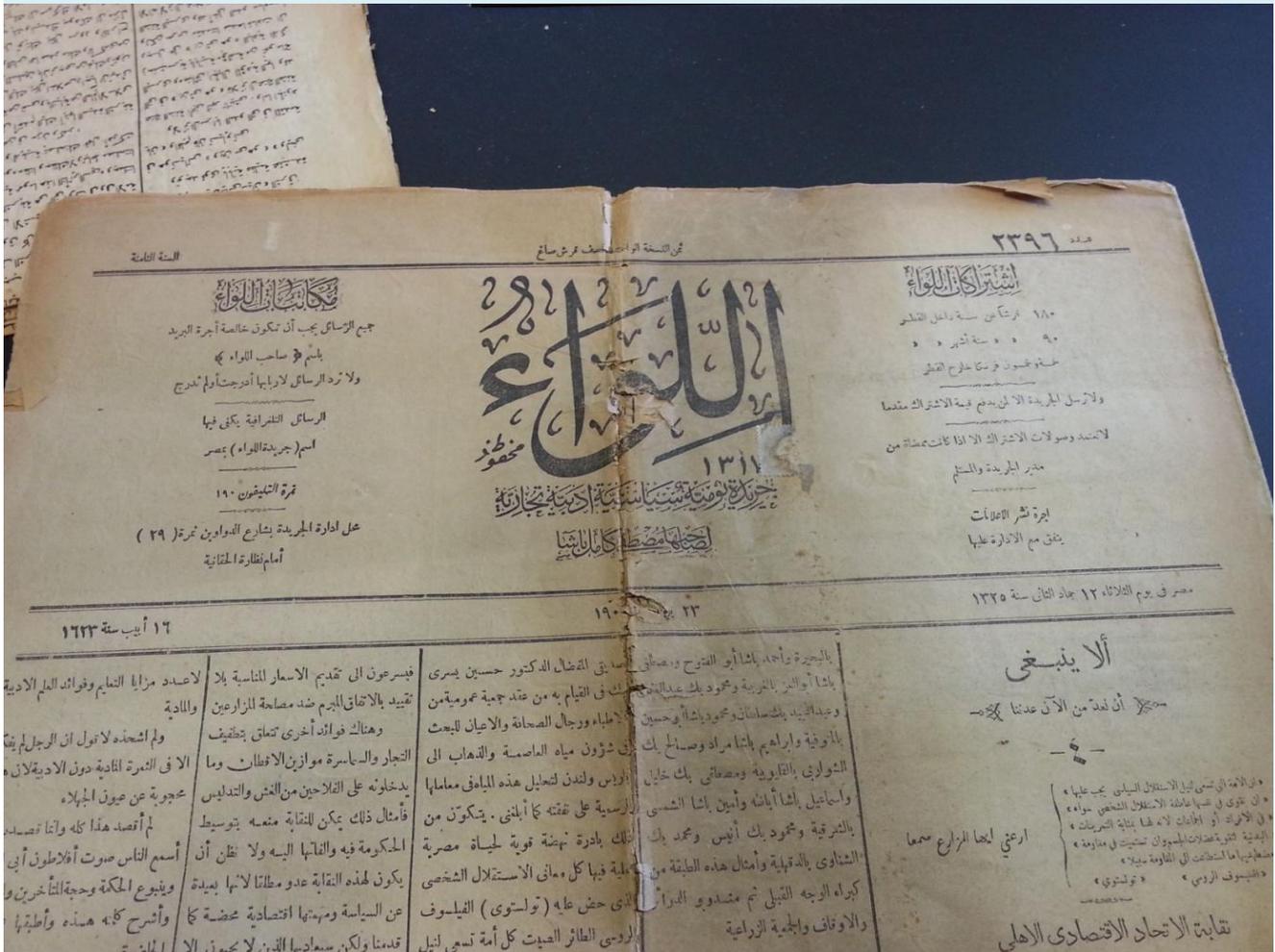




Creating Spaces, Connecting Worlds

Dimensions of the Press in the Middle East and Eurasia



International Workshop, University of Zurich
Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 2019

Conveners:

Ulrich Brandenburg, Eliza Isabaeva, Helena Rust, Gonzalo San Emeterio Cabañes

Places are limited. To participate, please register until October 25, 2019 with:
ulrich.brandenburg@uzh.ch

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Creating Spaces, Connecting Worlds: Dimensions of the Press in the Middle East and Eurasia

The movement towards mass digitization has opened up new horizons for research into the role of the press in modern history.¹ Although digitized press archives in most Middle Eastern or Asian languages still lag behind in full-text searchability, an unprecedented number of journals and newspapers are now easily accessible online. Searchable archives in other languages shed light on exciting interconnections between contents, locales, people, and media institutions across national and linguistic boundaries. Accordingly, scholars of modern Asian history have to critically examine how to process the immense quantities of newly available data, which may enable them to access new dimensions of intertextuality in the analysis of periodicals. Given these developments, further discussion is needed as to how research into the publication, circulation, and reproduction of news items can contribute to a re-writing of the history of the modern world – beyond the provision of data for particular historic events.

The immense significance that people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries attached to the press is visible in countless travelogues, archival documents, as well as scholarly and literary writings. Travelers visited newspaper offices during their journeys; news reports were closely observed, collected, and cited by diplomats and figures of public life; and journals were censored, manipulated, or bribed to steer public opinion. As the scholarly analysis of daily newspapers in particular has been notoriously cumbersome, however, these sources were often accessed indirectly, through contemporary collections of newspaper clippings or summaries of articles. This situation has begun to change with digitization, and our workshop aims at exploring different methodological approaches that enable us not only to deal with data and information but also to place the press itself at the center of historical inquiry. Essential questions are:

- 1) How can we grasp and describe the role of the press as a historical actor? How does its role differ between the global, imperial, national, regional and local levels?
- 2) What options are available for the classification of journals and newspapers beyond national press histories?
- 3) How can we aggregate knowledge about the press through the use of cooperative digital resources?

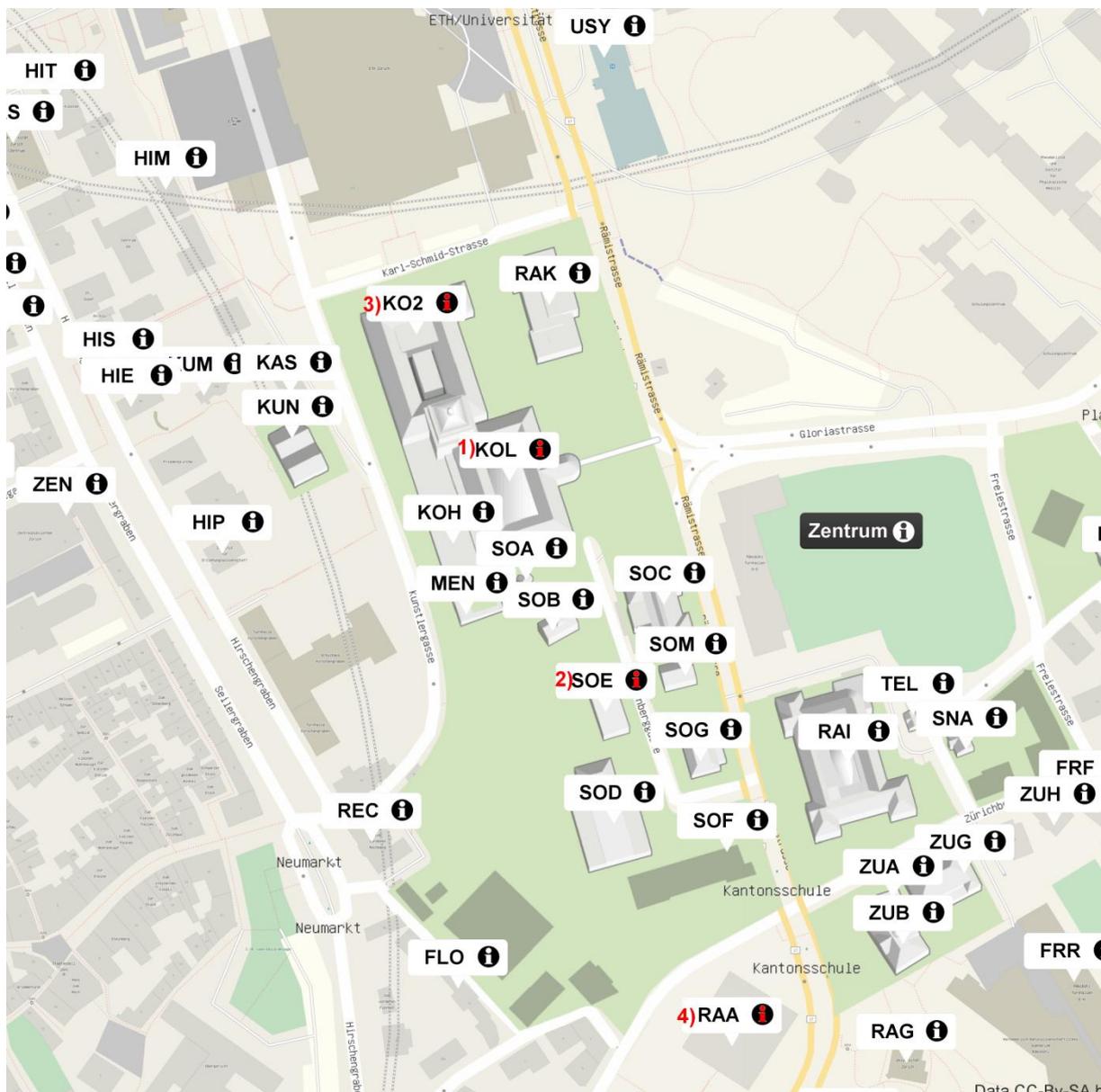
The workshop has emerged out of the panel “Creating Spaces, Connecting Worlds: The Press in the Middle East and Beyond as a Historical Actor,” which Leyla von Mende (University of Jena) and Ulrich Brandenburg convened for the 3rd European Convention on Turkic, Ottoman and Turkish Studies in Bamberg in September 2018. By continuing our discussions from Bamberg in Zurich and including the perspectives of new participants, we intend to initiate a regular series of meetings of scholars interested in the historical role of the press.

¹ In a recent article, Lara Putnam has discussed some of the possible of digitization and searchability. See Putnam, The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast, *The American Historical Review*, Volume 121, Issue 2, 1 April 2016, Pages 377–402.

Locations

- 1) University of Zurich main building: Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zürich (KOL), KOL-G-212 (Thursday)
- 2) ~~Schönberggasse 11, 8001 Zürich (SOE), SOE-F-8 (Friday)~~ **changed: KOL-N-1 (Friday)**
- 3) University of Zurich main building – annex: Karl Schmid-Strasse 4, 8006 Zürich (KO2), KO2-F-156 (Saturday)
- 4) Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zürich (RAA), RAA-G-15 (Thursday evening), RAA-G-01 (Friday evening)

=> Note on floor levels: E = 0 (ground floor), F = 1, G = 2



(source: <https://www.plaene.uzh.ch/>)

Thursday, Oct. 31, 2019 – KOL-G-212

- 10:15-10:30 **Introductory remarks**
 Ulrich Brandenburg (Zurich)
- 10:30-12:00 **Panel I: Ottoman Istanbul as a Local and Global Media Hub**
 Chair: **Ulrich Brandenburg** (Zurich)
 Aysegül Argit (Heidelberg)
 “British, French and German Reactions on the Ottoman Revolutionary Press”
 Ali Sonay (Basel)
 “Transnational Mediascapes in the Early 20th Century: The Press in the Young Turk Era”
- 12:00-13:30 Lunch break
- 13:30-15:30 **Panel II: Russia and Beyond – Boundaries and Overlaps in Communication Structures**
 Chair: **Eliza Isabaeva** (Zurich)
 Ryosuke Ono (Waseda University Tokyo):
 “‘Preparations for Our Future’: A Failed Attempt to Send Turk-Tatar Youths from the Far East to Al-Azhar, according to the Tatar Newspaper *Milli Bayraq* (1936-ca.1940)”
 Ivan Sablin (Heidelberg):
 “A Public Sphere without a State: Newspapers in the Russian Far East, 1920”
 Ulrich Brandenburg (Zurich)
 “Like Father Like Son? Two Tatars in pre-WWI Japan and the Press”
- 15:30-16:00 Coffee break
- 16:00-17:15 **Plenary Discussion: The Press – A Mirror or a Maker of Public Opinion?**
 Input from communication studies:
 Mike Meißner (Fribourg)
 Input from the sociology of knowledge:
 Florian Zemmin (Bern)
- ~~18:00-19:30~~ ~~**Public keynote lecture (RAA-G-15)**~~
 ~~**Samir Seikaly** (American University of Beirut)~~
 ~~“At the Fringes of Empire: The Press in Egypt and Syria on the Eve of World War I”~~ ~~**Cancelled!**~~
- ~~20:00-22:00~~ Workshop dinner (upon invitation)
- 18:30** Restaurant “Weisser Wind,” Oberdorfstrasse 20, 8001 Zürich

Friday, Nov. 1, 2019 – SOE-F-8 changed: KOL-N-1

- 10:00-12:00 **Panel III: The Press in the Intellectual Re-Making of the Middle East**
Chair: **Florian Zemmin** (Bern)
Mohammad Magout (Leipzig):
"Researching Religion in the Arabic Press in the 19th Century: Some Methodological Reflections"
Helena Rust (Zurich):
"Disciplining Bodies, Educating Desires: *Al-Riyāḍa al-Badaniyya* as a Forum for Arabic Sexology in the 1930s"
Mehdi Sajid (Utrecht):
"The Other Egyptian Islamic Press in the Interwar Years: The Journal *al-Faṭḥ* as an Example"
- 12:00-13:30 Lunch break
- 13:30-15:00 **Panel IV: Public Sphere or Locally Fragmented Publics?**
Chair: **Helena Rust** (Zurich)
Ellinor Morack (Bamberg):
"The Constitutional Revolution of 1908 and its Impact on Provincial Newspapers: The Case of Kastamonu"
Ayça Baydar (SOAS London, per videoconference):
"Tracing the Path from Coexistence to the Catastrophe through the Analysis of the 'Karamanlidhika' Press (1897-1924)"
- 15:00-15:30 Coffee break
- 15:30-16:45 **Plenary Discussion: How can we categorize, present, and connect press sources?**
Input from Japanese and global history:
Gonzalo San Emeterio Cabañes (Zurich/Madrid)
- 17:30-19:00 **Public film screening (RAA-G-01)**
"Karlstraße 10"
Documentary produced by the ERC project "Neither Visitors, nor Colonial Victims: Muslims in Interwar Europe and European Trans-cultural History"
- 19:00-21:00 Apéro riche (in cooperation with the Graduate School of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences)
Location: RAA main hall

Saturday, Nov. 2, 2019 – KO2-F-156

10:00-11:30 **Panel V: Digital Methods and Arabic Press Materials**

Chair: **Gonzalo San Emeterio Cabañes** (Zurich/Madrid)

Till Grallert (Orient-Institut Beirut, per videoconference):

“Tracking the Late Ottoman Ideosphere: Computational Approaches to the Wasteland of the ‘Digitised’ Arabic Press”

Emad Mohamed (Wolverhampton) and **Umar Ryad** (KU Leuven):

“‘Ugly’ but Civilized? The Images of Europe in the Arab Muslim Press in the Colonial Age”

11:30-12:00 **Final discussion**

12:00-13:00 Lunch

Keynote lecture

At the Fringes of Empire

The Press in Egypt and Syria on the Eve of World War I

Abstract. With one or two exceptions, and following the rise of the nation state in the countries of the modern Middle East, the history of journalism has been studied in relation to the individual Arab states constituting the region for example, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. But, as this intervention suggests, a variant perspective, the regional, is closer to reality and more likely to yield a closer, more involved and complex understanding of the phenomenal outbreak of the virtual press revolution, represented by the daily newspaper and periodical publication, in Egypt and geographical Syria on the eve of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire which, in its closing stages, exercised differing degrees of sovereignty over its domains. Arguing the viability of the regional, the intention of this exercise is also to shed comparative light on questions pertaining to origins, operation, self-representation and the representation of the other, communally, politically ideologically and gender wise. It also raises, for discussion, the question of similarity or difference between what obtained in the regions under discussion and the shrinking remnants of the Ottoman Empire, principally in the Balkan region. In conclusion the crucial historical uses of the newspaper as the archive of the daily, its availability and accessibility, will be broached.

Biographical note.

Dr. Samir Seikaly, history graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies, is long-time Professor of modern Middle Eastern History at the American University of Beirut. His publications, involving the massive use of the newspaper as a historical source include; 'The Syrian Economy at the Turn of the Century: The Testimony of *al-Muqtabas*, 1906-1914 – An Overview" in J. Hathaway, ed. *The Arab Lands in the Ottoman Era*; "Finding the Syrian Countryside and its Peasants, 1906-1914," <http://anemi.lib.uoc.gr/metadata/7/8/e/metadata-1412743543-919456-15948.tkl> and "Tribes in Late Ottoman Syria: Local Representations," *Archivuum Ottomanicum* 34 (2017), 221-229 https://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de/pdfjs/web/viewer.html?file=/ddo/artikel/72224/978-3-447-09980-6_Article%20Samir%20Seikaly,%20Tribes%20in%20late%20Ottoman%20Syria.pdf

British, French and German Reactions on the Ottoman Revolutionary Press

Aysegül Argit, Heidelberg University

The Young Turk Revolution in the summer of 1908 seemingly opened the gates for an almost unrestrained media landscape. The printing press, which until this point had been controlled strictly by the Ottoman State, gathered new momentum and flourished as the Hamidian censorship was lifted. Nevertheless, the various, multilingual newspapers and magazines circulating in the Ottoman Empire were still closely read and analyzed by both Ottoman and foreign state officials. This paper will concentrate on the latter. By means of source material retrieved from the foreign office archives in Nantes, Kew and Berlin (CADN, TNA, PA AA) the paper follows questions on how news outlets in and information on the Ottoman context were read, categorized and used by British, French and German officials with regard to their quest to understand and (re-)act to (socio-)political events in the Ottoman Empire. Through a comparative perspective it will be shown that diplomats and officials had at times analogous and other times quite diverging verdicts about what they believed the Ottoman 'public' thought or demanded politically. On the backdrop of trying to pursue own interests and to carefully observe actions taken by other European powers, the officials naturally were eager to track information structures and thusly evaluate the relevance of news and rumors received. Within this framework the paper will touch upon strategies applied by the officials in order (1) to retrieve information and (2) to prove its validity. It will elaborate which forms of collecting intelligence proved to be the most reliable and why knowledge or network gaps existed. Here it will be crucial to see if/where systemic errors in judgment or frequent cases of misinformation occurred. Ultimately it is of interest to ask to what extend officials could have had a 'full picture' and how much individual reports affected decision-making processes concerning the late Ottoman Empire. Finally, the paper will also consider inter-governmental negotiations and/or struggles over information networks and forms in which e.g. newspapers were used strategically as part of French, German and British foreign policies after 1908.

The paper proposed is an extract from the doctoral project "Press, Politics and Mobilization in Istanbul 1908-1914" at Heidelberg University. The dissertation deals with communication structures and spaces in Istanbul between the Young Turk Revolution and WWI. It analyses the coinciding and usage of communication possibilities, habits and networks in moments of (socio-)political unrest and seeks to identify actual, as well as historically ascribed roles of different media for political activity. By means of Ottoman, British, French and German source material the study thus examines the activity of city dwellers and users. Furthermore, it surveys the medial dimension of political as well as social events and processes on the backdrop of late Ottoman Istanbul.

Transnational Mediascapes in the Early 20th Century

The Press in the Young Turk Era

Ali Sonay, University of Basel

This paper is approaching the press as a source of political history. The media during the Ottoman Empire is usually treated rather implicitly than focusing on the content.

The press in the Ottoman Empire emerged as a new and a socially determining medium in the mid-1850s. Within this context, the Empire's power structure and social cohesion were increasingly prone to change and fragmentation. Nationalist ideas were increasingly absorbed into the populations' different ethnic and confessional communities. The press was thereby one of the main instruments and representations to express new social and cultural identities.

The Second Constitutional Era (1908-1918) was a distinct period in terms of the press' expansion: Though not continuously upheld, moments of press freedom were used by journalists, politicians, and activists to establish an unprecedented number of newspapers in order to influence political discourse and public opinion.

Thus, Turkish and Arab Nationalist ideas were negotiated and came in contact with one another arguing about their places in possible new social contracts.

The paper aims at illustrating the transnational and intertextual element characterizing the representation of new modes of community in the press by focusing on the dialogue between *Tanin* (Istanbul) and *al-Mufid* (Beirut) newspapers, written in Ottoman-Turkish and Arabic respectively. Both papers were highly influential in setting public agendas and had a wide circulation.

“Preparations for Our Future”

A Failed Attempt to Send Turk-Tatar Youths from the Far East to Al-Azhar, according to the Tatar Newspaper *Milli Bayraq* (1936-ca.1940)

Ryosuke Ono, Waseda University

From the late 19th century, especially after the Russian Revolution, a Turk-Tatar diaspora spread from the Volga-Ural region to Manchuria, Korea, Japan and some parts of North China. Most of them organized under the leadership of Ayaz Ishaki, a well-known Tatar nationalist writer, in the Association of Idil-Ural Turk-Tatar Civilization in Mukden (nowadays Shenyang). In 1935, this organization launched the newspaper *Milli Bayraq* (the National Flag), published in Tatar in Arabic letters. This newspaper spread a sense of crisis concerning social issues in the Tatar diaspora, meditated the thoughts of community members, reported their actions and expectations in attempts to develop their future, and most importantly, exposed even their failures.

In this presentation, I focus on one such failed attempt and its repercussions between 1936 and 1940: the dispatch of Turk-Tatar youths from the Far East to al-Azhar in Cairo. Under the initiative of Madiyar Shamghuni, the director of the Religious Department of the Association and imam of Kobe Mosque in Japan, the Association managed to dispatch ten young men from Manchuria and Japan to al-Azhar. Several articles of *Milli Bayraq* emphasized the need to train religious specialists such as muallims, imams and muezzins for the sake of maintaining religious and national traditions. Detailed reports of donations from several communities provide a rough sketch of the Tatar diaspora's economic situation. Occasionally, students wrote about their school lives and social activities in Cairo. By 1938, however, the students gave up their studies and left Cairo, and Shamghuni passed away in the following year. Facing this failure, some readers of *Milli Bayraq* began to argue how one could resume the training of religious leaders. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the editors of the newspaper condemned the diaspora's reluctance to fully cooperate with the Association's program for training teachers.

In conclusion, *Milli Bayraq* tells us a lot about the Tatar diaspora's efforts to maintain their religious and national identity. At the same time, the failure of its project and its inability to find a solution can be regarded as signs of the decline of social cohesion.

A Public Sphere without a State
Newspapers in the Russian Far East, 1920

Ivan Sablin, University of Heidelberg

In 1920, amidst the protracted collapse of the Russian Empire, the Russian Civil War, and the Allied Intervention, the Russian Far East, a diverse and contested settler region, found itself in a post-imperial limbo. There were Japanese troops, which arrived there as part of the Allied Intervention, Russian troops under informal Bolshevik leadership, and numerous independent guerrilla and criminal groups, featuring Russians, Koreans, Chinese, and other combatants, on site. At the same time, the region was neither under formal Japanese occupation nor part of the Soviet state. It also had no single regional government. Russian, Korean, Ukrainian, and Chinese activists of Bolshevik, moderate socialist, liberal, moderate right, and monarchist orientations participated in power struggle and shared their visions of the region's (and the world's) future in a situation of unprecedented freedom of press. The moderate socialist *Volia* (Freedom) and the left-liberal *Vecher* (Evening), both of which can be considered independent, were accompanied by the Japan-sponsored *Vladivo-Nippo* (Vladivostok-Japan), the pro-Bolshevik *Dal'nevostochnoe obozrenie* (Far Eastern Review) and other newspapers. Although a parliamentary institution was established in Vladivostok in 1920 as part of the regional state-building effort, it was the newspapers that functioned as the prime venues of political debates not only between the different political groups but also between the representatives of Soviet Russia and Japan. They were also the main source of information for international audiences, such as American, British, and other observers and the Russian émigré circles in Europe, East Asia, and elsewhere. The newspapers created a public sphere which was simultaneously local and regional, i.e. pertaining to the events on site, and global and trans-imperial, i.e. reflecting and affecting world politics and the attempts of the two imperial regimes with the centers in Moscow and Tokyo to integrate the region into their respective political formations. Apart from discussing the concrete case, the paper seeks to demonstrate the potential of studying newspaper-based public spheres in comparable situations following the collapse of political regimes and playing out in internally diverse and externally contested territories.

Like Father Like Son?

Two Tatars in pre-WWI Japan and the Press

Ulrich Brandenburg, University of Zurich

This paper sets out to compare two travel writings about Japan, composed by Russian Muslim authors between 1909 and 1913. Abdürreşid İbrahim (1847-1944) was a religious scholar and journalist from Tara, who published (among others) the modernist journal *Ülfet* in St. Petersburg 1905-07. In 1909, İbrahim left Russia and spent five months in Tokyo and Yokohama, from where he contributed a regular column on his travel experiences to the journal *Beyanülhak* in Kazan. From Japan, İbrahim headed towards the Ottoman Empire and arrived in Istanbul in March 1910, where he published his massive, two-volume travelogue *Alem-i İslam ve Japonya'da intişar-ı İslamiyet*, with the help of the Islamist journal *Sırat-ı Müstakim*. This travelogue has formed the basis for later historical research into İbrahim's life and journey as well as informal relations between Japan and the Ottoman Empire.

İbrahim's son, Ahmed Münir İbrahim (1885-1941), arrived in Japan in December 1910 as member of a group of three Ottoman youths to study at Waseda University, Tokyo. During his journey to Japan, similar to his father, Ahmed Münir published frequent articles in *Beyanülhak*, in which he related his experiences. Ahmed Münir also contributed regularly to *Sırat-ı Müstakim* (later: *Sebilürreşad*) in Istanbul. While his writings in the Ottoman journal have meanwhile been subjected to scholarly scrutiny, his serialized travelogue in the Russian journal has remained completely obscure.

In this paper, I intend to address the biases in historical scholarship between the book and the journal as well as between different (non-European) languages. I will also point that this situation leads to one-sided research results and that it is necessary to address the lives of intellectually and spatially mobile individuals through their writings in different languages and localities.

Researching Religion in the Arabic Press in the 19th Century

Some Methodological Reflections

Mohammad Magout (University of Leipzig)

The paper deals with a number of methodological issues that researchers of religion in the Arabic press in the 19th century may face. First it briefly addresses the question 'why the press for the study of religion?' by defining three relevant dimensions: discursive, institutional, and actor-related (producers/consumers). Then, drawing on my own research about four Beirut-based periodicals, I will present some examples of how the press could be utilized for the study of religion and what methodological challenges may arise in this regard. Among the examples to be used is the issue of translation/adaptation: How did Arabic periodicals convey terms in European languages related to religion/the secular? Additionally, the paper will discuss the possibility of making some of the data extracted during my research available to other scholars digitally.

Disciplining Bodies, Educating Desires

Al-Riyāḍa al-Badaniyya as a Forum for Arabic Sexology in the 1930s

Helena Rust, University of Zurich

In my PhD project on the history of Arabic sexology, I work with publications that appeared roughly between 1900 and 1940, written by Arabic biologists and medical doctors, in which they theorize human sexual behavior and identities as well as sexual difference and gender relations from a Darwinist point of view. Although the most detailed theoretical accounts are found in their monographs, sexological contributions in the press must be considered as well: not only did periodicals help popularize ‘modern’ sexological knowledge, they moreover created a space for the readership to engage in a dialogue with experts about their desires, concerns, and questions about sexual matters. In the workshop I will focus on the Egyptian journal for physical culture, *al-Riyāḍa al-Badaniyya*, which appeared from 1929 up to the 1950s. As Wilson Jacob has shown in his influential study on Egyptian Effendi masculinity,² *al-Riyāḍa al-Badaniyya* helped normalizing heterosexuality and monogamy as keys to Egyptian modernity. In my presentation I will address the question of how the advice columns and articles published in *al-Riyāḍa al-Badaniyya* navigate between the secularist attitudes of their authors, on which they elaborate extensively in their monographs, and sexual norms firmly rooted in religious value systems.

² Jacob, Wilson Chacko (2011) Working out Egypt. Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Modernity, 1870–1940. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 156–185.

“Ugly” but Civilized? The Images of Europe in the Arab Muslim Press in the Colonial Age

Emad Mohamed, University of Wolverhampton
&
Umar Ryad, University of Leuven

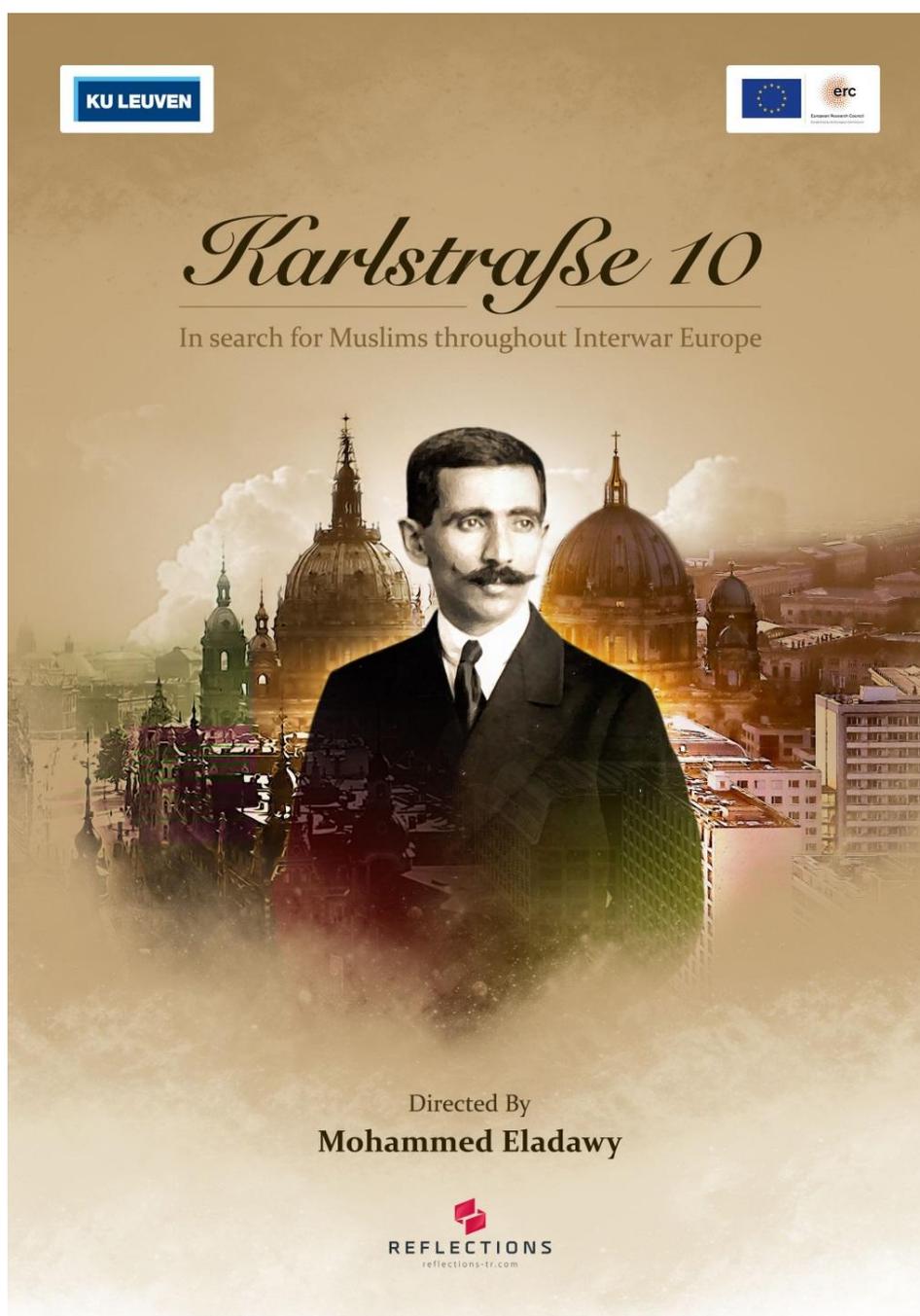
In the colonial age, the Arab Muslim press formulated various images regarding the West by searching for alternative civilizational discourses based on their own cultures and traditions. On the one hand, in many of Arab Muslim journals Europe was perceived as an “ugly” colonizer, but as a “cradle of civilization” on the other. By means of their multifaceted images about Europe, various journals and newspapers had participated in the popularization of the European political, socio-religious and intellectual thought in the Arab Muslim mind on both scales.

By using digital tools, the paper will look into the question, how the press debates pushed the discussions beyond the question of anti-colonial nationalism to include the Arab imaginations of the races, civilization, science, culture, society and religion in the West. While Arab Muslim journals based their authenticity claims on their own Arab-Islamic collective memory, they indirectly made multifaceted representations, perceptions and narratives about Europe. By utilizing the press writings and images of Europe, the paper traces the alternative views and diagnosis of the international structure of ideas and powers which Arab Muslim writers tried to offer in order to find their place in the international domain. Among the question which we are trying to answer are:

- In what way did the Arab Muslim press challenge the European (mis)perceptions about Islam and Muslims?
- How did they combine their fascination of the universal features of western civilization with their quest for preserving a Muslim religious and political entity in the imagined global society?
- How far did their presence in Europe make them familiar with the complexities of European intellectual trends?
- What were the key ideas of European modernity which they received, modified, changed or rejected in that process?
- How far did Muslims participate in the popularization of the interwar European thought in the Muslim mind?

To answer these questions, we use four journals that are available on shamela.ws, namely *Al-Manar* (Cairo, 1898-1935), *Al-Muqtabas* (Damascus, 1906-1913), *Al-Shihab* (Algeria 1924-1939), and *Al-Risala* (Cairo, 1933-1953). We employ quantitative and qualitative methods. Based on a corpus of a few million words of magazines and newspaper texts from the first half of the twentieth century, we use morphological processing, topic modeling and collocation analysis to examine the thematic co-occurrences of the topics and lexemes pertaining to the West. We then use qualitative historical analysis to map these topics to the events that triggered them, thus providing what we hope to be the first comprehensive study of its kind.

Film Screening: **Karlstraße 10** (2019)



This moving portrait of the defeated **Ottoman Arab officer Zeki Kiram** in interwar **Berlin** takes you back in time almost a century ago. It gives an exciting visualization of **life stories of Arabs and Muslims**, who lived in that crucial time of Europe, and their amazing encounters with European interwar ideologies. «Karlstrasse 10» is an enduring tale of love, politics and arms deals through the lens of **unique Arab family archives in Europe**. Diving deep into a story of war victims, religion, culture, mixed marriages, arms deals, mosques, politics and more, the film makes the point that Arabs in interwar Europe were **neither visitors nor colonial victims**.

(ERC Starting Grant Project NEITHER NOR - KU Leuven - Belgium)