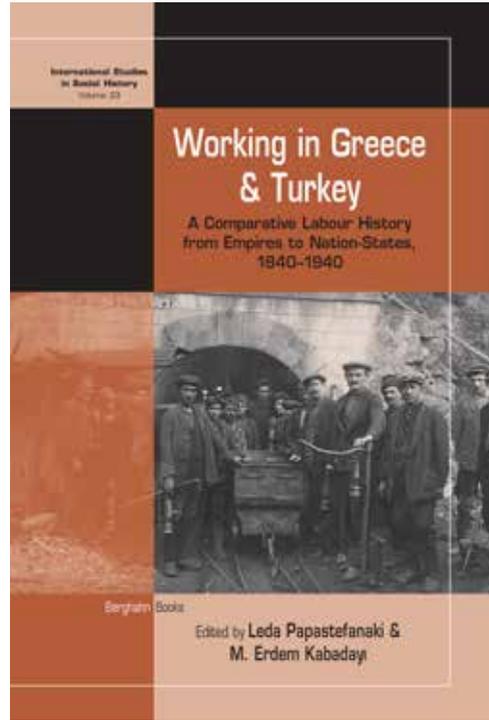


# GLOBAL LABOUR

# HISTORY STUDIES

# ON BOTH SHORES OF

# THE AEGEAN



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Global labour history represents a multidimensional approach that considers not only labour processes in factories, but also daily life, living standards, gender, use of child labour, ethnicity, environment, and migration. It evaluates qualitative and quantitative factors together and criticizes the Eurocentric perspective and methodological nationalism. The book entitled *Working in Greece and Turkey, A Comparative Labour History from Empires to Nation-States, 1840-1940* and edited by Leda Papastefanaki and M. Erdem Kabadayı uses the conceptual framework of global labour history. The book's primary objective is to contribute to the "internationalization of Greek, Ottoman, and Turkish labour history". The book consists of three parts and thirteen chapters. The first part entitled "Agrarian Property and Labour Relations, Rural and Urban Organization of Work" focuses on the themes of agricultural labour relations, working conditions in the farms (subjection to the landlord and unfree labour), inequalities in

rural society, the impact of environmental shocks on working relationships, labour organization in rural areas, and ethno-religious division of labour. Alp Yücel Kaya, the author of the first chapter, discusses the working conditions in the çiftliks (large landed estates) in the mid-nineteenth century in Tırhala in particular, in the Balkans in general. Landlords and cultivators were in continuous conflict; landlords wanted to increase their profitability, cultivators searched ways to meet their subsistence needs. In such a context landlords controlling local councils and having a strong influence on the central administration imposed restrictions on labour mobility. In the following chapter, Christos Hadziiossif discusses development of wage labour in rural Greece. He argues, criticizing the argument that small peasant property was the dominant form in rural Greece, forcefully that the reform of 1871 in Greece increased the inequality of property distribution in rural areas and made peasants highly dependent on wages.

Examination of labour history together with environmental history gives us neglected dimensions of working relations. Semih Çelik analyzes the effect of famine in Ottoman Anatolia from 1845 through 1848 on labour relations. The famine caused changes in the labour market: migration of people to cities, changes in the labour force profile in cities, fluctuations in price, transformation of production, and exchange relations. Hence, environmental shocks affected the labour market as well as demographic changes did. Using the concept of proto-industrialization, Fatma Öncel provides a qualitative and quantitative analysis of manufacturing activity in Plovdiv (Karlova, Kalofer, Sopot) in the mid-nineteenth century. Öncel discusses in detail the guild system, the working conditions of the craftsmen, income inequalities by occupational status, the flexibility of rural working conditions, and gender division in labour. In Öncel's study, some questions could not be answered due to lack of resources, such as why the non-Muslim population is dominant in woolen textiles or how to observe the labour of women and children. In another chapter, M. Erdem Kabadayı and Murat Güvenç conducted a study to explain the role of religion and ethnicity in occupational categories existing in the Ottoman Empire. According to the analysis made with a data set consisting of 51,401 observations for sixteen towns, there were ethnic concentrations in different sectors such as Armenians in the textile sector, Jews in the small trade, and Muslims in the agriculture sector, but according to them, this result cannot be generalized for the urban occupational structures of the Ottoman Empire.

The second part of the book entitled "Political Change, Migration and Nationalisms" focuses on the themes of unionization, role and positions of guilds in the formation of the working class, casualization of labour, chain migration, national preferences in migration, and the role of nationalism in employment. Akin Sefer's study builds on the collective actions of Istanbul port workers, especially Armenians. The development of steam technology and the transformation of the ports during the period of the Ottoman Empire's participation in global maritime capitalism affected the class formation among the port workers through the guild system. However, class formation among the port workers did not only concern their economic interests, but also their activities in political organizations. In a similar vein, Sinan Dinçer studies Armenian immigrant workers whose chain migrations were perceived as a political threat by the Ottoman governments. Nikos Potamianos discusses class consciousness of ethnic groups and refugees and scrutinizes the scope of national preference demands in Athens and Piraeus in the period

1890–1922. There are certain conditions necessary for the formulation of national preference demands. In Athens and Piraeus, these conditions emerged with the development of a class consciousness and labour solidarity and were used against refugees. In the last chapter of the second part, Erol Ülker explains the effect of the increase in nationalist tendencies on ethno-religious diversity. Russian refugees and non-Muslim Ottoman subjects at the Silahtarağa Power Plant were fired because of the pressure of the nationalist labour movement.

Women's labour and children's labour are neglected topics in labour history and history of class relations. The last part of the book entitled "Labour Market and Emotions in the Twentieth Century" focuses on paternalistic gender practices, child labour, and concept of intimacy. Leda Papastefanaki examines the relationship between paternalistic practices and gender in the Karellas textile factory in Hermoupolis during 1900–1940. In the Karellas textile factory, while the men were systematically given bonuses, the women were denied systematically given bonuses for reasons such as marriage, pregnancy, and sometimes for no reason. The women were given bonuses by employer's selection or by a lottery system. Barış Alp Özden's study exemplifies the paternalistic practices by examining the Bedaux system which is a performance-based wage method. According to his research, with the introduction of the Bedaux system in Mensucat Santral the conflict between the weavers and the management was resolved and the employers ensured their control over weavers. In addition to this system, paternalistic practices such as health services, sponsoring of social activities and informal benevolence were also used to increase the productivity and loyalty of the workers. Asimakis Paleologos' study, using the total history (*histoire totale*), focuses on printers and press workers in Patras during the period 1900–1940. There are both similarities and differences between printers and press workers in terms of education level, wage, and employment stability. But the primary difference emerges at the point where labour is determined by demand. Press workers who had left-wing political tendencies had stable employment in the press sector as conflicts were more severe. Pothiti Hantzaroula's study of child domestic labour, which is the final study of the book, is based on oral testimonies in Greece between 1920 and 1950. Children are included in the labour market due to increased male unemployment, insufficient wages, policy of state institutions, and private organizations, and cultural and emotional reasons. The girls experienced the workings of the family economy through bonds of fictive kinship, the myth of being one of the family, the use of gratitude and loyalty as pressure, and domination strategies.

This book offers a new perspective on global labour history studies by focusing on neglected, under-studied themes rather than traditional themes. It includes a multidimensional approach by mobilizing different disciplines such as migration studies, environmental history, and gender studies. It is very important for global labour history literature to evaluate the impact(s) and interaction of local councils, central administration, governments, trade unions, craft guilds in order to study conflicts and nationalism emerging in the labour market; and to examine the association between the wage information and paternalistic methods despite the scarcity of knowledge about the role of women and children in the labour market.