

When Democracy Died

The Treaty of Lausanne, signed in Switzerland in July 1923, officially settled the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Allied forces. Not only did the Treaty establish the borders of the modern Turkish republic, but it also defined boundaries, political systems, and understandings of citizenship in the newly formed post-Ottoman nation-states. Here, Hans-Lukas Kieser recounts how the eight dramatic months of the Lausanne Conference concluded more than ten years of war and genocide in the late-Ottoman Empire. Crucially, the Treaty was in favor of a homogeneous Turkish state in Asia Minor and became the basis for the compulsory “unmixing of people” that facilitated the persecution of minority groups, including Armenians, Kurds, and Arabs. Not only did this significant yet oft-overlooked treaty mark the end of the League of Nations’ project of self-determination and security for small peoples, but it was crucial in shaping the modern Middle East and dictatorships in Turkey and Europe.

Hans-Lukas Kieser is Associate Professor at the University of Newcastle, Australia, Adjunct Professor at the University of Zurich. His books include *Talât Pasha* (2018), *Nearest East* (2010), and the edited volume *Remembering the Great War in the Middle East* (2022).

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-316-51642-3 — When Democracy Died
Hans-Lukas Kieser
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

When Democracy Died

The Middle East's Enduring Peace of Lausanne

Hans-Lukas Kieser

University of Newcastle, Australia



Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-316-51642-3 — When Democracy Died
Hans-Lukas Kieser
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781316516423

DOI: 10.1017/9781009029957

© Hans-Lukas Kieser 2023

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2023

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-1-316-51642-3 Hardback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of Maps</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	x
Introduction: The Historic Near East Peace of Lausanne	1
“Unjust Peace Is Better than the Justest War”	2
Might Made Right	5
A Favored Model Dictatorship	11
The Book’s Structure and Sources	15
Part I A Century’s Pivotal “Peace”	20
1 A Peace of Dominant Interests on the Back of “Others”	21
2 A Peace without Peace: Unaddressed Violence, Coercion, and Racism	24
3 Ultrationalism Appeased? The Paris–Geneva–Lausanne Constellation	36
4 Armenia: When Violence Won and Democracy Died	41
5 A Pivotal “Peace” to Be Reassessed	46
Part II Against the Paris–Geneva Peace: Bolsheviks, Turkists, Islamists	50
6 Projecting Aftermaths during a Decade of War	51
7 A Vice-Plenipotentiary’s World of Thoughts and Sentiments: Dr. Rıza Nur	55
8 “We Turanians”: A Pervasive Ideology and Argument	65
9 At an Empire’s Long End: CUP Rule Defeated, Nationalist Struggle Continued	71
10 Defying the Paris–Geneva Peace Project, Forcing the Road to Lausanne	79
11 Aborting the Sèvres Treaty: A Plural Anatolia and Western Justice	92
12 The Military and Diplomatic Road to the Lausanne Conference	102
13 Lausanne’s Ottoman Diaspora: Preparing National Futures	111
Part III A Protracted Conference: Redefining Turkey, Western Realpolitik	120
14 The Conference’s Eve, Premises, and Grand Lines	121
15 Fascism’s Historic Hour	127

vi	Contents	
	16 Inauguration, Personalities, Early Imprints	137
	17 Pivotal First Weeks	143
	18 “Population Exchange” and Minorities	147
	19 Lausanne’s Armenian Catastrophe: No “Armenian Home,” No Assyrian Independence	158
	20 Mehmed Cavid, Ankara’s Mindful but Sidelined Expert in Lausanne	170
	21 Mosul	179
	22 Diplomatically Framing History, “Civilization,” Rule of Law	184
	23 Conference Break – Interval – Continuation	194
	24 After a Long Last Mile, the Treaty	201
	25 The US Lausanne Treaty: A Paradigm Shift in the Middle East	214
Part IV	Post-Lausanne Turkey: Most Favored Dictatorship?	222
	26 Establishing “Peace” and Dictatorship in Republican Turkey	224
	27 Cavid’s End	232
	28 “Revolution” in a Restive and Coercive, but Courted Country	237
	29 Reassessing Lausanne-Based Kemalism: Lofty Claims, Clashes with Reality	245
	30 Lausanne and Atatürk’s History Doctrine	250
	31 Dersim Genocide: Apex of Ultrationalism	259
	32 Lozan Myth: Turkey’s Betrayed, to Be Restored, Sultanate-Caliphate	264
	In Lieu of a Conclusion: Time for Democratic Social Contracts	272
	Dismantling Antidemocracy	273
	Lausanne’s Open Door for Fascisms	275
	“Overcoming Lausanne” by Democratic Social Contracts	280
	Violence, Peace, and Democracy: Dialectical Progress or Aporetic Spiral?	285
	<i>Annexes</i>	289
	Select Biographical Notes: Ankara’s Lausanne Team	289
	<i>Select Chronology</i>	297
	<i>Select Bibliography</i>	309
	<i>Index</i>	316

Figures

1	“Second [half of the] Lausanne Conference. [Madame] Peace: “Who will look after me when there are so many beautiful women?”	<i>page 4</i>
2	“If the [war] machine, which made its way to Izmir, moves this time again, it will probably make all the bumps [problems] flat.”	9
3	“Monument of Victory” (Zafer âbidesi).	10
4	Negotiation table in a subcommission meeting.	48
5	Rıza Nur side by side with İsmet Paşa (İnönü, on his left side) and the British plenipotentiary Horace Rumbold (on his right side).	56
6	Monument of the Republic on Istanbul’s Taksim Square.	83
7	Alexandre Khatissian, foreign minister and prime minister ad interim of the Republic of Armenia, during a military parade in Yerevan, ca. 1919.	105
8	Mussolini arriving in Lausanne on 20 November 1922.	128
9	Mussolini in Lausanne, November 1920.	131
10	Curzon, satisfied, after the first Conference meeting.	138
11	Drawn by the artist Derso, this late 1922 postcard puts the interaction of an oversized Lord Curzon and a tiny İsmet Paşa who reluctantly shake hands with each other in its center.	139
12	Alexandre Khatissian in front of the Armenian Church in Paris in 1927.	166
13	“A box match out of season. Sirs Rıza Nur and Hüseyin Cahid.”	177
14	Lord Curzon going to the Château d’Ouchy, the main meeting place of the Conference.	180
15	“Lausanne turns to a carnival. The British: Do not be embarrassed, gentlemen, our return [to London] coincides with the carnival.”	197
16	“The question of interests. Would you allow me to put this gold bracelet on your arms as a souvenir of the conference?”	203

viii List of Figures

17	“In the Lausanne concert, Greece plays ‘harp.’”	205
18	Signing the Treaty, 24 July 1923, as seen from where (in the foreground, from right to left) Ismet (Inönü), Rıza Nur, and, probably, Reşit Saffet (Atabinen) sat.	208
19	Karl Scheurer, president of the Swiss Confederation, speaking at the conclusion of the Lausanne Treaty, 24 July 1923.	209
20	Reşit Saffet (Atabinen), Ismet (Inönü), Joseph Grew, and Rıza Nur in a photo taken in Lausanne in early August 1923.	219
21	Cavid Bey after arrest, during the Independence Tribunal, summer 1926.	235
22	Photo taken in the entrance hall of the Palais de Rumine.	290

Maps

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1 From the late-Ottoman Empire to the early-republican Turkey. | <i>page</i> 73 |
| 2 Europe and the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. | 88 |

Acknowledgments

I am happy to start this book with thanks and acknowledgments. This monograph has a long history of its own. First ideas about it emerged more than twenty years ago, when I was working at the University of Zurich on two separate research projects, one on the late-Ottoman diaspora in Switzerland, the other – working with colleagues – on the concept of a common “historical space” of the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust. For both topics, the Near East Peace Conference of Lausanne in 1922–3 popped up as pivotal. Some related insight, then acquired, appeared in published results of those researches, but was not elaborated on in depth.¹

It took two decades more until a specific, Lausanne Conference–focused research project matured at my current University of Newcastle in Australia. Here, Philip Dwyer, Director of the Centre for Study of Violence, Catherine Oddie, Research Development Manager, and Tim Haydon, research consultant, helped me to prepare a specific submission. I was so fortunate to get the project funded by the Australian Research Council in 2020.² For sure, material support is of little value without a great deal of good will and wit, patient, collaboration, and open communication.

Scholarly competition on issues of significance transcends individual ambitions and corporatist interests. Sharing a constructive ethos of

¹ See H. Kieser, “Macro et micro histoire autour de la Conférence sur le Proche-Orient tenue à Lausanne en 1922–23,” *Mémoire vive. Pages d’histoire lausannoise* 13 (2004), 42–48; Kieser, *Vorkämpfer der “Neuen Türkei”: Revolutionäre Bildungseliten am Genfersee, 1870–1939* (Zurich: Chronos, 2005); Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller, “Völkermord im historischen Raum 1895–1945,” in H. Kieser, ed., *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah/The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah* (Zurich: Chronos, 2014, first ed. 2002), 11–80. These researches had been made possible by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Fonds zur Förderung des akademischen Nachwuchses (FAN) of the University of Zurich.

² ARC DP210100426, “The ‘Peace’ of Lausanne (1923): Genesis, Legacies, Paradoxes.” Helpful synergies also with another, University of Melbourne-based ARC project, to be acknowledged here: DP200101777, “Aftermaths of War: Violence, Trauma, Displacement, 1815–1950.”

scholarship with peers, research assistants, students, and library staff has greatly helped me in completing this study. Serhat Bozkurt, my research assistant in Istanbul, deserves a particular mention. I am happy to name also Khatchig Mouradian (New York), Ümit Kurt (Newcastle), Timothy Stanley (Newcastle), Guillaume Beausire (Lausanne), and Jan Bethsawoce and David Gaunt (Sweden). Other helping hands are mentioned at the related passages in the book. I acknowledge also my learning by teaching and supervising topics at the University of Newcastle related to the First World War and its aftermath. I like to mention Sacha Davis and Elizabeth Roberts-Pedersen, co-supervisors, Pearl Nunn and Caroline Schneider, tutors, as well as PhD student Wei Wang and my former PhD student Markos Carelos.

The wisdom that knowledge is a good that increases and progresses if shared, strongly applies to the making of this monograph. I am thankful for the rich correspondence and instructive meetings with colleagues who worked like me, partly on common projects, on the historical reassessment of the Lausanne Conference – in particular Jonathan Conlin and Ozan Ozavci of The Lausanne Project,³ as well as Jay Winter and Michelle Tusan, both authors of forthcoming monographs. This book owes its title to Jay's suggestion.

I enjoyed the rare opportunity of a special roundtable to give me critical feedback on an early, uncomplete version of my book manuscript at the Ecole des Hautes Etude en Sciences Social in Paris. My thanks go to the organizers Ahmet Insel and Hamit Bozarslan, as well as the other participants: Boris Adjemian, Dzovinar Kévonian, Raymond Kévorkian, Rey Matthieu, Emmanuel Szurek, and Alexandre Toumarkine. I'd like also to mention the good collaboration I enjoyed with those leading the 2023 commemoration events in Lausanne itself, notably Gaby Fierz, the curator of a special exhibition, and Laurent Golay, the director of the Musée Historique de Lausanne.

Other beneficial opportunities for exchange in view of this study on the Lausanne Conference included a guest professorship at the University of Vienna in 2021, where I enjoyed the collegial hospitality of the professors Oliver Jens Schmitt and Yavuz Köse, giving two semestrial courses, one on the post–Great War peace attempts as a whole, the other mainly on the Lausanne Conference. I also benefited from presenting preliminary findings and thoughts in talks or seminars at the University of Lausanne, Columbia University in New York, Flinders University in Adelaide, the American College in Thessaloniki, University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, and the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in

³ <https://thelausanneproject.com>

xii Acknowledgments

Paris. My thank goes to the hosts. Last but not least, I am grateful for the excellent collaboration with editor Maria Marsh and her editorial assistant Rachel Imrie from Cambridge University Press, and for the helpful and encouraging feedback by the anonymous reviewers; and particularly for the invaluable work of my copy editor Ursula Acton.

This book is dedicated to the political prisoners in Turkey.