

A Part of the Ottoman Centralization Policy: Travel Permits and Their Samples Until the 20th Century

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After the development of central governments, from the 16th century onwards, states wanted to control the movements of their citizens by several documents. These identity documents were a kind of passports, and their arrangements varied from country to country. With the undisputed triumph of capitalism and nation-states in 19th century of Europe, the state's control over the people was predominantly considered as an internal matter. Competition between states in the economic and military fields revealed the importance of centralization. Politicians who wanted to take advantage of this competition went on to increase control over the activities of their populations.

In the Ottoman Empire, the state-control over the movements of its citizens dates back well before the 19th century. Due to the manorial system in the Ottomans, the peasantry remained attached to their lands, and the State imposed criminal sanctions on those left their lands. There were severe migration waves to Western Anatolia and especially to Istanbul until the 20th century, and therefore it was necessary to prevent the entry of beggars and unemployed people without guarantees to the city. The obligation to have “*yol hükmü*” (road provision), whose name changed to “*mürur tezkeresi*” (passing compass), was also one of these considerations.

In this study, it is aimed to shed light on the state-control over the people by making use of the Ottoman archives, the narratives of the travellers with secondary sources, and aimed to give information about the travel permits and travel documents which were subject to an arrangement since the 19th century.

The first part of the study attempted to provide information about the emergence of the Modern States and the first passport applications. The second part focused on travel documents in the Ottoman Empire. The third section contains information about the political events in the depressed periods of the empire and the travel documents that changed as a core of the centralization policies which the government focused on. The final part provides information on the economic aspect of travel certificates as a source of income and as a means of pressure on the public.

The emergence of modern states and first passport applications

Since the disappearance of feudalism and the strengthening of central governments, some states wanted to control their citizens by some documents. These documents were pass-

ports, which also served as a form of identity documents, and their issuances varied from one country to another.¹

The economic change in Europe, especially since the 16th century, and the resulting unemployment has forced government administrators to take some precautions. With the documents issued by the Prussian Imperial Police Department in 1548 and known as “Pass”, the movements of gypsies, unemployed people, and cadgers were believed to pose a danger in terms of social order and security were tried to be limited.² Since the 16th century, especially unemployment in cities has brought with it the need for more control of the public by states. Before the applications of the Prussian Empire, despite the relatively free environment created by *Magna Charta* in England, it was illegal for some merchants and soldiers to leave their place in 1381 without permission.³

In the 17th century, we can understand that travellers and religious deviants with the vagrants were among the factors that worried state administrators.⁴

It is evident that in the 18th century, the main reason why state administrators brought up residence documents and travel permits in Russia, under the rule of Peter the Great, was the systematic need for the military for the vast army of the state. We understand that since 1719 people were obliged to obtain a permit from states to move from one town or village to another.⁵

Considering France, the place where the first nation-state was born, we see in the Louis-XVI period (1643–1715) people had to have some kind of internal passports. This situation is related to how the subjects living in the country defined as “foreign or national” rather than “foreign or local” due to the discriminatory policy imposed by the state since the late middle ages. From these documents prepared by local religious authorities, it is clear that the country was experiencing some kind of internal security problems.⁶

In the pre-revolutionary French regime, passport checks became a vital mechanism of daily life, and this situation disturbed the revolutionaries. In the French state, which was reconstructed after the revolution, we understand that with compulsory military service becoming a way of life, and residence documents and passports became crucial.⁷

The successful functioning of compulsory military service and the bureaucratic mechanism in this regard strengthened the state’s hand in defining and limiting the movements of its citizens, despite the vigorous protests of the revolutionaries.⁸ With the constitution adopted in 1791 after the revolution, passport controls were lifted because it was against individuals’ freedom to travel. Nevertheless, after a while, it was returned to this system.⁹

Competition between states since the 19th century, particularly in the economic and military sphere, demonstrated the importance of centralization. Politicians, who wanted to strengthen their hands for the race in question, went on to increase the control over the

¹ Turna, *Seyahat, Göç ve Asayiş*, 10.

² Torpey, *Passport*, 59–60.

³ Bertelsmann, *Das Passwesen*, 17–18.

⁴ Turna, *Seyahat, Göç ve Asayiş*, 10.

⁵ Torpey, *Passport*, 61–64.

⁶ Ibid. 65.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Torpey, *Passport*, 67–68.

⁹ Turna, *Seyahat, Göç ve Asayiş*, 11.

population movements. These checks gave the ruling class the power to determine who could enter their territories and who could go. Although the move towards freedom of travel in the 19th century (Appendix 1), America's law to prevent Chinese immigration to the country; Passport law that came into force in Italy in 1901; the transition of the French state to the identity document system and the current "Pass" system in Germany marked this century.¹⁰ The controls by the passport documents, which were temporarily applied during World War I, were made permanent in the later years of the war.

Travel documents and internal passport implementations were caused by the oppressive governments of the past to want to keep their citizens under control generally. We see that in the 20th century, passport applications were sometimes flexible and sometimes strict. For instance, Germany, which made special censuses to Jews in the coming periods after the World War I, put into effect a kind of internal passport application in 1935 (Appendix 2).¹¹

Another example of passport application in the twentieth century is related to the Soviet Union. In the Soviet era, a kind of passport system called "Propiska" was put into effect.¹² With this practice, it is apparent that villagers were wanted to be kept under control by preventing mass migration to the cities.

Many countries have ended their internal passport applications since the 20th century. "Pass" and other domestic passports were replaced by increasingly important identity cards. The role of the general validity of identity cards/documents in claiming citizenship rights and benefiting from social services plays a significant role in this.¹³

In short, it would not be wrong to say that the identity documents we use today are a continuation and an example of former internal passport applications.

Travel documents in the Ottoman Empire

We see that state-control over citizens' movements in the Ottoman Empire dated far beyond the 18th century when the state took intense steps towards centralization. In Europe, the serfdom system had tied people to the field and prevented migration from the countryside to the cities. As this system began to deteriorate, there was a massive wave of migration from the countryside to the cities; the cities were full of unemployed, homeless people, beggars, and vagrants.¹⁴

Due to the *Timar system*¹⁵ in the Ottoman Empire, the state imposed criminal sanctions on those who left their land. However, the general economic hardship in the country over time – an increase of taxes, some adverse economic developments, and the difficulties that the peasant suffered – forced the farmers to leave their lands. Just like the samples of the other European states, many of these mentioned people, who were called *çiftbozan*,¹⁶ fell

¹⁰ Torpey, *Passport*, 63–111.

¹¹ Schmid, *Juden Unterm Hakenkreuz*, 97–100.

¹² Garcelon, *Colonizing the Subject*, 83–100.

¹³ Turna, *Seyahat, Göç ve Asayiş*, 12.

¹⁴ Lüdtke, *Police and State in Prussia*, 46.

¹⁵ *Timar*: Ottoman land usufructary right. In Ottoman Empire, it was known as a donation of lands or takings by the sultan to a person in emolument for his services. Encyclopaedia Britannica, "*Timar*".

¹⁶ A type of law prohibiting migration from villages to cities in different periods of the Ottoman Empire. E-Tarih, "*Çift Bozan Kanunu*".

into the grip of hunger where they went. By the archive documents of that era, we see that these people caused anxiety and mistrust of their existence among all the Anatolian and Rumelian people.

There were severe waves of migration to Western Anatolia and especially to Istanbul until the 19th century. Therefore, it was necessary to prevent the entry of beggars, unemployed, and people without guarantees. One of these measures is the obligation to have road provision, whose name was changed to *mürur tezkeresi*¹⁷ in the 19th century.

We understand from previous researches that the Ottoman citizens had to obtain these travel permits, called the *mürur tezkeresi*, from *Qadis*¹⁸ and regent in villages and towns until 1831. Anyone wishing to go to another city for a visit or for business or other reasons, firstly, should have received a written letter from the imam of the neighborhood where, for what reason and for how long he would go; then he could take this paper to the court and give it to the *Qadi* and pay the required fee, and then he could have permission paper. After the establishment of the reeve organization in neighborhoods, the authority to issue these written ballots was taken from imams and given to *demarchs*.¹⁹

The issue of allowing travels and migrations in the territories of the Ottoman Empire arose with the period of Sultan Mehmet II (The Conqueror) in the 15th century. One of these first orders, called "*il-can-name*" or "*il-can mektubu*", was written by Mehmet II in 1463 to allow a Venetian ambassador, named Franco Bobanic,²⁰ to settle in Ottoman territory (*Novo Brdo*)²¹ with his family, and the other was addressed to the authorities, asking for necessary measures to ensure that the Venetian ambassador could travel safely.²²

We see that "*il-can-name*"s in the 15th century and "*izn-i serif*"s the 16th century left their places in the 18th and 19th centuries to "*yol emr-i serif*"s. In addition to all these documents, the type of document known as "*passavan*"²³ arranged for people traveling between two neighboring states and the "*yol emr-i serif*"s requested by the embassies of foreign countries also took their place among the documents required for the trip.

These documents, requested by foreign embassies, are documents addressed to the authorities at the places where the traveler will stop and arrive at the last time of the trip and are intended to ensure the safety of the passenger, to provide for his needs and to prevent any arbitrary application (Appendix 3).²⁴

The need for "*yol izn-i serif*"s decreased over time as the use of description-based "*Mürur*"s became widespread. *Mürur* documents were mainly required to be provided by

¹⁷ Kutukoglu, *Diplomatik*, 251.

¹⁸ "*Qadi*" or Arabic "*qādī*": A Muslim judge who renders decisions according to the Sharī'ah (Islamic law). The qadi's jurisdiction theoretically includes civil as well as criminal matters. Encyclopaedia Britannica, "*Qadi*".

¹⁹ Cadırcı, *Pasaport Nizamnameleri*, 171.

²⁰ Ménage, *Seven Ottoman Documents*, 96–97.

²¹ "*Novabrdo*" or "*Novo Brdo*", is a medieval Serbian mining town located nowadays in Pristina / Kosovo. Mapnall, "*Novo Brdo*".

²² Sezer, *Seyahat İzinleri*, 108.

²³ "*Pasavan*" or "*Passavant*": a document issued to Turkish citizens who live in the border areas between neighbouring countries and who have land there to be used as a passport for their free commute. Kubbealti Lugati, "*Pasavan*".

²⁴ Turna, *Seyahat, Göç ve Asayiş*, 14.

everyone, local or foreign, who had the desire to travel in Ottoman territories. These documents, usually issued for foreign embassy employees,²⁵ merchants and clergy, were road permits issued for one year to ensure that such persons are not subjected to arbitrary treatment by the civil servants on the route they pass during their travels and that they can provide their needs with their own money.²⁶

In addition to the information about which state the person is a subject, his/her place of residence, where he/she will go, the age, height, beard, mustache of the owner of the certificate (*tezkere*), whether he/she carries a gun or not, were included (Appendix 4). Furthermore, if a traveler passes a settlement under an epidemic, the information about the health status of this person was noted by police on the backside of the mentioned certificate.²⁷

It is also understood that the state has been strict at times in allowing travel. For example, Afife Hanım, who was living in Istanbul in 1757, went to Edirne with her daughter Ayşe and her two concubines to settle a debt, but they were not allowed to return. We also know that some foreign travellers wishing to travel in the Ottoman Empire also encountered some difficulties in travel permit applications.²⁸

In the translation of a road permit dated 1588, which Reinhold Lubenau, who wanted to travel through the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, had it delivered with the British envoy's assistant and prepared on behalf of the Turkish Sultan, the following phrases were used:

“May God make all our designs and actions successful. To the qadis or judges who are in charge of all the sea and land routes of Bab-ı Humayun²⁹ at the intersection of the known cities and to the captains who rule the ports, Gulf and islands at sea or manage the ships, as well as to the chiefs and commanders who roam the seas, to the emirs assigned to the ports of our country and is reported by: Reinhold Lubenau, who presented the Emirname-i Humayun³⁰ that should be counted and obeyed, some time ago, our esteemed ally and beloved nurse of the Ottoman Empire came with the tribute sent by The King of Vienna (Beç) to Bab-ı Humayun on the orders of the English Queen³¹ and now asked my permission to return to the Great Queen of England again. For this reason, it goes wherever the person in question, land, and sea, roads or ports are not against the law in personal and prevent damage to equipment, disconnect any hassle, and providing everything he needs money for supplies

²⁵ For instance, the Habsburg envoy Anselm Franz von Fleischmann, who was in Istanbul between 1711 and 1715, stated in a report that he was waiting for a passport. HHStA-*Türkei I-1710-1713*, 179v.

²⁶ The Encyclopaedia of Islam [EOI], “*Murur Tezkereleri*”.

²⁷ Kutukoglu, *Diplomatik*, 254.

²⁸ Turna, *Seyahat, Göç ve Asayiş*, 44.

²⁹ “*Bab-ı Humayun (The Great Gate)*” refers to the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, where the Ottoman Sultan and his veziers were located.

³⁰ “*Emirname-i Humayun (The Great Order)*” refers to the letters sent by the Ottoman sultans to the rulers of foreign states as well as to the Lords in the status of vassals and to the rulers of the privileged regions. EOI, “*Name-i Humayun*”.

³¹ *Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603)* is meant.

and food, also freely and in safety from one place to another is commanded to go and help him get out of the country. However, he was not allowed to take horses, slaves, weapons, or other forbidden goods with him when he returned to his home country by ship. This Emirname must be followed carefully."³²

An Englishman Henry Barkley, a traveler, and an engineer, also mentioned that people wishing to travel in the Ottoman country in the 19th century should have obtained travel documents and carried the Sultan's edict with them. Barkley pointed out that only essential and reassuring Europeans could receive these documents, was complaining about the security guards waiting with them until they leave the city:

*"When you enter a city, you either show the Sultan's edict, or you send the edict with one of your men to the state official in the city. The next step is for city security guards to stand by until you leave town in the morning. Nevertheless, the truth is, they are never ready, so whenever we hire a new assistant security guard, I can say that we have lost two hours to wait for this guy to get ready. In general, it is doubtful that they are a blessing, but there is no doubt that they are a nuisance."*³³

According to the memoirs of J. Rendel Harris,³⁴ another pilgrim who visited the Ottoman lands, it is clear that several unique documents were inevitably issued in the late 19th century, other than travel permits or *mürur* certificates, as in earlier centuries. In a letter, Harris tells that the Grand Vizier would assist them on travel permits so that they would have certain privileges wherever they visit on the way, and there is no longer need guides. In another letter dated July 30, 1896, he states that some government officials had hampered regarding travel permits and that he had sent them a sum of money by telegraph.³⁵

Road provision, *izn-i sharif*, or another certificate, it is understood that foreign nationals who request a permit were not ordinary citizens. These documents were requested by persons of special status, including commercial ones, such as merchants, embassy officials, interpreters. Some of the road permits, which required by foreign nationals, were based on trade concessions or peace agreements granted by the Ottoman Empire to many other states.³⁶

In 1908, the application of the *mürur* certificates was abrogated by the proclamation of the constitution in the Second Constitutional Era (II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi). With the increase in the use of identity documents called "*Tezkire-i Osmaniyye*",³⁷ and since the middle of the 19th century, the application of foreign passports became widespread, and the application of the *mürur* certificates was not necessary. In the following years, *mürur* certificates

³² Lubenau, *Osmanli Ulkesinde*, 544–545.

³³ Olivier, *Yolculuk*, 45.

³⁴ James Rendel Harris was an English biblical scholar (1852–1941). Peoplepill, "J. Rendel Harris".

³⁵ Harris and Harris, *Ermeni Mektuplari*, 26.

³⁶ Kutukoglu, *Diplomatik*, 536–540.

³⁷ "*Tezkire-i Osmaniye documents were first adopted in 1863 C.E. (1280 A.H.) as, is in effect, an identification document. It included information describing the holder (parents, address, physical description) and where he/she was registered in the population registry.*" Sephardicstudies, "*Ottoman Identification Document*".

were replaced by “travel records”. This practice continued until the occupation of Istanbul in 1920, despite criticism that it was insufficient to produce solutions to the problems of public order after World War I.³⁸

The political environment in which the *mürur* applications developed

To examine the political atmosphere in which travel documents and permits developed along with the bureaucracy that evolved in the Ottoman Empire, a closer examination of the last century of the Empire is needed.

The rise of the Wahhabism in the Arabian Peninsula, Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798, and the over-empowered feudal lords in the Balkans, in particular, had shaken the imperial authority. During Selim III’s reign, the Janissary army, which had long lost its character, was also endangering the country’s internal and external security. In addition to all these current threats, we should not forget a Russian Tsarist who tried to advance towards the West and Ottoman lands. Russia, which annexed the Armenian territories and the north of Azerbaijan in 1804, was a great danger to Anatolia.³⁹

Both internal and external threats led Selim III (1761–1808) to a new reform movement. Several additional taxes were needed for this “New order” meaning “*Nizam-i Cedid*” reforms. The Janissary army and the ulema,⁴⁰ which benefited from the current corrupt order, caused the death of Selim III with the *Rebellion of Kabakçı Mustafa* (May 1807) and the shelving of the reform movement.⁴¹

With the accession of Mahmut II (1808–1839) to the throne, the reform movements resumed. The “*Sened-i Ittifak*” (1808),⁴² the suppression of the *Rebellion of Tepedelenli Ali Pasha* (1820–1822), and the *Abolition of the Janissary Army* (June 15, 1826), as well as the introduction of several innovation movements in the field of bureaucracy, were essential events in Ottoman political life during this period.

On November 3, 1839, the life, property, and honor of all subjects were secured by the promulgation of the “*Tanzimat*” edict.⁴³ It defined and regulated the relationship between the state and the citizen, and it was emphasized that every citizen had equal rights in the application of the principles of law. In the so-called *Tanzimat period* between 1839 and 1876, bribery was banned, and confiscation was duly terminated. “*İltizam*” – the system of

³⁸ Turna, *Seyahat, Göç ve Asayiş*, 14–17.

³⁹ Kurat, *Rusya Tarihi*, 319.

⁴⁰ Ulema: a privileged class originating from the madrasa, which formed the education, judiciary, fatwa and diyanet (religious organization) in the Ottoman Empire. [EOI], “*Ulema*”.

⁴¹ Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 77–80.

⁴² *Sened-i Ittifak*: the name of the document signed between the central bureaucracy and the powerful and wealthy governors in Ottoman history. [EOI], “*Sened-i Ittifak*”.

⁴³ *Tanzimat* (“*Reorganization*”): series of reforms promulgated in the Ottoman Empire between 1839 and 1876 under the reigns of the sultans Abdülmecid I and Abdülaziz. These reforms, heavily influenced by European ideas, were intended to effectuate a fundamental change of the Empire from the old system based on theocratic principles to that of a modern state. Encyclopaedia Britannica, “*Tanzimat*”.

collecting state revenues through the tender – was called off. Nevertheless, it returned to the system after a while due to the reactions that came.⁴⁴

Mass migration movements occurred after the Crimean War between the Ottoman Empire and Russia between 1853 and 1856. The Russians forcibly displaced Muslims in the Crimea region, resettling Orthodox Christians in the region. During and after the Crimean War, Russians doubted the loyalty of Crimean Tatars, while they were concerned about the Russian policy of russifying the region. The number of Tatars who migrated to the Ottoman country from 1783 to 1922 was around 1.800.000.⁴⁵

Caucasian migrations followed the Crimean migrations in the following years. During the six years between 1864–1870, when the 25-year resistance of Sheikh Shamil (1797–1871) ended in 1859, Caucasian migrations, thought to be about 2.500.000,⁴⁶ included Balkan migrations after the Russian War of 1877–1878. The migrations brought with them an identity crisis. Although the majority of the emigrants were Muslims, they had some disagreements with the locals in the new places. These problems were such as communion of the lands, marriages, and so on. The fact that those who forced Muslims to emigrate or tortured them where they lived and destroyed their families by confiscating their property were mostly Christians; the fact that the non-Muslim community in the places where Muslims had just emigrated was fuelling disagreements and causing identity problems⁴⁷ with public order failings.

The need for the state to control the movements of its subjects was of particular importance in this period. In addition to the mentioned political developments in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, one of the critical issues that preoccupied the Ottoman Empire was the Armenian issue.⁴⁸ Especially since the 1890's,⁴⁹ it is seen that Armenians often took part in the practice of *mürur* applications (Appendix 5). Armenians in Anatolia were able to enrich their language and literature through the work of missionaries; they fought for their national rights and received support from Russia. The events that took place before and during the First World War strengthened Armenian nationalism. Many Armenians have left the country, and many have lost their lives. Some of the Armenians also opted to side with Russia during the World War.

In summary, we see that in the last century of the Ottoman Empire, it had to deal with political and financial problems as well as a social issue that caused significant crises and identity problems. The Ottoman nation system, formerly composed of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish classes, has been shattered by the influence of the ideology of nationalism; communities, living in different geographies where the Empire has spread, have been questioning their loyalty to the state they were subjects of for centuries. The abolition of the Janissary army, which had been a plague on the State for more than a century, and the pro-

⁴⁴ Inal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, 392–406.

⁴⁵ Karpat, *Etnik Yapılanma*, 162–163.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 13–15.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 22.

⁴⁸ Turna, *Seyahat, Göç ve Asayiş*, 25–26.

⁴⁹ With the establishment of the Armenian Revolutionary Organization (Dashnaksutyun) in 1890, Armenians felt that the ideals of independence could not be achieved through peaceful policies. They started revolts in gangs in many cities in Eastern Anatolia. Encyclopaedia Britannica, “*Dashnaksutyun*”.

longed uprisings in Anatolia, in particular, forced an internal passport application for security reasons.⁵⁰ Travel documents, which were an effective method used by states for ages, had been used much earlier than the 19th century in the Ottoman Empire, but they had not only bureaucratic but also economic value.

Economic aspect of *mürur* applications

In addition to the function of ensuring security, it is seen that the state uses these documents as an element of pressure on its citizens regarding taxes. For example, if a person owed taxes, he could obtain a travel permit only if he had made a written commitment to pay the debt on a specific date. In a document dated September 25, 1850, in the Ottoman Archive, it is mentioned that the family of Kolagası Hasan from Cankırı (Central Anatolia) should send a written commitment document to the regional governor to be able to go to Istanbul, provided that they pay their accumulated tax debts or show a guarantee for their debts.⁵¹ The state used the *mürur* certificates as a tool for collecting debts, but this situation was met with the reaction by the public because it restricted travel opportunities.⁵² Based on a large number of documents to take measures against those who did not pay the wages of *mürur* certificates in the Ottoman archives, it is predictable that the high fees of these certificates created dissatisfaction in the society for seasonal workers, low-income citizens and those who had to travel in hopes of finding a job.

In the 19th century, expenses of these documents and salaries of some officials were covered by the fees received from *mürur* certificates (Appendix 6). Again, it can be said that the state intended to provide financial stability by increasing the amount of tuition in this period from time to time. Besides, the state was receiving tuition from Hajj tourists or for any other purpose, whether Muslim or not. Pilgrim Lui Ramber, since Muslims cannot go abroad without the Sultan's permission, mentions that these requests were often rejected and that they had to explain the reason for even the shortest trip. It also states that even a trip of fifty to a hundred miles is costly and requires waiting days for a permit.⁵³

Lui Ramber describes the problems related to the economic aspects of the *mürur* and passport practices in the Ottoman Empire as follows:

*“If the Turks are not obliged to accept foreigners with passports because of trade agreements and capitulations, they will close their borders and surround them with barriers. These difficulties are not alone in the journey. Now, many goods that can be obtained with difficulty before, and any machine that is not possible to produce in the country cannot be imported to Turkey. Therefore, no art can flourish in the country.”*⁵⁴

As a result, the states' control of the movements of their peoples did not begin in the 19th century. However, until the 19th century, travel documents existed with different names

⁵⁰ Ergün, “Ermeniler”, 28–29.

⁵¹ PSA, A.MKT.MVL. Nr:32/41. September 25, 1850.

⁵² Turna, *Seyahat, Göç ve Asayiş*, 27–28.

⁵³ Ramber, *Gizli Notlar*, 103.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

and different contents. The *mürur* papers with the description of the owner were the product of the centralization policy in their current period. Like many other states, the Ottoman Empire had been in the passport/internal passport application to ensure security and to observe who is entering and leaving the country (Appendix 7).

The *mürur* practice, which lasted until 1910, pioneered the practice of “*seyahat varakalari*” (new type travel papers), and the state continued its policy of monitoring individuals by passports and identity documents practices.

Conclusion

Since the end of feudalism and the reign of the central kingdoms as in ancient times, the ruling powers have wanted to control their citizens, both for their own and their country's safety. The producer peasant class, which was formerly dominated by feudal lords and was the most crucial part of the economy, found itself under the robust control mechanisms of centralized administrations after the disappearance of feudalism.

With the discovery of new, rich civilizations and evolving technology, countries have entered a natural race with each other. The population was one of the most influential forces in this race, which lasted mostly in the military and economic fields, and was of great importance both in terms of meeting the military needs of the states and in terms of providing tax benefits. Besides all this, we should not forget that the population should also be considered as a security issue. It is worth remembering that for centuries, peoples rebelled for many reasons, primarily economic reasons, displaced the throne holders, and even caused the disaster of the country. It was the same for peoples subject to the Ottoman State. The economic riots in Anatolia before the end of the 16th century, which was the most powerful and glamorous period of the Empire, left the Ottoman rulers in a problematic situation for many years. Ottoman politicians, who had to deal with wars and internal revolts at the same time, attempted to reforms both in the military and bureaucracy. In this context, they paid attention to travel restrictions to prevent villagers who hit the most significant blow to the economy from leaving the places where they lived. The Ottomans enjoyed being an empire with many different ethnic groups and spread over broad geography for a long time and experienced the transformation of these factors into a significant problem during the troubled period of the Empire.

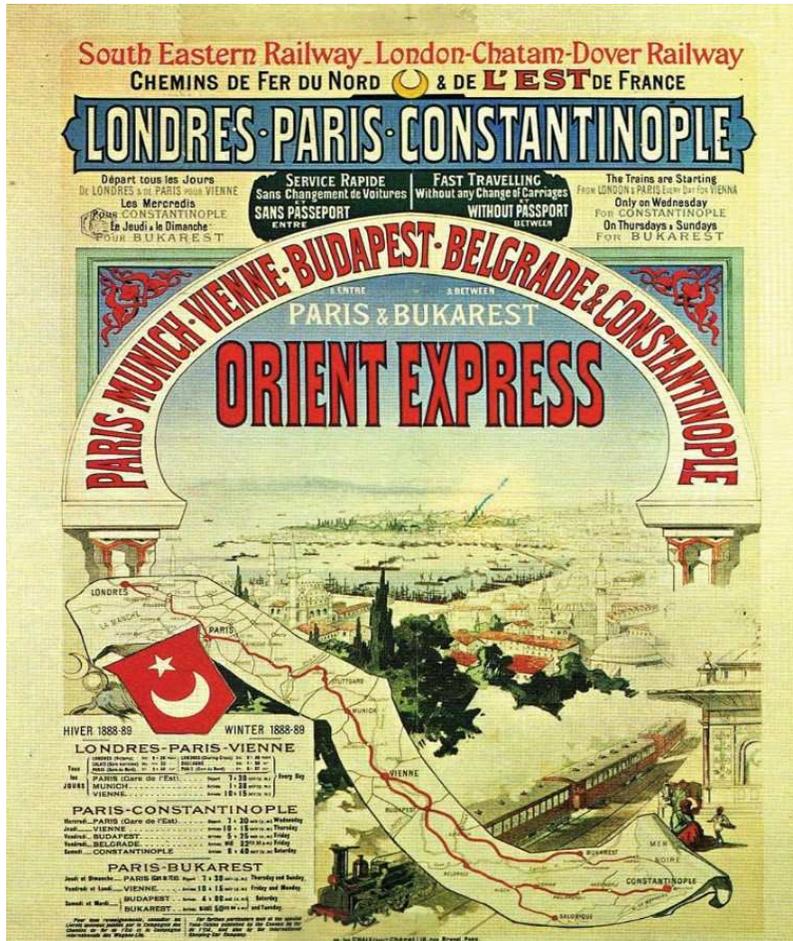
With the French Revolution, the definition of the nation changed. Muslims, Christians, and Jews, who were separated from each other in the society according to their religious beliefs, rediscovered their identities through factors such as culture, mother tongue, and collective history. Then, they rebelled against the Ottoman authority for independence, thanks to the ideology spread after the French Revolution. The Ottoman Empire, which was shaken by the influx of nationalism, had to struggle with the problems of public order and identity with the refugees who migrated from the lands lost as a result of successive defeats.

Although the government attempted to prevent irregular immigration with the travel permit practices, which was named *mürur* certificate since the 19th century, it is difficult to say that it was very successful in this because many documents in the Ottoman archives reveal that the Empire was insufficient to provide this internal security, especially in the 20th century. However, it is essential to remember that the implementation of travel documents as a continuation of the centralization policies that tried to keep the Ottoman Empire alive

until the 20th century was still used as a mechanism of control over the citizens, both socio-political and economic, by today's states.

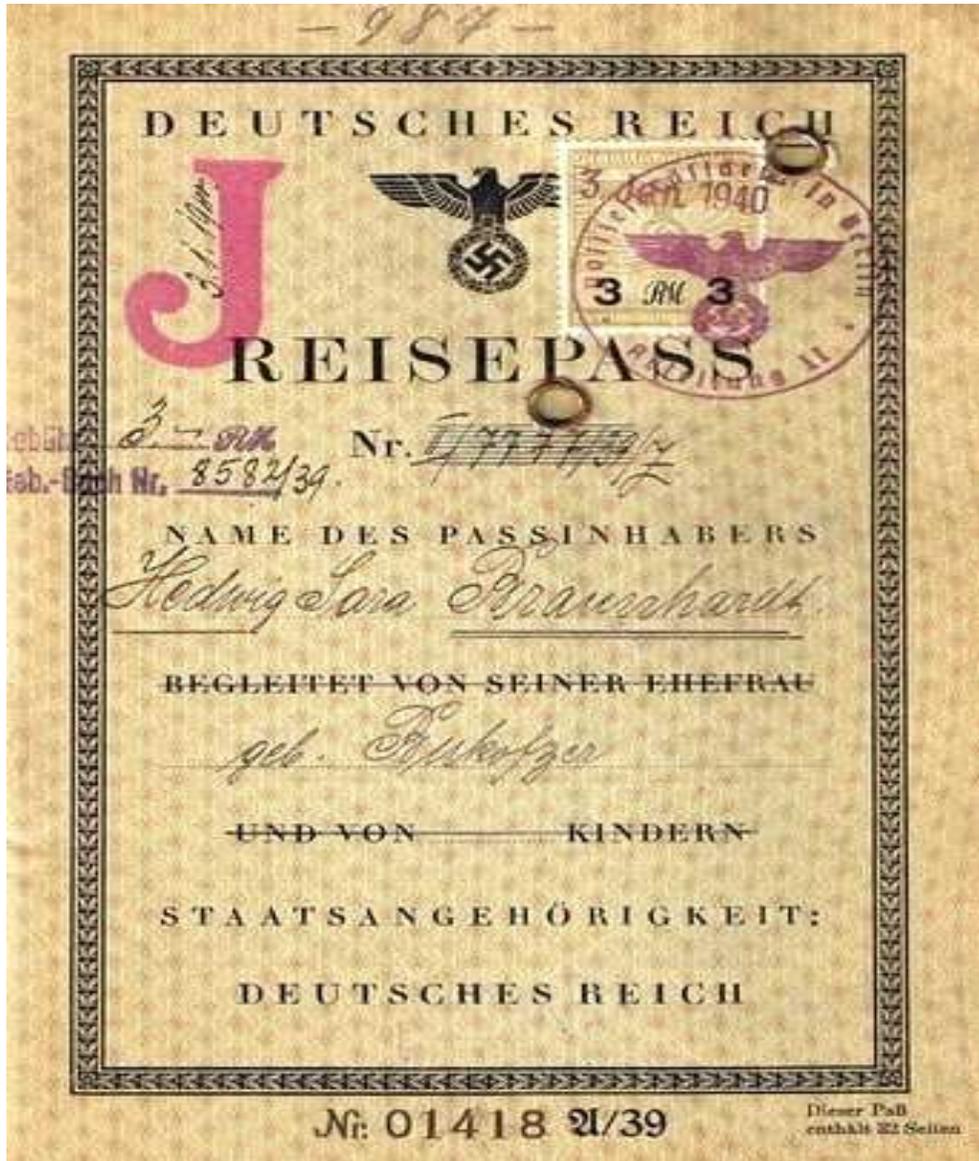
Appendixes

Appendix 1: "A passport-free tour commercial of the Orient Express"



A passport-free travel advertisement poster in 1888 for the Orient Express from London to Istanbul⁵⁵

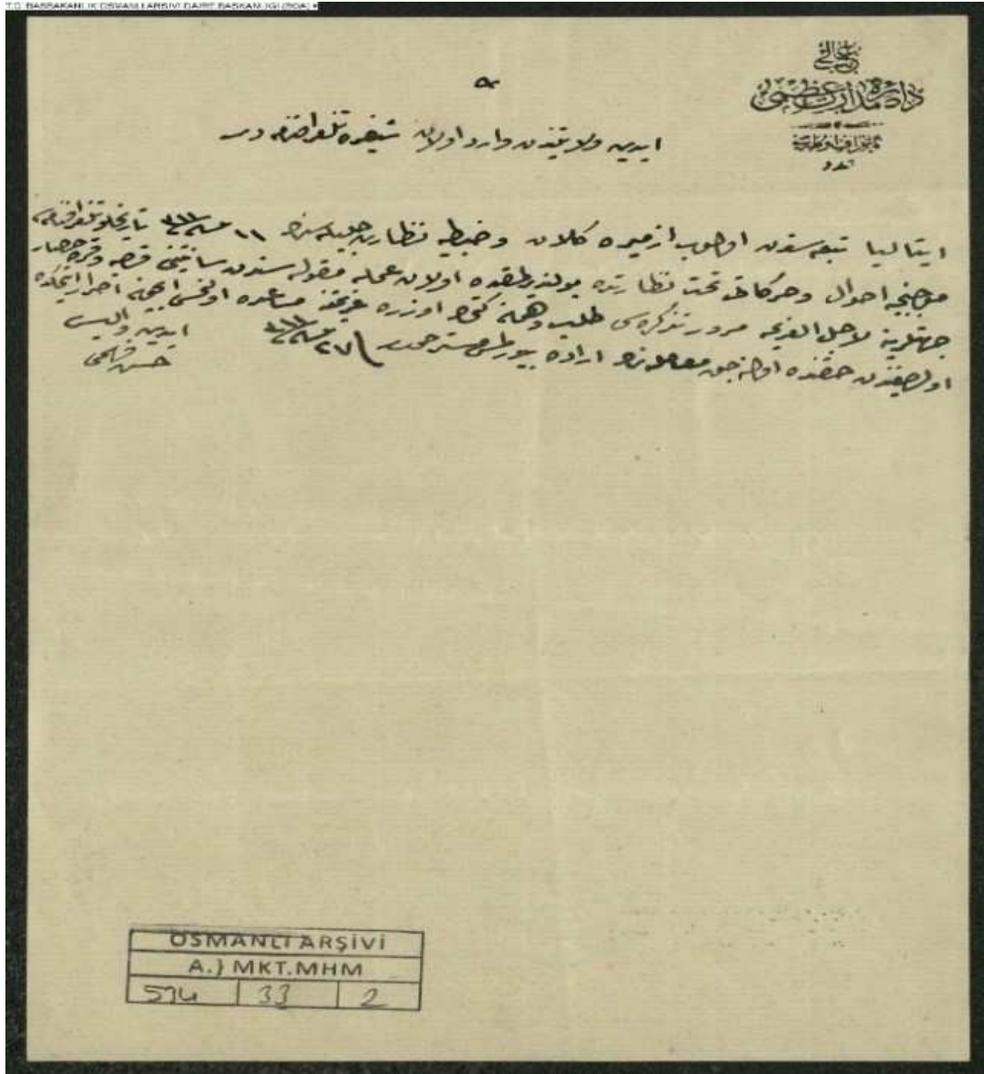
⁵⁵ Serlin, "Ready for Inspection".

Appendix 2: “A Jewish Pass issued by Nazi Germany”

Just before the beginning of the World War II, the German State cancelled the validations of all Jewish passports except the ones which have red “J” stamps on⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Citizenship by Investment, “Rare and most valuable historical passports in the World”. *CIP Journal*, 2017.

Appendix 3: “An Italian traveler’s request for permission”

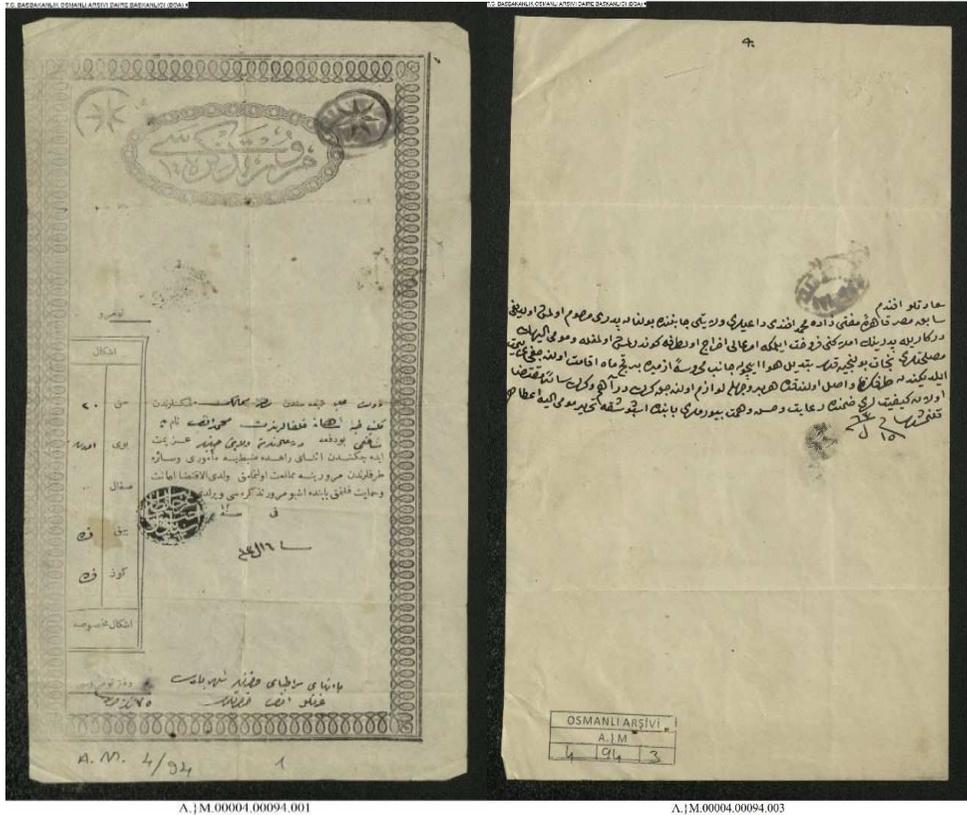


A. J. MKT. MHM.00534.00033.002

A request from the “Zaptiye Nezaret-i Celile” (today’s Police Department) for the mürur certificate of the person named “Santini” who came to Izmir from Italy⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Presidential State Archives of the Republic of Turkey [PSA], A. {MKT.MHM.}, Nr: 534/33. 9 May 1895.

Appendix 4: “A Sample of a *Mürur* Certificate and a Request for Assistance”



A sample of a *mürur* documents with the owner’s description on its left side; and a request for help from the Ottoman authorities: “Muftizade Mehmed Efendi will go to Izmir from Egypt to rest for a while and the letter and *mürur* certificate given to Kapıcıbashi Abdulkadir Agha regarding his request to be helped”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Presidential State Archives of the Republic of Turkey [PSA], A. {M...}, Nr: 21/17), 23. Oct. 1859.

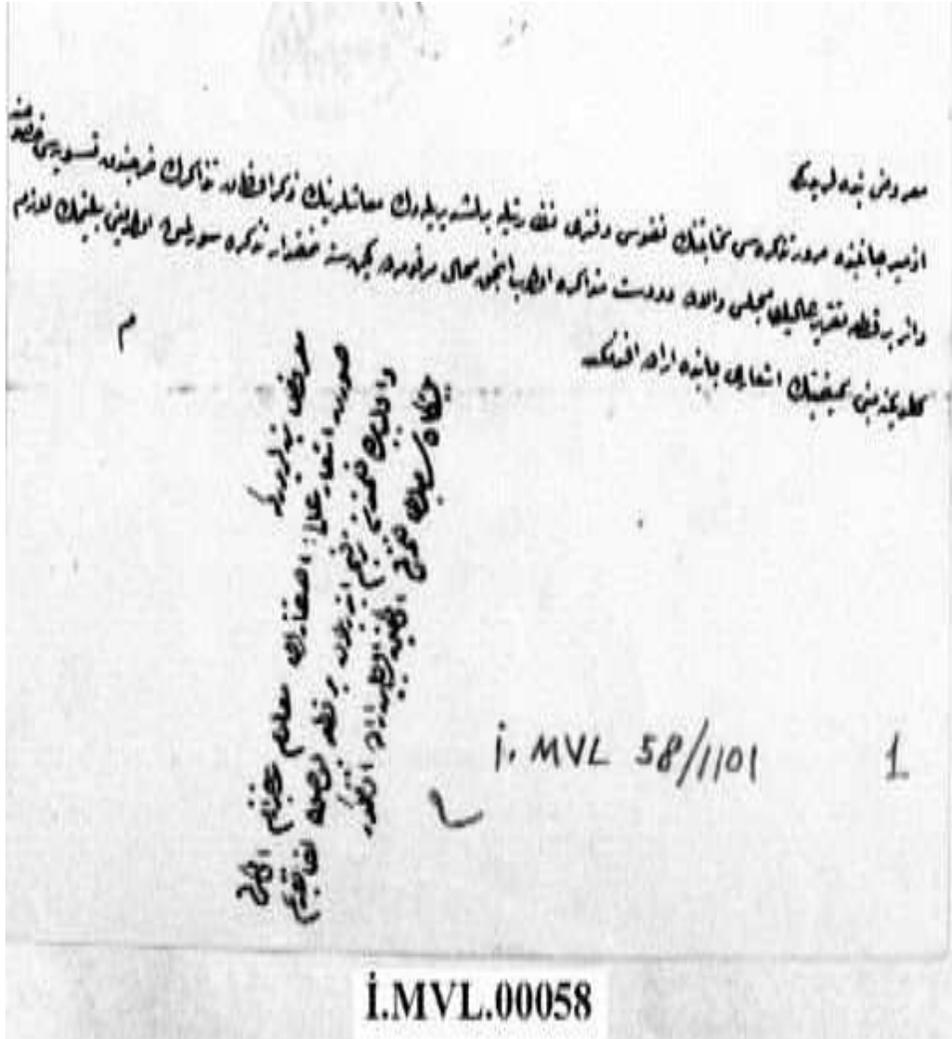
Appendix 5: "Passport Photos of two Armenian Families which left the Ottoman Empire"



In the left photo, the members of an Armenian family which received passports and emigrated to the United States. In the right photo, an Armenian family from the village named Miletli in Samsun (Northern Turkey), which left the country to go to their relatives in Russia⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Presidential State Archives of the Republic of Turkey [PSA].FTG. f./348--, September 16, 1905.; Presidential State Archives of the Republic of Turkey [PSA].FTG.f. Nr: 1060--, June 3, 1908.

Appendix 6: “About paying salaries of officials by *mürur* certificate fees”



A letter regarding the payment of salaries of officials in combination with the *mürur* certificate office located in Izmir (Western Anatolia) with the Ministry of Finance and Population (Ceride Nezareti)⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Presidential State Archives of the Republic of Turkey [PSA], İ. MVL. Nr:58/1101.

Appendix 7: “Internal view of an Ottoman Passport”



The interior view of an Ottoman passport dated August 12, 1923, in the explanation section on the right side of the document, states that Ottoman citizens who wish to obtain a passport must show a guarantor, along with the rules to be followed in order to possess the passport⁶¹

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A Part of Ottoman Centralization Policy: Travel Permits and Their Samples Until the 20th Century

After the disappearance of feudality and the development of central governments, from the 16th century onwards, states wanted to control the movements of their citizens by several documents. These documents were a kind of passports, which were also used as identity documents, and their arrangements varied from country to country. With the undisputed triumph of capitalism and nation-state in 19th century Europe, the state's control over the people was predominantly considered as an internal matter. Competition between states in the economic and military fields revealed the importance of centralization. Statesmen, who wanted to take advantage of this competition, went on to increase control over the activities of their populations.

In the Ottoman Empire, the state-control over the movements of its citizens dates back well before the 19th century. Due to the manorial system in the Ottomans, the peasantry remained attached to their lands and the State imposed criminal sanctions on those who left their lands. There were serious migration waves to Western Anatolia and especially to Con-

stantinople until the 20th century, and therefore it was necessary to prevent the entry of beggars and unemployed people without guarantees to the city. The obligation to have “*yol hükmü*” (road provision), whose name was changed to “*mürur tezkeresi*” (passing compass), was also one of these considerations.

In this study, it is aimed to shed light on the state-control over the people by making use of the Ottoman Archives and the memories of the travellers who visited the Ottoman Empire and aimed to give information about the travel permits and travel documents which were subject to an arrangement since the 19th century.