

Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20084]

Proposed title of the session

Crisis and Growth in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean during the interwar period

Abstract

The objective of this session is to explore and analyse socio-economic developments in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean between World War I and World War II. The end of World War I saw the collapse of the Ottoman Empire causing dramatic demographic, social, political and economic changes in the region. Its former unification under a single imperial authority was substituted by a series of separate states with their own tariffs, custom regulations and currencies. A few countries obtained independence, while most of the region became incorporated into the British and French empires.

The interwar era was a period dominated by “anti-global,” autarkic dynamics, which led to the disruption of commodity and factor price convergence in world markets, and contributed to the Great Depression. The replacement of the Ottoman political order by the creation of separate states generated wrenching economic and ideological readjustments upon the inhabitants of the region. In the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, political economic decisions mirrored the rise of economic nationalism, which in turn dominated policy decisions in the region. These took the form of tariff increases and other types of protectionist measures, such as quantitative restrictions to trade, government sanctioned trade monopolies, import licences, and anti-dumping legislation. Moreover, after the end of the Ottoman order, the socio-political structure of the region was shaken by various types of social upheavals, conflicts and revolts of different lengths and magnitude: the war of independence in Turkey (1919-1923), the countless coups in Greece, the Druze revolt in Syria (1925-1927), riots in Palestine (1921, 1929) followed by the Arab revolt in Palestine (1936-1939), and riots in Cyprus (1931). These upheavals signify the extreme stress that the new states had to manage while facing the turbulent economic conditions of the interwar period.

Over the past decades, economic historians have made a concerted effort to examine and understand the dramatic changes that affected economies worldwide in the period between the First and Second World Wars. However, with a few exceptions, the countries of the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean have yet to be fully incorporated into this research agenda. This session aims to contribute to this relatively unexplored field of economic history, focusing on various dimensions of socio-economic development in the region. Issues to be discussed in the session include (but are not restricted to): the effects of economic nationalism on trade and development, the economic implication of social revolts and upheavals, and the impact of the Great Depression and of international trade policy settings on the region’s market integration and growth.

If the panel is accepted we will issue an open call for up to four more papers. We encourage participants with ‘work in progress’ on the region.

I. Corresponding Session Organiser

Dr. Laura Panza (The University of Melbourne [Australia])

II. Co-Organiser(s)

1. Corresponding Organiser.
2. Dr. Andrew Schein (Netanya Academic College [Israel])
3. Dr. Alexandros Apostolides (European University Cyprus [Cyprus])

III. Expected Participant(s)

1. same as correspondent.
2. Andrew Schein (Netanya Academic College [Israel])
3. Alexandros Apostolides (European University Cyprus [Cyprus])
4. Ulaş Karakoç (London School of Economics [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland])