

## Night on Earth

*Night on Earth* is a broad-ranging account of international humanitarian programs in Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Near East from 1918 to 1930. Davide Rodogno shows that international “relief” and “development” were intertwined long before the birth of the United Nations, with humanitarians operating in a region devastated by war and famine and in which state sovereignty was deficient. Influenced by colonial motivations and ideologies, these humanitarians attempted to reshape entire communities and nations through reconstruction and rehabilitation programs. The book draws on the activities of a wide range of secular and religious organizations and philanthropic foundations in the United States and Europe, including the American Relief Administration, the American Red Cross, the Quakers, Save the Children, the Near East Relief, the American Women’s Hospitals, the League of Nations, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

DAVIDE RODOGNO is Professor of International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva. His previous publications include *Fascism’s European Empire* (2006) and *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914* (2011). He coedited and authored *Humanitarian Photography* (2015) and *Transnational Networks of Experts in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2016).

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# Night on Earth

*A History of International Humanitarianism  
in the Near East, 1918–1930*

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Davide Rodogno

*Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva*



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To Bruno

The thoughts that occur to me while I'm running are like clouds in the sky. Clouds of all different sizes. They come and they go, while the sky remains the same sky always. The clouds are mere guests in the sky that pass away and vanish, leaving behind the sky. The sky both exists and doesn't exist. It has substance and at the same time doesn't. And we merely accept that vast expanse and drink it in.

Haruki Murakami, *What I Talk about When I Talk about Running*.

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## Acknowledgments

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41. Nada se edifica sobre la piedra, todo sobre la arena, pero nuestro deber es edificar como si fuera piedra la arena.

Jorge Luis Borges, *Fragments of an Apocryphal Gospel*,  
Elogio de la Sombra, 1969

This research and book project were born while strolling up and down the Scores, at St. Andrews, in and out of St. Kathryne's Lodge, the pungent North Sea air in my nose and its grey horizon in my view. In 2008, I tried my luck with one of the most generous schemes of the Swiss Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique (FNS).<sup>1</sup> The FNS research professorship came with the possibility of hiring two PhD students as research assistants for the project. Shaloma Gauthier and Francesca Piana worked with me from 2009 to 2012. I thank them both for the innumerable hours they spent in so many archives in Switzerland, France, Great Britain, the United States, and Armenia. We collected a vast number of digital pictures, and discussed countless times how to focus and narrow down the research. Without them and without the generosity of the FNS, it would have been impossible to write this book, and many other projects directly and indirectly related to the initial grant. The archivists of all the archives, libraries, and research centers we visited offered valuable advice and useful suggestions. I thank them all: in Stanford and Beirut, in Yerevan and London, in Philadelphia and Geneva, in New York and Harvard, in Berne and Oxford. I thank the Rockefeller Archives Center for a grant that, in 2011, allowed me to spend several weeks at Tarrytown, working in perfect conditions.

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and Sam Moyn. They patiently waited for my manuscript. I hope, one day, to be able to return the favor. Nicolas Mansfield shared the archives of his great-grandfather Ernest A. Yarrow, an American missionary who served as director general of the Near East Relief Caucasus branch. David Treloar shared precious information and personal photos of Colonel George Treloar, his father. I thank both of them. Finally, Rona Johnston Gordon, whose intellectual curiosity, integrity, patience, and competence turned a very convoluted manuscript into a book.

Some things have changed. Unfiltered oval Karelias are long gone. Bruno Arcidiacono passed away in 2019. I wish I could have shared with him a copy of my book. I felt his gentle presence next to me, his rigorousness when I was imprecise, his clarity when I was vague, his determination when I was about to give up. We both know, Bruno, how important you have been for me. Some other things have remained the same: Jim Jarmush, Tom Waits, and Murakami Haruki, Billie Holiday, John Coltrane, and Keith Jarrett, Bruce Springsteen, Radiohead, and Brad Mehldau. Sergio Luzzatto and Matthew Leitner were there for me when I needed them most. I could always count on my waterpolo teammates for bruises, free doses of pain, and memorable moments in and out of the pool. Momo snored at my feet for the last four years, reminding me the importance of not taking oneself too seriously. My friends gave me joy and purpose: Giovanni Distefano, Davide Orifici, Nicolas Lieber, Alex Dimitrakopoulos, Stéphane Ferrer, Cecilia Alvarez-Santullano Wedholm, Isabelle Gattiker, Michele and Simona La Mazza, François and Claudia Marti, Julien and Nicole Babel, Antoine Bieler and Dina Debbas. Céline Rondi was there for my family during our most difficult times. I cannot forget it. Roberta's place at Case Sparse and Kat and Raffa's place at Riskov were my secret refuge. Vittoria Denti is the sister I never had. Antonio Denti is my Homeric brother. In his poem *Fragmentos de un Evangelio Apócrifo*, Jorge Luis Borges wrote that nothing is built on stone; all is built in sand. But we must build as if the sand were stone. Anna, Daniele, and Raffaele are the columns, Annah Andrea and Carla the cornerstones, and Giovanna is the stronghold of my existence.

## Note on the Text

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### List of Toponyms

If a placename has not changed, such as the island of Syra, Adana, or the city of Athens, no indication follows. Otherwise, I use the placename as indicated by contemporary sources I used first, followed by more recent name or names. In the main text, the first time the toponym appears, the new name is mentioned in parenthesis, for instance, Marash (Maraş).

Achrafieh (Ashrufiyeh in French translation), district of Beirut  
 Adana  
 Akhalkalkaki, Akhalkalaki  
 Alexandropol, Leninakan in 1924, Gyumri in 1990  
 Alexandretta, İskenderun  
 Aleppo  
 Aintab, Antep, Gaziantep  
 Ambelokipi camp and village (near Athens)  
 Antioch, Antakya  
 Ardahan, city and province  
 Ashdarag, Ashtarak northwest of Yerevan  
 Baku  
 Balikh River  
 Batum, Batumi  
 Bazar-Keui, spelled as Bazarkeui, village in the Yalova Peninsula  
 Borjom, Borjomi  
 Broussa, Bursa  
 Charb Bedros  
 Cilicia, Kilikya, region  
 Comotini, Komotini, capital of the Rhodope  
 Constantinople, Istanbul, I generally use Istanbul  
 Dedeğatch, Dedeğaç in Ottoman times, Alexandroupoli, in  
 Thrace



## Note on the Text

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- Delijan  
 Der Zor, Deir ez-Zor, Dayr az Zawr  
 Diarbekir, Diyarbakır  
 Dirgouti, name of an urban area in Athens  
 Djebel Moussa, Jabal Moussa  
 Djuma  
 Dört Yol  
 Drama  
 Edipsos, Aidipsos  
 Elizavetpol, Ganja  
 Erzerum, Erzurum  
 Etchmiadzin, Vagharshapat  
 Gamarlu  
 Garmuj  
 Ghazir  
 Ghemlik, Gemlik  
 Gumulgina, Gumuldjine  
 Hadjin, Haçin  
 Hakhichevan, Nakhichevan  
 Harouniye, orphanage two days march from Maraş  
 Harpoot, Kharput  
 Hasakah, Al-Hasakah  
 Hasbaya  
 Igdir, Iğdır  
 Izidies, Yazidis  
 Izmit (east of Yalova)  
 Jalaloghlu or Jalaloghli, Djelal Oghli, Stepanavan after 1923  
 Jarabulus  
 Kapakli, Kapaklı  
 Karabagh, Karabakh  
 Karadja-Ali  
 Karakala, about fifty miles from Alexandropol  
 Karaklis, Kirovakan, Vandzor  
 Karamürsel Değirmendere  
 Kars  
 Kessab, Kesab  
 Kilis  
 Kiril-Khan  
 Kiz-Dervent, Kız-Dervent  
 Kokinia, Kokkinia, since 2011 part of the municipality of  
 Nikaia-Agios Ionnais Rentis, Athens urban area

- xviii      Note on the Text
- Koumla, Koutchouk-Koumla and Koumla-Iskele, villages of the  
 Yalova Peninsula
- Kountouriotis camps and village took its name from Admiral  
 Pavlos Koundouriotis, now Koundouriotika
- Kumlar
- Kyrghia, Western Macedonia
- Latakia
- Loutraki
- Maameltein, district of Jounieh, Lebanon
- Macronissi, Macronisi, Makronisos
- Magnésie, Manissa, Magnesia
- Malatia, Malatya
- Marash, Maraş
- Mardin
- Marsovan, Merzifoun
- Medjeidé, Muyejid near Garmuj
- Mersina, Mersine, Mersin
- Meskéné, Tell Meskene
- Moudros
- Mudania, Mudanya
- Mytilene
- Orhangazi, rural district in the province of Bursa
- Oropos, orphanage in the town of the same name in Greece
- Panderma, Bandirma
- Pangrati, Pagkrati, neighborhood of Athens, site of a refugee  
 camp
- Procochani
- Rachaya, Rashaya, Rashaiya, Rashayya, or Rachaiya
- Ras-el-Ain, Ras-ul-Ain
- Rihanié, Al-Rihanié
- Rodosto, Tekirdağ
- Salonika, Salonica, Thessaloniki, Thessalonica, or Saloniki
- Sandjak
- Samsoun, Samsun,
- Sardarabad region and town; also Sardarapat, Hoktemberyan  
 (1932), Armavir (1992)
- Sedes
- Shebanieyeh, name of sanatorium
- Sidon, Saida
- Sis, Kozan
- Sivas
- Smyrna, Izmir (I generally use Izmir)

Note on the Text

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Souédia, Souédi

Stringos, refugee camp outside of Athens

Syngrou, name of an avenue in Athens

Syra

Talabaya (Bekaa Valley), Taalabaya

Tarsus

Tchatal Dagh

Tel Armen, Kızıltepe, Tell-Ermen, Ermen

Tel Samen, Tel Smane, north of Raqqa

Tiflis, Tbilisi

Tineh, Ayn al-Tineh

Trebizond, Trabzon

Tripoli (Lebanon)

Tulkarem (Kadoorie School), Tulkarm

Urfa, Şanlıurfa

Van

Vertecop, Skydra in Macedonia

Vodena, Edessa

Xanthi

Yalova Peninsula referred to as the Peninsula of Samanlı Dag in the documents of the ICRC is the Armutlu Peninsula, in Turkish Armutlu Yarımadası; it extends westward into Marmara. Yalova is also a province

Yedi Koule, Yedikule, neighborhood of Istanbul

Yerevan

Zahlé

Zeytun, Zeytin

Zouk Michail, Zouk Mkhayel

## Abbreviations

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ABCFM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
ABCFM archives	Archives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University
ACASR	American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief
ACRNE	American Committee for Relief in the Near East
ALON	Archives of the League of Nations, Palais des Nations, Geneva
ARA	American Relief Administration
ARA-ECF	American Relief Administration – European Children’s Fund
ARC	American Red Cross
AWH	American Women’s Hospitals
AWH records	Records of the American Women’s Hospitals 1917–1982, Medical College of Pennsylvania, Archives and special collection on women in medicine, Philadelphia – Drexel University College of Medicine
Baker papers	Private papers of Philip-Noel Baker, Churchill Archives Centre Churchill College, Cambridge
BC	biographical collection
BP	Barton papers: Barton James, corresponding secretary, ABCFM 1894-1927, Papers and correspondence
Carr papers	Alice Griffith Carr papers, Wright State University, Dayton (Ohio), Special collections and archives
CICR	Comité international de la Croix-Rouge
CRB	Committee for Relief in Belgium
CT	central Turkey

## List of Abbreviations

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CTM	central Turkish mission
ETM	eastern Turkey mission
Friends Archives	Society of Friends (Quakers) Library and archives, Friends House, London
HIA	Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICRC archives	International Committee of the Red Cross archives, Geneva
ILO archives	Archives of the International Labor Organization, Geneva
JDC	Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
LON	League of Nations
LON-HCR	League of Nations High Commission for Refugees
LON-HO	League of Nations Health Organisation
LSRM	Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial
Mis.	Mission files
Morgenthau papers	Henry Morgenthau papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, USA
NAGC	National Archives gift collection
Nansen papers	Fridtjof Nansen papers in National Library, Oslo, Norway
NARA	National Archives Record Administration
NEF	Near East Foundation
NER	Near East Relief
NYPL archives	New York Public Library, Archives and special collections
PAKPD	Polsko-Amerykański Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom
RAC	Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY
RG	Record Group
RSC	Refugee Settlement Commission
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SCF archives	Save the Children Fund archives, Microfilms, Library of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva
SCRA	Service Central des Rapatriements Arméniens
TM	Turkey mission
TNA, PRO, FO	The National Archives: Public Record Office, Foreign Office

xxii List of Abbreviations

UISE	Union Internationale de Secours aux Enfants
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
WTM	western Turkey mission
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association