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Ebru Boyar & Kate Fleet

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## The League of Nations and Turkish political refugees in Greece in the early 1930s

Ebru Boyar<sup>a</sup> and Kate Fleet<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey; <sup>b</sup>Skilliter Centre for Ottoman Studies, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

With the coming to power of Eleftherios Venizelos in Greece in 1928, Greek-Turkish relations moved towards a rapprochement which led to the Ankara Agreement, signed on 10 June 1930, and the subsequent agreements, including the Treaty of Friendship concluded on 30 October during Venizelos's official visit to Ankara. As part of this rapprochement, Turkey sought the expulsion from Greek soil of political opponents of the Turkish government.<sup>1</sup> These opponents were largely members of the *Yüzellilikler*, a disparate group of those who had opposed the National Liberation War of 1919-1922, and who had been declared *persona non grata* by the Turkish Grand National Assembly under the Protocol of the Lausanne Treaty of 1923.<sup>2</sup>

While Turkey may have wanted the expulsion of its political opponents from Greece, what the Greek government in fact did was to remove the *Yüzellilikler* from Western Thrace, the preferred location for Turkish political exiles,<sup>3</sup> for it was close to Turkey, had a large Turkish/Muslim population and it was here that they had strong Greek government support. At the beginning of January 1931, Venizelos announced that the *Yüzellilikler* would be expelled from Western Thrace, telling *Cumhuriyet's* Nadir Nadi that: 'The men that Turkey does not want, we too do not want. We cannot allow them to work on Greek soil against the republic of Turkey.'<sup>4</sup> While some chose to leave, others simply relocated to other parts of the country, some even becoming Greek nationals.

The *Yüzellilikler* were a constant thorn in the side of the Turkish government. Much has been written on them, either in general,<sup>5</sup> in relation to specific professions or groups,<sup>6</sup> as individuals,<sup>7</sup> or as Islamic thinkers.<sup>8</sup> What has not been examined in any depth, with the exception of the work of Ebru Boyar,<sup>9</sup> is the relationship between the *Yüzellilikler* and the League of Nations. Such an examination gives insights into how one particular group of political exiles could operate internationally due, at least in part, to the support of a major international body. The Athens Office of the Nansen International Office for Refugees of the League of Nations, which had its headquarters in Geneva, provides a specific on-the-ground case study of how the actions of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) both offered protection to political opponents of the Turkish government and provided wiggle room for the Greek government which was able to work with Ankara to produce a Turkish-Greek rapprochement while at the same time maintaining a discreet support for Turkish political exiles. The fact that the Athens Office was part of a much larger international organisation also rendered Turkish protests ineffective, for although much irritated by the League of Nations support of its political opponents it was unable to prevent this.

The Athens Office was headed by a White Russian turned Greek national,<sup>10</sup> Alexandre Kotelnikov, who had moved from the International Labour Office Refugees Service in Istanbul to the Office of the High Commission in Athens (the Nansen Office after 1930), where he began work on 1 July 1922.<sup>11</sup> Initially, the office dealt with the settlement of Greek refugees from

**CONTACT** Kate Fleet  [khf11@cam.ac.uk](mailto:khf11@cam.ac.uk)

Anatolia and with White Russian and Armenian refugees.<sup>12</sup> The remit of the office in Athens was extended to cover the *Yüzellilikler* in June 1928 when the Council of the League of Nations passed an Arrangement extending certain measures that had been applied to Russian and Armenian refugees to other categories of refugees, including 'Turkish refugees', defined as 'any person of Turkish origin, previously a subject of the Ottoman Empire, who under the terms of the Protocol of Lausanne of 24 July 1923 does not enjoy or no longer enjoys the protection of the Turkish Republic and who has not acquired another nationality'.<sup>13</sup>

Until its closure in 1938, the Nansen Office in Athens played a major role in supporting the *Yüzellilikler* in Greece, filling the vacuum created by the Greek government's withdrawal of its open and systematic support for Turkish political refugees. That *Yüzellilikler* continued to live in Greece, far from being 'somewhat puzzling', as Benjamin Fortna puts it,<sup>14</sup> was in fact the result of the existence of the Nansen Office in Athens together with the more low-key Greek support which the *Yüzellilikler* continued to receive. The importance of this office for the Turkish political refugees in Greece is made clear by the cases of two particular *Yüzellilikler*, the *ex-seyhülislam* Mustafa Sabri, an eminent political figure who chose to leave Greece after his expulsion from Western Thrace, and Namık Hilmi, an obscure former police officer from Istanbul, who chose to stay in Greece despite his removal from Western Thrace, and who died in Athens in 1937.

## The Nansen Office in Athens and the expulsion of the *Yüzellilikler* from Western Thrace

On 2 December 1930, Thomas F. Johnson, the Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees at the League of Nations and Chief of the Refugee Section of the International Labour Office in Geneva, wrote to Alexandre Kotelnikov, head of the Nansen Office in Athens, enclosing a copy of a letter from the president of the Ligue des Réfugiés Turcs written to the Greek minister of foreign affairs in Athens and dated 26 November 1930.<sup>15</sup> The Ligue des Réfugiés Turcs had been set up in 1930 under the French Law on Associations of 1 July 1901 as a non-profit charitable organization.<sup>16</sup> Based in Paris, this organisation caused considerable irritation to the Turkish government, undermined the authority and the income of the Turkish consular authorities,<sup>17</sup> and was described by the Turkish ambassador to Paris, Mehmet Münir [Erteğün] as a 'propaganda centre'<sup>18</sup> acting against the Turkish state. It was controlled by Mehmed Ali.<sup>19</sup> Briefly minister of internal affairs in Damat Ferid's cabinet in 1919, Mehmed Ali was no. 45 on the *Yüzellilikler* list and a leading opponent of the Kemalist regime. He published *La République enchaînée*, a virulently anti-Kemalist newspaper, and was also in control of the Parti Démocrate Turc, a Turkish opposition party in exile based in Paris which aimed to unite political opposition and to overthrow the Kemalist government.<sup>20</sup>

Describing the Ligue as 'an international association of Turkish refugees functioning under the auspices of the League of Nations', the president of the Ligue noted in his letter that the various visits Greek politicians, in particular Venizelos, had made to Ankara had resulted in the conclusion of a pact of friendship between the two countries. While the Ligue was the first 'to rejoice' at this accord, which had 'put an end to the age-old struggle, so prejudicial to the interests of both Greece and Turkey', the consequences of this agreement would be so contrary to the interests of members of the Ligue, that the Ligue could not but protest. From diverse sources the Ligue had already heard that the government of Ankara had put pressure on the Greek government to expel Turkish political refugees from its territory. Quoting at length from a piece in *Le Temps*, a major Parisian daily newspaper in this period, the president wrote that the Greek government proposed to bring in a law that would prevent Turks opposed to Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his new government from residing in Greece. This piece, which appeared on the front page of the paper in the column 'Dépêches de l'étranger', sent from Athens, stated that 'as a result of the new pact of friendship which now binds the two states, Greece cannot tolerate on its territory people

likely to plot against the Turkish regime.<sup>21</sup> The president concluded his letter by stating that the Ligue was convinced that the Greek government would in no way concede to these exigencies which were so 'immoral and contrasting with the Greek tradition' which called on Greece 'to accord its generous hospitality to refugees exiled because of their convictions.'<sup>22</sup>

Forwarding a copy of this letter to Kotelnikov, Johnson wrote that he had two principal comments to make. In the first place, 'I have of course had to call the attention of the Ligue des Réfugiés Turques [sic] to the fact that their organisation is not functioning under the auspices of the League of Nations,'<sup>23</sup> a rather important misrepresentation given that the letter was addressed to the Greek foreign minister; and, in the second, that he had reminded the Ligue that 'even the small measure of protection which we are able to give to Turkish refugees applies only to the 150 Turkish refugees' (i.e. the *Yüzellilikler*). It was clear that Johnson was keen to see that both the misrepresentation of the Ligue's role and the limited nature of the League's remit were underlined to the Greek government, for he wrote to Kotelnikov that 'it might be well if you would seize an early opportunity of acquainting the competent Greek authorities' on these two points.<sup>24</sup>

In August 1931, the Ligue once more complained to the League, concerned about those 'politicians' who were 'menaced by new rigorous measures taken by the Greek government'. It forwarded to the High Commissioner a protest from the Parti Démocrate Turc. Signed by Mehmed Ali and dated 30 July 1931, the protest was addressed to the Greek minister in Paris. Drawing the minister's attention to the difficult situation of 'certain Turkish political refugees', *Yüzellilikler*, long resident in Greece, a situation which did not conform to the 'liberal traditions of Greece', Mehmed Ali referred to the terms of the agreement concluded between the Greek and Turkish governments under which Greece undertook to expel from its territory eleven people on the *Yüzellilikler* list. Mehmed Ali requested that the minister intervene with his government to obtain for these eleven people either passports for the countries to which they wished to go or permission to return to Western Thrace. 'By reaching a fair solution that is both humane and consistent with the principles of law for this tragic situation', Mehmed Ali concluded, 'the Greek government would make a gesture conforming to the traditions of justice and humanity which are those of Greece.'<sup>25</sup>

In line with Mehmed Ali's protest, the Ligue requested that the League of Nations take all necessary measures to safeguard the interests of the Turkish exiles and was sure that the commissariat would do all that was necessary to avoid the commission of 'an injustice which is not worthy of traditional Greek hospitality'.<sup>26</sup> The level of demand from the Ligue resulted in Johnson's forwarding this correspondence to Sir Eric Drummond, the Secretary General of the League of Nations, noting that 'it refers to questions which appear to be more within the competence of the Secretariat than within that of the Office.'<sup>27</sup>

The protests of the Ligue and the Parti Démocrate Turc about the conditions of the *Yüzellilikler* who were expelled from Western Thrace clearly had an effect. In his letter of 2 December 1930, before any *Yüzellilikler* had been expelled, Johnson sought information from Kotelnikov about the situation in the region. Noting that according to the report submitted by Dr Nansen, who was then the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to the Council of the League of Nations in June 1928, there were then 37 of the *Yüzellilikler* in Greece, he asked Kotelnikov to inform him 'to what extent, if any, the situation of those refugees will be affected by the recent agreement entered into between the Greek and Turkish governments.'<sup>28</sup>

A year later, on 3 November 1931, Johnson wrote to Kotelnikov, noting that the Ligue had informed him that those Turkish refugees in Greece who were *Yüzellilikler* and who thus were covered by the June 1928 Arrangement found themselves in a difficult situation because of their expulsion from Western Thrace to other parts of Greece. 'Because of the difference in language and religion, these refugees would not be able to establish themselves in conditions that would permit them to support themselves.' Johnson sent Kotelnikov a list of 'Turkish refugees in Greece finding themselves in a difficult situation', requesting Kotelnikov, after consultation with the Greek

authorities (a phrase added in in hand to the typewritten letter), to undertake an inquiry into the material situation in which these refugees found themselves. He was not opposed in principle, he added, to the provision of repayable loans by the Nansen Office if this would allow them to give help that was effective, and requested Kotelnikov to submit to him proposals, 'as concrete as possible', for each of the refugees in question.<sup>29</sup> Kotelnikov's reply to Johnson on 11 November shows clearly that he was already busy working away on the situation and was well informed about it.<sup>30</sup>

Kotelnikov, too, put pressure on the Nansen Office in Geneva to assist the *Yüzellilikler*. He noted in late November 1931 that the atmosphere in Greece was 'very unfavourable for anti-Kemalist Turks' and that public opinion there viewed 'with sympathy' all the measures undertaken by the Greek government to affirm its friendly relations with Turkey.<sup>31</sup> He 'insisted once more' in a letter to Johnson on 24 November on the necessity of facilitating the departure from Greece of anti-Kemalist Turkish refugees whose situation there 'was very difficult',<sup>32</sup> and in a letter marked very urgent, he described the position of Turkish refugees in Greece as having become impossible 'for political reasons'.<sup>33</sup>

### 'No other protector than this great international institution': Mustafa Sabri and the League of Nations

As a result of the shift towards rapprochement in Greek-Turkish relations, Mustafa Sabri was expelled from Western Thrace and moved to Patras. He was the only Turkish exile specifically mentioned in the protest signed by Mehmed Ali,<sup>34</sup> and headed the list, together with his son, of 'Turkish refugees in Greece finding themselves in a difficult situation', where he appeared as Mustafa Sabri, S.A. the *şeyhülislam* of Turkey, followed by his son İsmail (i.e. İbrahim).<sup>35</sup> Mustafa Sabri was a die-hard opponent of the Kemalist government and is presented by Islamist circles in Turkey today as a shining light of Islamic thinkers. He was a member of the Ottoman parliament for Tokat and a leading member of Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası (the Freedom and Accord Party). He had been a member of Damat Ferid's cabinets in 1919 and 1920, having been appointed *şeyhülislam*. In 1922, with the victory of the Kemalist forces and the collapse of the government under Mehmed VI (Vahdeddin), he fled first to Egypt, and subsequently to Hejaz, Egypt, Lebanon, and Romania. His name appeared (as no. 9) on the *Yüzellilik* list, issued by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in April 1924.<sup>36</sup> In April 1925, Mustafa Sabri, together with several other prominent *Yüzellilikler* including Mehmed Ali (a close associate of his from Istanbul), visited the ex-sultan Mehmed VI, then living in Sanremo in northern Italy, where they had a series of meetings at which Mehmed VI 'entrusted them with toppling the Kemalist government'.<sup>37</sup> Ousted from Romania, where Mehmed Ali was also, he moved to Greece in December 1926, settling in Western Thrace.<sup>38</sup>

Mustafa Sabri was one of the *Yüzellilikler* covered continuously in the Turkish press and his prominence as an opponent of Ankara was well-known.<sup>39</sup> This makes the League's support of him particularly significant. This support was not limited to Mustafa Sabri but also covered his extended family, including his son İbrahim Sabri who was one of the *Yüzellilikler*, and his son-in-law, Ali Vasfi, who was not, but who appeared in the Turkish newspapers as a prominent opponent of Turkey.<sup>40</sup>

Mustafa Sabri was known to the League of Nations well before his expulsion from Western Thrace. In June 1928, Mustafa Sabri wrote a long letter from Komotini to the president and members of the Council of the League of Nations in Geneva. In his letter he noted that 'the Powers, in order to please the government of Ankara have consented that we remain outside Turkey, but they did not think that we would thus find ourselves without a nationality and without protection of any sort. Wherever we take refuge, the Turkish government, through the intermediaries of its ambassadors, still applies pressure to render life difficult.' He complained that while 'the

government of Ankara allows every injustice in our regard', those who had signed the Treaty of Lausanne 'are no longer interested in our fate and have done nothing to prevent the cruel injustice of which we are victims'. 'Must the signatory powers of the Treaty of Lausanne', he asked rhetorically, 'ignore these acts and leave Turkey to act as it wishes?' This situation had thus reduced these Turkish refugees to a state of oppression, 'the innocent victims' of the protocol of 24 July 1923 signed by the Allied Powers and Turkey, and now forced to 'come to knock on your door...', in the hope that the League of Nations would wish to interest itself in our rights, first as citizens of humanity having no other protector than this great international institution'.<sup>41</sup>

What Mustafa Sabri wanted was a Nansen passport, or presumably passports as he explained the need being so that 'we can move around'; and that the necessary approaches be made to Ankara so that he could dispose of his goods or reclaim their value, goods which the signatories of Lausanne 'legally and morally' were required to protect. At the end of the letter, he listed four demands: 1. Nansen passport; 2. that the League denounce to the signatory powers of the Protocol of Lausanne 'the abuses of which we are victims'; 3. that it engage the signatory powers to undertake all steps to obtain 'our rights'; and 4. that it intervene to ensure that the treaty was respected.

This letter, together with those from other *Yüzellilikler* in Greece, Osman Nuri (no. 56 on the *Yüzellilik* list) in Xanthi and Çerkez Reşid (no. 58 on the *Yüzellilik* list) in Athens, was forwarded from the League of Nations to Johnson with the request that Johnson see if he could do anything for them, in light of the extension of measures in favour of Russians and Armenians to other categories of refugees agreed by the League under the June 1928 Arrangement.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately for Mustafa Sabri, the Greek government, although apparently in favour of the extension,<sup>43</sup> had not in fact signed the Arrangement, leaving Johnson to conclude that it was not possible in these circumstances to extend such advantages to these Turks.<sup>44</sup> Kotelnikov duly wrote to Mustafa Sabri explaining that since the Greek government had not signed the Arrangement, it would not be possible for the Turkish refugees resident in Greece to benefit from it.<sup>45</sup> Johnson clearly found the Greek approach an irritation, for he instructed Kotelnikov 'to draw the attention of the competent authorities of the necessity of adhering to [the Arrangement] as soon as possible'.<sup>46</sup>

From the point of view of the Turkish government, the presence of virulent political opponents in Greece was highly unsatisfactory and that of Mustafa Sabri in particular. From Western Thrace, Mustafa Sabri kept up a constant barrage of anti-Turkish activity. He produced the anti-Kemalist newspaper, *Yarın* in which he published, in July 1927, his famous poem 'İstifa Ediyorum' (I resign), in which he referred to the Turkish leaders as 'a handful of bandits', rejected Turkish nationalism and begged God's forgiveness for 'my Turkishness'.<sup>47</sup>

For Mustafa Sabri, appeal to the League of Nations offered a way to strengthen his hand and to obtain international support. It is important to note that he wrote to the League on 9 June 1928, at the very time when the Council was meeting to pass the 1928 Arrangement, which would open the way to the issuing of Nansen passports to the *Yüzellilikler*, among them Mustafa Sabri. The timing of his letter thus indicates that he was very well informed about the activities of the League and demonstrates the international links and networks with which the political opponents of the Kemalist government outside Turkey availed themselves.

With his expulsion from Western Thrace, Mustafa Sabri once more looked to the League of Nations to lobby on his behalf with various government authorities to obtain visas and for financial support. In a hand-written note to Kotelnikov, dated 12 November 1931, Mustafa Sabri's son İbrahim Sabri, no. 113 in the *Yüzellilik* list, who signed himself son of the ex-*şeyhülislam* of Turkey and political refugee in Greece, explained that he had been informed by a Turkish political refugee from Athens that Kotelnikov had told the Turkish political refugees resident in Athens to inform their 'comrades' that the Athens Office had received an order from the League of Nations to provide these refugees with passports and travel expenses and to assist them in obtaining the necessary visas for the countries they wished to go to. He requested information about this issue, which was 'of paramount importance' for them.<sup>48</sup>

This note may have been delivered by hand for on 13 November, Kotelnikov wrote to Johnson reporting that the Turkish political refugees 'S.A. the *şeyhülislam* of Turkey' Mustafa Sabri Efendi and his son İbrahim Sabri Efendi had come from Patras where they lived to 'put themselves in direct contact with our delegation'. Mustafa Sabri wished to leave Greece for any Muslim country, with the exception of Iran, and with a preference for Syria, India or Yemen. Interestingly, according to Turkish intelligence reports from Athens, Mustafa Sabri and İbrahim Sabri had in fact applied unsuccessfully for visas to both Yugoslavia and Iran before turning to the League of Nations, to whom they had expressed their willingness to go to any Muslim country for which the Nansen Office could arrange a visa.<sup>49</sup> Mustafa Sabri requested Kotelnikov's assistance in obtaining entry visas. He also wanted help in obtaining a provisional entry visa for Palestine so that he could take part in the General Islamic Congress due to be held in Jerusalem starting on 7 December. He did not, however, attend the conference, his absence being ascribed by Shakib Arslan to Turkish government policy, for he regarded the Turkish government as 'directly responsible for the absence of Muslims from Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece', in particular citing 'Turkish pressure brought to bear on Greece, which prevented the participation of the former Ottoman Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri, then in Greek exile'.<sup>50</sup> Mustafa Sabri's absence was apparently not, however, the result of either Greek or Turkish pressure but British failure to issue him with a visa.

Apart from help with visas, Mustafa Sabri requested financial aid for himself and his family members, amounting to twelve people: Mustafa Sabri, his wife, daughter and servant, Emine aged 22 (who appears in subsequent correspondence as his daughter); his son İbrahim Sabri, İbrahim Sabri's wife and three children; his son-in-law Ali Vasfi, Ali Vasfi's wife and baby son.<sup>51</sup>

There now followed a flurry of letters from Kotelnikov seeking help for Mustafa Sabri and his extended family. The letter of 13 November was swiftly followed by another, dated 14 November 1931, this time addressed to the British consul in Athens whose help Kotelnikov requested for Mustafa Sabri Efendi, 'S.A. *şeyhülislam* of Turkey', and his family, Turkish refugees resident in Greece. Kotelnikov stated that they wished to go to India for six months. There was, he said, no financial issue and all the refugees held Nansen certificates. It appears that he gave this letter to Mustafa Sabri's family to present to the British consul.<sup>52</sup> On the same day he also wrote to Johnson requesting his support with the British government in this matter.<sup>53</sup>

Several days later, Kotelnikov addressed a letter to the French consul in Athens recommending to him the bearer of this letter, 'the *şeyhülislam* of Turkey', Mustafa Sabri Efendi, who wished to go with his family to Ethiopia. He requested that he be granted a transit visa for Djibouti.<sup>54</sup> He followed this letter up with another the following day, this time to Johnson requesting that Johnson do what was necessary to obtain for the family the right to enter and settle in Ethiopia.<sup>55</sup>

Kotelnikov's hard work paid off, for he informed Johnson on 27 November that the Egyptian consul was going to issue for free an Egyptian transit visa to Mustafa Sabri and his family. Interestingly, obtaining a transit visa for Egypt in this period for a Turkish national was not easy, as the experience of Mehmet Fuat, a former advisor on the Mixed Commission for the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Population, shows.<sup>56</sup> Here, however, the visa was for a member of the Turkish opposition. Mustafa Sabri was prepared to leave Greece for Yemen, if the High Commissariat of Syria refused entry visas and the British government refused to allow them to settle in India, which was highly probable. Apart from the transit visa, Kotelnikov also secured an entry visa for Yemen.<sup>57</sup>

Interestingly, the considerable effort put in by the League to ensure visas is often absent from contemporary scholarship on Mustafa Sabri. The entry on him in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, for example, claims that 'he wrote to Arab friends whom he had known from the time when he was *şeyhülislam* and member of parliament to obtain their intervention with their governments so that he would be able to find asylum in an Islamic country'. Failing to get any positive response, he went to Athens and 'with the help of the Egyptian ambassador, he went to Cairo' in 1932,<sup>58</sup> help facilitated presumably by Kotelnikov. For Andrew Hammond, Mustafa Sabri 'was surprised to be

offered a visa by the Egyptian ambassador in Athens.<sup>59</sup> Given both Mustafa Sabri's appeals to the League and Kotelnikov's repeated interventions on his behalf, the appearance of a visa can hardly have come as a surprise. In fact, it appears that what was granted was a transit visa for Mustafa Sabri to travel to Yemen,<sup>60</sup> something that he did not do, for instead he settled in Egypt, his permanent presence there clearly permissible to British and Egyptian officials.

Mustafa Sabri and his family members were also granted Nansen passports by the Athens Office. These passports were granted 'without the right of return to Greece'. Kotelnikov assured Johnson that he would undertake the necessary steps to ensure that they obtained this right which was 'clearly merely a formality but ...indispensable to obtain the Egyptian and French (Djibouti) transit visas'.<sup>61</sup>

Apart from Nansen passports and visas, Mustafa Sabri also turned to the League for financial assistance. According to Kotelnikov, the family was experiencing material difficulties and had asked the Athens Office for subsidies,<sup>62</sup> although Kotelnikov had interestingly informed the British consul in Athens that there were no financial issues.<sup>63</sup> In fact, a couple of months before this approach to the Athens Office, Mustafa Sabri and İbrahim Sabri had received a payment from the Greek government of 9,000 drachmas.<sup>64</sup> Kotelnikov 'warmly support[ed]' Mustafa Sabri's request for funds,<sup>65</sup> which were apparently to cover his travel expenses for Yemen.<sup>66</sup> The figure proposed by Kotelnikov was 2,500 French francs,<sup>67</sup> a sum that he requested be given, if possible, as a non-repayable subsidy, or if not, then as a reimbursable advance but without guarantee, given that Mustafa Sabri had no one in Greece who could guarantee the reimbursement of this advance.<sup>68</sup> With the departure date, fixed for 24 December 1931,<sup>69</sup> fast approaching, İbrahim Sabri sent a note from Patras written in hand on his business card, headed İbrahim Sabri, 'Diplomé en Droit' (which was in fact not the case as he did not graduate from Law School in Istanbul),<sup>70</sup> and dated 1 December 1931, requesting the speeding up of the subsidies that had been promised.<sup>71</sup>

Kotelnikov's repeated request for 2,500 French francs as a non-repayable subsidy created an administrative problem for the League, for, since the sum would not be reimbursed, Johnson was required to submit these various requests to the Commission for the Finances of the Nansen Office. He would therefore be unable to give Kotelnikov an answer until after the next meeting, the date of which was not yet fixed and would certainly not be happening before the first of the next month.<sup>72</sup> Whether Kotelnikov simply paid out the money before authorisation or not is not clear, though, given that he did do so on other occasions, it seems highly possible.

While Mustafa Sabri and İbrahim Sabri and their respective families left Greece, Ali Vasfi, Mustafa Sabri's son-in-law, his wife and son did not, for Kotelnikov reported to Johnson that 'Ali Vasfi Bey... will remain for several months in Greece. He hopes to become an Hellenic subject.'<sup>73</sup> This decision was presumably taken some time into the process for obtaining visas, for he, his wife and son are listed among the family members requiring visas in Kotelnikov's correspondence.<sup>74</sup>

For Mustafa Sabri, the Athens Office proved a major source of support. While the Greek government had expelled him from Western Thrace, it had not prevented his relocation to Patras and it was not until the end of 1931 that he actually left the country, of his own volition. The 'primary exponent of uncompromising Islamic opposition to the republic during its early years',<sup>75</sup> Mustafa Sabri was supported in Greece by a network of Turkish political exiles, most notably by Mehmed Ali, who described him as 'venerated not only by all the Turkish people but also by the whole of Islam',<sup>76</sup> an assessment clearly not accepted by all for Gümülcineli İsmail Hakkı (no. 25 in the *Yüzellilik* list), who took over the Ligue after Mehmed Ali's removal, claimed that Mustafa Sabri had been expelled from Mecca and Jeddah because of his homosexual acts.<sup>77</sup> His religious identity was clearly uppermost in the minds of the League officials. Interestingly, while in 1928 Kotelnikov refers to Mustafa Sabri as the *ex-şeyhülislam* of the Ottoman empire,<sup>78</sup> by 1930 Mustafa Sabri is the *şeyhülislam*, or less often the *ex-şeyhülislam*, of Turkey in League correspondence. Such a change can hardly have been accidental, any more than was the use of a term which was



clearly inaccurate. To persist in describing him as the *şeyhülislam* of Turkey would seem to indicate a hostile attitude to Kemalist Turkey or a wilful, and totally unconvincing, lack of knowledge about modern Turkish affairs.

### 'Marks of kindness and humanity': Namık Hilmi and the Nansen Office in Athens

One of the contacts of Mustafa Sabri in Greece was Namık Hilmi who, at least in his own account, was the one who introduced Mustafa Sabri to the Nansen Office, inviting him and İbrahim Sabri to Athens from Patras and introducing them to Kotelnikov.<sup>79</sup> Namık Hilmi was energetically supported by Mehmed Ali. A former police chief (oddly misidentified by Kotelnikov as an ex-army officer)<sup>80</sup> and one of the *Yüzellilikler*, Namık Hilmi, no. 90 on the *Yüzellilik* list, fled from Turkey in 1922. Between 1923 and 1931 he was in Western Thrace.

After his expulsion from Western Thrace, Namık Hilmi ended up in, or close to, Athens in areas which are now suburbs of the modern city. Unlike Mustafa Sabri, he never left Greece but obtained a Greek passport in March 1931<sup>81</sup> thus losing his refugee status according to the June 1928 Arrangement which stipulated that once a *Yüzellilik* obtained another nationality, his status as refugee lapsed.<sup>82</sup> This, however, did not affect his support by the Nansen Office. He remained in Athens until his death there in January 1937, although he did initially apply to the League for help in obtaining a visa for Syria or Egypt, one which Johnson felt the British were highly unlikely to grant.<sup>83</sup> His name appeared in a list of the Turkish political refugees who were preparing to leave Greece which Kotelnikov gave to B. Papadakis, the head of the League of Nations section in the Greek ministry of foreign affairs, at the beginning of 1932.<sup>84</sup>

Throughout his time in Greece, Namık Hilmi, described by Kotelnikov as 'very respected in the little Turkish colony in Athens',<sup>85</sup> survived on a continuous stream of handouts from fellow Turkish political exiles, most notably fellow *Yüzellilik* Refet, 109 in the *Yüzellilik* list, who supported the Greek occupation of İzmir through his newspaper *Köylü*, and his wife İfakat, and from a raft of Greek friends and Greek officials, including the mayor of Podoniftis who provided him with money.<sup>86</sup>

He was also backed by Mehmed Ali, with whom he had a friendship dating back to the time when Mehmed Ali had been the Ottoman minister of internal affairs in the cabinet of Damat Ferid. Like Namık Hilmi, Mehmed Ali too had taken refuge in the British embassy in 1922 and had fled to Romania with British assistance from where he went to Paris in 1926. Namık Hilmi became Mehmed Ali's 'spy, representative and propagandist'<sup>87</sup> in the Balkans and played an important role in the distribution of *La République enchaînée*. Mehmed Ali, with whom Namık Hilmi regularly corresponded, made Namık Hilmi a member of his newly formed Ligue when he arrived in Paris, and Namık Hilmi was also a member of Mehmed Ali's Parti Démocrate Turc. Mehmed Ali intervened on behalf of Namık Hilmi with the League of Nations, and it was to Mehmed Ali that Namık Hilmi turned throughout his time in Athens.<sup>88</sup>

It was with Mehmed Ali's help and encouragement that Namık Hilmi approached the Nansen Office in Athens, a constant port of call in his search for subsidies. Here he found an enthusiastic and never-failing friend in Kotelnikov who kept up a constant stream of correspondence on his behalf with the Nansen Office in Geneva, while at the same time often slipping him small sums to keep him going, as he did in November 1931 so that he could buy food,<sup>89</sup> and again in December, when he noted in a letter to Johnson 'I have several times advanced him small sums to support him.'<sup>90</sup> Kotelnikov also tried other ways of supporting him. In early 1932 he reported to Johnson that 'I have tried to get him the right to eat in the restaurants of the unemployed [les restaurants des chômeurs] for free but unfortunately, for various reasons, my efforts remained without result.'<sup>91</sup>

In mid-November 1931 Namık Hilmi visited Kotelnikov requesting a subsidy for the next three to four months to allow him to survive in Athens.<sup>92</sup> According to Namık Hilmi's diary, Kotelnikov had invited him to his office and informed him that he had approved his request for money,

which he had submitted to the Athens Office.<sup>93</sup> In early December Kotelnikov reported to Johnson that Namik Hilmi had visited him twice asking him 'to provide him with the means to feed himself'.<sup>94</sup> According to the entries in the diary, Kotelnikov provided him with 500 drachmas on 15 November, 150 on 25 November and 100 drachmas each on 2 and 12 December. On 24 December he received 100 drachmas and on 31 December he sought out Kotelnikov, who was playing poker, and received a further 100 drachmas. In the first four months of 1932, Namik Hilmi received 1,800 drachmas in instalments from Kotelnikov.<sup>95</sup>

Kotelnikov wrote persistently to Geneva requesting financial support for Namik Hilmi, whom he described as of an advanced age, ill and unable to work.<sup>96</sup> Drawing Johnson's 'particular attention' to the situation of Namik Hilmi, he asked him on 13 November 1931 to do everything possible to secure a subsidy for him as fast as possible.<sup>97</sup> Ten days later he requested 1,500 French francs for Namik Hilmi;<sup>98</sup> in February 1932 he wrote to Johnson, 'I beg you to do all possible to come to the aid of the refugee Namik Bey'.<sup>99</sup>

Kotelnikov wanted the money given to Namik Hilmi to be non-repayable, for Namik Hilmi was in no position to repay such subsidies, or to find a guarantor.<sup>100</sup> He did on occasion, however, hold out the possibility of repayment. In the letter he wrote to Johnson at the end of November 1931 stating that any advance made to him by the Nansen Office would have to be non-repayable, and that it would be impossible for Namik Hilmi to provide a guarantee from a solvent individual as he had no friends in Greece who could provide such a guarantee, he also stated that Namik Hilmi hoped to receive an entry permit for Turkey in several months after the amnesty which would, so he had informed him, be voted on by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in around March 1932. Once Namik Hilmi had returned to his homeland, he would be able immediately to reimburse the loans which the Nansen Office would have granted him.<sup>101</sup>

Johnson, however, necessarily regarded such payments as loans, which they had to be under the League's requirements. Telling Kotelnikov in mid-November 1931 that he was not opposed in principle to loans being made, he requested exact figures for the subsidies requested, including that for Namik Hilmi, and information on how long it was envisaged before repayment was made and how the repayment would be guaranteed.<sup>102</sup> If the money was not to be repaid, then this required the submission of the requests for subvention to the Commission of Finances of the Nansen Office, a bureaucratic manoeuvre that would take time.<sup>103</sup> In April 1932, Johnson informed Kotelnikov that, despite 'the keen interest' the Nansen Office had in the Turkish political refugees, including Namik Hilmi, they could not provide the subsidies requested 'given that the current rules require the presentation of a guarantee of repayment provided by an organisation or two solvent guarantors'.<sup>104</sup> It was at this point that the subsidies stopped.<sup>105</sup>

However, by 1935 the Athens Office was once more supporting Namik Hilmi, for he noted in his diary that he had received 1,350 drachmas after visiting the Athens Office on 9 June.<sup>106</sup> In August 1936 Kotelnikov was still attempting to extract subsidies for him, this time proposing a small subsidy of 40 drachmas per day to enable him to eat, to be paid monthly, at a rate of 1,200 drachmas for four months from October to December.<sup>107</sup> The Nansen Office in Geneva, however, was not willing to provide regular payments, but was prepared to provide a one-off payment, a pencil note at the bottom of Johnson's letter stating that he would be willing to consider an advance of 100 francs to Namik Hilmi.<sup>108</sup> It was from his ally and supporter, Mehmed Ali, that Namik Hilmi heard that the money would be forthcoming from the League and immediately went to see Kotelnikov who confirmed this.<sup>109</sup> It is significant here that Namik Hilmi's source of information was Mehmed Ali, thus underlining the close connections between Mehmed Ali and the Nansen Office in Geneva and highlighting the close-knit international network that operated among some of the Turkish political refugees. In September the Nansen Office agreed to a one-off, one-time only payment to Namik Hilmi of 150 Swiss francs. This, Johnson noted, was the only help that the office was able to offer.<sup>110</sup> On 19 September Kotelnikov gave Namik Hilmi 1,300 of the total 5,200 drachmas he was to receive, giving him the second tranche on 1 October and the third tranche on 16 October.<sup>111</sup>

Shortly after receiving the third payment, Namık Hilmi wrote to Kotelnikov, asking him to press his request for support with officials in Geneva. Acknowledging how good Kotelnikov had been to him and how his intervention had saved him from a life of misery, he expressed his deep concern for the future, for ‘the days pass and with the last due date for the subvention [presumably the fourth and final payment of 1,300 drachmas from the 5,200 granted] which was allocated to me already approaching, the prospect of next year haunts me’. In order ‘to prevent this terrible future’ he had sent a petition directly to the Secretary General of the Nansen Office, that is Johnson. He concluded his letter, ‘I have no doubt that in this circumstance too I will profit from the same marks of kindness and humanity which in all other circumstances you have had the goodness to bestow upon me.’<sup>112</sup>

Kotelnikov persistently represented Namık Hilmi’s situation to Johnson as one of absolute destitution, reporting in November 1931 that he was ‘in very difficult straits’,<sup>113</sup> in great misery,<sup>114</sup> and ‘in a desperate material situation’.<sup>115</sup> In early December, he informed Johnson that Namık Hilmi was ‘completely destitute of the means of existence’<sup>116</sup> and at the beginning of 1932 he referred to ‘the extremely difficult, almost desperate situation’ in which Namık Hilmi found himself.<sup>117</sup> Several years later, in August 1936, Kotelnikov was still reporting on Namık Hilmi’s ‘extremely difficult situation’<sup>118</sup> and his ‘very critical’ condition.<sup>119</sup> Kotelnikov personally vouched for Namık Hilmi’s desperate situation, writing to Johnson in early December 1931 that ‘I have verified the conditions in which Namık Bey finds himself’.<sup>120</sup> From Namık Hilmi’s diaries, however, it appears that Namık Hilmi, whom Kotelnikov rather oddly described in August 1936 as not having ‘acclimatised to Greece’, although he had by then been in the country for a considerable number of years,<sup>121</sup> had a lively social life with what was clearly a rather wide circle of Greek friends, as well as ‘the little Turkish colony’ in Athens. The diary has numerous entries describing drinking and eating, getting drunk on retsina and raki, celebrating Ramazan Bayramı and Christmas and passing time in tavernas. That Kotelnikov was not aware of this is hardly conceivable, particularly given that Namık Hilmi was able to locate him on New Year’s Eve as he was playing poker, in order to extract a subvention from him.

### The nature of support from the Nansen Office in Athens

The Athens Office offered vigorous support to the Turkish political refugees in Greece. The reason for this lies in part in the nature of the League and in part in the outlook of its officials. In the first place the League was nothing if not political. An interesting comparison can be drawn between the treatment of petitions sent to the League by those in the British and French Mandates of Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Transjordan,<sup>122</sup> and those sent to Geneva and to the Athens Office by the Turkish opponents of the Kemalist government in Ankara. While the petitions from the Mandates were totally ignored, not responded to or simply buried in the archives, those from both the *Yüzellilikler* and from other Turkish anti-Kemalists were treated with the utmost respect, replied to and, in many cases, responded to positively. One explanation lies in the phrase used by Johnson when referring to the *Yüzellilikler*. They were, he wrote, ‘friends of allies’,<sup>123</sup> clearly people with whom the British could do business, so to speak.

A further factor concerns the personal approach of the main actors, Fridtjof Nansen, the founder and for many years head of the refugee work in the League of Nations, and his right-hand man and successor Thomas Johnson. Nansen was well-known for his hostility to Turks. When Şükrü Kaya, then president of the foreign affairs committee of the Turkish parliament and former foreign minister, attended a dinner held during the International Labour Conference in Geneva in 1927, Nansen, who had specifically elected to attend, studiously ignored him all evening, talking instead loudly to those around him about the ‘horribilities’ committed by the Turks against the Armenians. Şükrü Kaya was apparently unphased by the behaviour, for he spoke all evening in French, professing not to know English which he in fact spoke very well.<sup>124</sup>

Johnson, the man who was in contact with the *Yüzellilikler* throughout the negotiations making them refugees under the protection of the League of Nations, was also no fan of the Kemalist government. For Johnson, the actions of the Turks in İzmir were 'an encouragement to resort to assassination as a political weapon by Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler and the Japanese murderers of defenceless Chinese civilians',<sup>125</sup> and Ankara, which he visited in early summer 1927, was 'no more modern than the Balkan or Russian villages to which I was accustomed'.<sup>126</sup> Neither the 'devilish Turk'<sup>127</sup> nor his capital were thus viewed with anything but hostility and distaste by Johnson, an attitude which was typical of many British officials in this period. The British had regarded Ankara with a jaundiced eye throughout the 1920s<sup>128</sup> and continued to entertain the possibility of a collapse of the Kemalist regime and a return of the Ottoman royal family as late as 1941.<sup>129</sup> This goes some way towards explaining the attitude of the Nansen Office towards the Turkish opponents of Ankara. Such officials were predisposed to find attractive the idea of the downfall of Ankara and thus prepared to accept the assessments provided to them by figures such as Mehmed Ali, who assured Namık Hilmi in 1932 that the Kemalist government was on the point of collapse.<sup>130</sup>

The level of support that Turkish political refugees received from the Athens Office and from the League of Nations was important not merely from a material point of view, for it also provided them with international recognition and allowed them to present themselves as a united, and significant, political opposition to the Kemalist government. For a figure such as Mehmed Ali, the ability to establish connections with the League and, at the same time, to position himself as the representative of Turkish political refugees, and of the *Yüzellilikler* in particular, regardless of any actual reality, was a significant boost to his own credibility both internationally and among Turkish refugees who, encouraged by his high profile and connections to international bodies, were then prepared to take him more seriously. By the early 1930s Mehmed Ali had established himself as a prominent oppositional actor who appeared as such in the international press. According to the coverage in *The New York Times*, the two telegrams he addressed to Mustafa Kemal in Ankara in May 1931 protesting against the recent elections 'came as a bombshell' and aroused 'great resentment' in the Turkish capital.<sup>131</sup> *Le Temps*, too covered his activity and on 31 May it published a letter he had written to the editor to correct earlier coverage of his telegrams. In the letter he stressed that the *Yüzellilikler* were not guilty of any act against Turkey but were 'victims of personal vengeance'.<sup>132</sup> This international recognition in turn strengthened the belief of Turkish political refugees that the Kemalist government would collapse, for it was thought that it would be unable to survive without international support.

The favourable milieu Turkish political refugees found within the League of Nations and the negative attitude towards the Kemalist regime created an environment in which the Athens Office was able to go beyond the remit of the League under the June 1928 Arrangement. The office thus provided financial support to those who under the League's regulations were not entitled to it. Even though Namık Hilmi, for example, lost his refugee status after he acquired a Greek passport, he continued to receive support from the Athens Office. It would also appear that there was a certain elasticity in the way in which financial support was provided to Namık Hilmi, for under the regulations of the League, money was to be provided in the form of a loan to be paid back. Not only was this not applied to Namık Hilmi, but there was a constant stream of small handouts. Given the way they were dispensed personally by Kotelnikov from his office, and presumably coming at least on one occasion directly from his own pocket (when Namık Hilmi tracked him down on New Year's Eve playing poker), it seems likely that such small sums were covered from general administrative expenses, an entry that appears in the monthly accounts of the Athens Office.

While Nansen passports were only to be provided to the *Yüzellilikler* under the 1928 Arrangement, the Athens Office provided passports to *Yüzellilik* family members. Although in the debate about the 1928 Arrangement views were expressed concerning the inclusion of families,<sup>133</sup> the June 1928 Arrangement itself stipulates that only 'Turkish refugees', i.e. the *Yüzellilikler*,

were entitled to be covered by this extension. In the case of Mustafa Sabri there is a further anomaly. In the list provided by Kotelnikov to Johnson on 13 November 1931, Mustafa Sabri is listed as having two daughters and a servant, Emine, aged 22.<sup>134</sup> However, in the letter sent by Kotelnikov to the British consul in Athens the very next day, Emine appears as his daughter,<sup>135</sup> as she does in a further letter to Johnson written on the same day.<sup>136</sup> Kotelnikov informed the British consul that all the people on the list provided, thus including Emine, had Nansen passports.<sup>137</sup>

Kotelnikov's changing Emine from servant to daughter cannot have been a slip of the pen in his letters to Johnson and the British consul, raising the question of why he felt the need to do so. Had Emine been a servant, she would clearly not have been entitled to a Nansen passport, even if applying a very wide interpretation of the 1928 Arrangement, based on the intent expressed in the discussions rather than the actual letter of the Arrangement itself. The situation would be different were she to be a daughter. It is known, however, that Mustafa Sabri had only two daughters and one son.<sup>138</sup>

This raises the question of quite who she was. Given the religious nature of the family, it would seem unlikely that a young, unrelated, female would have travelled with them from Turkey, or from Western Thrace to Patras. A more likely explanation is that she was a second wife from Western Thrace. In this case, she would have been a Greek national, and, again, not entitled to a Nansen passport.

Shortly after Kotelnikov issued this passport in contravention of the 1928 Arrangement, Turkey joined the League of Nations in July 1932. Turkey's membership of the League, however, did not have an impact on the support offered by the Athens Office to the *Yüzellilikler*. That the Nansen Office and the League of Nations were perfectly aware of the political nature of the refugees they were helping and of the annoyance this occasioned to the Turkish government is made clear by correspondence between Kotelnikov and Johnson's successor in Geneva, Coroni Bey (Georges Coroni), over the subvention to be given to Namik Hilmi's friend *Yüzellilik* Refet, who had approached the League for financial support. Coroni Bey instructed Kotelnikov in October 1937 to ascertain if Refet was in a state of destitution and whether he was involved in political activity against the Turkish government.<sup>139</sup> Confirming Refet's 'financially desperate situation', Kotelnikov informed Coroni Bey that Refet's conduct was 'irreproachable'. 'Concerning his participation in political propaganda against his government', he wrote, 'no information confirming his political activity has been communicated to me.'<sup>140</sup> At the end of November, Coroni Bey confirmed that the Athens Office was to pay Refet a one-off subvention of 100 Swiss francs. 'However, given that the Turkish government regards the aid given by the office to 150 Turkish refugees [i.e. the *Yüzellilikler*] as merely serving to facilitate their political activity and obscures the fact that they are constantly directing [such activity] against the regime and the national interests of Turkey', Kotelnikov was instructed to hand over the subvention directly to Refet, 'in your office', and not by a cheque. He was 'to recommend to this refugee the greatest discretion.'<sup>141</sup>

For the Turkish government, therefore, the Athens Office was a source of active support for Turkish political refugees hostile to Ankara. This view, which existed both before Turkey joined the League of Nations in 1932 and afterwards, was an accurate reflection of the activities of the Athens Office which provided passports, assisted with visas, liaised with foreign embassies and the Greek authorities and gave financial assistance both to the *Yüzellilikler* and to those who were not covered by the remit of the June 1928 Arrangement. Further, the support of the League of Nations more generally empowered Turkish political refugees and enabled them to present themselves as significant opponents of Ankara. The substantial support provided by the Athens Office contributed significantly to the existence, and survival, of Turkish political refugees in Greece, despite Turkish government frustration and opposition. Greece thus continued to be a location for Turkish political opposition to Ankara and the reality of the gesture made by Venizelos in January 1931 was thus less substantial than it was presented as.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Notes

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18. TDA, 525 38572 155749 494, Mehmet Münir to the Foreign Ministry, Ankara, 20 July 1931.
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23. The League did in fact officially recognize the Ligue as the representative of the Turkish refugees in 1932 despite the objection of the Turkish government. Boyar, 'Yüzellilikler', p.119.
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30. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 11 November 1931.
31. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 23 November 1931.
32. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 24 November 1931.
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42. UNAG, C1423/319/R.419/2/26/1 and UNAG, R1840/1A/2614/2614, M. Roddolo, League of Nations, Geneva, to Major Johnson, International Labour Office, Geneva, 20 June 1928. See also copies in UNAG, S545/4/4.
43. UNAG, S547/6/2, Kotelnikov to A. Michelocopoulos, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Athens, 15 May 1928; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 24 April 1928.
44. UNAG, C1423/319/R.419/2/26/1, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 22 September 1928.
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51. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 13 November 1931.
52. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to the Consul of Great Britain, Athens, 14 November 1931.
53. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 14 November 1931.
54. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to the French Consul, Athens, 18 November 1931.
55. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 19 November 1931.
56. Mehmet Fuat, *Dedikodulu Seyahat* [Gossipy Travels] (Istanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1930), pp.5–7.
57. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 7 December 1931.
58. Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, 'Mustafa Sabri Efendi (1869–1954), Osmanlı Şeyhülislamı' [Mustafa Sabri Efendi, the Ottoman Şeyhülislam], *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* Vol.31 (2000), p.351.
59. Hammond, *Late Ottoman Origins of Modern Islamic Thought*, p.45. Hammond gives no reference for this statement.
60. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931, where Mustafa Sabri and İbrahim Sabri and the two families of nine people are listed as having obtained visas for Yemen via Egypt.
61. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 19 November 1931.
62. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 13 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 19 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 7 December 1931.
63. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to the Consul of Great Britain, Athens, 14 November 1931.

64. Tülay Duran (ed.), 'Yüzelliliklerden Eski Dahiliye Nazırı (İçişleri Bakanı) Mehmet Ali'nin Mektuplarının Özetleri. Belge 10, 1 Eylül 1931' [Summaries of the Letters of *Yüzellilik* Mehmed Ali, the Former Interior Minister. Document 10, 1 September 1931], in '150 liklerin Gizli Mektupları' [The Secret Letters of the *Yüzellilikler*], *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi. Dün/ Bugün/ Yarın* No.32 (September 1999), p.48.
65. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931.
66. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 7 December 1931.
67. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 7 December 1931.
68. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931.
69. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 7 December 1931.
70. M.A. Yekta Saraç, 'Mehmet Akif'in Gölgelelerinin Arapçaya Tercümesi ve İbrahim Sabri Efendi' [The Translation into Arabic of Mehmet Akif's *Shadows* and İbrahim Sabri Efendi], *İlmi Araştırmalar* Vol.5 (1997), p.248.
71. UNAG, S545/4/4, İbrahim Sabri, Patras, 1 December 1931.
72. UNAG, S545/4/4, the Secretary General, League of Nations, Geneva, to Kotelnikov, 11 December 1931.
73. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931.
74. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 13 November 1931; Kotelnikov to the Consul of Great Britain, Athens, 14 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 14 November 1931.
75. Bein, *Ottoman Ulema, Turkish Republic: Agents of Change and Guardians of Tradition*, p.111.
76. UNAG, R1840/1A/2614/2614, Mehmed Ali Bey, the President of Parti Démocrate Turc, the Former Minister of Internal Affairs of Turkey, to the Minister of Greece in Paris, 30 July 1931.
77. Boyar, 'Yüzellilikler', p.130.
78. UNAG, S547/6/2, Kotelnikov to Mustafa Sabri, *ex-şeyhülislam* of the Ottoman Empire, Platia Ifestou no. 39, Komotini, 5 October 1928.
79. Şaduman Halıcı, 'Yüzellilik Namık Hilmi Bey'in Not Defterlerinde Sürgün Yılları' [The Years in Exile in the Notebooks of *Yüzellilik* Namık Hilmi Bey], *Belgi* No.24 (2022), p.148. Halıcı's article makes extensive use of Namık Hilmi's diaries for the period 1922 to 1936, which are found in the Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi in Ankara, not currently accessible to researchers.
80. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 23 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 26 September 1932. Kotelnikov identified him as an ex-major in the Ottoman army. Namık Hilmi described himself as 'Chéf du bureau politique de la police de Constantinople', UNAG, S550/1, Namık Hilmi to Kotelnikov, 25 October 1936.
81. Halıcı, 'Yüzellilik Namık Hilmi Bey', pp.145, 162.
82. Boyar, 'Yüzellilikler', p.135.
83. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 13 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 24 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931; Johnson to Kotelnikov, 4 April 1932.
84. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to B. Papadakis, the Head of the League of Nations section in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, 8 January 1932.
85. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 23 November 1931.
86. Halıcı, 'Yüzellilik Namık Hilmi Bey', pp.142, 150.
87. *Ibid.*, p.147.
88. *Ibid.*, pp.146–47; UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 5 November 1931; Johnson to Kotelnikov, 11 January 1932; Johnson to Kotelnikov, 4 April 1932; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 26 September 1932; Johnson to Kotelnikov, 25 October 1932.
89. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 23 November 1931.
90. UNAG, S545/4/4, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 7 December 1931.
91. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 1 February 1932.
92. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 11 November 1931.
93. Halıcı, 'Yüzellilik Namık Hilmi Bey', p.148.
94. UNAG, S545/4/4, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 7 December 1931.
95. Halıcı, 'Yüzellilik Namık Hilmi Bey', p.148.
96. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 11 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 11 November 1931; Johnson to Kotelnikov, 7 December 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 26 September 1932; UNAG, S550/01, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 22 August 1936.
97. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 13 November 1931.
98. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 23 November 1931; Kotelnikov to Johnson, 27 November 1931, where the figure 1,500 French francs for Namık Hilmi is given in a list of Turkish refugees requesting subsidies.
99. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 1 February 1932.
100. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 23 November 1931; Johnson to Kotelnikov, 7 December 1931.
101. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 23 November 1931. See also UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 11 November 1931, which refers to Namık Hilmi, Refet and Davud having 'precise information' about the intention of the Turkish Grand National Assembly to vote for a general amnesty during the 1932 session. The amnesty was in fact only granted in 1938.



102. UNAG, S545/4/4, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 18 November 1931.
103. UNAG, S545/4/4, the Secretary General, League of Nations, Geneva, to Kotelnikov, 11 December 1931.
104. UNAG, S545/4/4, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 4 April 1932.
105. Halıcı, 'Yüzellilik Namık Hilmi Bey', p.148.
106. *Ibid.*, p.149.
107. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 23 November 1931.
108. UNAG, S550/01, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 28 August 1936.
109. Halıcı, 'Yüzellilik Namık Hilmi Bey', p.149.
110. UNAG, S550/01, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 12 September 1936. In pencil at the bottom of the letter: Namık, Nea Philadelphia, Cafı Capella.
111. Halıcı, 'Yüzellilik Namık Hilmi Bey', p.150.
112. UNAG, S550/01, Namık Hilmi to Kotelnikov, 25 October 1936.
113. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 11 November 1931.
114. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 23 November 1931.
115. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 13 November 1931.
116. UNAG, S545/4/4, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 7 December 1931.
117. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 3 January 1932.
118. UNAG, S550/01, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 22 August 1936.
119. UNAG, S550/01, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 17 August 1936.
120. UNAG, S545/4/4, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 7 December 1931.
121. UNAG, S550/01, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 22 August 1936.
122. Michael Provence, 'Post-Ottoman Dreams and Nightmares in the Mandate Middle East', in Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet (eds), *Borders, Boundaries and Belonging in Post-Ottoman Space in the Interwar Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2023), pp.12–26.
123. UNAG, S 545/4/4, Johnson to Kotelnikov, 2 December 1930.
124. Thomas Frank Johnson, *International Tramps: from Chaos to Permanent World Peace* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), p.250.
125. Johnson, *Tramps*, p.296.
126. *Ibid.*, p.246.
127. *Ibid.*, pp.246–47.
128. Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, 'Great Britain and "a Small and Poor Peasant State": Turkey, Britain and the 1930 Anglo-Turkish Treaty of Commerce and Navigation', *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.57, No. 6 (2021), pp.904–19.
129. Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, 'Introduction', in Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet (eds), *Borders, Boundaries and Belonging in Post-Ottoman Space in the Interwar Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2023), p.3.
130. Halıcı, 'Yüzellilik Namık Hilmi Bey', p.149.
131. J.W. Collins, 'Angora is Annoyed by Turkish Exiles', *The New York Times*, 24 May 1931. See also Boyar, 'Yüzellilikler', pp.121–22.
132. TDA, 525 38535 155978 58, Mehmet Münir, Paris, to the Foreign Ministry, Ankara, 1 June 1931 (enclosing a cutting from *Le Temps*). The news item referred to by Mehmed Ali appeared in *Le Temps*, 16 May 1931, p.2.
133. UNAG, C1415/311/R/409/0/6/2/3, *Inter Governmental Conference on the Legal Status of Refugees*, Geneva, 1928.
134. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 13 November 1931.
135. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to the Consul of Great Britain, Athens, 14 November 1931.
136. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to Johnson, 14 November 1931.
137. UNAG, S545/4/4, Kotelnikov to the Consul of Great Britain, Athens, 14 November 1931.
138. Halıcı, *Yüzellilik Gazeteciler*, pp.293–94.
139. UNAG, S550/01, Coroni Bey to Kotelnikov, 18 October 1937.
140. UNAG, S550/01, Kotelnikov to Coroni Bey, 24 November 1936 (the date should be 1937).
141. UNAG, S550/01, Coroni Bey to Kotelnikov, 29 November 1937.