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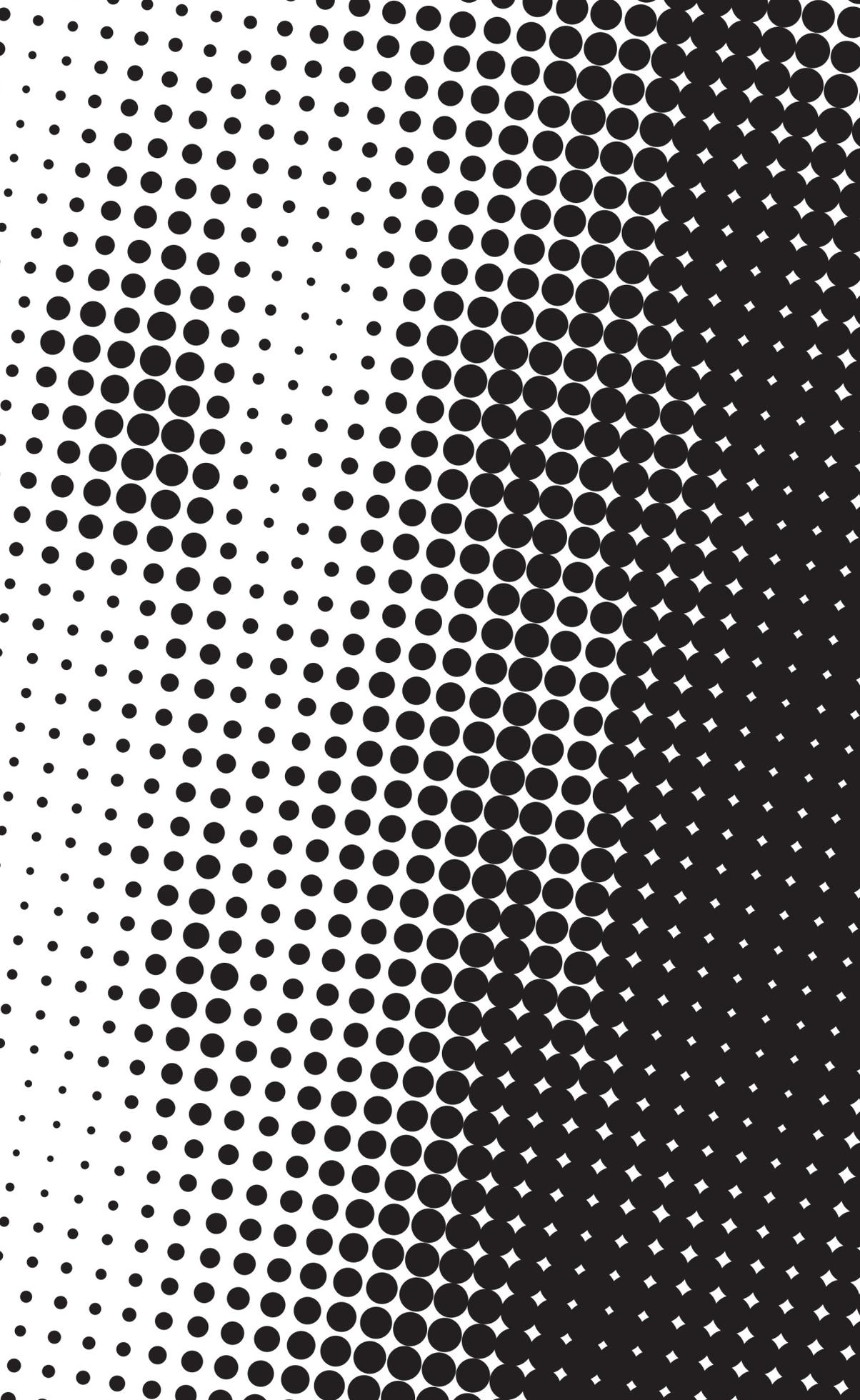
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Opium, Bonito and Olive Agents: States and Drugs in the Balkans (Beginning of the 19th Century — 1940s)

Based on archival analysis our paper presents the research which, for the first time, examines the role of opium in some of the nation-states emerged from the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire — Bulgaria, Turkey and Serbia (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia); tracing the period before World War II. During the interwar period 43% of the opium on the international market came from the contested Macedonian region that was split between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece after World War I. Following the Yugoslavian-Turkish agreement this percentage increased to 80%, while the Balkans became part of the notorious French connection. By using the methods of *Histoire croisée*, our report attempts to show the interrelations within the Balkan states in relation to opium politics, the porous new national borders, ethnic collaboration and rivalry in the (il)legal opium trade business.

Key words: opium, drugs, interwar period, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Yugoslavia

At the end of the 19th century, William Osler, the founder of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, called opium „God’s own medicine“ and his no less famous colleague at the same hospital William Stewart Halsted treated his own cocaine addiction with morphine¹. At that time opium was virtually omnipresent — as a recreational drug, as a medicine, but also as a trading commodity that was so important that wars were fought between empires for the possibility to export it.

Opium trade was crucial in the colonisation of the Far East. As a commodity, it provided huge profits that led to a transfer of wealth and power to Western imperial regimes.² Westerners believed that opium

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¹ Where’s The Knick Headed? Look at the Man Who Inspired It, Wired, <https://www.wired.com/2015/10/the-knick-thackery-halsted/>, accessed: 13. 11. 2020

² Timothy Brook, Bob Wakabayashi (eds.). *Opium Regimes China, Britain, and Japan, 1839–1952*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2000, p. 25

use was inherent to the Oriental people and for a long time found no moral contradiction in its trade.³ As we shall see, this view started to change when opium reached Western Europe and the USA at the end of the 19th century and became hugely popular amongst the elite.

Opium is a popular subject in historiography, mainly because of its importance for British colonial politics. Britain waged two opium wars with China (1839–1842) and (1856–1860) which weakened the Qing dynasty and opened the Chinese market to the flood of opium, which caused a long lasting epidemic that was finally dealt with only after World War II⁴.

The opium wars created a huge international market for the drug which soon made the Ottoman Empire one of its leading producers in the world. Poppy is a capricious crop and in the 19th century the necessary soils and climate conditions for its production were found only in India, China, Iran and the Ottoman Empire.

It was only recently that the Western scholars have turned their attention towards the opium problem in the Balkans and especially in the Ottoman Empire. This is partly, due to the continuous poppy production in Turkey, which is nowadays one of the leading exporters of heroin (opium derivative). Some historians and criminologists think that opium and subsequently heroin was the commodity around which Turkish mafia was born and the notorious Turkish „deep state“ began to exist.⁵ New research shows how Albanians based in the former socialist Yugoslavia also became intertwined in the Eastern European heroin trade and have recently become „junior partners“ in the construction of both smuggling and distribution networks based in Turkey.⁶

In our paper we will focus not only on opium and other drugs like for instance hashish in the Ottoman Empire but also in its successor states, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) which were involved in production and trade of opium. During the interwar period, 43% of the opium on the international market came from the contested Macedonian region that was split between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece after World War I. Following the Yugoslav-Turkish agreements this percentage increased to 80%, while the Balkans became part of the notorious French connection. This remained until 1930s, when as a result of the international agreements restricting the trade of opium and its derivatives, the percentages dropped substantially. Opium gradually disappeared from the Balkan markets with the exception of Turkey,

³ J. P. Gavit, *Opium*. London, 1925, pp. 55–58

⁴ For a broader scientific and popular presentation of the topic online in the context of history of medicine see <<https://pointsadhsblog.wordpress.com/>> (accessed: 15. 10. 2020)

⁵ Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey*. OUP, Kindle Edition, 2014

⁶ Ryan Gingeras, *Brothers and Clients: Heroin, Turkey and the Making of the Albanian Mafia*, <https://www.academia.edu/2639231/Heroin_Turkey_and_the_Making_of_the_Albanian_Mafia_> (accessed: 10. 10. 2020)

which managed to establish legal monopoly over this commodity between the years of 1931–1933 and again after 1938.

By using the methods of *Histoire croisée*, our paper attempts to show the role each Balkan state played in the opium trade, but also the interrelations within the states in relation to opium politics; the new porous national borders; ethnic collaboration and rivalry in the (il)legal opium trade business. We shall also examine the role that various ethnic and minorities networks had in the opium trade and how they managed to outlive the Ottoman empire and adapt to the intricate conditions of 20th century Europe, characterized by constant wars and restructuring of borders. Furthermore, we will trace how the Balkan nation-states adapted to the changes of Great powers' regulation policies concerning the international opium trade. We will also describe how ideas of free trade and monopoly often changed their meaning, depending on the interests of the Great powers and especially of Great Britain.

Since this is the first attempt to research the role of opium in all of the Balkan states at the end of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th, we have to say that our work is still in progress and much archival work remains to be done. Nevertheless, we hope that our work is quite relevant since Bulgarian historiography in particular hasn't dealt with the opium problem at all⁷ though some exceptions are noted such as treating the question in the framework of traditional folk medicine⁸.

Our research starts with some background information on opium trade in the 19th century, focusing on the role Great Britain played for the imposition of free trade in the Balkans and for the expansion of the drug's trade and its production in the Ottoman Empire until WWI. Then we will briefly describe the situation in other Balkan states till the end of the First World War with an accent on the Bulgarian case. After that we will shift our focus towards the interwar period and the evolution of drug production and trade in the Balkans in a global context.

Opium and its free trade in the Ottoman Empire

In the 17th century, the Dutch imported opium from Java and sold this colonial product in China, where they taught enthusiasts to smoke it in a pipe (incidentally, the Dutch were later to earn even more money from cocaine). The British grew opium on a large scale

⁷ Some Bulgarian historians even prefer to dismiss any role organizations like IMRO had in the opium trade. See: Димитър Тюлеков, *Обречено родолюбие. ВМРО в Пиринско 1919–1934*, <http://macedonia.kroraina.com/dt/dt3_4.html#320> (accessed: 10. 10. 2020)

⁸ Георги Георгиев, „Опиум, живак и магия — български народни лековници и регионални лечителски „школи“ през Ранното възрождане“. — *История*, книжка 5, година XXIII, 2015, с. 471–490

in the British East Indies from the end of the 18th century onwards and they, too, shipped it to Chinese seaports.⁹ The main actor here was the notorious East-India Company and most of its trade was done illegally. EIC had a monopoly on opium production in Bengal and used that profitable market position to smuggle the drug to China. Historian Michael Greenberg underlines opium's global significance at the time with the comment that „opium was no hole-in-the-corner petty smuggling trade, but probably the largest commerce of the time in any single commodity“.¹⁰

Criminologists point out the irony that the two countries that can currently be seen as the most loyal of allies in the war on drugs, at least where the fight against trafficking is concerned, once earned massive profits from that same trade.¹¹

„VICTORIA REGINA“, „ARMIS EXPOSCERE PACEM“ [They demanded peace by force of arms], and „CHINA“ 1842 is what's written on a China War Medal from 1842¹². As we said, back in 1839 Great Britain even fought two wars with China over opium after the Emperor tried to ban all imports due to the addiction crisis in the country. After the war British traders were given the right to legally import opium from India under the terms of the commercial protocol which accompanied the peace treaties. Recent research like J. Y. Wong's book *Opium, Imperialism, and the Arrow War (1856–1860) in China* convincingly show the economic links which made Britain's imperial efforts in Asia dependant on opium. The rocky finances of the government of India, which had been thrown into even greater chaos by the rebellion of 1857, were underpinned by the large revenues from opium sales, as were the private business enterprises which linked Bombay, Calcutta, and Canton. More generally, opium played an important and growing part in supporting Britain's balance of trade with Asia.¹³

After the wars opium imports to China underwent a dramatic growth spurt. The scourge of opium addiction rolled on. In all, millions of Chinese died during the 19th century as a result of opium, a „crime which no one even today acknowledges as the man-made catastrophe it was“.¹⁴

Interestingly, one of the journalists who tried to investigate the deeper causes of the second opium war was Karl Marx. He wrote of the exceptional struggle between „the Celestial Emperor, [who] in order to check the suicide of his people prohibited at once the import

⁹ Frank Bovenkerk, Yucel Yesilgöz, Y. *The Turkish Mafia: A History of the Heroin Godfathers*. Milo Books Ltd. Kindle Edition, 2007, Kindle Locations 652–659

¹⁰ Timothy Brook, Bob Wakabayashi, Op. cit., p. 34

¹¹ FranmBovenkerk, YucelYesilgöz, Op. cit., Kindle Locations 652–659

¹² Royal Museum Greenwich <<http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/40479.html>> (accessed: 15. 10. 2020)

¹³ John Wong, *Deadly Dreams: Opium, Imperialism and the Arrow War (1856–1860) in China*. CUP, 1998

¹⁴ Nick Robins, *The Corporation that Changed the World: How the East India Company Shaped the Modern Multinational*. London, 2006, p. 142

of the poison by the foreigner' and 'the East India Company [who] was rapidly converting the cultivation of opium in India and its contraband sale to China into internal parts of its own financial system'. Marx quickly revealed the hypocrisy at the heart of British strategy. „While openly preaching free trade in poison,“ he wrote, „it secretly defends the monopoly of its manufacture. Whenever we look closely into the nature of British free trade, monopoly is pretty generally found to lie at the bottom of its „freedom“.¹⁵

Imperialism and racism were also intertwined, with the British proclaiming that opium was to the East what alcohol was to the West, a parallel expressed clearly by George Campbell, the secretary of state for India from 1868 to 1874, who suggested that Parliament might treat the issue „simply as a matter of race“: „as the Aryan races prefer alcohol, so the Turanian consume opium.“¹⁶

But the consumer market in the West also became interested in opium at the end of the 19th century. In 1898, the German pharmaceutical firm Bayer marketed heroin as a cough medicine and, initially, the substance seemed to belong to the same category as the painkiller they launched a year later, under the name of aspirin. The firm did what was expected of it: advertising, setting up points of sale as far as China and lobbying to ensure that the substance was not placed on the prohibited list. The cough remedy proved, however, to cause more dramatic effects than the company claimed and, what's more, it was scientifically established that it could actually lead to addiction.¹⁷

How did these events half a world away transform the status of opium in the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the 19th century? The presence of opium within the Mediterranean marketplace can be dated back to as early as the Bronze Age. Ryan Gingeras writes, with a tinge of irony, that the cornerstone of the Ottoman Empire rested somewhere within a field of poppies. Osman Gazi, the empire's titular founder, was born in the town of Söğüt, in the region of modern-day Afyon (meaning poppy in Turkish).¹⁸

In addition to the territory lying between Afyon and Yozgat, peasants and traders have made the poppy a staple crop in the environs of Aydın, Balıkesir, Kütahya, Konya, Isparta and elsewhere in western and central Anatolia. But opium was for a long time not used as a narcotic. Both the seed and the sap from the poppy were instead used for a variety of purposes, such as for cooking oil, flavoring (such as in bread), and medicinal purposes. Although neither Muslim nor

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 162. For more see Karl Marx, „Trade or Opium?“, New York Daily Tribune, September 20, 1858, <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1858/09/20.htm>> (accessed: 10. 10. 2020); „Free Trade and Monopoly“, New York Daily Tribune, September 25, 1858, <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1858/09/25.htm>> (accessed: 10. 10. 2020)

¹⁶ Timothy Brook, Bob Wakabayashi, Op. cit., p. 37

¹⁷ Frank Bovenkerk, Yücel Yesilgöz, Op. cit., Kindle Locations 652–659

¹⁸ Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 55

Christian farmers monopolized the harvesting of opium, by the nineteenth century the trade in poppy-related products became associated with Armenians. The situation changed after the Opium wars. Southern China's seemingly insatiable demand for opium compelled governments and private interests to foster native opium production or to seek new sources of the drug. Since opium was indigenous only to a narrow belt of land stretching from east to west across the Eurasian landmass, much of the lands best suited for cultivation were in the possession of three imperial states: British India, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire. Following the Bengalese model, Ottoman farmers and merchants responded quickly to the lure of high profits, transforming opium into a vital cash crop.¹⁹

This opium boom brought the crop to the Balkans. It is claimed that the first poppy crops used for the modern large scale opium production were introduced in Macedonia in the mid-19th century. There is a dispute whether this happened for the first time in Shtip in 1835, or in the 1850s when Abdul Hasan Halill Bajraktar planted poppy for opium extraction in Kocani or it was Ali Simon Zade in Kavadarci²⁰. Turkish merchants brought the seed from Asia Minor and the local soil was soon found to be excellent for the plant growth. The state tried to popularize opium as much as possible, bringing agronomists from Asia Minor and printing agricultural manuals, which explained that opium production was much more profitable than growing grains. Soon the poppy became very popular in the lands along the Vardar river and its tributaries Cerna, Bregalnica and Peinja. In the years after World War I, almost all regions across Vardar Macedonia, now part of The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were growing poppy — Strumica, Veles, Negotino, Kavadarci, Ovce Pole, Kumanovo, Radovis, Kocani, Skopje, Kratovo, Dojran, Gevgelija, Prilep, Carevoselo.²¹

During Ottoman times Macedonian opium was shipped mainly from Thessaloniki towards London and was thus known by the name of the port city. Between the years 1900–1912, the average production of opium in Macedonia was around 95 tons per annum. During the Balkan wars and later during World War I, the number dropped to 60. Later, between the years 1920–1931 it reached 76 tons per annum.²²

Macedonian opium was of excellent quality. In 1869 the British C. Finckh wrote: „Opium from Thessaloniki or Kocani is by all means very similar to that in Gueve“. Gueve opium was at that time considered the best opium in Asia.²³

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Hrvoje Tartalja, „Povijest opijuma i kulture maka u Makedoniji.“ — *Naučno društvo za istoriju zdravstvene kulture Jugoslavije. Zbornik radova sa četrnaestog naučnog sastanka*, 5–7. Jun 1965. Beograd, 1965, s. 123

²¹ Владимир Брунети, *Хемијске студије о културе мака и производни опиума у Македонији*. Београд, 1951, с. 1

²² Ibid., с. 2

²³ Ibid, p. 3

Istanbul, of course, was doing far more than just introducing opium to the Macedonian farmers. In 1828, the Ottoman government responded to the dramatic rise in demand for opium by instituting a state monopoly (*yed-ivahet*) on the drug. The system limited the purchase of opium produced by the farmers only to the agents of the state and the merchants authorized to act in its name. After transportation to Izmir and Istanbul the opium was sold to local merchants and exporters. It appears, however, that once the opium passed into the hands of merchants, no further restrictions were applied to its sale.²⁴

Under monopoly, poppy production and profits soared. Although never rivaling the sort of production capabilities of Bengal, Ottoman opium would at one point account for 10 percent of China's overall consumption of the drug.²⁵

In the long run, however, major outlets for the Anatolian opium were to England, the United States, and the countries in Western Europe, and due to its high morphine content it became an invaluable pain killer. Opium provided the main ingredient for a large number of drugs manufactured in England to be used in the country and abroad. For example, in 1870 the Turkish opium exports to England and to the U. S. were in excess of 300,000 lbs. each.²⁶

In 1873 the average consumption of Turkish opium throughout the world was estimated at 400 cases per month, or 4800 in a year. Especially for the American market, Turkish opium was of high importance since the Indian opium was of low quality and could not be admitted into American ports.²⁷

As a rule, the cultivators were Turks, Greeks or Bulgarians, while opium merchants were of Armenian origin, usually channeling the funds advanced to them by Izmir and Istanbul sarrafs, they themselves of Jewish origin. But neither function was exclusive to these groups.

For example, Bochor Taranto, a Jewish merchant from Izmir, was appointed as the Monopoly's official inspector. By 1910, long after the abolishment of the monopoly, the two-thirds of the opium trade in Istanbul would pass through the company belonging to Taranto and his sons. The Taranto family also possessed the oldest laboratory in the city dedicated to that trade.²⁸ The Greek Chrisantos, on the other hand, was one of the most famous bandits and opium smugglers — a champion of the Greek minority in Istanbul in the early 20th century, who was revered by Turks too.²⁹

²⁴ Ibrahim Poroy, „Expansion of Opium Production in Turkey and the State Monopoly of 1828–1839“. — *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (May, 1981), p. 198

²⁵ Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 56

²⁶ Ibrahim Poroy, Op. cit., p. 194

²⁷ Boston Daily Globe, July 23, 1873, p. 2

²⁸ Devi Mays, D. „Becoming Illegal: Sephardi Jews in the Transnational Opium Trade“. Unpublished paper, cited with authors permission

²⁹ Frank Bovenkerk, Yucel Yesilgöz, Op. cit., Kindle Locations 1580–1586

Given the chaotic state of affairs in the countryside, the opium monopoly administration was unable to enforce its own rules. There was contraband everywhere but there is still indirect evidence giving the impression that, in general, the farmers did benefit from the monopoly. Numerous petitions express gratitude for the reasonable price, none complains; in 1839, at the ban of opium due to unsold stocks all requested permission to sow it again. The large increase of opium production is also an indirect sign of satisfactory prices from the farmers' point of view.³⁰

But the monopoly wasn't meant to last long. Tensions between Egypt and the Ottoman Empire caused serious disturbances in Ottoman politics. Mahmud II sought the intercession of Russia and other European Powers in order to save his throne and state. In 1838, a year before the sweeping Tanzimat reforms undertaken by Sultan Abdülmecid I, Great Britain compelled Istanbul to sign the Treaty of Balta Limanı, which stipulated the abrogation of Istanbul's monopoly over all agricultural products and a reduction in duties on foreign goods.

British demands for free trade within the Ottoman Empire radically changed the political and economic significance of the opium trade. No longer would the expanding proceeds of foreign opium sales be transferred to state coffers or invested in institutional reform. In lowering the barriers to foreign exports and investment, the Treaty of Balta Limanı allowed Western merchants and manufacturers to swarm over the Ottoman's poppy crop. For the next century, the bulk of the opium trade (and its profits) fell into foreign hands.³¹

Izmir was the principal market for the sale of opium. In 1857, for example, 3271 cases of opium, the value of which was 266,382 pounds were shipped from that port, chiefly to England, the United States, and China.³² The port was well known to British, American and Dutch merchants, who frequented the warehouses and the regular market.³³

Following what Marx said about the way monopoly laid at the bottom of 'freedom' in the case of the Opium wars, it is easy to see the similarities with the treaty of Balta Limanı. It is no coincidence that some scholars write about the "imperialism of free trade." When in 1892 the Ottomans planned another trial at establishing a monopoly, the British were quick to react. The Times predicted „calamity and ruin that are certain to ensue should the Government favour the scheme“ and warned that „in the existing circumstances the matter assumes a somewhat serious aspect, because the necessities of the Treasury give rise to apprehensions that a short-sighted

³⁰ Ibrahim Poroy, Op. cit., p. 202

³¹ Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 57

³² Farley Lewis, *The Resources of Turkey*, London, 1863, pp. 45–46

³³ Sudda (Georges della), Colonel Faye Bey. *Monographie des opiums de l'empire ottoman a l'exposition*. Paris, 1867, pp. 18–19

economic policy may tempt the Executive to accept immediate returns at the sacrifice of future advantages.³⁴

While having a safe monopoly in Bengal, the British hunted monopolies elsewhere but only as long as they were against their interests. Following the imposition of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (1881), European pressure in 1884 compelled Istanbul to form the Tabac Régie, an imperial company designed to monopolize the production, sale, and transport of tobacco products inside of the Ottoman Empire. The imposition of the Régie, which channeled all proceeds into the financing of the empire's debts, imposed the greatest of burdens upon tobacco cultivators throughout the empire but continued its existence even after WWI.³⁵

By the turn of the twentieth century, however, free opium trade had amassed a lot of enemies. The most consistent and ultimately the most influential source of opposition, was missionary objections to opium trade and to the British government's role in it. The missionaries' objections arose both from their personal observation of addicts but also from the fact that attempts at conversion were frustrated by the Chinese perception that the British opium trade demonstrated the immorality of Christians.³⁶

New technologies — most significantly the development of hypodermic syringes — and the rapidly developing chemical industry made the access to opium and its derivatives easier, cheaper, and faster for the masses in the Western countries.³⁷ As the „democratisation“ of opium prompted the usage of this drug beyond the borders of China, public opinion began to sway under the increasing influence of medical professionals campaigning against the non-medical use of opium³⁸. According to London's Times „The subject of the opium traffic between India and China is attracting so much attention both in the East and at home, where it has been frequently represented in the light of a national scandal [...]“³⁹. The USA led this campaign against opium motivated both by competition with Great Britain's interests in the Asian opium traffic and the restriction-oriented policy demands of domestic reform groups.⁴⁰

Those groups were often motivated by racism. The first anti-drug law in the USA was a local law in San Francisco passed in 1875 which outlawed the smoking of opium and was directed at the Chinese

³⁴ The Times, December 13, 1892, p. 5

³⁵ Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 43

³⁶ Timothy Brook, Bob Wakabayashi, *Op. cit.*, p. 37

³⁷ William B. McAllister, *Drug Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century: An International History*. London and New York, 2000, pp. 14–15

³⁸ Burcak Özgür, „Losing wealth or restricting the poison? Changing opium policies in early republican Turkey, 1923–1945“. — *Historia Agraria*, 61, Diciembre 2013, p. 119

³⁹ The History of the Opium Traffic. — *The Times*, January 4, 1882, p. 4

⁴⁰ Burcak Özgür, *Op. cit.*, p. 119

because opium smoking was a peculiarly Chinese habit. It was believed that Chinese men were luring white women into having sex with them in opium dens. In 1909 Congress made opium smoking a federal offense by enacting the Anti-Opium Act. It reinforced anti-Chinese racism by carving out an exception for drinking and injecting tinctures of opiates that were popular among whites.⁴¹

The United States set up an International Opium Commission in Shanghai in 1909 to explore ways and means of suppressing drugs, particularly opium's inexpensive and potent derivative, morphine.

The US pressed for a second opium conference at The Hague in the winter of 1912, with a follow-up meeting in 1913. The Hague Convention urged members to restrict opium and its derivatives to medical uses, but allowed those states already involved in producing opium to phase it out gradually through a system of export licensing.⁴²

The Ottoman Empire refused to partake in any of these conventions well after the end of the First World War. Istanbul first claimed that participation in the Shanghai Commission of 1909 was deemed impossible due to the domestic troubles that followed a coup led by Abdülhamid II in March of that year. Two years later, the Young Turk government again refused to take part in negotiations at The Hague, this time stating that an anti-opium convention would harm the state's financial interests.⁴³

The opium production and trade in Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece before the end of First World War

Macedonian lands were not part of Bulgaria's borders shaped by The Treaty of Berlin but probably it was exactly the Ottoman influence that led the authorities of Bulgarian principality to adopt a special law regarding the cultivation of poppy for opium production in 1882⁴⁴. According to the law, the owners of poppy fields were exempted from 10% tax for ten-year period, the import of poppy seeds was exempted from custom duties, and the export of opium poppy also was free of custom duties. The law stated that beneficiaries were to be only local Bulgarian producers. The last article of the law pointed out that Bulgarian poppy producers and merchants who would receive an International award for their production should be rewarded with 5000 leva. The law was followed by an instruction from the minister of finance Grigor Nachovic regarding the way the law

⁴¹ Frederick Block, *Racism's Hidden History in the War on Drugs* <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/judge-frederic-block/war-on-drugs_b_2384624.html> (accessed: 10. 10. 2020)

⁴² Timothy Brook, Bob Wakabayashi, *Op. cit.*, p. 30

⁴³ Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 65

⁴⁴ *Държавен вестник*, 24–3. III. 1883

should be applied by the local authorities⁴⁵. The instruction insisted that opium was a highly valued product on the international market and according to past experience the land of the Principality could provide best quality poppy for opium production, so the minister ordered that the local authorities had to spread enough information among the peasants and to „use all of the moral influence of their authority to stimulate the cultivation of this so much valuable plant“⁴⁶.

It is not clear how the law influenced the opium production in Bulgaria. So far, there is no data for the period 1883–1913, and probably the measures from years 1882–1883 remained only on paper. The comparative analysis with other Balkan cases and the Ottoman in particular showed that the Western Anatolia, parts of Central Anatolia and Macedonia remained the major poppy production regions in the Balkans and in the Ottoman Empire. Bulgaria is not mentioned as a major source of opium in the world trade despite the fact that a Bulgarian report from 1960 made for UN mentioned that in the end of 19th century the poppy was to be found as far as the Danube valley⁴⁷ and another earlier Bulgarian edition from 1951 specifies that along with the spread of poppy for opium production as north as the Danube valley for the first time opium poppy was planted in the village of Ferdinandovo, Plovdiv region, Southern Bulgaria in 1895 by a migrant from Macedonia⁴⁸. The *Annuaire International de la Bulgarie* from 1898 does not mention opium among the export goods making more than 100000 leva in 1894 and 1895⁴⁹. This can be proved also by the fact that immediately after the Balkan wars and during the First World War there is much more archival information regarding the place of Bulgaria in poppy production and opium trade. The reason for that is the fact that parts of Macedonia were seized by Bulgaria. As a result of the wars, not only Bulgaria did become a possessor of new very fertile poppy fields but it also acquired large quantities of raw opium as war booty. It was no surprise that some Bulgarian entrepreneurs seized the opportunity to make profit. The archival sources show that Bulgarian contractors or various industrial commerce chambers were looking for markets and information about the prices of raw opium and asked help from Bulgarian

⁴⁵ Окръжно писмо от Григор Начович, министър на финансите, до окръжните управители за приемането от Народното събрание на Закона за обработване на мака и за добиване на афион, за освобождаване от десетък за 10 години отглеждащите мак, за освобождаване от мито вноса на маково семе и износа на афион и обявяване на 5000 лева награда за производител, спечелил награда в изложение. Литографно копие. Ръкопис. 3 март 1883. ЦДА, фонд 159 к, оп. 1, ае. 59, л. 28–29.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 29

⁴⁷ D. Dalev, L. Iliev, R. Ilieva. Poppy cultivation in Bulgaria, and the production of opium, 1960, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/bulletin/bulletin_1960-01-01_1_page005.html> (accessed: 10. 10. 2020)

⁴⁸ П. Попов, Й. Димитров. *Мак за опиум и семе*. С., 1951, с. 11

⁴⁹ *Annuaire International de la Bulgarie*. Sofia, 1897, p. 148–149

diplomatic representatives in Istanbul and Western Europe⁵⁰. This is how contacts were established with the famous British Jewish merchants from the Witall family whose network encompassed the most important drug trade centers in the Balkans — Smyrna, Istanbul and Thessaloniki⁵¹. The content of the documents once again proves that before the wars Bulgaria did not have a significant position in opium production and trade. That is why after the seizure of the new territories Bulgarian contractors acquired large opium stock but had no experience with the markets and the prices, so they had to ask the Bulgarian diplomatic representatives for help.

In the statistics regarding Bulgarian export for 1911 to 1915 we were able to find official data on opium which are summarized in the following table:

Export of opium from Bulgaria ⁵²											
country	weight	1915		1914		1913		1912		1911	
		quantity	value lv. fr.								
England	kg	426	27025	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Germany	—	135	11568	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greece	—	1563	101220	918	46460	50	1500	—	—	—	—
Russia	—	753	60496	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
USA	—	1878	133014	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Serbia	—	—	—	1899	86652	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ottoman empire	—	—	—	1679	58870	—	—	—	—	—	—
All	kg	4756	333323	4496	191982	50	1500	—	—	—	—
Duty free	kg	2	175	4496	191982	50	1500	—	—	—	—

Another important information tells us that in 1915 the quantities of poppy seed valued 38 480 francs as well as opium with a price of 5961195 francs were transited through Bulgaria⁵³. The amount of 113453 kilos of opium with the estimated value of 5961195 francs came from Turkey⁵⁴. The opium was directed to Germany (758000 francs)⁵⁵, Greece (8609661 francs⁵⁶), Italy (608750⁵⁷), Romania (6000

⁵⁰ ЦДА, ф. 321^к, оп. 9, а.е. 22, л. 1, ЦДА, ф. 304^к, а.е. 1342, л. 72, ЦДА, ф. 320^к, а.е. 15а, л. 1, ЦДА, ф. 320^к, а. е. 15а, л. 4

⁵¹ ЦДА, ф. 321^к, оп. 9, а.е. 22, л. 3

⁵² Статистика за търговията на Царство България с чуждите държави: Внос, износ, антрепозит и транзит през 1913, 1914 и 1915 години. С., 1921, с. 324

⁵³ с. 512

⁵⁴ с. 533

⁵⁵ с. 525

⁵⁶ с. 527

⁵⁷ с. 529

francs⁵⁸), Russia (285655⁵⁹), USA (292430⁶⁰), Switzerland (11710 kilos estimated as 404699 francs)⁶¹. 97510 kilos of opium for 469540 francs exited from Dedeagach (Alexandroupoli) customs⁶². 1733 kilos of opium (107100 francs)⁶³ entered through Kuleliburgaz (Pythio). 15943 kilos of opium (1321655 francs) left Bulgaria through Ruse⁶⁴. 97510 kilos of opium (4639540 francs)⁶⁵ entered Bulgaria as transit through Soufli (Suflu). 14210 kilos of opium (1214555 francs)⁶⁶ entered Bulgaria as transit through Harmanli. The opium was classified as part of Resins, mineral oils and sticky substances and bore statistical number 306a in the so called Goods nomenclature according to the list made by the General Directorate of Statistics which came into force in 1891⁶⁷.

During the war years and especially during the First World War when the Bulgarian army occupied almost all the territory of Macedonia, another state representative gained an important role in the trade with poppy and opium — the militaries. Their role was a typical one. Some of them were using their power given by the state mainly for private benefit and imposed a kind of „free trade“ status in the occupied territories in the war context. In his diary General Zhostov blamed General Tantilov for acquiring permission from the government to launch and almost chaotic mass export from the new territories. Zhostov as well blamed General Racho Petrov who exported 70 boxcars with poppy via a Jewish merchant as Zhostov underlined⁶⁸.

The period after the Liberation to the end of the Wars in the context of drug production and trade in Bulgaria started with a rather interesting attempt from the state to encourage cultivation of poppy plants but it seems that the intervention of the state remained only on paper and Bulgaria did not manage to create a significant poppy and opium production. The situation changed dramatically as a result of the wars. Upon this loss, Bulgaria became a political outsider in the Balkans but in terms of opium production and trade the Bulgarian state turned into one of the drugs great powers in the global world market due to its minor gains in Macedonia.

⁵⁸ с. 530

⁵⁹ с. 531

⁶⁰ с. 531

⁶¹ с. 535

⁶² с. 546

⁶³ с. 548

⁶⁴ с. 551

⁶⁵ с. 554

⁶⁶ с. 556

⁶⁷ с. 560

⁶⁸ Дневник на ген. Константин Жостов — 1916 г. УИКИИЗТОЧНИК, <shorturl.at/ntPQ6> (accessed: 15. 11. 2020)

Opium and other drugs in Turkey, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania during the Interwar period

The Interwar period could be described as a transition between legal trade and production and prohibition that created the conditions for underground and criminal activities. The external factors were again to be of crucial importance. On the one hand, the International community through the League of Nations imposed greater control on drugs and during the Interwar period it created the conditions for the almost total ban of so called dangerous drugs after the Second World War⁶⁹. The International Opium Convention, signed at The Hague on January 23, 1912 was incorporated into the Treaty of Versailles. A revised International Opium Convention relating to Dangerous Drugs was signed in Geneva on February 19, 1925⁷⁰, and went into effect on September 25, 1938, and was registered in League of Nations Treaty Series on the same day. The Convention for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs which was a drug control treaty was promulgated in Geneva on 13 July 1931 and entered into force on 9 July 1933.

On the other hand, the drug market was growing rapidly and the Balkans seemed to be in the center of it especially with respect to opium and partly hashish. According to some of the authors, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria reached the spectacular 80% percent share in the raw opium production between the wars⁷¹. So the limitations on the market imposed by the League of Nations and inspired primarily by USA were contradicted by the expanding global demand. That created a semi legal situation which marked the whole period. The Balkans became a central point between major drug markets of global significance. The region was bordered by the large Persian opium producing and demanding market, the enormous and at the same time highly illegal and no less hungry cocaine, heroin⁷² and hashish (the latter

⁶⁹ By The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and afterwards

⁷⁰ SOCIETE DES NATIONS. DEUXIEME CONFERENCE DE L'OPIUM. CONVENTION PROTOCOLE ACTE FINAL. Signés à Genève le 19 février 1925/ LEAGUE OF NATIONS. SECOND OPIUM CONFERENCE. CONVENTION PROTOCOL FINAL ACT. Signed at Geneva on February 19th, 1925. C. 88. M. 44.1925. XI, Genève le 23 février 1925; See also SOCIETE DES NATIONS. ACTES DE LA DEUXIEME CONFERENCE DE L'OPIUM, Genève, 17 novembre-19 février 1925. VOLUME I. SEANCES PLENIERES COMPTE RENDU DES DEBATS. C. 760. M. 260.1924. XI, Genève, août 1925; SOCIETE DES NATIONS. ACTES DE LA DEUXIEME CONFERENCE DE L'OPIUM, Genève, du 24 novembre-3 décembre 1924. VOLUME II. SEANCES DES COMMISSIONS ET DES SOUS-COMMISSIONS. C. 760. M. 260.1924. XI, Vol. II, Genève, août 1925

⁷¹ Владан Јовановић, „Македонски опијум 1918–1941. О финансијским и политичким размерама феномена.“ — *Годишњак за друштвеноу историју* 3, 2009, с. 69–79.

⁷² In Egypt, heroin and cocaine found themselves in the market: cocaine could be bought at pharmacies, making it very popular, especially among the upper classes.

being most popular) Egyptian market and the growing European market with its highly effective drug producing and consuming German engine together with French who were among the top illicit producers and smugglers. Via the so called French connection the Balkan drugs (mainly opium) reached the USA whose market was on a road to become probably the most important factor in the global drug trade, consumption and politics. It should be also mentioned that opium from the Balkans found its place on the traditional and illegal Chinese market.

There were differences between the levels of state intervention in the drug production in the Balkan countries. The role of the state was stronger in Turkey and Yugoslavia and it seemed to be weaker in Bulgaria. In such a way it was easier for the League of Nations to try to impose restrictions on Turkey and Yugoslavia than on Bulgaria where the things were not quite clear, the private and state interest were intermingled and hard to trace and the state of affairs was additionally complicated by paramilitary IMRO which was constantly accused of illegal trade and production of opium⁷³ and hashish. That is why Turkey and Yugoslavia were even more ready to resist the international measures at the state level and Turkey especially opposed the foreign intervention. Both countries even tried to form a kind of the Balkan opium entente by creating The Central Bureau of Opium in Constantinople in 1934⁷⁴. The purpose of that institution was to defend the local producers and merchants from foreign pressure and from the supposedly unfair competition of the so called „European Cartel of the Factories of Opiates“. As a whole in economic terms the Central Bureau proved to be as effective as the Balkan pact in political terms.

Contrary to this, Bulgaria kept a low profile while readily introducing various restrictions⁷⁵ inspired by the International drug policy and calmly rejecting the perpetual charges for illegal drug factories and production in the country. The Bulgarian authorities were also very cooperative in case of foreign states' requests for extradition of various smugglers but in most cases the persons under investigation were never found. After the coup in 1934 the state became more

The British commander of the Egyptian police, Russell Pasha, relates how in 1919 he saw columns of carriages waiting in front of the pharmacies, <<http://blogs.haaretz.co.il/sadna/929/>> (accessed: 21. 10. 2020) מישוחכ מיחאלפ. אמזוק תאיל (accessed: 21. 10. 2020) מישולשהו מירשעה תונש לש מירצמב ויאקוקו ויאוריה: מיינתנדקד תוגונעתו

⁷³ Чехословашки извори за българската история. Т. 3. С., 1994, с. 98.

⁷⁴ Vladan Virijević, Zdravko Deletić. „The Central Bureau of Opium in Constantinople: The Segment of Yugoslav — Turkish Economic Relations between the Two World Wars“. *Teme — Časopis za Društvene Nauke* 2, pp. 597–612.

⁷⁵ Окръжно №3517-IV от 9. II. 1931 — за забраняване сеенето на растението „Индийски коноп“ за приготвяне на „хашиш“ (ДНЗ). Дв. 256–17. II. 931; Наредба №7792-IV от 19. VI. 933 относно производство и търговията със „суров опиум“ (афион) (ДНЗ). Дв. 66–26. VI. 933; Окръжно №8501–28. V. 935 — относно лицата, които могат да произвеждат опиум (ДНЗ). Дв. 153–11. VII. 935; Заповед №4921–4. V. 937 относно забрана сеенето, отглеждането, разпространението и търгуването с хашиш, и относно производството и продажбата на опиум (ДНЗ). Дв. 104–15. V. 937.

active and started to exercise bigger control over the drugs production and trade. And despite the fact that private contractors and commissioners continued their activities permissions were harder to obtain (as we can see from The Book of Agents dealing with Olives, Bonito and Opium)⁷⁶ and the state was ready to get a grasp on the opium production during the Second World War when this commodity increased its value and its importance for the military purposes rose⁷⁷. The 32 pages Regulation F on trade with raw opium, published and promulgated on 8 of July 1941 is a good example of the dimensions reached by the state intervention in the opium production and trade⁷⁸.

Seizures of drugs were recorded in most of the Balkan countries in 1935 including opium and cannabis in Turkey, cannabis and cocaine (sic!) in Greece, and cannabis in Romania⁷⁹.

The Turkish government reported two illegal factories in 1934 — in Istanbul and in Pera, and two in 1935 — in Bebek, Istanbul and on the European shore of Bosphorus, Bulgaria reported that the state closed an illegal factory in Gorna Dzumaya in June, 1934 and Greece found an illegal enterprise in Athens also in 1934⁸⁰.

Nicolas Scaliaris was mentioned among the traffickers expelled by France probably in 1934 or 1935⁸¹.

„In Bulgaria the situation does not appear to be perfectly clear, although seizures in other countries do not provide evidence that Bulgaria continues to be a center for the illicit manufacture and distribution of drugs. Attention should be drawn to a seizure made at Salonica on 13 September 1934 (Case O. C. 294 (v), page 32 No. 1419) in respect of which the Government of Hellenic Republic made the following declaration:

„The defendants appear to be affiliated with a band of drug traffickers, perhaps to the benefit of IMRO (Macedonian Revolutionary Organization), smuggled drugs in Bulgaria“.

⁷⁶ ЦДА, ф. 480^к, оп. 1, а.е. 264, Книга на агенти на маслини, опиум и паламут

⁷⁷ ЦДА, ф. 1471^к, оп. 1, а.е. 360, Наредби на МВ-Главна реквизиционна комисия за реквизиране на опиума

⁷⁸ Дирекция за закупуване и износ на зърнени храни — София. Отдел „Текстилни влакна“. Наредба „Ф“ за търговия със суров опиум (обнародвана в Държ. вестник бр. 147 от 8. VII. 1941 г.) и Окръжно № 3 за приложението ѝ. С., 1941.

⁷⁹ COMMISSION CONSULTATIVE DU TRAFIC DE L'OPIUM ET AUTRES DROGUES NUISIBLES. RAPPORT AU CONSEIL SUR LES TRAVAUX DE LA VINGTIEME SESSION. N officiel : C. 253. M. 185125.1935. XI P. 17–18

⁸⁰ COMMISSION CONSULTATIVE DU TRAFIC DE L'OPIUM ET AUTRES DROGUES NUISIBLES. RAPPORT AU CONSEIL SUR LES TRAVAUX DE LA VINGTIEME SESSION. N officiel : C. 253. M. 185125.1935. XI P. 17–19

⁸¹ COMMISSION CONSULTATIVE DU TRAFIC DE L'OPIUM ET AUTRES DROGUES NUISIBLES. RAPPORT AU CONSEIL SUR LES TRAVAUX DE LA VINGTIEME SESSION. N officiel : C. 253. M. 185125.1935. XI P. 17–26

A seizure in Alexandria, on 15 January 1935, of which the Cairo Central Narcotics Information Office stated that it had reason to consider the 200 grams of heroin seized as Bulgarian, was also reported.

It seems that Bulgarian clandestine factories, which were known to function a few years ago, did not use labels or trademarks. In any case, no such labels or trademarks have been brought to the attention of the Sub-Committee.

The most recent information given by the Bulgarian Government appears in the reply to the circular letter concerning the restriction of the number of licenses for the manufacture of drugs, or the Bulgarian Government states the following:

„The Bulgarian Government accepts the recommendation of the Consultative Committee for Opium in this field. In accordance with this recommendation, the Directorate General of Public Health not only no longer grants licenses for the opening of new drug factories, but also strives to discover the slightest legal pretext for closing down existing factories“⁸².

According to a DOCUMENT O. C. 1550 after 1929 when a decision was voted to hold a future conference in order to limit the production of drugs 16 factories fabricating different kinds of narcotics were established in 10 countries among them 1 factory in Yugoslavia and 6 factories in Bulgaria⁸³.

Unfortunately, we were not able to find enough data regarding the Greek case during the Interwar period. Also after the seizure of the important opium trade center Thessaloniki the importance of Greece in the world opium trade became significant. According to a UN report from 1949 the maximum production in Greece since 1926 was 3,428 kg. in 1928⁸⁴.

According to a Greek report, the 1935 coup in Greece (organized by former Prime Minister Eleutherios Venizelos) resulted in even greater amounts being trafficked through the Greek ports. However, it is not clear how the rise of Metaxas' military government in 1936 affected the narcotics trade during the lead-up to the Nazi invasion of 1941⁸⁵.

So, according to the scarce information we found it seems that the Greeks were very active in the smuggling of drugs worldwide

⁸² COMMISSION CONSULTATIVE DU TRAFIC DE L'OPIMUM ET AUTRES DROGUES NUISIBLES. RAPPORT AU CONSEIL SUR LES TRAVAUX DE LA VINGTIÈME SESSION. N officiel : C. 253. M. 185125.1935. XI P. 17-26

⁸³ COMMISSION CONSULTATIVE DU TRAFIC DE L'OPIMUM ET AUTRES DROGUES NUISIBLES. RAPPORT AU CONSEIL SUR LES TRAVAUX DE LA DIX-NEUVIÈME SESSION. N officiel : C. 530. M. 241.1934. XI, 4 décembre 1934, p. 10

⁸⁴ Bulletin on Narcotics, 1949 Issue 1, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/bulletin/bulletin_1949-01-01_1_page005.html#bf18> (accessed: 10. 10. 2020)

⁸⁵ Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 70

despite the fact that by the early 1920s, Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon had eclipsed Greece as the largest source of hashish consumed in Egypt⁸⁶. We should also point out the part played by Greek Sephardic Jews in the smuggling of drugs opium and heroin in particular to the USA during the Interwar years⁸⁷.

Among all the figures that emerged during the interwar period, Elie Eliopoulos stands as the most notorious and prolific of the smugglers who traded in Turkish opium. Elie (or Elias) was born to a prominent family in the Greek port city of Piraeus in 1894. His father was a diplomat in Turkey⁸⁸. Like many ambitious, affluent young men both inside and outside of the Ottoman Empire, he attended Roberts College, an elite American university located up the Bosphorus from the old city of Istanbul. Although it is clear Eliopoulos had already established himself as an importer of military wares in advance of his career as a smuggler, it is not clear exactly when or how Eliopoulos first entered the drug trade. Whatever the exact circumstances might have been, Elie Eliopoulos did forge partnerships with individuals who had made their mark upon the trade before the 1930s. An early confederate of the Eliopoulos brothers, David Gourievidis, an ethnic Greek from the Russian town of Novgorod, had exported opium into France after having spent several years living in China. 54 By the early 1930s, Eliopoulos, in partnership with Louis Lyon, Gourievidis, and other traffickers, had established a network of buyers, smugglers, and suppliers across Europe, Asia, and North America. His influence over the global narcotics trade particularly came to light with arrest of August „Little Augie“ Del Gracio, a New York gangster with connections to Lucky Luciano. Del Gracio's arrest at the hands of German police in 1931 attracted the attention of both the United States and the League of Nations, leading to an expansive investigation of various transnational traffickers (including Eliopoulos). One witness interviewed by League of Nations sources suggested that Elie's dealings in France alone during the early 1930s netted him over £400,000. 55 Elie Eliopoulos made it clear to investigators that he was a man with powerful friends. In a 1932 interview conducted by British officers in Egypt, Eliopoulos offered a lengthy autobiographical account of his activities, detailing both his methods and the accomplices who aided him along the way. In addition to his collaboration with Louis Lyon (who possessed his own connections to men of influence), he claimed that his operations in France were protected by a chief inspector of the Sûreté in Paris. Politicians in Athens similarly abetted his activities in Greece. Even a Peruvian diplomat based in Oslo became a client, smuggling large quantities of heroin to the United States in his

⁸⁶ Cyrus Schayegh, „The Many Worlds of Abud Yasin; or, What Narcotics Trafficking in the Interwar Middle East Can Tell Us about Territorialization“. — *American Historical Review*, April 2011, p. 274

⁸⁷ Devi Mays, D. Op. cit.

⁸⁸ Douglas Valentine, *The Strength of the Wolf: The Secret History of America's War on Drugs*. London, New York, 2004, p. 10

official luggage⁸⁹. It was only in the wake of the Del Gracio case that the protection proffered by officers in Sûreté Nationale began to evaporate. His expulsion from France in 1931 was sealed, he claimed, after Eliopoulos refused to pay one last bribe to a retired inspector. 57 Elie Eliopoulos, it appears, rarely laid a hand upon the narcotics he is often credited with smuggling. Instead, he often acted as a creditor, investor and middleman for both producers and shippers involved in the opium trade. One of his clients, whose name features prominently in the early „narcotics suspect“ files of the United States Department of the Treasury, was Georges Baklacoğlu (often spelled Bakladjoğlu). Born in Istanbul, Baklacoğlu's career began in the Egyptian Market (MısırÇarşısı), a neighborhood located within the old city of Istanbul. Alongside his brother-in-law (who operated an opium factory in Istanbul), he had made his name as an international smuggler by the early 1930s. In October 1930, he was implicated (although never imprisoned) in a case that involved the sale of forty kilos of heroin in the Egyptian port city of Alexandria. 58 Three years later, his name was mentioned in an investigation of Nessim Calderon, another Istanbul-based trafficker who serviced heroin markets in France, Egypt and Ethiopia⁹⁰.

Chief rival of Paul Carbone and Francois Spirito was „the top-head overlord of dope“, Elios Eliopoulos, described by historian A. A. Block as „a Greek (also allegedly a Jew) living in Paris... who [from 1928 through 1930] was under the protection of a Mr. Martin, called ‘Zani,’ of the Prefecture de Police“. According to Block, „For his part Zani received information on other traffickers and, most importantly, 10,000 francs every month“. Spirito, who offered Zani a greater monthly stipend flavored with subtle threats of exposure, displaced Eliopoulos's cozy arrangement. Eliopoulos, threatened with huge losses, fought back, but Zani by this time had tipped American authorities off about Eliopoulos's activities. In 1952, crime journalist Will Oursler said of the Greek dealer: „He was the man who gave the modern underworld of drugs definitive shape“. According to H. P. Albarelli „I would be Carbone and Spirito who would mold that shape into a sophisticated international business [...]“⁹¹.

Almost inevitably, many of the foreign powers and local politicians who have ruled Marseille allied themselves with the Corsican

⁸⁹ According to Douglas Valentine in the early 1930s a Peruvian diplomat called Carlos Fernandez Bacula „made six trips to New York, each time carrying 250 kilograms of narcotics under the protection of his diplomatic passport“. Douglas Valentine, *Op. cit.*, p. 10

⁹⁰ Ryan Gingeras, *Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey*, p. 68–69

⁹¹ H. P. Albarelli Jr., *A Terrible Mistake: The Murder of Frank Olson and the CIA's Secret Cold War Experiments*. Waterville, 2009, <https://books.google.bg/books?id=Ov-0BQAQBAJ&pg=PT701&clpg=PT701&dq=Elias+Eliopoulos&source=bl&ots=es7893vHr3&sig=ZYB0is_3LZf0wOxm8Km8ICFk-zj8&chl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjkr_5n-jWAhVmApoKHfrtAAEQ6AE-IVzAO#v=onepage&q=Elias%20Eliopoulos&f=false> (accessed: 11. 10. 2020)

syndicates: French Fascists used them to battle Communist demonstrators in the 1930s; the Nazi Gestapo used them to spy on the Communist underground during World War II; and the CIA paid them to break Communist strikes in 1947 and 1950. The last of these alliances proved the most significant, since it put the Corsicans in a powerful enough position to establish Marseille as the postwar heroin capital of the Western world and to cement a long-term partnership with Mafia drug distributors⁹².

It is worth adding that according to us there was one important difference between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia (and to some extent the Republic of Turkey as well) on the one hand and Greece on the other. In contrast to the former the latter had a significant local consumption of heroin, opium and hashish⁹³. According to Kostis Gotsinas heroin addiction even caused a sort of ‘drug scare’⁹⁴. To some extent this was a consequence from the Greek defeat in the war with the Kemalists that led to a large exodus of Orthodox population from Asia Minor, many of whom were scorned in Greece as „the seed of the Turk“⁹⁵ and had a difficulty to adapt at to the new homeland. Together with the desperate refugees a lot of new teriyakis and rebetes or mangas also arrived in Greece. They were traditional opium and hashish consumers from the Asia Minor drug dens. The new mangas from Asia Minor strengthened the underworld subculture that had already existed in the Greek hashish tekkes which included drug consumption and rebetiko music and dances⁹⁶. In the framework of rebetiko music genre a special subgenre developed called *χασικλίδικα* [hasiklithika]⁹⁷. Thus Greece became probably the first Balkan country in which the topic of drugs influenced the popular culture like it later happened in much more larger scale through the so called narcocorridos in Mexico and Columbia⁹⁸.

⁹² Alfred W. McCoy. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade: Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, Central America, Colombia*. Chicago, 2003, p. 46–47

⁹³ Συγκελάκης Α. Τα μεγάλα κοινωνικά δηλητήρια: (καπνός, οινόπνευμα, χασίς, μορφίνη, κοκαΐνη, κ.τ.λ.). Αλεξάνδρεια, Αθήναι, 1928; Στριγγάρης Μ. Γ. Χασίς: Ψυχοπαθολογική, κλινική, κοινωνιολογική μελέτη επι των συνεπειών του κανναβισμού. Αθήνα, 1937

⁹⁴ Kostis Gotsinas, Attitudes towards Heroin Addicts and Addiction in Inter-War Greece. — *Central Europe*, 12: 2, 2014, p. 174

⁹⁵ Susam Şebnem, „Rembetika Songs and Their ‘Return’ to Anatolia“, *The Translator*, 2006, 12: 2, p. 253

⁹⁶ Gail Holst, *Road to Rembetika. Music of Greek Sub-Culture, Songs of Love, Sorrow and Hashish*. Limni, 2013; See also <<http://www.dopemagazine.com/traditional-hashish-songs-of-greece/>> (accessed: 11. 10. 2020)

⁹⁷ Τα χασικλίδικα ρεμπέτικα που σόκαραν την Ελλάδα του μεσοπολέμου Οι μάγκες, οι τεκέδες, τα ναρκωτικά και η σκληρή τιμωρία που τους επιφύλασσε το δικτατορικό καθεστώς του Μεταξά. — *newsbeast*, 0: 05, 18/12/2016, <<http://www.newsbeast.gr/weekend/arthro/2501912/ta-chasiklidika-rempetika-pou-sokaran-tin-ellada-tou-mesopolemou>> (accessed: 13. 10. 2020)

⁹⁸ Elijah Wald, *Narcocorrido: A Journey into the Music of Drugs, Guns, and Guerrillas*. HarperCollins e-books. First Rayo paperback edition published 2002.

Conclusion

Recently a leading article in the New York Times started with the following text:

At a time when the United States is in the grip of an opioid epidemic, many insurers are limiting access to pain medications that carry a lower risk of addiction or dependence, even as they provide comparatively easy access to generic opioid medications⁹⁹.

The superstition of the state to quote Lev Tolstoy is something in which people are made to believe. In such a way people believe that taking governmentally approved drugs is not as dangerous as taking governmentally forbidden drugs. The governments had and have the legitimate right to introduce and ban opioids. There are a lot of examples of these double standard politics. The Nazis persecuted people they suspected in doing decadent things but at the same time they were conducting blitzkrieg with soldiers being on cheap methamphetamines (1939–1941). Sieg „High“ as Norman Ohler have written with hint of style and irony¹⁰⁰. The double moral standards could be seen in the evaluation of different actors in the illegal drugs traffic. So, according to the Turkish state the Kurdish heroin smugglers are criminals who support Kurdish terrorist activities with drugs money, but on the other hand there are speculations that Kurtlar Vadisi paramilitary hero Polat Alemdar was inspired by the famous Turkish terrorist and drug smuggler Abdullah Çatlı, who after his death was praised by the then-prime minister Tansu Ciller who said that „those who have been shot or who have shot on behalf of the state are both honorable“¹⁰¹.

Like yin and yang, the history of the relations between states and drugs in the World as a whole and in the Balkans in particular show how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may actually be complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the world of supply and demand, and how they may give rise or fall to each other as they interrelate to one another. In the 19th century and beginning of 20th century, following the Western example the Balkan states were encouraging its opium and hashish production and export and during the Interwar years, in a short time in legal and semi legal conditions

⁹⁹ Thomas, K., Ch. Ornstein. „Amid Opioid Crisis, Insurers Restrict Pricey, Less Addictive Painkillers: Drug companies and doctors have been accused of fueling the opioid crisis, but some question whether insurers have played a role, too“. — *New York Times*, SEPT. 17, 2017, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/17/health/opioid-painkillers-insurance-companies.html?hp&action=click&pg-type=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=first-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>> (accessed: 4. 10. 2020).

¹⁰⁰ Norman Ohler, *El gran delirio: Hitler, drogas y el III Reich*. Spanish Edition, Grupo Planeta, Kindle Edition, Kindle Locations 14–15.

¹⁰¹ Berfin Emre Çetin, *The Paramilitary Hero on Turkish Television: A Case Study on Valley of the Wolves*. Cambridge, 2015, p. 59

they became the world's top producers in terms of raw opium. Thus the Balkans became fully integrated into a growing global market. At the same time, after the First World War almost the same force that had pushed the Balkan states into the global drugs market started to impose restrictions creating the conditions for the future almost full ban on the so called dangerous drugs including those cultivated and produced on the Balkans. As a result of this the region had to follow the example of USA and the leading European countries and to sharply limit its trade and production. But the demand was still growing creating the global market of illegal supply and illegal drugs with its irresistible underground in form and capitalist in content force. And then again the Balkans had to adapt. And like in the 19th and the beginning of 20th century they did adopt the new framework and did adapt.

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TRGOVCI OPIJUMOM, BONITOM I MASLINAMA:
DRŽAVE I DROGA NA BALKANU (OD POČETKA 19.
VIJEKA DO ČETRDESETIH GODINA 20. VIJEKA)

Na osnovu arhivske analize, ovaj rad predstavlja istraživanje koje po prvi put ispituje ulogu opijuma u nekim nacionalnim državama nastalim raspadom Osmanskog carstva — Bugarske, Turske i Srbije (kasnije Kraljevine Jugoslavije); prateći period prije Drugog svjetskog rata. Tokom međuratnog perioda 43% opijuma na međunarodnom tržištu dolazilo je iz sporne makedonske regije, koja je bila podijeljena između Jugoslavije, Bugarske i Grčke, nakon Prvog svjetskog rata. Nakon jugoslovensko-turskog sporazuma taj procenat se povećao na 80%, a Balkan je postao dio ozloglašene francuske veze. Služeći se metodom Histoire croisée, naš prilog pokušava prikazati odnose između balkanskih zemalja u vezi sa opijumskom politikom, novim poroznim nacionalnim granicama, etičkom saradnjom i rivalstvom u (ne)legalnom poslu trgovine opijumom.

Ključne riječi: opijum, droge, međuratni period, Makedonija, Bugarska, Turska, Jugoslavija