Palestine Police, antimodernizing, racist—despite relying on mainly Arab enlistment—and given to nihilistic violence, contemptuous of its reformist commanders before the great rebellion precipitated its collapse, demoralized and ineffectual. The British military took over, expanding violent repression to totemic extremes, more pacification, with extreme prejudice, than appeasement. Mathew Kraig