Feminism, philanthropy and patriotism : female associational life in the Ottoman empire

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

*Ottoman Muslim Women and Work during the First World War**

The Turkish author Yalman referred to in Chapter Nine stressed the importance of women getting (paid) work for the emancipation of, what he called, "Turkish" women.[1] Scholars doing research on the effects of the developments on the labour market on women and gender during the First World War in other countries, show that the changes which took place are much more complicated. They discovered that women did not simply start to work, but that a shift took place in the gender division of labour: women, who, in general, had been working before, took jobs that men used to do.[2] Others reject this idea too, for the countries they studied. They argue that women were not able to take up the jobs of men in the war industry, because the latter were skilled labourers, while the women were unskilled. In Germany this led to a lack of cooperation or blank refusal of the side of the employers to employ women. They were allowed to call back their skilled labourers from the front instead.[3] In France, on the other hand, the need for a higher production led to the rationalization of the production process and the introduction of Taylorism. Instead of the old system with craftsmen working on a product as a whole, the production process was cut into small, repetitious pieces which unskilled workers, for example women, could do. So, in this case women did not take the jobs of men, but the production process was reformed in such a way that new jobs were created which supposedly suited women better, argues Downs.[4] The same author argues that in Britain, on the other hand, the "dilution" of skilled labour had been blocked by the labour

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[1] [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, 235-238.
[2] See e.g. Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work*.
[3] Daniel, *The War from Within*, 37-127.
[4] Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality*, 6-14; 24-30.

unions. Only after a law forced them and with the promise that the previous conditions would be restored after the war, the craftsmen accepted the fragmentation of skilled labour into smaller pieces.[5]

Another issue which comes up in the literature on the impact of the First World War on women and their families is for which women changes took place. Were the changes which took place affecting all women in an equal way and to a similar degree or were some women more affected than others or in different way? Factors like class, ethnic background and stage in the life cycle might be important parameters in this context. Greenwald, for example, argues that in the case of the United States the jobs vacated by white women taking men's jobs, were filled in turn by black women.[6] Hausen tells us about middle class German women who were forced to find a paid job for the first time in their life, because their husbands had died and their widows' pension was not enough to live from.[7] In the same way working class women who had stopped working after they got married and had their first child were forced to return on the work floor. Healy points out how middle- and upper-class women in Austria were warned not to do any sewing on a voluntary base in order not to effect the employability of working class women negatively, a problem also referred to by Darrow for France.[8]

Whether or not there was a direct causal connection between the changes in the gendered division of labour and the war is still another issue of debate. Some authors argue that the changes were the result of an earlier development and that the war actually was detrimental to the emancipation of women. They point out that after the war the changes which had actually started before the war in retrospect were regarded a result of the war and thus explicitly meant to be only temporary.[9]

This brings us to another question which was asked: whether or not the changes lasted beyond the war. Did women continue to work in their new jobs, or were the changes reversed after the war? Often they found that the latter was

[5] Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality*, 30-39. See also Irene Osgood Andrews & Margarett A. Hobbs, *Economic Effects of the World War upon Women and Children in Great Britain,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1921, 50-74.

[6] Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work*, 4.

[7] Karin Hausen, "The German Nation's Obligations to the Heroes' Widows of World War I," in: Higonnet et al. (eds), *Behind the Lines*, 126-140.

[8] Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 175-181; Darrow, *French Women and the First World War*, 174-178.

[9] "Introduction," in: Higonnet et al. (eds), *Behind the Lines*, 1-17.

the case. Women were simply laid off completely when the men returned from the home front, were forced to accept lower paid jobs, or at best returned to their former jobs.[10] Instead of a consolidation of whatever changes had taken place, women were forced to return to their homes. In order to make up for the loss of manpower, governments followed pronatalist policies which bound women to their homes. Moreover, the prevention of social unrest amongst the returning soldiers led the same governments to take "limiting legislative"[11] measures to oust women out of the working force: protective labour laws regarding working women and children which had been void during the war became valid again after the war.[12]

War thus did not provide women with an entrance ticket to the male domain of (economic) life, in which men and women equally participated. The reality was much more complicated than that for at least the women in countries like Germany, France, Great Britain and the United States as several scholars have shown. To what extent, however, are their findings applicable to the Ottoman Empire? What shifts took place in the Ottoman industrial labour force during the First World War? What effect did these shifts have on Ottoman women and on gender? To what extent were these shifts lasting?

The countries these scholars studied were all industrialized countries. Their findings, therefore, are mainly based on the participation of women in the industrial production process. The Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, was far from industrialized when the First World War started. If we want to be able to say something on Ottoman women in general, we would have to also include the by far largest sector of Ottoman economy: agriculture.[13] The authors who do refer to this sector for Britain, Germany and France, respectively, all conclude that this sector constituted a serious problem for their governments. In all three countries the agricultural labour force was decreased by the drawing of men.

[10] Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work*; "Introduction," in: Higonnet et al. (eds), *Behind the Lines*, 8-10; Downs, *Manufacturing Inequality*, 186-211; Daniel, *The War from Within*, 1997.

[11] This term is borrowed from Koven and Michel who make a distinction between "redistributive" measures which compensate women for the loss of income or prevent them from having to give up their job and "limiting legislation" including measures which lead to a loss of work for women without any compensation, such as the limitation of working hours and protective measures related to working conditions. Koven & Michel, "Introduction," 18-19.

[12] "Introduction," in: Higonnet et al. (eds), *Behind the Lines*, 9; Andrews & Hobbs, *Economic Effects of the World War upon Women and Children in Great Britain*, 126-166; 223; Daniel, *The War from Within*, 63-64.

[13] I.e. the agricultural sector provided 56% of the Ottoman "national" income in 1914, but in 1913 78% of its population lived in rural areas. Quataert, "The Age of Reforms, 1812 - 1914," 781; 845.

Moreover, there was a tendency of women (and the remaining men) to leave the agricultural sector and look for jobs in the cities, because they were better paid. In Britain and France this had already been the case before the war started.[14] In Germany the wish to migrate to the city of agricultural contract workers became more evident during the war.[15] In all these countries the government took measures to prevent the agricultural sector from being completely destroyed, including the employment of women. Thus, for example, in Britain a Women's Land Army was established in July 1917, which by October 1919 had allocated 23,000 women to working in agriculture despite the resistance of many farmers against employing female labourers.[16] In Germany the government tried to prevent women from leaving the countryside to become weekend-commuting industrial workers by threatening them with prison sentences or denying them the mediation of the Employment Office.[17] What the effect of the war was on Ottoman women in the agricultural sector constitutes the second part of this chapter. [18]

While the researchers referred to above used primary sources such as the archives of Trade Unions, women's labour organizations, Social Insurance Institutions, or employer's organizations, such materials are lacking in the Ottoman case. The primary materials available for information on women and manufacturing in the Ottoman Empire are Ottoman and foreign newspaper clippings and articles from periodicals (with which we have to be careful, because they may have served as propaganda), annual reports of the major state induced employment agency for women, the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi,* the statistics on industrial enterprises with more than 10 workers over the two years 1913 and 1915 which were published by the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture in 1917[19] and some references in (auto)biographies. The sources on

[14] Sharon Ouditt, *Fighting Forces, Writing Women: Identity and Ideology in the First World War*, London & New York: Routledge, 1994, 50-51; Darrow, *French Women and the First World War*, 178-186.

[15] Daniel, *The War from Within*, 48-49.

[16] Ouditt, *Fighting Forces, Writing Women*, 54-57.

[17] Daniel, *The War from Within*, 48-49.

[18] The services sector is largely dealt with in Chapter Eight.

[19] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, [hazırl. Ökçün, Gündüz], İstanbul: Hil Yayın, 1984[3] (1970) [orig. *Ticaret ve Ziraat Nezareti, 1329,1331 Seneleri Sanayi İstatistiki, (İstanbul vilâyeti ile İzmir, Manisa, Bursa, İzmit, Karamürsel, Bandırma, Uşak şehirlerinde bulunan sanayi müesseselerinin, bizzat mahallinde icra olunan tetkikat üzerine ahval-i umumiyesini, tesisat, müstahdemin ve istihsalatını ve işbu istihsalatın Ticaret-i Hariciye İstatistik ile mukayesesini muhtevidir)*, İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1917 - 1333].

women and agriculture during the First World War are even scantier. Although the materials, thus, are rather limited, it is possible to compose a picture out of the bits and pieces available which can contribute to the further comprehension of the effect of the war on Ottoman (Muslim) women in general and, more specifically, to those women belonging to the lower socio-economic strata.

Women and Manufacturing

Ottoman Manufacturing and Women on the Eve of the First World War

The largest share of the production of the manufacturing sector in the Ottoman Empire on the eve of the First World War took place in workshops of various sizes, while also home production formed a major factor. The number of mechanized factories in the Ottoman Empire remained limited until the very end of the Empire. Most of the mechanized factories were situated around Istanbul and some other major cities and by 1914 they employed approximately 35,000 workers. Partly these factories were founded and controlled by the state and not only producing for the market, but also for the military.[20] Women formed an important part of the labour force in certain branches of the manufacturing sector. As discussed in Chapter Six, women and girls formed a large share of the labour force in all stages of the production process of all sorts of textile.[21] Another industry in which women formed a dominant part of the labour force was the tobacco industry.[22] Apart from these two branches women

[20] Quataert, "The Age of Reforms, 1812 - 1914," 898-904.

[21] Donald Quataert, "Ottoman Women, Households, and Textile Manufacturing, 1800 - 1914," in: Nikki R. Keddie & Beth Baron (eds), *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1991, 161-176. In a German article published in 1902, the author stated that almost all of the workers in the factories he referred to (amongst them the cotton mill in Yedikule, the fez factory in Fezhane, the shoe workshops in Beykoz, the Porcelain factories, the artillery factory in Tophane) were men and in most cases "Turks" except for the workers in the tapestry industry where women and children from surrounding villages were employed. "Industrielle Unternehmungen in der Tuerkei," *Palästina*, 1, 1902, 13-15.

[22] Gülhan Balsoy, "Gendering Ottoman Labor History: The Cibali Régie Factory in the Early Twentieth Century," *International Review of Social History,* 54, Supplement, 2009, 45-68.

were also employed in other industries. The First World War brought along major transformations for this sector and its employees.

According to Yalman, the Ottoman government possessed already before the First World War several factories which manufactured various kinds of "war materials."[23] It is not clear, however, what he means with "war materials." Daniel in her book on working class women during the First World War in Germany makes a distinction between "war industries" and "peace industries." In her view the former includes the weapon and ammunition factories. Textile production or the food(processing) industries, even if they were producing for the army, were by her included in the "peace industries." This distinction, however, seems not very functional. In the context of an actual war, the purchasers/consumers of the goods produced and not the nature of these products form a more useful criterion to classify an industry: rather than referring to the dichotomy of a war versus peace industry, the distinction should be made between a military or army industry on the one hand and a civil industry on the other. Thus the production of textile goods, such as uniforms and sandbags for the army should at any time be counted part of that army industry. So is the tobacco industry, but only if the largest part of its production is purchased by the army to distribute amongst its soldiers. Thus, various parts of the "civil industry," in the Ottoman Empire were turned into "army industries" during the First World War to equip the Ottoman army and its soldiers.

Ottoman Manufacturing and Women during the First World War

Over the war years the manufacturing sector was militarized fast: not only did civil industries turn to production for the army, the Ottoman military themselves tried to expand production under their control in an effort to meet the increased demand, which, for several reasons discussed further below, became increasingly harder to meet through import in the course of the war years. Women proved to be an import potential source of labour to be tapped into.

When the army was mobilized in August 1914, the logistics and provisioning were not yet organized. Thus, for example, there were not enough uniforms for the men in arms while the uniforms which were available were meant for the

[23] [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, 91.

winter.[24] To provide the clothing several ways were used. Through the military attaché in Berlin orders were placed in Germany, while also an effort was made to expand the local production. In 1914 the Ottomans asked the Germans for 150,000 military cloaks, 150,000 uniforms and 200,000 pair of shoes. These goods from the first order, however, never arrived in the Ottoman Empire for three reasons. Firstly, there were no direct connections possible between Germany and the Ottoman Empire to transport the goods. Secondly, after the Battle at the Marne the whole German production was used for the own army. Thirdly, the Germans refused to send goods unless the Ottomans would enter the war on their side.[25] Only in 1916 the Germans were able to send a limited amount of "clothing, footwear, equipment and materials for protection from the cold."[26] The total amount of "textiles" sent by the Germans during the war was, according to Yılmaz, 97 wagons of uniforms (*elbise*), 1 wagon of blankets, 226 chests of socks and 637 chests of tents.[27]

This was by far not enough to equip the army and thus the local production was expanded. One way to create this expansion was to appeal to the patriotic feelings of the (female) population and to ask them to contribute voluntarily, as shown in the following two chapters. Another way was to enhance industrial production. On the one hand, the industrial production in existing factories and workshops was increased, while new factories and workshops were opened. On the other hand an effort was made to mobilize the potential home industry. Partly this was done by the military authorities, partly private or semi-private initiatives instigated these activities.

On 17 August 1914 the First Army Corps published an advertisement calling upon "persons of both sexes" who would be able to assist in the production of "uniforms, military cloaks and fur caps (*kalpak*)" to apply to its depot in Süleymaniye (Istanbul). The advertisement mentioned that it was possible to work both in the depot itself and at home. In the latter case, however, the applicants needed a certificate of the Board of Elders of their neighbourhood, probably to show that they were reliable.[28] Lorenz also mentions that many

[24] Veli Yılmaz, *I'nci Dünya Harbi'nde Türk-Alman İttifakı ve Askeri Yardımlar*, İstanbul: n.p., 1993, 99-100. See also Orga who relates how his uncle who belonged to one of the first contingents taking off for the front did not have a uniform nor marching boots, but was marched off in his own clothes. Orga, *Portrait of a Turkish Family*, 72.

[25] Yılmaz, *I'nci Dünya Harbi'nde Türk-Alman İttifakı ve Askeri Yardımlar*, 87; 101-104.

[26] Yılmaz, *I'nci Dünya Harbi'nde Türk-Alman İttifakı ve Askeri Yardımlar*, 166.

[27] Yılmaz, *I'nci Dünya Harbi'nde Türk-Alman İttifakı ve Askeri Yardımlar*, 310.

[28] "I. Armeekorps," *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 17. August 1914, 2.

women got involved in army sewings at home.[29] Moreover, in Manisa 1,300 home workers of which 1,000 women produced cotton cloth at home.[30] Little is known about the actual organization of homework. Originally it seems to have been distributed through subcontractors. Irfan Orga mentions in his memoirs, however, how his mother and their neighbour sewed for a subcontractor until the army decided to buy up all the materials needed and started to open army *dikimhane* (sewing workshops) itself.[31] Subsequently his mother was left with no other choice, but to work at such a *dikimhane* in Gülhane. In *Harb Mecmuası* of July 1916 three photographs were published of such an *askeri dikimhane* (military sewing workshop) of which the location is unknown. On two of the photographs groups of women are working on their sewing, by hand and on sewing machines. The third photograph, on the other hand, depicts a large room with men in military outfit behind sewing machines. According to the subtitles the women on the photographs were "Muslim and Ottoman women aged between 12 and seventy sewing uniforms for our soldiers." The men behind the sewing machines were supposed to do the first coarse work, after which the uniforms were sent off in small wagons to the women, so that they could give them the finer finishing touch.[32]

According to Orga his mother received food and a small income, while she was housed in a dormitory during the week despite the fact that she was living in Istanbul and had a family with three children to look after.[33] The *dikimhane* where Orga's mother worked might well have been the one shown in the photographs below or the *dikimhane* which is referred to as the Sultan Ahmed *Elbise Anbarı* (Garments' Storehouse) in the first annual report of the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*.[34] This organization not only allocated women to work in existing institutions, but also established workshops itself as will be discussed in the paragraphs to come.

[29] Lorenz, *Die Frauenfrage im Osmanischen Reiche*, 54.

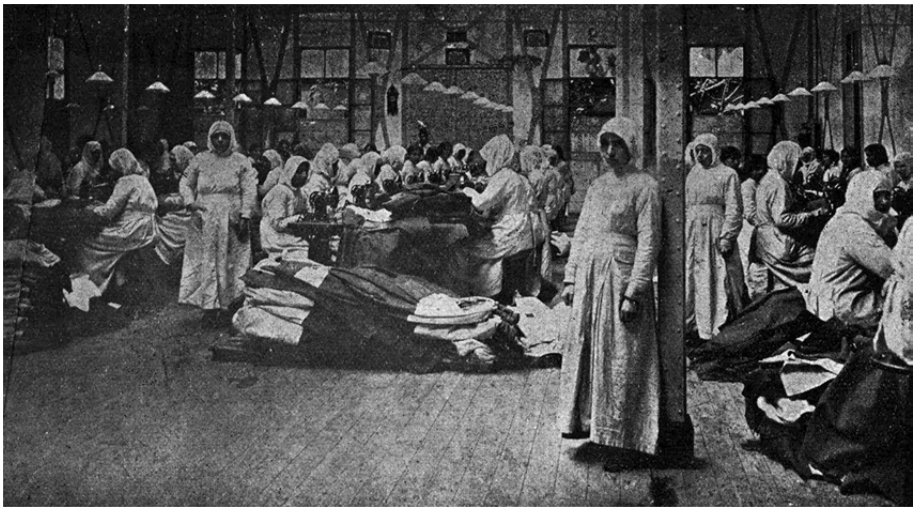
[30] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 135-139.

[31] Orga, *Portrait of a Turkish Family*, 152; 156-157.

[32] *Harb Mecmuası*, I, 11, Temmuz 1332, 174.

[33] Orga, *Portrait of a Turkish Family*, 164-167.

[34] *Devletlü İsmetlü Naciye Sultan hazretlerinin zir-i himayelerinde Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, İstanbul: Ahmet İhsan ve Şurekası, 1334, Cedvel No. 4.



Figures 17 and 18 "A picture of the thankworthy reforms of the Quartermaster General's Department. At the Military Workshop: Muslim and Ottoman ladies aged from 12 to seventy at work sewing uniforms for our soldiers while making a living with an Oriental zeal" *Harb Mecmuası*, I, 11, Temmuz 1332 (July/August 1916), 174. All the women are dressed in light coloured, apron-like dresses with matching headscarves as if they are wearing a uniform. Hanging on the walls are their outdoor black *çarşaf*s.

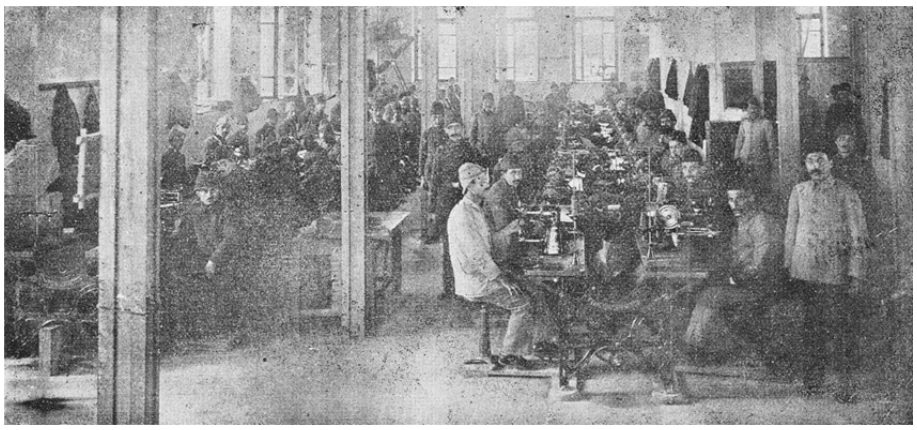


Figure 19 "A part of the department of the workshop with electrically driven sewing machines. The rough and rapid sewing is done in this department; the remaining fine work is immediately transported to the women's department in Decauville wagons." *Harb Mecmuası*, I, 11, Temmuz 1332 (July/August 1916), 174.

The military *dikimhane*s were not a specific feature of war time industry. They had been established by the military authorities to meet the increasing demand for military textiles due to the modernizing reforms in the army in the late nineteenth century. The military had been involved in manufacturing for the army from the mid-1800s onwards by establishing factories and workshops under military control. The Ministry of War, for example, in 1855 founded a factory in Makriköy which produced cotton thread and cloth.[35] It also opened military sewing workshops, where women were employed.[36] Similar workshops were also established at the vocational schools for girls which were founded in the second half of the nineteenth century. One such school was the one at Yedikule, which was opened by Midhat Pasha in 1869 and where 50 girls were

[35] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 135-136.

[36] These workshops seem to have served at the same time as correction facilities where fallen women were employed to prevent them from prostituting themselves. Yavuz Selim Karakışla, "Yoksulluktan fuhuş yapanların ıslahı (1910): askeri dikimevlerinde işe alınan Müslüman fahişeler [Arşivden bir belge (49)]," *Toplumsal Tarih* XIX, 112, 2003, 98-101. See also Nazan Maksudyan, "State 'Parenthood' and Vocational Orphanages (İslâhhanes): Transformation of Urbanity and Family Life," *History of the Family*, 16, 2011, 172-181. Fatma Aliye may have referred to one of these workshops when she mentioned a girl who had "money from military sewings" (*asker dikişi parası*) with whom the heroine of her novel, Fazıla, had taken refuge, in her first novel *Muhaderrat*. Fatma Âliye Hanım, *Muhâdarât*, [yayına hazırlayan H. Emel Aşa], 263-265.

educated to become seamstresses getting practical training by sewing uniforms for the army.[37] When this particular school was closed down in 1884, the pupils were sent to the other vocational schools which had been opened for girls in the meantime.

During the First World War, however, new factories and workshops were established, while existing private textile factories were put under military administration to meet the increasing demand and to substitute the import of, for example, cotton yarn from Britain and India, who provided 54% of the total demand in 1913, with locally produced yarn.[38] Since women had always formed a large part of the labour force in the textile industries, the opening of new factories and work places potentially offered job opportunities to an increasing number of women. The statistics on industrial enterprises published by the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture in 1917 which cover the years 1913 and 1915 seem to confirm this for the start of the war.

So, for example, the three cotton yarn and cloth factories existing in 1913 employed a total of 604 labourers of whom 50 % were women and children. In 1915 there were four such factories which employed, besides 270 soldiers working in the factory in Makriköy, 1,227 labourers of whom 55.5% were women and 14.3% children.[39] The number of female workers increased further during the war years. In 1916 - 1917, 833 women were employed at the Makriköy factory alone through the mediation of the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*.[40]

Apart from the cotton production, the wool industry was important for the military. Due to the war all the factories producing only yarn – mostly exclusively for the production of carpets – were closed down. The six factories producing cloth and yarn continued their existence under military administration.[41] The personnel working in these factories increased from 200 in 1913 to 393 in 1915. In 1913 there were only a few factories with women. In 1915

[37] According to Kurnaz, who bases her information on the State Yearbooks it was connected to the Ministry of Trade. According to Ergin, who does not give his sources, it was connected to the Ministry of War, a not wholly unlikely option since the girls manufactured goods for the army. Kurnaz, Şefika, *Cumhuriyet Öncesinde Türk Kadını (1839 – 1923)*, Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Aile Araştırma Kurumu Başkanlığı, 1991, 20-22; Ergin, *Türk Maarif Tarihi*, 686-688.

[38] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 130, 135-139.

[39] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 135-136.

[40] *Devletlü İsmetlü Naciye Sultan hazretlerinin zir-i himayelerinde Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, İstanbul: Ahmet İhsan ve Şurekası, 1334, Cedvel No. 4.

[41] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 130.

their number had increased relatively. In the Feshane and Izmit factories, however, women started to be employed only after 1916.[42] Through the mediation of the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* 1,140 women were allocated to the Feshane factory between October 1916 and January 1918.[43] Lorenz mentions that by 1917 or 1918 the Feshane had a sewing workshop where the total cloth production of the factory was processed. 80% of the persons working in this workshop were women many of whom were "Turkish," who, carrying a facial veil, worked under male supervisors.[44]

The *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*, apart from the numbers of women and places mentioned above, allocated at least another 2,671 women to other textile enterprises between October 1916 and January 1918. Women were sent to the *Taksim Fanila ve Çorab Fabrikası* (135),[45] to the *Milli Mensucat Şirketi*, which was founded in 1917[46] (22),[47] the *Eyüp Melbusat İmalathanesi* (1,592), the *Levazım İplik Fabrikası* which must be a military enterprise (272), and the *Ahırkapı Melbusat ve Çadır İmalathanesi* (250). In June 1918 the organization was still advertising to find 200 women to work at the *Eyüp Sultan Melbusat İmalathanesi* and the *Defterdar Mensucat Fabrikası*.[48]

Furthermore, in 1916 - 1917 another 863 women were, through the organization, employed at the military footwear factory in Beykoz.[49] When, in December 1917, German journalists visited this factory, they were surprised by the high number of women and girls working at this factory.[50] This factory, as the statistics show, had in 1915 already been by far the largest in its kind with a total of 768 personnel. The statistics, however, do not specify its personnel according to gender.[51] Women were, however, for the first time employed in the

[42] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 131.

[43] I.e. if the *Defterdar Mensucat Fabrikası* is the same as the Feshane which is very likely to be the case. *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel No. 4.

[44] Lorenz, *Die Frauenfrage im Osmanischen Reiche*, 61-62.

[45] According to Lorenz 400 women were employed at this factory by the organization. Lorenz, *Die Frauenfrage im Osmanischen Reiche,* 61-62.

[46] Toprak, *Milli İktisat - Milli Burjuvazi*, 193.

[47] According to an advertisement in *Tanin*, it was actually trying to find 400 (fourhundred!) "ladies" to work here in March 1917. It is not clear why the year report only gives the number of 22. "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi'nden," *Tanin,* 16 Mart/March 1333/1917, 4.

[48] "Çalışmak isteyen kadınlara," *Tanin,* 11 Haziran/June 1334/1918, 4.

[49] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel No. 4.

[50] "Alman gazetecilerin İstanbul ziyaretleri," *Tanin,* 25 Kanunuevvel/December 1333/1917, 3.

[51] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 101-104.

production of wooden nails for shoes during the first years of the war. The local production of these nails increased, because import was no longer possible. In 1913 there were 18 male workers in one factory which closed down during the war, in 1915 there were 40 male and 20 female workers in two factories both founded in 1915. One of the larger factories put under military administration was located in Saraçhane.[52] This might be the factory the annual report of the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti* is referring to as the *Saraçhane Fabrikası.* In this factory 371 women were employed through its agency in 1916 - 1917.[53]

Thus, over the war years, an increasing number of women were employed in the production of textiles and shoes for the army in the factories in Istanbul. The statistics of the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture show, however, that the increases were relatively small for the period 1913 - 1915 in the larger industrial establishments. Other sources, on the other hand, reveal that towards the end of 1916 the number of women working in this sector of industry grew much faster. This must have been due to the increasingly limited possibilities to import textile goods from, especially, Austria-Hungary and the efforts to establish a substitute industry.

Women were also active in other segments of the industrial sector which produced for the army and its soldiers. One of these segments was the tobacco industry, which showed a different picture. During the first years of the war, the total number of labourers increased, with the number of women increasing more than that of men. Two factories in Istanbul and Izmir had 1,994 workers of whom 923 female (46.3%) in 1913 and 2,112 workers including 1,086 women (51.4%) in 1915. The wages for workers were not specified for the two sexes, but were on average less than 10 *kuruş* per day.[54] The *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti* also allocated women to this industry. A total of 317 women worked there through their agency between October 1916 and January 1918.[55] Women and children were also employed in one of its supply industries: that of cigarette paper. The total number of labourers declined during the first years of the war. However, since no specifications are given for gender, it is not clear whether and how women were affected. The wages of women and children, though, varied between 2 and 6 *kuruş* per day, while that of men was between 10 and 15 *kuruş*

[52] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 117.
[53] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel No. 4.
[54] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 77.
[55] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel No. 4.

per day.[56] The production of the twelve factories, however, declined and was obviously not sufficient to meet demand. Over the war years three wagon loads of cigarette paper were imported from Germany.[57]

While it is thus possible to get quite some information on the participation of women in the labour force for the production of these parts of a soldier's equipment, his outfit and his cigarettes, it is more difficult to find data on another important part of a soldier's equipment, his weapons. Part of the military factories established by the Sultans in the nineteenth century must have served to produce weapons and ammunition. The old Tophane was still producing in the time of the First World War, while more weapons were produced at a factory in Zeytinburnu.[58] According to Eldem, the number of labourers in the weapon industry increased. While before the war 3,000 men were working in this branch, by the end of the war their number had risen to 10,000.[59] It is unclear, though, whether there were any women involved in this branch. Most likely, the workers employed were military from the worker's battalions. Through these battalions skilled craftsmen could be saved from active military service and be put at work in the war industry.[60] Moreover, German labourers were imported to work at the German-Ottoman arms factories.[61] References to women working in this particular branch of industries are limited, though. As early as August 1915, however, the *İmalat-i Harbiye Müdüriyeti* (Directorate of War Production) was advertising that it was looking for women and girls to work as quality controllers of shells at the Zeytinburnu Rifle Factory (*Zeytinburnu Demir Fabrikası*) and at the sewing workshop of the Makriköy Gunpowder Factory.[62] By February 1916, 150 women who had supposedly applied voluntarily were working at the state ammunition factory, while there were also women employed in the "automobile industry" (*Automobilfabrikation*) which was

[56] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 158-160.

[57] Yılmaz, *I'nci Dünya Harbi'nde Türk-Alman İttifakı ve Askeri Yardımlar*, 310.

[58] Stuermer, *Zwei Kriegsjahre in Konstantinopel*.

[59] Eldem, *Harp ve Mütareke Yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomisi*, 81. The 1915/16 budget for the *İmalat-ı Harbiye* refers to 4,500 employees (*memur*) to whom a total payment is foreseen of 12 million *kuruş*. This means that the daily wage for these employees was approximately 10 *kuruş*. Eldem, *Harp ve Mütareke Yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomisi*, 97-98.

[60] See e.g. the ad with the call of duty for skilled craftsmen specifically listed and the order to report to their recruitment offices in order to be employed at "certain institutions and certain factories at the capital." "Les artisans" *Lloyd Ottoman*, 2 Février 1915, 4.

[61] Einstein, *Inside Constantinopl*e, 274-275.

[62] "İmalat-i Harbiye Müdüriyeti'nden," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 15 Ağustos 1331 (28 August 1915), 4.

producing for the army.[63] By the end of July 1918, the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* was still advertising to find women to work at the *Makriköy Barut Fabrikası* (Makriköy Gunpowder Factory).[64] The production was far from satisfying the need of the Ottoman army. Most of the weapons and ammunition as well as means of communication and transport were imported from Austria and Germany.[65]

Due to the lack of male labour force, women were also catapulted into other jobs. As shown in Chapter Eight, women increasingly started to work in white collar jobs both for private companies as well as local and state authorities. The local authorities, however, in due time employed an increasing number of women as civil servants at lower levels as well.[66] The municipality of Istanbul employed, through the mediation of the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi,* women dressed in special uniforms and trousers as street cleaners.[67] The City Council appointed female civil servants in the district of Üsküdar, women were employed as toll collectors at the Galata bridge, while also at the Disinfecting Stations of Istanbul, Üsküdar and Tophane women were hired at 400 *kuruş* per month.[68] The Municipality of Izmir employed women in its town scavenger and building services,[69] while the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* served as mediator for the districts of Beyoğlu and İstanbul in finding 800 (!) "ladies" (*hanım*) to get "employment in the building trade" (*inşaatında istihdam)* probably to assist in the rebuilding of the old town after the big Fatih

[63] "Frauen als Fabrikarbeiterinnen," *Korrespondenzblatt der Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient*, II, 14, 12. Januar 1915, 340; Lorenz, *Die Frauenfrage im Osmanischen Reiche*, 62.

[64] "Kadın işçi aranıyor," *Tanin*, 29 Temmuz/July 1918, 4.

[65] Yılmaz, *I'nci Dünya Harbi'nde Türk-Alman İttifakı ve Askeri Yardımlar*.

[66] "Frauen im Zivildienst," *Der Neue Orient*, I, 7, Juli 1917, 331.

[67] "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi'nden," *Tanin,* 18 Mart/March 1333/1917, 2. According to the advertisement the organization sought to employ 300 women at 300 *kuruş* per month. See also [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, 237 and "Kadınlarımızdan da amele," *Sanayi,* 11, 31 Mart/March 1333/1917, 32 as quoted in Toprak, Zafer, *İttihad – Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: savaş ekonomisi ve Türkiye'de devletçilik, 1914 - 1918,* İstanbul: Homerkitabevi, 2003, 231, fn 38.

[68] "Die Tätigkeit der Frau," *Osmanischer Lloyd,* 19 April 1917, 3; Lorenz, *Die Frauenfrage im Osmanischen Reiche*, 69.

[69] "İzmir'de kadın tanzifat amelesi," *Tasvir-i Efkar,* 24 Nisan/April 1333/1917, 2; "İzmir'de kadın tanzifat amelesi," *İktisadiyat Mecmuası*, 55, 10 Mayıs/May 1333/1917, 7.

fire of June 1918.[70] By spring 1917 women also started to be employed by the shipping company as stewards at the women's cabins of the local steamers.[71]

Thus, although the numbers are incomparable with the large numbers of women working in industries in Western Europe and, later, in the United States, the Ottoman female population was certainly tapped into to meet the increasing need for labour of a country at war. The Ottoman statesmen seem to have been well aware of the potential of the female labour pool: mid 1916, Enver Pasha, at that time the Minister of War, took the initiative to found an organization which would not only work as an employment agency introducing and allocating women and girls looking for work to potential employers, but which also opened workshops itself, the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*. Eventually, this organization became one of the larger employers of women working in the production of military textiles.

The *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*

The *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* was founded in June 1916[72] upon the initiative of the Minister of War, Enver Pasha.[73] Its main aim was "to protect women by finding them work and by making them accustomed to making a living in an honorable way."[74] Although it was aiming at "all Muslim women" (*bilumum İslam kadınları*), as an article in *İktisadiyat Mecmuası* stated, the

[70] They would receive 10-15 *kuruş* per day plus one *okka* of bread. "İnşaat için hanım aranıyor," *Tanin*, 6 Ağustos/August 1334/1918, 4.

[71] "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi Müdüriyet-i umumiyesi'nden," *Tanin,* 16 Nisan/April 1333/1917, 4. See also "Kadın kamarot isteniyor," *Vakit,* 22 Ağustos 1918, 2.

[72] I.e. in June 1916 it applied for permission to be officially established to the Ministry of Interior. After the approval of the authorities, it was officially established on 14 August 1916. Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*, Nizamname,* Dersaadet: Matbaa-i Askeri, 1332, 1.

[73] Other countries set up similar organizations to promote women's labour in the context of this war. In December 1916, the Germans established a *Nationaler Ausschuß für Frauenarbeit im Kriege,* while the Austrian-Hungarian military authorities decided to found a "Women's Auxiliary Labour Force in the Field" (*weibliche Hilfskräfte der Armee im Felde).* The French never mobilized their women in an official context despite the establishment of a *Comité du travail féminin* which had to study the possibilities to do so in April 1916. Daniel, *The War from Within*, 77; Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 2004, 204-209; Darrow, *French Women and the First World War*, 187-188. See also Maria L. Klausberger, "Die 'Mobilisierung' der Frau," *Zeitschrift für Frauen-Stimmricht*, VI, 1-2, 1916, 3-4 (accessed through http://www.literature.at/default.alo -> Collections -> Frauen in Bewegung (Ariadne/ÖNB), lastly at 10 February 2013).

[74] Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi, *Nizamname*, 2.

statutes of the organization do not warrant such a conclusion: it lacked any ethno-religious specifications.[75]

Despite the patronage of the wife of Enver Pasha, Naciye Sultan, women were hardly involved in the administration of the organization. The (male) board members, however, seem to have made some efforts to include female members. In 1917 a *Hanımlar Heyeti* (Ladies' Committee*)* headed by Naciye Sultan and consisting of twelve members was established. These twelve women were chosen from amongst all the female members of the society. By 1920 the society had 78 female members out of 435 regular members. Only four women were remaining on the *Hanımlar Meclis-i İdaresi* (Governing Board of Ladies*)* as it was called by then, including Naciye Sultan, whose husband Enver Pasha by that time had fled the country.[76] The lack of women involved in the organization and the administrative chaos created by its administrators led (an) anonymous author(s) in the women's periodical *Kadınlar Dünyası* to reprimand the organization and its administrators in 1921. She (or he) wrote that now the male administrators had shown their incompetence, it was time to turn its governance over to skillful and capable women, especially since this organization was established for women.[77] Disappointment was therefore great when the new Board of Directors again consisted only of men and again mainly high bureaucrats and other men of the Istanbul Muslim establishment.[78]

The *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* not only worked as a mediator between women looking for work and employers looking for labour, but also employed women in entreprises owned and managed by the organization itself. According to *Osmanischer Lloyd,* the organization owned, for example, two of the factories mentioned above to which it allocated women: the *Taksim Fanila ve Çorab Fabrikası,* a factory equipped with machinery from Germany, and the *Eyüp Melbusat İmalathanesi*.[79] Moreover, it established textile workshops itself.

[75] "Matbuat: Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi," *İktisadiyat Mecmuası*, 23, 28 Temmuz 1332, 7.

[76] Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire*, 67-68.

[77] "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi," *Kadınlar Dünyası,* 194, 1 Kanunusani (January) 1921, 11.

[78] "Havadis-i dünya: Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti yine erkeklerin elinde," *Kadınlar Dünyası*, 194-6, 5 Şubat (February) 1921, 14.

[79] "Frauenarbeit,"*Osmanischer Lloyd,* 9. Februar 1917, 3. The ownership of these factories is, however, not confirmed in other sources. According to an advertisement in *Tanin,* though, a factory referred to as *Taksim'de Talimhane arkasındaki Türk Mensucat Fabrikası* (the Turkish Textile Factory behind Talimhane at Taksim) was under the protection of the organization.

In these workshops unskilled women were turned into skilled labourers producing mainly military goods for the Ministry of War and the *Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti*.[80]

Although the organization originally aimed at founding workshops with separate departments for the production of goods such as lace, simple white embroidery, dresses, machine knitted socks and flannel undershirts, military uniforms, and tailor made costumes,[81] the reports show that the production was almost exclusively geared towards war time needs.[82]

At the Çapa branch 20 women worked on 19 sewing machines, while 90 other women worked on 46 knitting machines. The women were using cotton from Adana, while the machines were imported from Germany.[83] There the organization had ordered 100 sewing machines of which by January 1918 only 14 had been delivered.[84] In 1917 - 1918 this branch produced quilted blankets (1,360), quilted vests (144,193), sandbags (37,000), girdles (6,164), flannel undershirts (1,125), woolen jackets (6,910), underpants (25,675), shirts (998) and socks (389 pairs).[85] The Fatih branch, which had 18 knitting machines and 16 sewing machines at its disposal, produced more than 10,000 pair of socks, over 56,000 quilted vests, and further woolen girdles (7,800) and jackets (5,340), flannel undershirts (2,909), headgears (698) and children's clothes (855) in that period.[86] The Üsküdar branch, finally, possessed 40 sewing machines and 10 knitting machines on which women produced 31,843 quilted vests, 43,293 sandbags, 2,485 shirts and 2,146 underpants.[87]

Since the organization was mainly producing for the army, the termination of the flow of orders from the army at the end of the First World War was the

"Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi'nden," *Tanin,* 3 Nisan/April 1333/1917, 3.

[80] Ahmed Emin, "Kadınları çalıştırma teşebbüsü," *Vakit,* 8 Şubat/February 1334/1918, 1.

[81] "Matbuat: Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi," *İktisadiyat Mecmuası*, 23, 28 Temmuz 1332 (10 August 1916), 7.

[82] See also the ad in which the organization explicitly asks for women to assist in the sewing of military equipment. "Dikiş ve iş isteyen muhadderata," *Tasvir-i Efkar,* 16 Teşrinievvel 1332 (29 October 1916), 2.

[83] K*adınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, 4-5.

[84] "Activité féminine," *Lloyd Ottoman*, 25 Janvier 1918, 3 ; see also Lorenz, *Die Frauenfrage im Osmanischen Reiche,* 61-62.

[85] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel No. 1.

[86] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel No. 2.

[87] *Kadınları Çalıtırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel No. 3.

main factor leading to the decrease of labour force employed by the organization in 1919.[88]

The sources are unclear on the number of women employed by or through the mediation of the organization. According to Yalman the organization employed up to between six and seven thousand women in its workshops, while another seven to eight thousand women were given work to do at home in times of "abundant work."[89] Edhem Nejat mentioned in an article written in 1918 that the organization had employed and educated more than 56,000 women.[90] Neither of them, however, gives the source of these numbers.

That the need for work was enormous is clear from the number of women applying to the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* once it was founded in the early summer of 1916. Immediately after it started its activities on the 14 August of that year, it asked women in need to apply for a job through advertisements in the newspapers.[91] The response was large: within 19 days 11,000 women applied to get a job.[92] By the beginning of October this number had reportedly grown to 14,000.[93] A month later, the number of women applying for work had reached 15,000.[94]

[88] *Devletlü İsmetlü Naciye Sultan hazretlerinin zir-i himayelerinde Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1336 senesi raporu*, İstanbul: Orhaniye Matbaası, 1336.

[89] [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, 259.

[90] Edhem Nejat, "Türkiye'de kız mektepleri ve terbiyesi," *Türk Kadını*, 11, 17 Teşrinievvel 1334 (30 October 1918), 163-165.

[91] "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi idare-i umumiyesinden," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 2 Ağustos 1332 (15 August 1916), 2.

[92] "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi hakkında," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 25 Ağustos 1332 (7 September 1916), 2; "İktisadi haberler: Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi hakkında," *İktisadiyat Mecmuası*, 27, 1 Eylül 1332 (14 September 1916), 7.

[93] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, 4; Ahmed Emin, "Kadınları çalıştırma teşebbüsü," *Vakit*, 8 Şubat/February 1334/1918, 1.

[94] BOA, DH.KMS, 42/10, 17 Muharrem 1335 (14 November 1916). It is unclear how many inhabitants Istanbul had at that particular moment and thus how to interpret this figure. In 1914, Istanbul supposedly had approximately 975,000 inhabitants. About 600,000 of them were Muslim. Using slightly different numbers but stating that half of these 600,000 were women and that half of the women were of working age (15-45 years old), Karakışla reaches the conclusion that approximately 10% of all Muslim women who were employable and 5% of all Muslim women living in Istanbul had applied to the organization. For several reasons, this argument may not be tenable. Firstly, especially during times of war the population of a city is in flux and male-female rates change rapidly. It is, therefore, risky to take the figures of 1914 and transpose them simply to 1916. Secondly, Karakışla presumes that all the applicants had been Muslims. The sources, however, do not give any indication on the ethno-religious background of the applicants. Thirdly, when he refers to women aged 15-45 as women of working age, he ignores the fact that those women, in general, preferred not to work outside their homes due to their familial duties.

The Board of the organization was aware that it would not be able to employ all these women. On 7 November 1916, therefore, Enver Pasha, send a request to the Ministry of Education to see whether it could employ any of these women. The Ministry answered that it could only employ qualified teachers at girls' schools and forwarded the request to the existing schools.[95] Enver Pasha also sent a letter to the Minister of Interior asking whether his Ministry would be able to employ any women.[96] On 13 November the Minister of Interior in turn sent a dispatch to the major of Istanbul (*Şehremini*) Bedri *Bey* asking him whether he could provide the women with work in hospitals or other institutions.[97] Since it proved impossible to employ all the women applying, the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti* consequently decided to open soup kitchens to provide the women if not with work, at least with some food. The number of women begging in the streets and in need of assistance was, in fact, so large that the officers at a police station in Istanbul decided to found a similar organization later in 1916: the *İslam Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* (Charitable Organization for the Employment of Muslim Women). This organization opened a workshop for boarders in Fındıklı. In a letter from to the Ottoman Red Crescent the organization asked for beds and matrasses from the Red Crescent to house the women properly.[98]

The women working outside their homes were in general young girls up until approximately 15 and elderly women of over 40 years of age. Taking into account, however, that the means of communication were less developed, that the majority of the female inhabitants of the city were probably hardly able to read or write and that the information was thus very likely largely only spread by word of mouth, the figures can be regarded as one amongst many other indications for the desperate situation of women living in Istanbul during war times. Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire*, 169-170; Duben & Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 193; Behar (ed.), *Osmanlı imparatorluğu`nun ve Türkiye'nin nüfusu, 1500 - 1927*, 73-74; 78.

[95] BOA, MF.MKT, 1220/74, 22 Muharrem 1335 (19 November 1916).

[96] BOA, DH.KMS, 42/10, 17 Muharrem 1335 (14 November 1916).

[97] BOA, DH.KMS, 42/10, 17 Muharrem 1335 (14 November 1916).

[98] TKA, 74/80, 4 Kanunuevvel 1332 (17 December 1916). Another, slightly different name, *İslam Kadınlar [sic!] Çalıştırma Cemiyeti,* was used in the list with women's organizations in the Osmanlı Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti Hanımlar Heyet-i Merkeziyesi*, Takvim - 5 -*, ([İstanbul], 1335/1919, 199). Interestingly enough, the name *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* is lacking on this list. It remains unclear whether these sources are referring to one and the same organization. In the 1336 report cited by Oktar there is a reference to a branch of the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* located in Kabataş (a neighbourhood adjacent to Fındıklı). It is possible that the police officers started their organization independently, but that their organization was absorbed by the organization of Enver Pasha to become its Kabataş branch. *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1336 senesi raporu,* İstanbul: Orhaniye Matbaası, 1336, 23, 24 and 26 as quoted in: Oktar, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Kadının Çalışma Yaşamı,* 117-118; 126.

The *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*, in the end, hired a limited group of applicants to work in one of its workshops who were chosen based on a competition.[99] How many women were actually employed by and through the organization of Enver Pasha? The organization itself mentions in its first annual report, which covers the period from Teşrinievvel 1332 until the end of Kanunuevvel 1333 (October/November 1916 – January 1918) that it employed a total of 24,254 daily workers over that period of 15 months.[100] This number was exclusive of the 6,885 women who were placed in (semi-) official and private companies and institutions during these months.[101] According to a historical overview of the activities of the organization given in its annual report of 1920, the organization claimed to have had 2,000 Muslim women working daily producing flannel undershirts, socks, watted vests and similar products for the army by February 1917.[102] The *Osmanischer Lloyd* reported in that particular month that 4,500 women had been given work by that time.[103]

It is difficult, however, to establish the actual figures. The schedules given in the annual report of 1916 - 1917 justify the conclusion that the number of 24,254 daily workers is highly exaggerated. In that period the organization had three branches in various parts of Istanbul: Çapa, Fatih and Üsküdar. The Çapa branch consisted of a workshop where 231 women were continuously employed, while it also had contracted 35 women producing slippers, plus another 405 women who were spinning and twining wool in their own homes.[104] Moreover, it had a dormitory and a dining-hall for its employees whose labour force was also entirely consisting of women. All the employees of this branch, from director to servant were female. The director and the forewomen were women who had graduated from the *Türk Kadınları Biçki Yurdu* and were hired by the General Manager of the *Cemiyet,* İsmail Hakkı, who was the husband of Behire Hakkı, the founder of the *Biçki Yurdu.*[105] The director and the foreman of the

[99] "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi idare-i umumiyesi'nden," *Tasvir-i Efkar,* 11 Teşrinisani 1332 (24 November 1916), 2.

[100] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, 5.

[101] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel No. 4

[102] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1336 senesi raporu.*

[103] "Frauenarbeit," *Osmanischer Lloyd,* 9. Februar 1917, 3.

[104] See, e.g. "İş arayan hanımlara," *Tasvir-i Efkar,* 25 Teşrinisani 1332 (8 December 1916), 2 and "İş arayan hanımlara," *Tanin,* 16 Teşrinisani/November 1333/1917, 3 through which the organization looked for women who could process, i.e. scour, card, and spin (spring)wool and knit it into socks, at home.

[105] "Matbuat: Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi," *İktisadiyat Mecmuası*, 23, 28 Temmuz 1332 (10 August 1916), 7.

Fatih branch, on the other hand were male. Under their supervision 128 women worked on a daily basis, while 250 women were working at home. The Üsküdar branch, which also had a male director, employed 60 women in its workshop and 200 women at home.[106] If we add up all these numbers, there were 419 women working on a daily basis in the workshops (excluding the persons working as executives or, for example, at the dining-hall or dormitory of the Çapa branch), while 890 women were working at home for the organization. However, the figures which the organization gives for the individual months between October 1916 and January 1918 vary from a minimum of 72 in October/November 1916 to a maximum of more than 5,000 in January/February 1917, as is shown in Table 1.[107]

Month	Number of workers
October 1916	72
November 1916	578
December 1916	1,647
January 1917	5,113
February 1917	883
March 1917	2,212
April 1917	508
May 1917	1,113
June 1917	1,938
July 1917	1,664
August 1917	1,081
September 1917	2,179
October 1917	2,249
November 1917	1,398
December 1917	619
Total	24,254

Table 4 Source: Devletlü İsmetlü Naciye Sultan hazretlerinin zir-i himayelerinde Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu, İstanbul: Ahmet İhsan ve Şürekası, 1334, Cedvel No. 5.

[106] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel Nos. 1-3.
[107] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel No. 5.

The average number of workers for the organization according to this particular table is 1,617 per month. If you exclude the two extremes, the average becomes 1,390, which is fairly close to the total of women working at a daily base in the workshops and as home workers. If we add the 6,885 employed elsewhere to the women working on daily base in the workshops this totals up to 7,305 (plus somewhat) women working on a daily base and if we include the home workers to 8,194 women, which is only half of the numbers Yalman gives and far below the 24,254 mentioned in the report and taken for granted by, for example, Sümer.[108] The reason for the confusion might be due to the way the figure of 24,254 was calculated. First the number of employees per month was determined, subsequently these numbers were totaled. This means that someone who had been employed for half a year was probably counted six times. Unless, of course, the organization had a policy of replacing its complete labour force every month or the tables only give the numbers of newly employed. Both possibilities, however, seem highly unlikely.

A further analysis of the figures in the annual report, more specifically those related to the payments made to the workers, moreover, indicates that even these figures might be too high, that not all women were working full-time or that most women did not receive a proper wage. According to Yalman the organization paid a minimum wage of 10 piasters (=*kuruş*) *per day*.[109] This seems not unlikely given that the lowest wage for a working woman in the Women's Battalion, which will be discussed more extensively in one of the following paragraphs, was 250 *kuruş* per month and that in an advertisement through which the organization tried to find workers for the Haydarpaşa hospital and which was dated July 1918 a wage of 225 *kuruş* is mentioned.[110] If we, however, use the year report to calculate the average wages paid to the women they vary between somewhat more than 17 and somewhat above 62 *kuruş per month*. The all over average is 31.41 *kuruş*. This implies that many women were only part-time employed, hired on a daily contract and laid off as soon as the work was finished or that the home workers were not paid on a daily base, but based on the quantity produced. Or, to put it in another way, if we assume that the minimum wage is indeed 10 *kuruş* per day and that an average working month is existing of 22.5 days (but probably more) we can calculate

[108] Tülin Sümer, "Türkiye'de İlk Defa Kurulan Kadınları Çalıştırma Derneği," *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi*, II, 10, 1968, 59-63.

[109] [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, 259.

[110] "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi'nden," *Vakit,* 16 Temmuz/July 1918/1334, 2.

how many full-time equivalents (fte) could be paid with the money the organization spent on wages every month. The figures which result from this calculation show that the organization might have employed only a very limited number of women. The lowest fte would be 17.5, the highest 392.9. The average over the whole period of 15 months, however, was only 225.7. This means that the organization itself over the first fifteen months of its existence provided paid full-time work to an average of 225.7 women only. In the year 1918, however, there seems to have been an increase: in that year a total of 819,802 *lira*s was paid as "workers' wage." This implies that the average fte for that year would have been 303.6.[111] If we reverse the argument and take the number of women employed for granted with the salary as a variable, we would have to conclude that most women were paid much less than the minimum wage of 10 *kuruş* per day referred to by Yalman. In fact, it would mean that most women were probably working just for a meal and a bed.

To summarize, the figures given by the organization have to be used with due caution. Although the organization did indeed find employment for quite some women, it seems to have been more a kind of employment agency than an employer itself. Moreover, based on the total amount of money paid on wages, the workshops of the organization itself should be regarded as charity workshops rather than proper manufacturing enterprises working under regular market conditions.

The First World War, Industry and Ottoman Muslim Women

Thus, during the war the number of women in certain branches of the military industry increased. Their numbers, however, seem to have been limited and not to have run into the ten thousands. Still it might be useful to ask the question where these women came from. Were these their first experiences as working, wage-earning women or not?

Based on the limited evidence available, this does not seem to be the case. While the beginning of the war meant the increase of work for women in some branches of industry, in other branches there was a sharp decline.[112] These declines were even further accelerated in the later years of the war when the

[111] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1336 senesi raporu*.

[112] Such as e.g. the relatively small sweets production and canning industry. *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 63-64, 68-70.

available stocks of raw materials were running out and both import and export became increasingly difficult.

Although the textile industry was the branch in which most women found work, it was meanwhile also the branch in which most women were laid off. Especially the production of the more luxurious kinds of textile products came almost completely to a halt due to the diminished demand.[113] Already during the first years of the war, the labour force working in the silk cloth industry was more than halved, while the raw silk production lost almost one third of its more than three and a half thousand workers. By the end of the First World War, this industry had almost completely disappeared.[114]

Problems on the supply side formed another reason for a decrease in production in certain branches of the textile industry. While the producers of thread initially may have had a surplus due to the cut off of export of both yarn and luxury products due to the war, in due course the purchase of raw materials or half products such as yarn became virtually impossible for non-military producers of textiles.[115] Firstly, the import from traditional suppliers such as Britain and India for the finer cotton yarn and Britain and France for the finer woolen yarn was cut off.[116] By the end of 1916 the import from Germany and Austria-Hungary, the latter of which was the main supplier of *Amerikan bezi*, also diminished, due to their own needs.[117] The *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti,* for example, also suffered from the lack of half products. In December 1917 it sent a letter to the Ottoman Red Crescent stating that it could not produce the needed underwear for children due to the lack of appropriate cloth since it could no longer be imported.[118] The result of the lack of half products and raw materials was that the textile manufacturers in the Ottoman Empire had to rely on the local production, which they tried to increase. As a consequence,

[113] According to a report of the US consul in Constantinople published in 1915 "[p]roducers [had] large quantities of thread on hand which they [were] unable to export." G.B. Ravndal, "Turkey," *Supplement to Commerce Reports,* No 18b, October 23, 1915, 1-19, quotation 16.

[114] Eldem, *Harp ve Mütareke Yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomisi, 172; Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 142-150. See also "Türkische Seidenwirtschaft im Kriege," *Die Neue Türkei*, I, 19, 12. Juni 1917, 4-6.

[115] See also Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire,* 176, fn 47.

[116] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 134; 138-139.

[117] Daniel, *The War from Within*, 58-62. See also Chapter Thirteen.

[118] TKA, 345/79, 15 Kanunuevvel 1333 (28 December 1917).

however, the materials produced were coarser than they would have been with the imported yarn.[119]

Secondly, the production of raw materials in the Ottoman Empire itself declined due to the lack of manpower in the agricultural sector. Although few figures are known, Yalman reports, for example, that the production of tobacco fell from more than 55 million kilos in 1913 to just below 14 million in 1915, after which it slowly recovered to 21 million in 1918. The decline in cotton production was even more dramatic: from 24 million and 27 million kilos in 1913 and 1914 respectively, to 3 million in 1915, 2 million in both 1916 and 1917 and again 3 million kilos in 1918.[120]

Most of the wool production was, moreover, directly confiscated by the military authorities to use for their own factories. This meant that all other producers within the textile sector, like the small textile workshops where mainly women were working, were left with no raw materials at all and had to lay off their personnel. It meant also that, for example, the estimated 60,000 persons working in the production of tapestry in Anatolia who were mostly women were left without the necessary yarn and thus had to give up their work.[121]

Furthermore, as both Healy and Darrow point out for Austria-Hungary and France, respectively, the employment of so many women in charity workshops against very low payments or just a meal might have had a detrimental effect on the labour market as such. In France, the cheap labour of these workshops undercut the wages of the skilled women who had been working in textile industries: a large part of the demand of the army, for example, could be met relatively cheap by the charity work of the elite urban women and the women

[119] Orga's father, for example, complains about the coarse cloth used for his military underwear. Orga, *Portrait of a Turkish Family,* 79.

[120] [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, 117-118. The data Eldem gives for the cotton production (in Adana) indicate an even more disastrous situation: from 120,000 bales of cotton in 1913, to 135,000 bales in 1914, but with a fall to 15,000 bales only in 1915. For the years 1916 - 1918 he does not give any figures at all. Vedat Eldem, "Cihan Harbi'nin ve İstiklal Savaşı'nın Ekonomik Sorunları," in: Osman Okyar (der.), *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri*, Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1975, 373-405, 378.

[121] Eldem, *Harp ve Mütareke Yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomisi*, 80-81. In 1915 the US consulate in Izmir reported: "Carpet making, however, which furnished employment to thousands of hands, has been almost entirely suspended on account of lack of wool and money (…). The wool collected for the carpets has been largely requisitioned." George Horton, "Turkey: Smyrna," *Supplement to Commerce Reports,* No 18b, June 12, 1915, 1-6, quotation 2. According to the report the cotton and wool mills were also producing far below their normal level due to lack of raw material, coal and money.

employed in their charity workshops.[122] This may also have been the case in the Ottoman Empire, but it is difficult to determine this based on the scanty materials available.

Thus, although, "thousands of women," as Yalman says, might indeed have "found work in the military factories" during the First World War,[123] these women might not all have been the "ordinary women [drawn] into a working life" to whom Tekeli referred.[124] At least, women as a "category," were not drawn into a working life for the first time. What seems to have taken place is a shift in both the "market" women worked for and in the geography of women's work: instead of producing luxury products for a civil market, women started to work for the military. With that shift the female textile production was clustered in the workshops and factories in the more industrialized urban areas instead of being spread over the homes and workshops of Anatolia. It is unlikely that large numbers of women followed this shift in production and moved to the urban areas. However, also the producers of more luxury, civilian goods in the urban areas lost their jobs. Employers might have preferred these more experienced women, who had had a job before above women who had never worked before. A small announcement in *Tasvir-i Efkar* seems to confirm this: accordingly, the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* had, upon request, decided to bring 80 women (*işçi kadın*) from Izmir.[125]

The employers were, however, not entirely depending on women. Partly the labour was done by men, who worked in these factories with the status of soldier. Since they received the extremely low payment of soldiers and were more likely to be skilled, they might even have been preferred by the factory managers above the unskilled and higher paid women.[126] In the military factory producing cotton thread and cloth in Makriköy, for example, 270 soldiers were employed by 1915.[127] Also in a new factory, which was founded in Adapazarı in 1916 with German assistance, 400 "labourers were working as soldiers."[128] It is

[122] Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 175-181; Darrow, *French Women and the First World War*, 174-178.

[123] Ahmed Emin Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim*, 2 Vols., [yayına hazırlayan: Erol Şadi Erdinç], İstanbul: Pera Turizm ve Ticaret A.Ş., 19972 [1970], Vol. 1, 336.

[124] Şirin Tekeli, *Kadınlar ve Siyasal Toplumsal Hayat*, İstanbul: Birikim, 1982, 198-199, quotation 199.

[125] "İşçi kadınlar," *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 2 Mayıs/May 1333/1917, 2.

[126] Toprak, *İttihat-Terakki ve Devletçilik*, 155

[127] *Osmanlı Sanayii 1913 - 1915 İstatistikleri*, 130.

[128] *Harb Mecmuası*, I, 14, Teşrinisani 1332 (November/December 1916) 212. See also Toprak, *Türkiye'de "Milli İktisat" (1908 - 1918),* 202-205.

not clear, though, whether these men were withdrawn from the fighting force only to be put at work in these factories, as was the case in Germany, or that there were other reasons for not marching them off to the front. It is very well possible that they belonged to the so-called *silahsız ihtiyatiye*, non-Muslim conscripts who were not allowed to wear weapons, and who were made useful this way.

Did war work close the gender gap between the wages of men and women, did it improve the financial situation of the latter or did it make them financially independent are other questions which can be asked. None of these seem to be the case. Although the wages of women seem to have gone up a little more than those of men and the gap between the two genders narrowed somewhat in a few industries, there are no gender specific figures available for the two most important branches of textile and tobacco. What is clear, though, is that the wages of women, like those of men, stayed far behind the inflation rate and thus that even if they increased, their reel wages were decimated. While, as mentioned before, an income of 250 *kuruş* per month was sufficient to buy the necessary consumer goods for a family in July 1914, that family needed more than 4,500 *kuruş* for the same goods by September 1918.[129] The minimum wage offered by the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti* of approximately 250 *kuruş* as late as 1918, therefore, was by far not enough to keep a family fed and dressed properly.

Another element which could have changed the labour situation of women was a shift in the division of labour. The data hardly give any information on this subject. It seems that women did basically "unskilled labour" before the war.[130] The book with the state statistics refers to female *memur* (officials) nor *ustabaşı* (foremen), but only to *işçi* (workers). The sources do not indicate that a change took place in this regard. An exception may have been the newly founded women's sewing workshops of the women's organizations and the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti:* they may have used forewomen rather than foremen more than was usual.

Did any changes take place regarding the parameters of class, ethnic background or place in the life cycle? Or, in other words, did the composition of the totality of labour women change in these aspects? This is again a question

[129] Toprak, *İttihat-Terakki ve Devletçilik*, 149.

[130] Although the labour of women is often classified as "unskilled," this qualification may be questioned. The term is generally used for labour consisting of menial and repetitive tasks. This does not necessarily imply that no skills are needed as can be seen in the chapter on the silk industry.

which is difficult to answer. Daniel argues that in Germany class differences were partly eradicated and a new class of "war wives" was created. To what extent this was the case for the Ottoman Empire remains unclear. It seems that a class distinction was continued between the women who needed to work, and those who had a substantial family capital and thus did not need to go out for work. The latter women became often the members of the charitable organizations which provided the former women with work. What happened to the women of the middle class, which had started to develop in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who were less affluent or lacked a social safety net is not clear. Some of them were able to find white collar jobs vacated by men or non-Muslim women as shown in Chapter Eight. Others, who lacked any formal education, were forced to go to work in other kinds of jobs including sweat shop work, like Irfan Orga's mother.

Before the war it seems that women who worked in a factory like environment generally did this before they got married (up to the age of 15) and when they were older (from 40 years upwards). After their marriage, they would continue to work to contribute to the family income, but by doing their work at home. It seems that this pattern continued during the war.[131] During the war many women with children whose husbands had been forced to leave them behind were forced to find themselves a source of income. Not unlike the German women, they preferred a job which they could combine with their duties as a mother. Thus many women were given work to do at home. While Daniel qualifies this development in the German context as a step back into the nineteenth century, because of the low payment and lack of labour protection, in the Ottoman context homework had been an ongoing feature until the war. What did take place, though, was a shift in the products made. Instead of luxury products as lace, embroidery or tapestry, the female home workers now produced for the army.

Before the war an important part of the Ottoman female labour force seems to have consisted of non-Muslim women.[132] Women's organizations referred to

[131] See e.g. the ages of the women working at the *Hilal-i Ahmer Hanımlar Darüssınaası* referred to in Chapter Twelve.

[132] See, e.g. the photographs discussed in the article by Balsoy. Although the author does not refer to ethnicity at all, the women on these photographs taken in or just after 1900 seem to be all non-Muslim as they wear no scarfs or other specifically "Muslim" gears. Also Kabadayı points out that, although the male workers at the *Feshane* in 1876 were in majority Muslim, the female employées were almost all non-Muslim. Balsoy, "Gendering Ottoman Labor History," 45-68; Mustafa Erdem Kabadayı, "Working in a Fez Factory in Istanbul in the late Nineteenth Century:

in the previous chapters, such as the *Esirgeme Derneği,* the *Biçki Yurdu*, and the *İstihlak-i Milli Kadınlar Cemiyeti,* however, concentrated their efforts on Muslim women. Is this also the case for the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*? Karakışla indeed does state in his conclusion that the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* only hired Muslim women and that only Muslim women were placed at the military industrial enterprises.[133] The publications of the organization itself do not easily justify such a conclusion. Only in hindsight, in its report of 1920, the organization specifically referred to the employment of 2,000 *Muslim* women in February 1917.[134] The statistics in the first report of the organization, however, lack ethno-religious specifics, as do the statutes and almost all of the advertisements of the organization in the newspapers.[135] Nor does the name of the organization "Islamic Organization for the Employment of Women" imply such a limitation. Toprak and Oktar in their Turkish texts and Karakışla in his translation all added the adjective "Ottoman" to its name, but in none of the primary sources, nor the official documents this adjective is used. I would argue that the absence of this adjective in its name is extremely relevant, since it was indicative for the dismissal of the policy of Ottomanism by that time.[136] Similarly, the use of the term "Islamic" was relevant in the context of the shift to a nationalism that was Islamic at its heart. It is, however, important to notice that *Islamic* was used as an adjective not for the supposed objects of the organization, the women, as Karakışla translated it, but for the organization as such. The latter might seem to form an indication that the official policy of the organization was not – and perhaps could not at that time be – to aim at Muslim women only. Knowing of the conscious efforts of the Ottoman government to nationalize, read Muslimize, the Ottoman economy, it is not unlikely, however, that this was, covertly, certainly the case. Some of the sources certainly do

Division of Labour and Networks of Migration Formed along Ethno-religious Lines," *International Review of Social History* 54, Supplement, 2009, 69-90.

[133] Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire*, 172-173.

[134] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1336 senesi raporu*.

[135] An exception seems to be the very first advertisement of the organization which explicitly referred to "Muslim ladies" (*İslam hanımları)*. "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi İdare-i Umumiyesinden," *Tasvir-i Efkar,* 2 Ağustos 1332 (15 August 1916), 2.

[136] Karakışla used it in his translation of the name: "Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women." Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire;* Oktar, *Osmanlı toplumunda kadının çalışma yaşamı*; Oktar, "Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslâmiyesi, 1920 senesi raporu;" Toprak, "Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti."

indicate this.[137] All in all, it seems that the industrial female labour force during the First World War was increasingly more Muslim than it had been before.[138] What the effect of this was on the non-Muslim labour women remains to be researched.

What did the Muslimization of work mean for the Ottoman Muslim women? Did women's work during the war allow for these women to enter the male domain and make them intermingle more freely with men? Again the answer is no. The authorities were only able to tap into the pool of Muslim female labourers by allowing them to maintain their physical distance from men. Many of the women, especially those with children, worked within the privacy of their homes, as mentioned above. Those who worked in the workshops of the charitable (women's) organizations worked in all female environments, except for the occasional male foreman, which had been a general practice in the textile industry before the war too. Even in the army workshops women were kept secluded from men in single-sex departments. Here too little seems to have been changed by the war. The photographs, furthermore, show that the women, in general, fulfilled the requirements of *tesettür*: they wore headscarves to cover their hair, something confirmed by other sources such as Lorenz.[139]

One other criterion used to judge the effects of the war is the post-war situation in comparison with the pre-war situation and that during the war. In this respect Ottoman women seem not to have gained anything either. The women who had obtained jobs at the Post Office, as mentioned in Chapter Eight, were fired because "the clerks which had worked in these jobs, but had been taken into arms were returning."[140] With the end of the war the stream of orders from the Ministry of War also dried up. Thus, the men and women

[137] Notably in a letter of the founding members to prominent members of Ottoman society cited by Karakışla the authors refer to *Türk ve İslam kadınlığı* (Turkish and Muslim womanhood), while the director of the organization, İsmail Hakkı, in a letter to the Minister of Interior cited by Oktar refers to *muhadderat-ı islamiye* (virtous Muslim women) and *İslam hanımları* (Muslim ladies). BOA, Ali Fuat Türkgeldi'den Satın Alınan Evrakları, 6/27 cited in: Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire*, 54 fn 51. BOA, DH.KMS, 42/10, 27 Teşrinievvel 1332 cited in Oktar, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Kadının Çalışma Yaşamı.* 104-105. See also "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi'nden," *Tanin,* 12 Nisan/April 1333/1917, 4 for a (rare) ad in which explicitly is referred to "İslam hanıma...."

[138] See for an ad of a (Muslim) factory owner also explicitly asking for *İslam hanımları*: "İslam hanımlarına iş," *Tasvir-i Efkar,* 20 Eylül 1332 (3 October 1916), 2.

[139] As opposed to the, supposedly, non-Muslim women on the photographs in Balsoy's article. Balsoy, "Gendering Ottoman Labor History," 45-68.

[140] "Kadın memurlarımız," *Vakit,* 27 Teşrinisani/November 1918, 2.

working at the weapon factory in Zeytinburnu and at the gunpowder factory at Makriköy were discharged. Only those who used to work there before the war, and thus men, were allowed to stay.[141] Many women were left without work and once again without an income. If we look at the figures given in the report of the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti* of 1920 we can see that the post for the payment of labourers on the 1919 balance of payments was only enough to cover the wages of 131.7 fte, while in 1920 only 50-60 women were left working for them.[142] The after effects of the war followed by still another war, moreover, did not help the economy to recover. As a consequence labour class women did not only lose their war time job but meanwhile the route to their traditional work continued to be barred.

With respect to the industrial sector, therefore, the changes which took place due to the First World War were minimal and do not show any evidence of an emancipating effect on the urban, "ordinary women." On the contrary, it is more likely that what happened was that the outcome of the war was a negative one for these women belonging to the lower strata of Ottoman urban society.

Women and Agriculture

As mentioned before, the agricultural sector was by far the largest sector of the Ottoman economy not only in output, but also in the number of people engaged in it. The majority of the population of the Ottoman Empire was living in a rural environment and earned its living from this sector of the economy. The effects of the large scale mobilization in August 1914, therefore, were enormous in this sector. Eighty per cent of the soldiers drawn were estimated to be of rural extract. The effects of the draft were exacerbated by other factors.

The government took several measures in order to try to maintain, and later to increase, production. Already during the Balkan wars, in December 1912, regulations had been issued in order to ensure that the families of men who had been called up continued production. According to these regulations, the land of *muinsiz* families – families whose breadwinner had been called into arms – was to be sown by other farmers under the supervision of the local committee of

[141] "İmalat-ı Harbiye kuyudat-ı zatiye kaleminden," *Vakit,* 27 Teşrinisani/November 1918, 2

[142] *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1336 senesi raporu*. See also Sabiha Zekeriya, "Kadınlara çalışma hakkı," *Büyük Mecmua,* 11, 18 Eylül/September 1919, 170 as quoted in Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire,* 176.

elders. If there were too few farmers in the district to take care of the *muinsiz* families' land, the committee of elders would ask agricultural contractors to send workers from elsewhere to assist on the farms. The same method was to be employed if an appointed "breadwinner" (*muin*) for a family was unable to do all the work for himself and his (assigned) dependents. [143] If the farmers had no seed to sow or had no money to purchase it, this would be provided by the agricultural banks on the shortest possible notice. Supervision of the crops in the fields was the responsibility of the committee of elders, too. If necessary they had to appoint guards who not only had to make sure that the crops were not stolen or illegally harvested, but also had to prevent animals from eating them. These arrangements were to be supervised by the Agricultural Chambers (*Ziraat Odaları*).[144]

Despite the existing measures, agricultural production declined sharply after the beginning of the First World War due to the large scale mobilization of August 1914. The fact that the mobilization fell during the season of harvesting made things even worse. The crops, which were, according to Yalman, "exceptionally good" that year could be harvested only partly, because of the lack of man- and animal power. Women, who normally would not participate in working in the field were forced to join old men and children in the harvest to replace the able-bodied men.[145] During the first year of the First World War the total area used for agriculture declined by more than 50%. Despite the exulting texts in *Tanin* and *Türk Yurdu* on the agricultural activities of women in Anatolia in general and Ankara especially, this decrease continued in the year 1915 - 1916.[146]

[143] See Chapter Ten.

[144] BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti, Hukuk Müşavirliği (hereafter, DH.HMS), 23/75, 20.4.1331 (19 March 1913).

[145] [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, 107-108; Eldem, *Harp ve Mütareke Yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomisi*, 33-34. The information on the historical division of agricultural labour according to gender lines is minimal. Anthropological studies, like those of Friedl in rural Iran, show that the lines were not clearly set but that "actual gender performances are so highly contextualized, variable, and overlapping (...) that normative rules can be isolated only with so many exceptions that the 'norm' is rendered heuristically dubious." She points out that women would attend to their own small gardens around the house the products of which would serve for the own consumption. Their share in the production of commercial cash crops, however, was limited to basically the "tail end of harvesting." Erika Friedl, "The Dynamics of Women's Spheres of Action in Rural Iran" in: Keddie & Baron (eds), *Women in Middle Eastern History*, 195-214, quotations 196.

[146] Lebib Selim, "Türk kadınlığın harb-ı umumideki faaliyeti," *Türk Yurdu*, IX, 3, 8 Teşrinievvel 1331 (21 October 1915), 2782-2784; T.Y., "Anadolu Türk kadınlarının faaliyeti,"

There were, however, more reasons to account for the loss in agricultural production during the First World War. Due to the Balkan Wars fertile lands with large farms particularly producing for the capital had been lost to the Empire. Moreover, the people in the villages had experienced how, during the Balkan Wars, the authorities had confiscated their production to leave them nearly starving and took precautions when a new war started: they hid their possessions and lowered their production to such a degree that they could barely sustain their own family. The lack of food was further aggravated due to the severing of the lines of transportation with the traditional suppliers of agricultural products within the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas and the resulting decline in imports.[147] The Ottoman government, thus, felt the urgent need to take measures to restore and improve production levels, not only to feed the population, but even more so to continue to feed the soldiers. Thus, the Ministry of War played an important role in the efforts to stimulate the production.[148] Germany and Austria-Hungary, which both hoped that a part of the Ottoman agricultural production could serve to also feed their soldiers, eagerly jumped in: they gave technical support to develop irrigation works and assisted in the mechanization of the agricultural sector by providing agricultural machinery to the Ottoman Empire.[149]

In September 1916, when the situation not only in the Ottoman Empire, but also for its allies, Germany and Austria-Hungary, seems to have gotten worse than ever before, other measures were taken. The *Mükellefiyet-i Ziraiye Kanun-u Muvakkatı* (Provisional Law on Agricultural Duty) was issued.[150] On 10 April 1917 this law was passed by the Senate.[151] The first article of the law stipulated that all Ottomans, male and *female*, of 14 years and older whose normal activity was farming and who for some reason were exempted from active military service could be called upon by the Ministry of Agriculture to work in the agricultural sector. In a regulation of October 1917 this was worked out in more

Türk Yurdu, IX, 4, 22 Teşrinievvel 1331 (4 November 1915), 2805; "Anadolu kadını," *Tanin*, 30 Nisan 1332 (13 May 1916), 1.

[147] Toprak, *İttihad – Terakki ve Cihan Harbi*, 81-82.

[148] Toprak, *İttihad – Terakki ve Cihan Harbi*, 85-87.

[149] Toprak, *İttihad – Terakki ve Cihan Harbi*, 92; Benson, *Deutschland über Allah*, 20-21.

[150] BOA, DUİT, 50-1/27-4, 30 Zilkade 1334 (29 September 1916); BOA, DUİT, 50-1/27-3, 19 Şevval 1334 (19 August 1916). "Mükellefiyet-i ziraiye kanun-u muvakkatı," *Düstur*, II, 8, 20 Zilkade 1334 / 5 Eylül 1332 (18 September 1914), 1297-1298. For an English translation of this law see [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War,* 129-130.

[151] BOA, DUİT, 50-1/27-2, 10 Cemaiyelahir 1335 (2 April 1917).

detail: depending on the amount of land that a farmer had to cultivate – this in turn was depending on the number of plough oxen he possessed – a certain number of persons could be exempted from regular military service and become a rear reservist (*mustahfız*) instead. Land that was not brought into cultivation was to be taken over by the village authorities.[152] The lack of manpower was further solved by deploying prisoners of war – a practice also used in Germany, convicts of minor crimes, who could volunteer to do this work in so-called *üsera taburları* (prisoner's battalions) instead of serving time in jail,[153] and the poor families of soldiers, while some local authorities asked the central government for a one-month leave for civil servants in order for them to assist in the harvest.[154] Furthermore, Workers' Battalions were created which fell under military control and as such became regular units of the army.

The *Kadın Birinci İşçi Taburu*

These Workers' Battalions consisted mainly of unarmed non-Muslim conscripts and were employed both in war industrial enterprises and in agriculture.[155] In May 1917, however, the first Women Workers' Battalion was formed by Cemal Pasha as an auxiliary within the Fourth Army. The women of this battalion were to be deployed in agriculture in the Bekaa, Çukurova and Bissam.[156] In June 1918, another Women's Battalion was created within the Fourth Army, this time composed of immigrants whose background remains unknown, in Mamüret el-Aziz, present-day Elazığ. These women were supposed to work not in the fields

[152] BOA, DUİT, 50-1/27-1, 3 Zilhicce 1335 (21 September 1917). For further details, see also, Toprak, *İttihad – Terakki ve Cihan Harbi,* 87-91.

[153] By 1914 there were 90 of these battalions for each of the four armies, while every battalion existed of 1,000 to 1,500 men. Shaw, *The Ottoman Empire in World War I,* 148, see also 339-352.

[154] BOA, DH.İ-UM, E-25/5, 13 Safer 1335 (9 December 1916); BOA, DH.İ-UM, E-18/16, 5 Şevval 1334 (5 August 1916); BOA, MV, 212/69, 7 Ramazan 1336 (16 June 1918).

[155] BOA, DH.İ-UM, E-11/8, 23 Zillkade 1333 (4 October 1915); BOA, DH.İ-UM, E-24/42, 29 Muharrem 1335 (26 November 1916); BOA, MV, 208/100, 18 Ramazan 1335 (8 July 1917). See also Cengiz Mutlu, *Birinci Dünya Savaşında Amele Taburları,* İstanbul: İQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2007, 86-97.

[156] Although the information on this first women's battalion was given first in *İktisadiat Medjmouassi* and two months later in *Der Neue Orient* (this article was probably based on the former one), Cemal Pasha does not mention this in his memoirs where he does refer to other activities related to women. "L'agriculture et les femmes," *İktisadiat Medjmouassi*, 2me année, 54, 3 Mai 1917, 4; "Die Frau in der Landwirtschaft," *Der Neue Orient*, I, 7, Juli 1917, 331.

as agricultural workers, though, but on the looms which had been ordered to produce cloth for the army.[157]

The idea of women's battalions must have been liked by the military authorities including Enver Pasha; in July 1917 he ordered the formation of a Women Workers' Battalion within the First Ottoman Army.[158] A copy of the order was sent to the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* with whose mediation the women for the Women's battalion were to be recruited. On 10 September 1917 the Battalion was officially established and two weeks later, in the last week of September indeed an advertisement appeared in the newspapers: the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi* was looking for 302 "women" (*kadın*) and 32 "ladies" (*hanım).* The latter were to be employed in managerial and secretarial functions (25), as nurses (3), as seamstresses (2) and as (skilled) workers (*işçi*) (2); the former as unskilled labourers (*amele*). The labourers and the "ladies" with the managerial tasks were to be boarders.[159]

The interest for the *Kadın Birinci İşçi Taburu* (Women's First Workers Battalion) was, however, extremely low. Including the women who were sent through the agency of the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi,*[160] the number was hardly enough for a company, leave alone a battalion. According to Karakışla a total of 300 women was registered by November 1917. 270 of them were to be employed in road construction, the digging of trenches or agriculture. The other 30 were supposed to work in the transportation unit (this is including the women sent through the agency of the *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*). According to the annual report of the latter organization the

[157] "Arbeiterkompagnien," *Osmanischer Lloyd*, 12. Juni 1918, 3.

[158] Karakışla has covered this *Kadın Birinci İşçi Taburu* extensively in his book on Ottoman Muslim women and work during the First World War. Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire*, 101-134. Shaw refers to *Kadın Amele Taburları,* in plural, "composed of village women who volunteered for such service, especially those whose men had been conscripted into the army." based on a file not further used by Karakışla. It is unclear whether Shaw is referring to the battalions of the fourth army or the Enver Pasha organization or whether there are even more women's battalions. Shaw, *The Ottoman Empire in World War I,* (Vol. I), 341.

[159] "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi'nden," *Tanin,* 27 Eylül/September 1917, 3; "İş isteyen hanımlara," *Tasvir-i Efkar,* 28 Eylül/September 1917, 2.

[160] Which called upon the women who had been registered to duly report to the organization to be transported to their unit in an ad appearing on 1 December 1917. "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi İdare-i Umumiyesi' nden," *Tanin,* 1 Kanunuevvel/December 1917, 4.

Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi had allocated only 125 women to the *Kadın Amele Taburu* by January 1918, though.[161]

The lack of interest might have been an indication of the aversion of women against agricultural work (which was very public) and their preference for manufacturing jobs (in a more closed environment) as was the case in Britain and Germany, since although the Battalion also offered a limited number of administrative duties within its own organization, the majority of women was supposed to work in the open air. Photographs in the military propaganda periodical, *Harb Mecmuası* (War Magazine), indeed, show the women doing agricultural work and constructing a road.[162]

Another reason might have been the aversion against the inclusion of women within the army for other tasks than nursing. As Schönberger noticed writing on Germany: "The close association of women with the army in any capacity other than nursing carried negative connotations for contemporaries in almost all belligerent countries."[163]

The Battalion indeed formed a regular unit of the First Army Corps and had its headquarters in Istanbul. The women received the same pays and rations as soldiers in the regular army. That is, there were two classes: on the one hand women who worked as administrative force and received a regular salary; on the other hand, the workers who got a daily ration like ordinary soldiers plus a daily allowance. Although the officers were initially men, they were supposed to be replaced by women as soon as a sufficient number of women was properly trained. Every battalion was to be led by a chief of battalion (male), two chiefs of company (male), one accountant (female), one secretary (female), female sergeants and corporals, a civil engineer and an agricultural specialist. The women were expected to live in barracks like soldiers, and to be trained and drilled like them, but if they were married they would be allowed to go home four nights per week.

[161] Altındal, however, writes that the number of women who actually took duty totaled between 80 and 90. *Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1333 senesi raporu*, Cedvel No. 4; Karakışla, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire*, 106; Meral Altındal, "Kadın Birinci İşçi Taburu Tarihçesi," *Toplumsal Tarih*, 41, Mayıs 1997, 14-16.

[162] [photographs], *Harb Mecmuası*, III, 25-26, Mayıs 1334 (May 1918), 410-411.

[163] Bianca Schönberger, "Motherly heroines and adventurous girls: Red Cross nurses and Women Army Auxiliaries in the First World War," in: Karen Hagemann & Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (eds), *Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth Century Germany*, Oxford, etc: Berg Publishers, 2002, 87-113.

Figure 20 "Workers' Battalion plowing" *Harb Mecmuası*, III, 25-26, Mayıs 1334 (May 1918), 410.

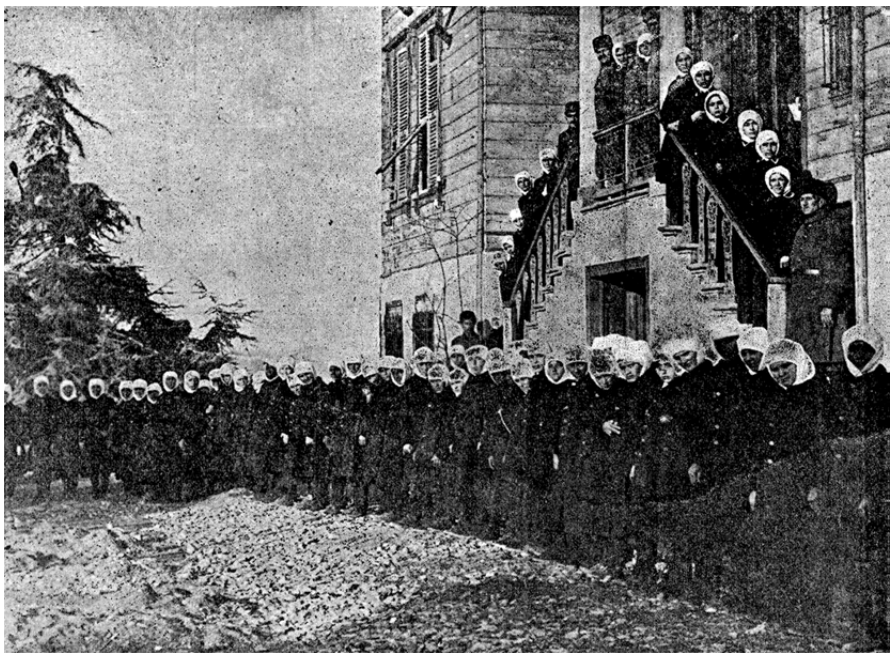


Figure 21 The women of the Worker's Battalion, *Harb Mecmuası*, III, 25-26, Mayıs 1334 (May 1918), 410.

Moreover, the women were to wear specially designed uniforms with distinguishing marks according to their rank.[164] Adapting to an army discipline where hierarchy was deemed vital, however, did not take place without problems. The women refused to salute the (male) officers, who in turn scolded the women for that. The army leaders, consequently, in January 1918 issued an order cancelling the obligation for women to salute the officers.[165] Measures were taken to reduce the contacts between the women workers and the male officers to a minimum.[166] The two women highest in rank (the accountant and the secretary) served as intermediary between the other women and the two male officers. As educated women they were probably more used to having social interaction with males. The guards for the battalions were chosen from among elderly soldiers.[167] On 1 January 1919, only a year after it started its activities, the Women's Battalion was dissolved again.[168]

The military (and civil) authorities thus tried to increase the agricultural production in order to feed the army and the civilian population, but were only partly successful. The all over yield did not really increase and to be able to feed the army the war taxes were continuously increased. The weight of these increasing demands was shifted onto the shoulders of the women left behind in the villages. Some of these women complained to the authorities about the ever increasing taxes. By October 1916, for example, the families were, according to the regulations, allowed to keep an amount of grain based on an allocation of 500 grams per day. The remainder had to be handed over as tax.[169] The Ottoman archives contain many letters and telegrams of women complaining to the local authorities about what they felt to be the unfair collection of taxes by the tax-officials of the central government. The local officials in turn applied to the Ministry of Interior with requests to spare the population of their district,

[164] "Der erste weibliche Arbeiterbataillon," *Der Neue Orient*, II, 11-12, March 1918, 557; *Harb Mecmuası*, III, 25-26, Mayıs 1334 (May 1918), 410-411; [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, 236; Toprak, "Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti"; Altındal, "Kadın Birinci İşçi Taburu tarihçesi"; "Protect Women Soldiers," *New York Times,* 23 March 1918.

[165] *Ordu Emirnamesi*, 68, 15 Kanunuevvel 1333, 407.

[166] "Turkish women form Battalion: Minute Measures Taken to Isolate Them from Men," *Washington Post,* 23 March 1918, 4.

[167] Karakışla, "Women Workers' Brigade," 126-127.

[168] Altındal, "Kadın Birinci İşçi Taburu tarihçesi."

[169] BOA, DH.İ-UM, E-80/35, 9 Zilhicce 1334 (8 October 1916).

because, as they pointed out, a higher tax burden would lead to the starvation of women and children.[170]

The fact that women sent these complaints might indicate that they were the ones who had taken over dealing with the authorities instead of their absent husbands, who would normally have kept these contacts with the outside world. However, to what extent the women themselves went indeed to the post-office to send a telegram is not clear. It might have been the members of the Committee of Elders in charge of the village who sent the complaints and who tried to raise a patriotic compassion with the authorities using the women's status as the mothers and wives of the soldiers "fighting for faith and fatherland" to reach their aim.

From these letters and telegraphs it becomes clear that the financial and material situation of the rural women and their families deteriorated. Although the prices of foodstuff went up, the actual producers did not gain anything. A large part of it was confiscated by the state and bought at fixed (low) prices, while another part was levied as (war) taxes. What profits were made did not end up in the hands of the farmers, but in the coffers of the middlemen. Moreover, the extra incomes women had from small scale manufacturing of, for example, carpets also disappeared. The continuous devaluation of paper money further added to the deterioration of the situation.

Another kind of letters which reached the Ministry of Interior were complaints on the physical (and sexual) harassment of women without male companions by other men. These letters, sometimes written by the women themselves, but more often by the elderly men or women of the family (her parents-in-law), show that the life of a woman alone in a village was far from safe.

As a result we may say that the war did very little to emancipate the women in the rural areas of the Ottoman Empire. Although women were explicitly referred to in the Provisional Law on Agricultural Duty, it remains unclear in what way and to what extent these measures affected women and to what extent women, for example, took up chores which normally were done by men. The fact that other males, such as Prisoners of War and Worker's Battalions, were forced to work in the agricultural sector indicates that women at least were not able to completely replace their own men. The loss of control of a male partner

[170] See, for example, BOA, DH.İ-UM, 20-2/2-50, 26 Cemaziyelevvel 1336 (10 March 1918); BOA, DH.İ-UM, 20-3/2-30, 26 Receb 1336 (8 May 1918); BOA, DH.İ-UM, 20-18/12-1, 16 Safer 1336 (2 December 1917); BOA, DH.İ-UM, E-37/49, 1 Zilkade 1335 (20 August 1917).

was partly made up for with the control of a(n all-male) public body as the Committee of Elders: private patriarchy was replaced by public patriarchy, leaving no space for a shift in gender patterns. Further research into the many telegrams and letters in the Ottoman archives is, however, needed to get a more complete picture of women and gender in the hinterland of the coastal cities and small towns of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War.

Conclusion

The analysis of the available data on Ottoman Muslim women during the First World War do not warrant the simple conclusion drawn by Ahmed Emin Yalman in his book *Turkey in the World War* that this war had had an emancipatory effect on women.[171] As in many of the other countries involved in the First World War, the situation was much more complicated. Women in the Late Ottoman Empire – as in any other country – did not form a homogenous group. And as other researchers on women in various countries have shown, the effects of the First World War, were, therefore, not uniform for all women. They varied depending ot the age or stage in the life-cycle of these women, their ethno-religious roots and their socio-economic backgrounds. Two major trends can be discerned, though. Firstly, the situation of war combined with the nationalization (read muslimization) of the economy increased the number and share of Muslim women working in urban, industrial settings as well as in manufacturing at least temporarily. A second change which can be discerned was that the shift from the production of luxury goods for an international, civil market to the production of military goods for the local military led to a change in the geography of manufacturing: the production of textiles moved from the homes and workshops of Anatolia to the workshops and factories in the more industrialized urban areas. Thus an important (additional) source of income for Ottoman (Muslim) women from the rural areas was lost.

Although much more research is needed on this topic, it is clear that the situation of women in Anatolia deteriorated severely during the series of wars in the second decade of the twentieth century. More than the women in the urban areas, they felt the effects of "reliance on mass conscription, confiscatory

[171] [Yalman], *Turkey in the World War*, 235-238.

taxation, and conversion of production to the ends of a war:"[172] their husbands and breadwinners were mobilized, the agricultural production which had diminished for various reasons was confiscated by the authorities, while they were unable to continue their small scale manufacturing due to a lack of materials and a market which had collapsed.

[172] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990 - 1992,* Cambridge, MA & Oxford UK: Blackwell, 1992 [revised paperback edition of original, 1990], 83.