

# Nuova Rivista Storica

Anno CV, Settembre-Dicembre 2021, Fascicolo III

## Abstracts

FABIO L. GRASSI, *La diaspora caucasica in Turchia, 1914-1923. Uno Stato nello Stato?*

*Caucasian diaspora was formed when refugees came from their native lands in Northern and South-western Caucasus, as a consequence of the extermination and expulsion policies that were implemented by the Tsarist Empire. In the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, displaced Caucasians not only represented a considerable proportion of the Muslim population in Anatolia, but also came to occupy a large part of the Ottoman state apparatus, especially in the army. This paper provides due preliminary information on this scarcely known topic that pertains to millions of people in modern-day Turkey, the majority of which are Circassians. During WWI, individuals and communities from the Caucasus acted as loyal and willing Ottoman Muslims, but, at the same time, they strove to return to their lost native lands. Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the Mudros truce, many Caucasians had a prominent role in the “Turkish national struggle”, but were reluctant to abandon the irredentist perspective; many others joined the loyalist, anti-nationalist camp and it was a Circassian, the Circassian par excellence, Ethem Dipsheu, who openly challenged Mustafa Kemal’s leadership inside the nationalist movement. Before the foundation of the Republic, some Circassian communities who had reportedly committed betrayal were punished with deportation from the Marmara Sea region to Eastern Anatolia. In this way Mustafa Kemal warned both the powerful Caucasian lobby inside the establishment and the whole population of the “new Turkey”: nothing other than complete commitment to the Turkish nation would be accepted and the expression of separate identities would be totally forbidden. Hence, the Circassians were the first victims of the Kemalist regime’s massive repression. With few exceptions, the Caucasians bowed their heads, whereas many Kurds did not.*

Keywords:

*Caucasian Diaspora in the Ottoman Empire*

*Circassians*

*Turkey*

*Ethem Dipsheu*

*Mustafa Kemal*