



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Humanitarianism and the Non-European World

İşleyen, B.

DOI

[10.4324/9781003162711-11](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003162711-11)

Publication date

2023

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

The Routledge International Handbook of Critical Philanthropy and Humanitarianism

License

Article 25fa Dutch Copyright Act (<https://www.openaccess.nl/en/in-the-netherlands/you-share-we-take-care>)

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

İşleyen, B. (2023). Humanitarianism and the Non-European World. In K. Mitchell, & P. Pallister-Wilkins (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Critical Philanthropy and Humanitarianism* (pp. 125-134). (Routledge International Handbooks). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003162711-11>

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

9

HUMANITARIANISM AND THE NON-EUROPEAN WORLD

Beste İşleyen

There is a commonly held view that humanitarianism is rooted in “Western” history and philosophy, whereby, as Didier Fassin has famously argued, Christianity’s “valorization of suffering” and commitment to alleviate that suffering plays a pivotal role (Fassin, 2011 p. 248). It is therefore not surprising that academic studies on the topic have almost exclusively traced the times and locations of the emergence and evolution of humanitarianism in the West (El Qadim et al., 2021). A synopsis of the dominant narrative of the “international humanitarian order” (O’Hagan and Hirono, 2014) is as follows: Starting from the nineteenth century, particularly with the Battle of Solferino, events, interests, actors, institutions and practices pertaining to humanitarianism has been shaped by the West (Binder and Meier, 2011). The evolution of humanitarianism has been linked, among others, to the foundation of the Red Cross in 1863 and of Médecins Sans Frontières in 1971 (Fassin, 2011). More recent scholarship has enriched existing debates by pointing to the entanglement of colonialism and humanitarianism by paying particular attention to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833 (Lester and Dussart, 2014).

The Western-centrism of humanitarianism is argued to be challenged nowadays with the increasing involvement of non-Western actors and institutions in addressing humanitarian needs in such global issues as armed conflict, refugee governance, development aid, and natural disasters across the world (Binder and Meier, 2011; O’Hagan and Hirono, 2014). The humanitarian field is said to have become more “diverse” (O’Hagan and Hirono, 2014) as states like India, Japan, Brazil, and Turkey have shifted from being at the receiving aid of humanitarianism to active agents and donors of humanitarian assistance. Examples include Brazilian, Indian, and Saudi Arabian contributions to the World Food Programme along with the Chinese and Japanese financial aid and on-site assistance in emergencies (Binder and Meier, 2011; O’Hagan and Hirono, 2014). Binder and Meier (2011, p. 1136) argue that these developments in international humanitarianism “must be understood in the context of an increasingly multi-polar world. Voices from Latin America, Africa, and Asia confidently demand their own space as aid providers, whereas economic decline, crippling debt, and domestic political discourses increasingly contest the leading role of Europe and North America in foreign assistance.”

Turkey is one such actor, whose humanitarian activities and interventions in different countries and regions are understood in the framework of the recently pluralizing humanitarian field. Turkey is called a “humanitarian state” (Keyman and Sazak, 2014), meaning that the country

has successfully turned humanitarian action into a foreign policy instrument by engaging in and expanding activities and influence ranging from the Balkans to the Middle East, Africa, and Caucasus (Coşkun-Türkmen, 2020; Langan, 2017). Following its ranking as the first country whose humanitarian assistance made up 0.75% share of its gross national income (GNI) in 2016, Turkey increased this amount to 0.86% in 2017 (Coşkun-Türkmen, 2020). Turkey's activism as a humanitarian state encompasses a range of policies, including emergency and disaster assistance along with the provision of food, medical supplies, and shelter for refugees in Africa and the Middle East.

Analyses of Turkey's role as a humanitarian state rest on two assumptions. The first assumption is that Turkey is a late-comer to the international humanitarian field. A global power shift has occurred from the global North to the South in line with which non-Western humanitarian involvement, in this case Turkey, has turned into both an aspiration and a necessity. Regarding the former, Turkey seeks to emulate the West by means of getting more recognition, responsibility, and representation in international humanitarianism. At the same time, Turkish humanitarian action is the result of its global position as an emerging economy, which "comes at a price," urging the country "to share the traditional actors' burden in addressing such vital global issues as armed conflicts, human rights violations, poverty, deteriorating health conditions, environmental degradation and climate change" (Keyman and Sazak, 2014: 1).

The second assumption is that Turkey is an essentially different humanitarian actor when compared to Western actors and institutions. In fact, the recent emergence of the non-West in the international humanitarian order has led scholars to an exploration of the political and ethical implications of this trend. One central question has focused on the exploration of "what constitutes legitimate humanitarianism in the eyes of different societies" in relation to the "four core principles of humanitarianism: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence" (O'Hagan and Hirono, 2014, 412). In a relatively appreciative piece, Keyman and Sazak identify a set of traits distinguishing Turkish humanitarianism from not just Western but also other non-Western actors and institutions. These traits, as the authors continue, serve the constitution of "Turkey's image as a reliable and responsible ... actor" (Keyman and Sazak, 2014, p. 7). Turkey's presumed distinctiveness in international humanitarianism has also been critically examined. Langan offers a powerful critique to the concept of "virtuous power Turkey," which is employed by the Turkish state elites to construct the country's involvement, especially in Africa, as benevolent in contrast to colonial and imperial underpinnings of Western intentions and goals across the continent (Langana, 2017). Langan critically finds a discrepancy between the Turkish official discourse on virtuous power and its reflection in actual practices and outcomes in the specific case of Somalia.

While a significant amount of work has been produced with regard to the second assumption (e.g., Coşkun-Türkmen, 2020; Langan, 2017), the first assumption has been widely accepted in an unproblematic and uncritical way. With a particular focus on refugee humanitarianism, this chapter rejects the taken-for-granted view that Turkey is a follower of humanitarianism whose origins lie elsewhere. In what follows, I will develop my argument in two steps. First, I will review the recent calls for decentering EU studies on migration and refugees. Decentered approaches offer a research agenda that shifts focus to the interests and viewpoints of the European Union's (EU) interlocutors (e.g., El Qadim, 2014; El Qadim et al., 2021; İşleyen, 2018a, 2018b; Triandafyllidou, 2020). Drawing on postcolonial studies problematizing historical narratives which attribute Europe historical primacy and leadership in international relations (e.g., Bhabra, 2007; Bilgin, 2021), I will argue that neither is Turkish humanitarianism a recent phenomenon nor is the country a latecomer to humanitarian action by imitating and/or following Europe.

Revisiting Decentering Approaches to Migration and Refugee Governance

Decentered approaches to migration and refugee governance have emerged as a reaction to the perceived Eurocentrism of the field. The main argument is that academic studies have largely neglected the actors and viewpoints of the countries which are interlocutors of EU countries in migration and refugee control. This criticism is especially prevalent in the literature on EU external migration policy (e.g., Cassarino, 2014; Paoletti, 2010). For Nora el Qadim (2017), the Eurocentrism of EU studies lies in the disproportionate focus on EU actors and institutions to the detriment of others. This is, to a large extent, due to the centrality of the concept of “external governance” in EU migration and refugee studies. External governance privileges endogenous explanations in line with which policies are unquestionably taken as the outcome of interests, developments, and events relating to the EU and its individual member states. El Qadim gives the example of readmission agreements, whose successful negotiation with third countries—or the failure thereof—is linked with the EU’s institutional limitations and division of competences between national, supranational, and intergovernmental agencies in EU external policies. El Qadim invites a decentering of research by examining third countries’ resistance to the content and negotiation of readmission agreements requested by the EU. Taking EU–Moroccan negotiations of migrant readmission agreement as a research focus, El Qadim makes two arguments. First, Morocco as a so-called transit country has its own political and economic interests in migration control that cannot be reduced to EU expectations and demands. Second, the Moroccan state deploys a number of material and symbolic avoidance and resistance practices which are not pure tactics but are part and parcel of negotiations.

Similarly, Anna Triandafyllidou (2020) emphasizes the necessity to integrate the factors and actors of those labeled as “periphery” states and offers three decentering strategies in EU migration and refugee studies. The first strategy is to pluralize actors and perspectives within both the EU and the partner countries by moving beyond a focus on the state and the national level to incorporate nonstate actors as well as transnational ones. The second is to pluralize scales of analysis through a recognition of the importance of local actors and local governance mechanisms and practices in investigating the production, adoption, negotiation, and contestation of migrants and refugees and their lives, including labor conditions and relations, the question of legality, and integration in countries of arrival and residence. The third strategy that Triandafyllidou proposes is a much closer engagement with the diverse locations and actors of knowledge production on migration so that academic perspectives emerging from a wide range of places and regions around the world are taken into account.

Humanitarianism has become a key debate within academic research on EU migration and refugee policies and practices (e.g., Pallister-Wilkins, 2015; Rozakou, 2012). These studies investigate the manifold ways through which humanitarian rationalities, techniques, and technologies shape EU policy responses and daily practices addressing mass displacement within and outside Europe. The EU’s humanitarian action in refugee and migration governance rests on a wide network of actors, including state agencies, transnational actors (e.g., European Border and Coast Guard Agency—FRONTEX), nongovernmental actors, as well as private contracts. These studies provide empirically grounded novel insights along with critique regarding EU migration and refugee humanitarianism. Paolo Cuttitta (2018), for example, investigates and compares the discourses and everyday workings of nongovernmental organizations engaged in search-and-rescue activities in the central Mediterranean and asks how their involvement contributed to or disturbed the humanitarian politics of EU governmentality of borders and migration. Katerina Rozakou offers a genealogical reading of Greek asylum and refugee reception and questions the emancipatory potential of some of advocacy groups whose political agendas rest on the Greek

conception of hospitality (Rozakou, 2012). There are also works focusing on the growing presence of private actors through, for example, service provision through digital and logistical support in refugee hosting (Pascucci, 2021; Tazzioli, 2019). Humanitarian justifications have also been used during the Covid-19 pandemic when Greece, Italy, and Malta as countries making up the EU's external border adopted new tactics and measures to further strengthen migrant incarceration and migrant containment aspects of border policing (Tazzioli and Stierl, 2021).

Non-EU actors and geographies are recurrently present within studies on EU refugee and migration humanitarianism. There are three main ways in which the non-Europe features in this particular strand of the literature. First, non-European actors have been studied in the context of the EU's international promotion of refugee and asylum rights. In the case of Turkey, the topic has primarily been approached as part of the country's protracted EU accession process. EU studies have long studied the EU's external action as an example of "transformative power" (Börzel and Risse, 2009), which refers to positive policy change in non-European countries by means of their close cooperation with EU actors and institutions. Change occurs through the transfer of norms, values, and institutions from the EU to third countries, whereby accession provides the most effective change for transformations. It is because candidate countries have to fulfil certain political criteria and align their laws, policies, and practices with those of the EU in order to become eligible for membership. In migration and refugee matters, such a diffusionist understanding of humanitarianism—the outward promotion of the European system to the non-European world—is very much present. The EU is assumed to be the origin of humanitarianism in the governance of refugees and migrants, while Turkey is the target country for EU interventions through such political and technical instruments as policy transfer, training, and financial aid. One example is legal reforms in Turkey in asylum law, which rests on a logic of diffusion (Soykan, 2016; Üstübcü, 2019). As such, the non-European world is emptied of history in that its encounter with modernity is equated with its encounter with Europe (Chakrabarty, 2000), including humanitarianism.

The second way in which the non-European world features in EU studies on migration and refugee humanitarianism is through a discourse of co-optation. In accordance with the diffusionist account, the co-optation argument posits that the international promotion of humanitarianism renders non-EU countries, especially those in its immediate neighborhood, into collaborators to take on responsibilities for the execution of the EU's exclusionary and restrictive migration and refugee policies. An example is the infamous EU–Turkey Statement of March 16, 2016 with which the Turkish side "agreed to accept the rapid return of all migrants not in need of international protection crossing from Turkey into Greece and to take back all irregular migrants intercepted in Turkish waters."¹ The 2016 statement, also called the EU–Turkey Deal, was justified on humanitarian grounds, such as the prevention of deaths at sea through interception before embarkment. Reflecting on the two-year anniversary of the EU–Turkey Statement, the European Commission defined this cooperation as "a game changer" whose "effects ... were immediate" in reducing suffering and life loss at sea by stopping dangerous journeys and disrupting the smuggling networks.² Academic studies have offered powerful criticism with regard to the normative and legal implications of the 2016 statement. They agree with EU politicians in viewing the deal as a breakthrough but in an alternative perspective. Accordingly, the 2016 agreement between the two parties has turned Turkey into a "gatekeeper" doing the EU's "dirty job" of containing, detaining, and deporting people in need of protection and safety (Soykan, 2016). In both narratives, Europe remains the central agent of humanitarianism, whereas Turkey either catches up by adopting the EU's externally promoted humanitarian agenda or acts as a collaborator of, again, externally promoted malevolent EU policies which are in breach of international refugee and asylum law.

There is a third way in which non-European countries feature in humanitarianism research on migration and refugee management. This concerns the silencing of colonialism's enduring impact on not just contemporary refugee movements and contemporary refugee and asylum policies in Europe (Chimni, 1998; el-Enany, 2020). Drawing on archival research, Ulrike Krause, for example, analyzed debates at the United Nations (UN) as regards the founding of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Krause counters the Eurocentric narrative that the 1951 Convention was universal and liberal from the beginning by making visible its "colonial ignorance" (Krause, 2021, p. 620). The Convention's colonial ignorance relates first to its prioritization of European refugees as the true refugees while ignoring forced migratory movements outside of Europe at the time. The privileging of the European refugee is entangled with the "myth of difference," which depicts European mass displacement as different in terms of root causes and volume despite lack of empirical support for such differentiation (Chimni, 1998). Second, colonial ignorance concerns the silencing of the arguments by the colonized in convention debates despite the latter's efforts toward a universal definition of refugee to be adopted in the final text. For Krause, despite their knowledge about the globality of the migration reality at the time, the previous colonies chose to be ignorant and tried to exclude the colonized territories from the scope of protection (Krause, 2021).

This strand of academic scholarship is important in decentering humanitarianism by foregrounding colonialism and colonialism's afterlives in the emergence and operation of the international refugee norms and rules. While drawing on their insights, this chapter makes one further step. It aims to contribute to the historicization of humanitarianism by being attentive to humanitarianism's manifestations in the non-European world (El Qadim, 2021; İşleyen, 2016). A growing body of postcolonial work rejects the spatiotemporal hierarchies which distinguish Europe from the non-European world when explaining historical phenomena of world significance. The argument is that modernity is not a product of the immanent dynamics of Europe but has developed out of global connections where European colonialism and imperialism have been decisive (Bhambra, 2007). These studies investigate how the transfer and exchanges of ideas, skills, and technologies between Europe and the non-European world have been foundational to the making of modernity (Bhambra, 2007), such as capitalism (Tansel, 2015). The non-European world has therefore been part of modernity from the onset, not just by providing raw materials and labor through forced labor but also through the production, learning, and coproduction of ideas (Bilgin, 2021).

Take, for example, the emergence of cosmopolitanism, whose beginnings are commonly located in European political thought. Branwen Gruffydd Jones (2021) counters the Eurocentrism of historical narratives on the sources and beginnings of cosmopolitan thinking and argues instead that European cosmopolitanism is not the origin but one particular school of philosophical debates which had their parallels in the non-European world in the first half of the twentieth century. Gruffydd Jones' empirical focus is on African liberation movements against Portuguese colonialism. Through a close engagement with the key texts of African revolutionaries, Gruffydd Jones demonstrates the rise of cosmopolitanisms as a matter of global connectivity, where Pan-African movements of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s were pivotal for African political organization and anticolonial resistance. Gruffydd Jones demonstrates that African cosmopolitanism did not just occur around the same time as European cosmopolitanism. But it carried philosophical elements which were much more progressive than European ideals of equity, justice, and democracy through its placing of anticolonialism and universal solidarity at the heart of the definition of humanity.

The following section utilizes these postcolonial insights to challenge the dominant narrative of humanitarianism portrayed as a European phenomenon. Due to space limitations, this

section will use the Jewish immigration to the Ottoman lands to make visible an alternative account of the history of our humanitarian present.

Jewish Immigration to the Ottoman Empire

Since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2012, millions of Syrians fled to Turkey in search of protection and/or moved further to the EU for better life opportunities. A hospitality discourse has surrounded Turkish political discourse on Syrian refugee presence in the country since the initial days of this mass displacement. By no means securing legal and political rights for refugee populations, the hospitality discourse draws on the country's Ottoman past to construct a distinct vision of Turkish humanitarianism juxtaposed against Europe. Compassion is defined in relation to Islamic values, and Turkey's welcoming attitude toward displaced Syrians is presented as a continuation of Turkey's historical commitment to helping people in need, including Europeans. Here, the Turkish governing elite refers to the Jewish migration to the Ottoman Empire following their expulsion from Spain in 1492 (Karakaya-Polat, 2018). In the words of Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during his speech at the UN General Assembly:

Just like we opened our doors to Jews who were expelled from Europe 500 years ago and we protected the rights of Christian communities in Europe throughout history, today, irrespective of their religion, sect or race we embrace and help everyone.

(quoted in Karakaya-Polat, 2018: 7)

Turkey's reliance on Ottoman history to portray the self as a humanitarian actor in refugee hosting urges us to reconsider the beginnings of humanitarianism in migration and refugee governance. Rather than dismissing Turkey's governing elite's reference to the Ottoman past as pure rhetoric, one question which arises is whether we can locate the spaces and times of the development of humanitarianism in migration and refugee governance beyond the limits set by the prevalent Eurocentric thinking in social sciences.

Jewish migration to the Ottoman Empire began as early as the fourteenth century following the announcement of Edirne as the imperial capital, upon which Jews from Europe moved to the city. This was followed by the arrival of Jews expelled from Hungary and from France in the late fourteenth century. From the early fifteenth century on, Jews from Sicily sought refuge in the Ottoman lands. In 1465, shortly after the fall of the Constantinople, the chief rabbi of Edirne, Rabbi Yizhak Sarfati, sent a letter to European Jewish communities and "invited his co-religionists to leave the torments they were enduring in Europe and to seek safety and prosperity in Turkey" (quoted in Gülerüz, 2012, p. 65). In the centuries to follow, Jewish migration from Europe to the Ottoman Empire continued, and historical sources show that the empire under the rule of different sultans not just welcomed migrating Jews but undertook action to stop their persecution in Europe (Gülerüz, 2012; Demirel, 2016).

A key historical moment of Jewish migration to the Ottoman Empire happened in 1492 with the fall of Muslim rule in Granada with the entry of Catholic armies into the region. Jews of Spain had already been subject to persecution and violence from the beginning of the fourteenth century when they were forced to convert to Christianity, their villages and synagogues were destroyed, and prohibitions were placed on occupations along with social and religious activities (Şalom, 2008). The situation got worse with the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, upon which Spain became a single country to be premised upon Christianity as the unifying religion of the foreseen nation. The outcome was the Alhambra Enactment Reconquista signed in March 1492, which gave the Jews of the country

two options: convert to Christianity within six months or emigrate with six months by leaving their properties behind (Demirel, 2016). Of those who chose to stay, strict surveillance was introduced to make sure that they were not continuing with their Jewish way of life through marriage and worship. Thousands of people were executed at the Inquisition courts as a result of this surveillance. Most Jews refused to convert, and May 1492 was marked by the expulsion of thousands to seek refuge in other countries such as Morocco or the northern European reformist enclaves, though their stay in the latter would soon turn problematic too. Many of the almost 250,000 Jews expelled from Spain were left to die at sea by the Spanish captains who they paid for the travel to the relatively more tolerant countries in the East and especially the eastern Mediterranean regions under Ottoman rule (Şalom, 2008).

The Ottoman ruler of the time, Sultan Bayezid II, received the news of the enactment and the resulting Jewish expulsion and ordered the departure of galleys to save the Jews at the ports of Cadiz and Seville. It is estimated that more than 100,000 Jews arrived onto the Ottoman lands after the enactment (Demirel, 2016) and were settled in and around the cities of Salonika, İstanbul, İzmir, and Edirne (Şalom, 2008). Sultan Bayezid issued an edict for the provincial governors and ordered them “not to refuse the Jews entry or cause them difficulties, but to receive them cordially” (quoted in Güleriyüz, 2012, p. 64). In an interview on the anniversary of the 1492 exodus, the manager of the Turkish Jews Museum in İstanbul, Nisya İşman Allovi, states that Sultan Bayezid II expressed his surprise to Ferdinand II regarding the enactment as follows: “If a ruler enriches my country while he is making his country poor, how can he be a wise ruler?” (Daily Sabah, 2018).

Jewish migration from Europe to the Ottoman Empire continued after 1492:

Over the centuries, an increasing number of European Jews, escaping persecution in their native countries, settled in the Ottoman Empire. In the years after 1541 the Jews expelled from Apulia (Italy) after the city fell under Papal control, in 1542 those expelled from Bohemia by King Ferdinand found a safe haven in the Ottoman Empire. In March of 1556, Sultan Süleyman “the Magnificent” wrote a letter to the Pope Paul IV asking for the immediate release of the Ancona *marranos*.

(Güleriyüz, 2012, p. 65)

The Jews of Europe enriched the Ottoman Empire with the knowledge, networks, art, and skills they brought with them. Concerning the 1492 Spanish expulsion, “Bayezid II trusted Jews as an element of confidence in trade,” which is why the Sultan gave Jews key positions. “Bayezid II was born in Amasya and ruled there. Thus, he had close relations with the Jews and knew who they were.” (Allovi quoted in Daily Sabah, 2018). Jews quickly took on important responsibilities in Ottoman diplomacy, such as Joseph Nasi (formerly a Portuguese *marrano*), who was appointed by Selim II as the duke of Naxos. Both Jewish men and women became highly influential in courts, including as physicians. The Ottoman Empire was introduced to the printing press by the Nahmias brothers (Güleriyüz, 2012, p. 65).

Conclusion

On August 3, 1492, Christopher Columbus and his crew set sail from Spain in three ships which would culminate in events and developments of world significance. Praised as the start of the Age of Discovery with Europe assumed to be taking the lead in early modernity, the year of 1492 is taken as a turning point in world history as the voyages of Columbus paved the way for European imperialism to spread across the world. In the centuries to follow, the

Age of Discovery became entangled with the mass displacement and genocide of Indigenous populations of the conquered lands along with transatlantic slavery, resource extraction, and structural racism which were constitutive of—rather than external to—modernity.

Columbus departed from Spain under the sponsorship of the Crown of Castile, which during the very same year ordered the execution and expulsion of thousands of Muslims and Jews who opposed the forced conversion to Christianity, regarded as an indispensable element of the Spanish nation-building process. The release of the Alhambra Enactment Reconquista of March 1492 would bring one of “the biggest disasters which happened to the Jews” apart from the Holocaust (Şalom, 2008). In a distant geography, an imperial ruler, the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid “extended an immediate welcome to these persecuted Jews, the Sephardim” (Güteryüz, 2012, p. 64). For many centuries, Jews would live across the empire preserving their religion, language (Ladino, which is the medieval Judeo-Spanish language), and culture while making significant contributions to the Ottoman society through their knowledge, experience, and networks.

What this chapter has attempted to do is add to historicized research on the history of migration and refugee humanitarianism, illustrating its beginnings and operation in the non-European world. Turkish humanitarianism cannot be simplified as a recent foreign policy activism which developed out of nowhere under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Instead, Turkish humanitarianism is rooted in a long history going back to imperial times. This also concerns the foundation of the Turkish Red Crescent Organization in 1868 following the Crimean War around the same time as its European counterparts. In this chapter, the empirical focus is on Jewish migration from Europe to lands under Ottoman rule, which shows that the non-European world was not a late-comer to humanitarianism but an early subject of humanitarian action by actively contributing to understandings and practices, including during times when European politics went into a different direction.

The argument here is not that Ottoman subjects, Jews or other Muslims and non-Muslims, were free of discrimination, violence, or persecution. The horrors inflicted on non-Muslim subjects, particularly during the last century of the empire, demonstrate that violence is integral to any form of imperial rule. Julia Phillips Cohen, for example, delves into Jewish life and political activity as a response to Ottoman state reforms in the nineteenth century known as the Tanzimat (1839–1876), which put forward an idea of imperial citizen. Through in-depth archival research, Phillips Cohen argues that the historical account depicting the relationship between Jews and the Ottoman Empire as a romance is a myth and unpacks the historical formation of Jews as a model community within the empire. For Phillips Cohen, this process was neither easy nor straightforward but required the Jewish population to invest immense work, make sacrifices, and forge alliances to define themselves and their place within the society. The decades which followed the Tanzimat reforms revealed that despite these attempts at political integration, Jews were never truly accepted as fully Ottoman but had to repeatedly prove their loyalty and devotion to the government (Phillips Cohen, 2014). The establishment of the Turkish Republic further complicated the position of the Jews in the Turkish society as a result of assimilationist policies that hit non-Muslim populations harshly. Meanwhile, the political ideal of creating a “native” middle class equated with a Muslim–Turkish middle class had severe consequences for the Jews and other non-Muslims of the country as primary subjects of trade and industry in the early day of the Republic. The adoption of the Wealth Tax (Varlık Vergisi) in 1942, which was legitimized by reference to the war economy, led to wealth and income dispossession as the tax burden fell disproportionately on the non-Muslims. 1,400 non-Muslim citizens who were unable to pay the requested amount went sent to a labor camp in eastern Turkey called Aşkale, where 21 died due to harsh working conditions (Aktar, 2011).

Notes

- 1 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/> (accessed March 14, 2021).
- 2 https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20180314_eu-turkey-two-years-on_en.pdf (accessed March 14, 2021).

References

- Aktar, Ayhan. 2011. "Introduction" in Ayhan Aktar (ed.), *Yorgo Hacdimitriadis' in Aşkale Günlüğü (The Aşkale Diary of Yorgo Hacdimitriadis)*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Bhambra, Gurminder K. 2007. *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bilgin, Pınar. 2021. "How not to globalise IR: 'Centre' and 'periphery' as constitutive of 'the international'." *Uluslararası İlişkiler*. doi.org/10.33458/uidergisi.960548.
- Binder, Andrea, and Claudia Meier. 2011. "Opportunity knocks: Why non-Western donors enter humanitarianism and how to make the best of it." *International Review of the Red Cross* 93(884): 1135–49. doi.org/10.1017/S1816383112000409.
- Börzel, Tanja and Thomas Risse. 2009. *The transformative power of Europe: The European Union and the diffusion of ideas* (KFG Working Paper Series, 1). Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, FB Politik- und Sozialwissenschaften, Otto-SuhrInstitut für Politikwissenschaft Kolleg-Forscherguppe. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-364733>.
- Cassarino, Jean-Pierre, 2014. "Channelled policy transfers: EU-Tunisia interactions on migration matters." *European Journal of Migration and Law* 16(1): 96–122. doi.org/10.1163/15718166-00002050
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. *Provincializing Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chimni, Bhupinder S. 1998. "The geopolitics of refugee studies: A view from the south", *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 11(4): 350–374. doi.org/10.1093/jrs/11.4.350-a
- Coşkun-Türkmen, Efser Rana. 2020. *The Analysis of Turkey as a Non-Western and Emerging Humanitarian Actor*. PhD Dissertation. Ankara: Bilkent University. Accessed on July 21, 2021. <http://repository.bilkent.edu.tr/bitstream/handle/11693/53946/Efser%20Rana%20Coskun%20Turkmen-PhD%20Dissertation%20c4%0mzali.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Cuttitta, Paolo. 2018. "Repoliticization through search and rescue? Humanitarian NGOs and migration management in the central Mediterranean." *Geopolitics* 23(3): 632–60. doi:10.1080/14650045.2017.1344834.
- Daily Sabah. 2018. "Turkish Jews remember being welcomed in Ottoman lands." *Daily Sabah*, August 4. <https://www.dailysabah.com/history/2018/08/04/turkish-jews-remember-being-welcomed-in-ottoman-lands>.
- Demirel, İşıl. 2016. "31 Mart 1492 Yahudi Sürgünü (Jewish Exile of 31 March 1492)." *Avlaremoz*, March 31. <https://www.avlaremoz.com/2016/03/31/31-mart-1492-yahudi-surgunu-isil-demirel/>
- El Qadim, Nora. 2014. "Postcolonial challenges to migration control: French–Moroccan cooperation practices on forced returns." *Security Dialogue* 45(3): 242–61. doi:10.1177/0967010614533139.
- El Qadim, Nora. 2017. "EU-Morocco Negotiations on Migrations and the Decentring Agenda in EU Studies." *E-International Relations*. Accessed on July 21, 2021. <https://www.e-ir.info/2017/06/24/eu-morocco-negotiations-on-migrations-and-the-decentring-agenda-in-eu-studies/>
- El Qadim, Nora, Beste İşleyen, Leonie Ansems de Vries, Signe Sofie Hansen, Sibel Karadağ, Debbie Lisle, and Damien Simonneau. 2021. "(Im)moral borders in practice." *Geopolitics* 26(5): 1608–638.
- El-Enany, Nadine. 2020. *(B)Ordering Britain: Law, Race and Empire*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Fassin, Didier. 2011. *Humanitarian Reason: A moral History of the Present*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Gruffydd Jones, Branwen. 2021. "Internationalism and Anti-Racism in the Thought and Practice of Mondlane, Neto, Cabral and Machel" in Robbie Shilliam (ed.), *International Relations and Non-Western Thought: Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Güleryüz, Naim Avigdor. 2012. "Glimpses of Jewish life in Ottoman and Turkish society" in Raniero Speelman, Monica Jansen and Silvia Gaiga (eds.), *Jewish Migration: Voices of the Diaspora*, 978–90. Utrecht: Igitur Publishing.

- Hyndman, Jennifer. 2010. *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- İşleyen B. 2016. "Rendering Space and People Economic: Naguib Sawiris' Refugee 'Country'." *Mediterranean Politics* 21(2): 326–330 doi: 10.1080/13629395.2016.1145824.
- İşleyen, Beste. 2018a. "Transit mobility governance in Turkey." *Political Geography* 62: 23–32. doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2017.09.017.
- İşleyen, Beste. 2018b. "Turkey's governance of irregular migration at European Union borders: Emerging geographies of care and control." *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space* 36(5): 849–66. doi:10.1177/0263775818762132.
- Karakaya-Polat, Rabia. 2018. "Religious solidarity, historical mission and moral superiority: Construction of external and internal 'others' in AKP's discourses on Syrian refugees in Turkey." *Critical Discourse Studies* 15(5): 500–516. doi:10.1080/17405904.2018.1500925.
- Keyman, Fuat E. and Onur Sazak. 2014. "Turkey as a 'humanitarian state.'" POMEAS (Project on the Middle East and the Arab Spring). Accessed on July 21, 2021. <https://core.ac.uk/display/190017791>
- Krause, Ulrike. 2021. "Colonial roots of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its effects on the global refugee regime." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 24: 599–626. doi.org/10.1057/s41268-020-00205-9.
- Langan, Mark. 2017. "Virtuous power Turkey in sub-Saharan Africa: the 'Neo-Ottoman' challenge to the European Union." *Third World Quarterly* 38(6): 1399–414. doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1229569
- Lester, Alan and Fae Dussart. 2014. *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance: Protecting Aborigines across the Nineteenth-Century British Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Hagan, Jacinta and Miwa Hirono. 2014. "Fragmentation of the international humanitarian order? Understanding 'cultures of humanitarianism' in East Asia." *Ethics & International Affairs* 28(4): 409–24. doi.org/10.1017/S0892679414000586
- Pallister-Wilkins, Polly. 2015. "The humanitarian politics of European border policing: Frontex and border police in Evros." *International Political Sociology* 9(1): 53–69. doi.org/10.1111/ips.12076
- Paoletti, Emanuela. 2010. *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities: The Case of Italy and Libya*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pascucci, Elisa. 2021. "Refugee shelter in a logistical world: Designing goods for supply-chain humanitarianism." *Antipode* 53: 260–78. doi.org/10.1111/anti.12680
- Phillips Cohen, Julia. 2014. *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rozakou, Katerina. 2012. "The biopolitics of hospitality in Greece: Humanitarianism and the management of refugees." *American Ethnologist* 39(3): 562–77. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01381.x.
- Şalom. 2008. "Bir Millet'in İspanya'dan Sürgün Hikayesi (The Story of a Nation's Expulsion from Spain)." *Şalom*, January 9. https://www.salom.com.tr/arsiv/haber-65297-bir_milletin_İspanyadan_surgun_hikayesi.html
- Soykan, Cavidan. 2016. "Turkey as Europe's gatekeeper: Recent developments in the field of migration and Asylum and the EU-Turkey deal of 2016" in Sabine Hess, Bernd Kasperek, Stefanie Kron, Mathias Rodatz, Maria Schwertl and Simon Sontowski (eds.), *Grenzregime III: Der Lange Sommer Der Migration*, 52–60. Berlin: Assoziation A.
- Tansel, Cemal Burak. 2015. "Deafening silence? Marxism, international historical sociology and the spectre of Eurocentrism." *European Journal of International Relations* 21(1): 76–100. doi.org/10.1177/1354066113514779.
- Tazzioli, Martina. 2019. "Refugees' debit cards, subjectivities, and data circuits: Financial-Humanitarianism in the Greek migration laboratory." *International Political Sociology* 13(4): 392–408. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olz014>.
- Tazzioli, Martina and Stierl, Maurice. 2021. "We closed the ports to protect refugees. Hygienic borders and deterrence humanitarianism during Covid-19". *International Political Sociology* 15(4): 539–58. doi.org/10.1093/ips/olab023
- Triandafyllidou, Anna. 2020. "Decentering the study of migration governance: A radical view." *Geopolitics*. doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2020.1839052
- Üstübcü, Ayşen. 2019. "The impact of externalized migration governance on Turkey: Technocratic migration governance and the production of differentiated legal status." *Comparative Migration Studies* 7(46). doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0159-x.