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STATE OF EXCEPTION: EXCLUDED STRUMA SHIP AS A CAMP

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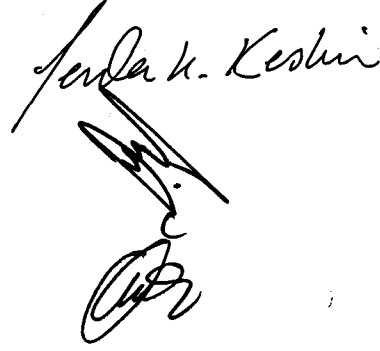
STATE OF EXCEPTION: EXCLUDED STRUMA SHIP AS A CAMP
OLAĞANÜSTÜ HAL: DIŞLANMIŞ STRUMA GEMİSİNİN KAMP HALİ

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I dedicate this thesis to my beloved grandmother FAZİLET ŞUŞUT and the rest of the people who were forced to be *Dönme* and also forced into a population exchange during the 1920's and became 'excluded' as *Mübadils*.

ABSTRACT

Giorgio Agamben who is considered to be a political and legal thinker introduced the theory of 'homo sacer,' which can be used to identify the on-hold situation of Struma Passengers. Non-citizen (homo sacer) Romanian Jewish Passengers in transit to the Promised Land (Palestine) were kept on the Turkish Sea during the 1940s when all institutions were banned to protect their fundamental rights. Eventually, the ship of Struma became a place outside of law, i.e. a place where law is suspended. Such a place can be considered to be a camp within the scope of a practice of thought that follows Agamben.

This thesis tries to understand how the unlimited power of sovereignty creates ambiguous camps (ship as a barrack) at the sacred times of the state of exception.

The controversial arguments by Giorgio Agamben allow to delve deeper in his context. In this work, Agamben's 'state of exception' coincides with several phenomena including bio politics, Turkish minority politics, the case of Struma and the notion of a camp. My thesis' ultimate aim is to go beyond what has been said to us so far, and, furthermore, to provide an argument to the effect that the unseen refugees from Struma ship became what Jewish prisoners were in Auschwitz.

KEYWORDS: Agamben, Struma, Camp, State of Exception, Turkish Minority Politics, Bare Life, Sovereignty, Jews, Biopolitics.

ÖZET

Politik ve hukuksal alanlarda bir düşünür olan Giorgio Agamben'in geliştirdiği 'kutsal insan' kavramı Struma yolcularının durumunu açıklayabilmek için kullanılabilir. Romanyalı Yahudi yolcular – ki onlar Türk vatandaşı olmayan 'kutsal insan'lardı – vaat edilen topraklara yaptıkları transit yolculukta Türkiye sularında mahsur kaldılar. 1940'ların atmosferinde tüm temel ellerinden alındı. Böylelikle Struma gemisi yasanın askıya alındığı, hukuksuz bir mekân haline geldi. Yasanın askıya alındığı bir mekân da bu düşünme pratiği içerisinde bir kamp olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Bu tez, olağanüstü halin kutsal zamanlarında, egemenliğin limitsiz gücünün muğlak kamplar yaratabileceğini (gemilerin barakalar olarak varsayılabilmesini) tasvir etmeye çalışmaktadır.

Giorgio Agamben'in tartışmalı argümanları bu kapsamda daha derine inerek araştırmayı sağlamıştır. Agamben'in 'olağanüstü hâl' kavramı birden fazla fenomenle kesişmektedir. Bunlar arasında; Foucault, biyopolitika, Türk azınlık politikaları, Struma olayı ve kamp kavramı bulunmaktadır. Tezimin nihai hedefi şimdiye kadar söylenenlerin ötesine gitmektir. Daha da ötesinde, Struma'nın görünmeyen mültecileri Auschwitz'deki Yahudi tutuklular haline gelmiştir argümanını savunmaktayım.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: Agamben, Struma, Kamp, Olağanüstü Hal, Türkiye Azınlık Politikaları, Çıplak Hayat, Egemenlik, Yahudiler, Biyopolitika

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"The existence of the camps is a warning... Under a new guise similar effects may appear tomorrow," David Rousset -Buchenwald survivor (quoted in Zoé Waxmen)
"We expected possibly to be taken somewhere else instead of Palestine. Even the place would be camp, the condition cannot be as bad as on the vessel," (Stoliar in Gabrea, 2001)
"On the 20th century commentary of Jurgen Habermas: "as gas chambers, total war, state-sponsored genocide and extermination camps, brainwashing, state security apparatuses and the panoptic surveillance of entire populations," (Habermas, 2001)
"The Biopolitical paradigm of western societies is today the concentration camp and not the city," (Agamben, 1998b)

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND SETTING THE STRUCTURE

1.1: Prologue

At the beginning of my thesis, I would like to mention how the aim of this work is set and more importantly the reasons that brought me to this point and evolved from there. Before starting this thesis, I was not precise about my problematic phenomenon. I had intended to blame and criticize Turkey's politics during the World War II. Then I considered these proclamations would and should not be related with what I intend to say. Yet, one may find many works on Turkish Foreign Policy during the wartime. My intention was to produce a work which should be more analytical than informative. It is one of the main reasons I did not choose to put charts and figures into this thesis. Mainly, anyone can get access to the historical documents, but surely, they would be limited to those which they are already permitted to see. If the archives were open, I would widen my research with new findings. But now, I neither would try to take an historical approach nor make an analysis of the outcomes of the war.

Additionally, Turkish nationalistic elements and their reflection on Turkish minorities made me further intensify my research. The founding principles of the

Turkish Jewish Community identity and Foreign Jewish Community identity are structured distinctly at the international arena. This was one of the first facts I realized when I started my research. I did not intend to make an ethnographic study in order to keep my work at a theoretico-discursive level.

An academic work on the Holocaust is not a preferred field of study for scholars in Turkey. It is certainly correct to frame the Holocaust as a meta-narrative. That is the crucial point to identify and divide Holocaust topography. I was constantly advised and encouraged by scholars to work on the Great Catastrophe¹. In order to do so, I had to set my study on ethnography and also on collective memory frameworks. On the other hand, I surely believe in the Affect Theory, which allows us to work on our own ghosts, haunted places and affective archives against historiography. My interest in the concentration camps and Holocaust helped me to search more on further connections since I read Anne Frank's Diary when I was at the same age as Frank was. The paths that Anne Frank had to take, reminded me that the road to Auschwitz did not happen in one day. So the camps as a notion should be deeper than just the buildings. In the aftermath, the turning points of my life can be summarized as dominos, with one event following another. Living in Krakow, Poland for a short period of time augmented my hunger for knowledge of the Holocaust even further. When I was studying for my literature review, to structure my work, reading Agamben made my case valuable and easier to focus on.

At the beginning, the telos of a camp and applying this onto Struma ship made me realize that this would not be enough by itself to create the framework. But the Turkification process and policies are quite impossible to ignore when one wants to construct a substitute study from a Turkish minority perspective.

'The Citizen, Speak Turkish! Campaign, the wealth of tax, compulsory military service' (Aktar, 2000) cracked the multicultural society at a nationalistic

¹ From this point of my work, I will use the word: *catastrophe* which Marc Nichanian translates from *ahged* in Armenian, Nichanian prefers to use *catastrophe* from the beginning of 1909 pogroms and 1915 massacre. He explains it all in his letters to David Kazanjian who become the editor of the book which includes those letters, called *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*.

level since the 1915 Catastrophe. It should not be so hard to imagine that people from other identities had started to feel excluded.

The definition of the concentration camp can be very ambiguous and obscure when the camp theory is applied to the case of Struma. With the help of other theoreticians such as Schmitt, Foucault and Diken, I will clarify that Agamben's camp as the nomos of our planet is no different than Struma. So, Struma can be the place where this camp theory is visible enough to underline the deaths of Romanian Jewish People on the way to Palestinian territories. As a matter of fact, before analyzing camp as a nomos, I intend to review Agamben's work for this thesis. Biopolitics, sovereignty, authority and more importantly the idea of the state of exception will inform my theoretical considerations before being applied to the example of the Struma ship.

To sum up my preface, being Jewish in Turkey is not different from being Armenian or Kurdish. It is just not as visible as the rest of them. Jews in Turkey had to face multiple pogroms and the 6-7 September Events. Yet, this thesis will not be about the struggles of Jewish identity in Turkey. I will briefly dwell on the Jewish identity in Turkey later in the 2nd chapter. But this will be a subchapter for my studies because, Struma represents the Romanian Jewish people not the Turkish Jews. This will bring me to the point of looking up the meaning of a "citizen," although a study of the 'citizen' will not be the main concern of the chapter.

Hence, I wish to declare at the end of this prologue that during the World War II, in Turkey, the Turkification processes resulted in the recognition of European Jewish people as *excluded* 'Musselmanns' (Agamben, 1999). These musselmanns were in a floating camp, which was known as the ship of Struma.

1.2: Giorgio Agamben

Giorgio Agamben, the contemporary philosopher, has become crucial for the world we live in today. His arguments are strong narratives for the political system. Again this system shapes the humanitarian situations that we face today. It would not be wrong to say that Foucault became the ultimate influence upon Agamben. Yet Hannah Arendt shouldn't be forgotten when discussing his influences. We can see that Agamben's work engages with and expands Foucault's work. The ultimate goal of this thesis is to focus on Agamben's terminology (especially "state of exception" and "camp") and to try to apply it to the case of Struma. The engagement of Agamben with Foucault opens a new door for this study. In order to understand Agamben, one would have to be familiar with Foucault's work as well as Agamben's, because Agamben has his own particular interpretations of the work of Foucault. Hence, this thesis doesn't claim to analyze Foucault's theoretical framework, yet it would be a completely different work without it.

Generally, this task is conducted through the State of Exception and camp theory. Understanding both biopolitics and law are also necessary for the framework. How may these apply to the Struma Case? This thesis is not only about Agamben but it is also an attempt to analyze how Turkey contributed to Holocaust with its own policies. This contribution might be hard to hear, yet the theoretical approaches brought to this conclusion at the end of my research.

1.3: Road to Conceptualization

1.3.1: Research Aims

In order to build a significant and a unique work for the areas of politics and philosophy, I have adopted and used various aims and literature reviews for this thesis. The concept of bare life and sovereignty were challenging at the beginning. The adoption of these concepts and their application to the Struma

passengers reflected how a concept interacts with an experience. This guided my table of contents very widely.

The historical analysis of the Turkification process in the Early Republican Era enlightened me about a different kind of racism.² A racism which forced the state's own citizens to be considered as outsiders. Later, while I was constructing the historiography of Struma, I was faced with the fact that the state does not provide security to the others, because it does not even do so for its own excluded citizens. Again, as a reminder, I would like to mention that the Struma passengers were held without rights while they were suspended on the Bosphorus. The era for Turkification towards Turkish Jews was horrible enough, yet the Romanian Jews on Turkish waters had to deal with more difficult circumstances.

1.3.2: Framework of the Concept

Arguments and approaches were adapted to this thesis according to my own methodology and to political conditions. The academic work I intend to produce aims to figure out the impacts that the incident of Struma might have unknowingly and maybe unintentionally caused. Furthermore, understanding the Struma Case in various aspects may create a new narrative for scholars and historians.

I was drawn to this subject in a pursuit to fill in my blanks. These blanks originated from the narrative of the official history. I was never fully satisfied with the historical approaches asserted throughout the past years. Yet, I emphasize again that this thesis will not be based on historical work. On the other hand, this combination of phenomena I intend to narrate will emerge from history. The narrative has been told to all of us without taking cognizance of the results. Today, these results are clearer to understand. For instance, the Syrian Refugee Tragedy

² I want to mention racism in here because Nazan Maksudyan also mentions; Turkish nationalism is based on citizenship level in the official narrative. But yet, when you dig deeper into the narrative and the cases you may find many examples for the ethnic discriminations. But the official narrative likes to identify them as an *exception*. The official narrative and the actual facts for Turkification process made me realize this was a racist attitude. (Maksudyan, 2005, 7-14)

around the world is yet another example similar to Struma. However, these examples and references will complete my conclusion and leave a field of study for further research.

Realizing political implications and policies may draw people to unknown circumstances. "Turkey did not enter the Second World War," is a phrase that every citizen must learn by heart. And the state shaped its own politics through this phrase. As a matter of fact, the academy is – or should be – a place that enables scholars to open new doors to reconsider the official historical narrative.

If I were to summarize my research, it would be a theoretical analysis of the Struma Case in terms of the State of Exception and the camp theory. This will lead me to uncover that, despite the official narrative according to which "Turkey did not enter the Second World War," its policy of not entering the war changed the lives of thousands of people. The official narrative can be used as an instrument of power (Frost, 2011, 25) and; "... it can shape and constitute each individual's way of being in the world as well as how the law can serve to repress and coerce."

February 24, 2015 was the day of Struma victim's Remembrance Day for the first time in history. Some officials were representing Turkey at the ceremony. This remembrance can be interpreted in so many different ways. Turkey has been in the process of becoming a member of International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance since 2008. This alliance was established to contribute to such policies as discrimination against minorities and support for Holocaust education in order to prevent anti-Semitism around the world. 2015 and 2016 were the years when Turkish government was represented in the ceremonies. These representations continued till this year. Indeed, this might be seen as an evolutionary effort towards the membership candidacy. Still, we are aware that there have been not any Holocaust chapters in our education system so far. The act of attending ceremonies alone would not be perceived as an improvement for our social political structure. The 1915 Armenian *Tehcir* ("Tehcir" is used as the Turkish official narrative, I prefer to use "*Catastrophe*," mentioned above) is another wheel for the genocide studies. Nevertheless, Holocaust must have been a historically unique event if we interpret it from the point of view for Turkey. The quote I will make from Pinar

Dost-Niyego³ (who is a Holocaust educator and historian) brings me to the point of confusion which mixes the guilt of Armenian Genocide with showing remembrance towards Struma victims. She believes that "...despite all the efforts of successive Turkish governments to instrumentalize the Holocaust in order to deny the Armenian Genocide, times have changed." (Dost in Guttstadt, Lutz, Rother and Ramon, 2016, 228) Times needed to be changed. I strongly support her belief that if scholars in Turkey would study Holocaust, they would have a better understanding about the Armenian Catastrophe. (Dost, 2016, 228)

As I have already mentioned above, State of Exception will be the original focus of my research and it will lead me to analyze the Struma Case as a camp. Furthermore, minority rights, citizenship, refugee transits would be excessively related with my research and also with within each other. I was not fully satisfied with the academic works about Struma. They were limited to either an example in an article or a chapter in a book. As a matter of fact, Turkish authors have used Struma in their romantic novels to create lyric narratives. This brought me to search documentaries instead of written sources. My obsession for Holocaust introduced me to Agamben and when I read his book, *State of Exception*, it appeared to me that a logical and a questionable research could be conducted about Turkey's involvement in Holocaust, as in the case of Struma. Agamben's arguments about law and political interactivities open up a new road to follow in conducting this research in the way in which I aim to conduct it.

1.4: Methodology

Hence, designing a research for this thesis, it was essential to be objective to select the literature. And yet this thesis is not conducted by literature overview. This is a manifestation of the intention which I want to pursue with some parts of the literature. Furthermore, I infused my own aims and conducted with the theoretical framework. I also try to be a fair investigator when I apply the theory on to the case.

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odtyM2_SyKE Niyego spoke in the "Holocaust and Turkey: Antisemitism in history" conference which was hold by Dur De Platformu and Anne Frank Huis.

Once a professor told class during the seminar, “a thesis must be genealogical, archeological and should be ethical at the same time,” In doing so, I wholeheartedly believe this thesis would match the criteria. The theories helped me to create discussions within a scope. And also historical approaches guided me in developing my own representation of the phenomenon.

This thesis is neither an archival work nor fieldwork research. It is rather a manifestation about unusual outsiders within the light of a theoretical framework. My study also includes a documentary, called “Struma” (Gabrea, 2001) rather than literature reviews in the 3rd chapter. The documentary was necessary to build my framework for this thesis, because there was no one to be consulted or to be interviewed with today about Struma. The recorded testimony from the only survivor of Struma, David Stoliar explains the case in detail in the documentary. Nevertheless, I do not carry ethical concerns in means of sources and the documentary; therefore this thesis does not carry ethical imperatives such as interviews or recorded data. On the other hand, the recorded testimony from the only survivor of Struma will be the basis for my 3rd chapter as I mentioned earlier and also, this chapter will guide me to study testimonies, collective memories and witnesses, in the future.

In addition, to complete my primary argument, the fragile concept of political responsibility underpins my approach for this thesis. Political responsibility is necessary today; people should create a collective memory against the official memory. Political responsibility will open new wounds for the next generations as long as they deny to face the past guilt, horrors and evils. (Sezer, 2015, 30) Everyone should remember and should be reminded. Facing pogroms and genocides will make us accept the reality as it is. Sezer argues in his article that the burdens of past crimes would make next generations live with wounds and that people won't have been mourned. 6/7 September Events and the Struma Case are still subjects which are not easy for Turkish Jews. I hope these concepts' temptation has not ruined my objectivity just as I tried not to make personal assumptions about it. Due to this also a scholar cannot be totally cut out from his/her own approaches. In pursuing this thesis, I have tried to cut out my own beliefs and ideas as much as

possible. My own emotional tie is with the Holocaust, but throughout this thesis I believe I have kept my distance so that my approach should be impartial enough.

The education I had in Political Philosophy leads me to examine cases in light of philosophers' arguments. Hence, this thesis will be based on a philosophical thought partially shaped by politics. This thesis will be constructed on the basis of discourse analysis. By means of research method, discourse analysis is applied to identify the origins of the concepts in social sciences. When I gained access to Foucault's language, the discourse kept its importance even more. Foucault argue that "social construction of reality is a form of knowledge that determines what is knowable, sayable and doable in a particular historical context" (Foucault, 1977). My framework involves both the political and the philosophical context. The multidisciplinary way of discourse analysis may leave the intention of the approach fragile and ambiguous. However, it might be vice versa and they might fill in each other.

People exist only in social interaction. In order to live in a more understanding way of life, discourse analysis helps to highlight this social interaction within itself.

Dehumanization of exclusion would illustrate how the nation and modern states are constructed to *camp'inized* individuals as excluders. This discourse analysis is also related to sovereignty and identity. Initially, we face with the discourse not only as a language (rhetoric) but also as a way of identification through the construction of social interaction.

Besides the theoretical reviews, scholars like Corry Guttstadt and Rifat Bali were extremely helpful with their intensive works for my literature reviews. As the matter of fact, there is another reason why I decided to pursue this thesis with a discursive analysis: the absence of the official documentations about Struma (Bali, 2005, 26). When I explained the subject of my thesis to the historian and Holocaust educator Pinar Dost-Nyego, she mentioned that 'almost a half century passed, but the official documents remain sealed.'⁴ A large amount of people work

⁴ A private conversation with Pinar Dost-Nyego, November 2016

on the history of the Turkish Republic and its policies but the ‘Primary Sources’ are unavailable to the scholars and public. Even A. Aktar mentions in his works in general that he had troubles accessing the national archives at the institutions which belonged to the RPP⁵, the single party during that period of time.

1.5: Theorizing the relationship between Agamben and Foucault

1.5.1: Biopolitics, Bare Life

I take concentration camps as the model of the political policies which make Struma a state of exception. This radical argument needs to be taken to the core of the thesis, which takes us to Foucauldian biopolitics. Foucault studies are beyond the scope of this thesis. But the fundamental approaches of his conceptual framework are crucial to draw the outlines of this study. His arguments on power and different types of domination are the simplest summary of my focus. *In The Discourse on Language*, he clarifies the concept of discourse very widely. In addition to his arguments on power and forms of domination, he argues that discourse is also controlled and can be transformed by rules. (Foucault, 2010) Knowledge and power are practices, which, according to Foucault, conduct, transform and produce the societies.

‘Discourse transmits and produces power.’ (Foucault, 1990, 101) In *he Discourse on Language*, Foucault questions and also clarifies the relationship between knowledge and the power. The codified disciplinary power infuses its tendency into social roles. “The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. It defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus, discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies.” (Foucault, 1994, 111) Meanwhile, Foucault works on discourse in different

⁵ Abbreviation of Republican People’s Party, I will continue with RPP in the 2nd chapter.

variations. In *Society Must Be Defended* he explains that disciplinary power is kind of alien to the law, it refers to the will of the sovereign. This is not a codified system of law but the disciplinary power is a code of normalization of law. (Foucault, 2009) It should not be hard to defend these arguments which are the basis of his understanding of biopolitics.

In Foucault's works, the main texts include the disciplinary societies for the bodies and citizens. When the body – as individual – is capable of labor and work, then for the sake of these acts, it must be protected. The schools, hospitals, military, and prisons are the institutions of the *panopticon*.⁶ The bodies can become more and more useful and obedient. The hierarchy and discipline configures the anathomo politics. The beginning of the 18th century gives new concepts for the sovereignty as a controller of life. The fundamental rights are the foundations of these concepts. Thus, this habitat creates the biopolitics. Foucault explains and enlarges his understandings on biopolitics at the 1978-79 Course at College de France.⁷ The phenomenon considers a group of human beings who are taken as one unique population. These populations can be divided as races, health and etc... Yet 1975-6 course examines power as a controller of life concerning issues. The development of the state policies in the 18th centuries such as birth control and birth rate included different ways of controlling people's habitats. Biopolitical governments inserted their hands into urban life as well. The effects of the environment, mortality rates, old rage rates, and disabilities were the major concerns of their policies. It is not wrong to declare that as in the case of biopower, society and the population has become its' scope to influence and intervene in society and the general population.

“ The assumption of life by power; if you prefer, the taking over of the man as a living being by power, a kind of statization of the biological or, at least a certain inclination that leads to what could be called statization of the biological,”

⁶ Panopticon is the architecture design of institutional building by Jeremy Bentham. It was designed as the periphery can control the rest of the parts but it cannot be seen from the parts. Foucault believes that panopticon is the main concept of a modern power. The discipline, the classification and the hierarchy are the absolute resolutions for the society who is inside of the panopticon.

⁷ My own personal notes from Rationality course at Bilgi University, given by Ass. Prof. Ferda Keskin.

(Foucault, 2003, 286) Foucault names the two bare matters. A given body – anathomo politics – approaches with a given population – biopolitics –. (Deleuze, 1988, 80) Furthermore, anathomo politics does not address on the population entirely. It centers on the individuals, citizens. On the other hand bio politics attracts on the population, collective groups. It centers and observes in macro level.

In terms of Foucault, biopolitics has become a new form of the technology of power and the nomos of the biopower and on the other hand they should be clarified from the form of the mechanisms of discipline after the 18th century. He argues “...control of life and the biological processes of man as species and of ensuring that they are not disciplined but regularized.” (Foucault, 2009, 246) While Foucault claims that biopolitics emerges and comes into life with the modern times on the other hand Agamben adds that the ‘bare life’ has always been existed in politics.

Agamben strengthens the bare matter of biopolitics discussing reduced circumstances of human life as a deprived human being in Homo Sacer. The sovereignty concept of Schmitt which was adopted by Agamben, namely demonstrates the power to suspend the law, the power to call as the exception. The sovereign power and the sacred were scrutinized by Agamben to codify the communities’ lack of governances. As I mentioned before bare life was always and already in politics which Agamben calls the *inclusive exclusion*, separating the *inclusion* and *exclusion*. The theme of Agamben is, when the modern sovereign power bans someone, this power does not put the one outside the law but instead of that abandons the one to the threshold in which neither life and nor law belong, outside and inside. At this point, inclusion and exclusion become almost identical. (Agamben, 1998, 28)

For this section of the work, Agamben’s notions are highly crucial. Addressing the bare life which overlaps with the sphere of the politics for Agamben is an argument which allows me to differentiate him from Foucault. Normalization and domination mechanisms are used to control and subjugate human beings by biopower. In contemporary democracies or let us say the western world, biopower is used in state of emergencies.

In order to consider on Foucault's own terms, subjectivization brings the individual to objectify his own self as to a power of external control. (Agamben, 1998, 119) Agamben advocates the argument that we should bring Foucault's insights to clarify the politics of the totalitarian states. Basically, biopolitics invented the homo sacer in modern times. Meanwhile, biopolitics emerged from politics, which constitutes totalitarianism. As Arendt mentions, "...the concentration camps are the laboratories in the experiment of total domination for human nature being what it is, this goal can be achieved only under the extreme circumstances of a human-made hell," (Arendt, 1994, 240 cited in Agamben, 1998, 71). The differences between Arendt and Agamben's approaches will be held in detail in the future sections.

1.5.2: Exception

There are some concepts I repeatedly mention in this chapter. The priority goes to "exception" as being possible and being limited. The second one is the "exceptionalism" which is controversial in politics and often depends on the narratives of the cases, situations. Carl Schmitt argues the exception as a metaphysical problem of the limitation. Exceptional rules and regulations are the certain defined acts of state of exception.

Giorgio Agamben has developed various understandings of the exception. And also we must accept the fact that, he did enlarge the concept of exception onto many accounts. His fame comes from two important books; *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, first published in Italian in 1995 and translated in 1998, and what is described as its sequel, *State of Exception*, first published in Italian in 2003 and translated in 2005. The concept of the books is not similar with each other. In *Homo Sacer*; Agamben remarks on Foucault's work, and underlines its fundamentals of the nature in biopolitics. He also declares that with the death of Foucault, his studies on development have been interrupted. With the lack of this development Agamben catches a gap to fill in, and asks "Where, in the body of power, is the zone of indistinction (or at least, the point of intersection) at

which techniques of individualization and totalizing procedures converge?" (Agamben, 1998, 6) But on the other hand, without the Foucault's governmentality approach meeting with the exception there would be no gap to fulfill. Moreover, Foucault's understanding of modern political power and bare life and also the state of exception have become more appropriate to comprehend the governmentality more than as a way of rethinking the political sovereignty. When returning to the concept of bios, bare life is interpreted as; a life which would be lived beyond all legal protections and prohibitions according to Agamben. Biopower uses every kind of normalization techniques to the bodies, because the bios is at the center of the state. The human body is now clearly open. The state of emergency and the space create this visible. The camp "the new biopolitical nomos of the planet" (Agamben, 2000, 45) is the space. Nazi concentration camps have evolved into today's refugee camps and terrorist camps whose existences' are seen as the threat to the state's wellbeing. The law should also eliminate the possibility of bare life and also the law should disallow legitimizing the extension of bare life. It lays out some rather innovative ideas regarding sovereignty and the figures of man and life. State of Exception cuts to the chase. It gives specific examples from contemporary politics and its sharpness is not hard to comprehend. Yet it brings the concept of state of exception in every angle and in all examples. The threats as I mentioned earlier brings "state of exception, in which bios and zoe are no longer separable – nor are right or fact- but instead enter into a zone of irreducible indistinction," (Agamben, 2005, 293)

Since then I have come to realize, this approach of bare life with its ties to the politics; it is inseparable with sovereignty, as I mentioned before. He clarifies the relationship with this phrase, "it can even be said that the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power," (Agamben, 2005, 128). This thesis will try to manifest the analysis and criticism of Agamben's concepts. In the light of his two books, the importance of his arguments and the obstacles of his questions will better be understood. Later, other questions should be raised such as, could it be considered in different ways or could it be pushed further? Schmitt, Foucault and Benjamin would explore these different

considerations and references. The main intent and concern will be to explain Agamben's exception with his reverberations. And in the process of doing this, it will be rational to raise questions to the concept through the analysis of Struma.

To declare the missing points from Agamben, one must rethink the Agamben's relationship with Foucault' as it was mentioned before. The discussions about their compromises and their controversies mostly focused on sovereignty, as it was highlighted earlier and the biopolitics in academia. Ahistoric and reduced analysis of Foucault's sovereignty is the most debatable acquisition on Agamben's behalf. Agamben's aspect of being ahistoric is not going to be this thesis' conduction. Instead of being ahistoric, power lies on this construction.

As Dan Diner declares (Diner, 2007, 13) 'Holocaust was the destruction of civilization,' this destruction cannot be explained without other historical cases. Yet, 'Auschwitz was not planned but happened regardless', kind of argument sounds historic but defending this argument makes the rhetoric ahistoric at the same time.

The phenomenon happens in various places but we only can exist in one specific place at the same time. Bülent Somay underlines the historical phenomenon cannot be evaluated by the historians without their own theoretical and ideological prejudices. As a matter of fact if the historian insists he is impartial objective under influence of the sovereign. So the history is a narrative. Somay (2015) explains the narratives as inadequate. You shall not correspond the narrative with the truth; they never collide with each other. When you give up hope on truth, you only remain with the phenomenon.⁸

⁸ My own personal translations from Turkish. It consists my own interpretation about Bülent Somay's preface.

1.5.3: Biopower

It can be declared that biopower is the turning point of Foucault's work. He mentions his concerns widely. (Foucault, 1990, 136) But as a matter of fact, sovereignty and the power becomes the subject of his rhetoric. Furthermore, Agamben's articulation on biopower cooperates with the concepts of belonging, minorities and inclusion/exclusion in citizenship. With this engagement the task which I aim to achieve would be clearer.

It can be clearly identified that there is a line which corresponds to classic to the modernity. This line links the periods of time. Moreover, it links the epistemological transformation between sovereign power to biopower. Biological beings transform as; man-as-species of the society. (Foucault, 2003, 246-47)

'Modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as living being in question', (Foucault, 2003, 143) is a phrase which Foucauldian modernity takes over from Aristotle to his book and this argument tries to clarify the transformation from sovereign power to biopower. This biopower is an articulated phenomenon which is strengthened by capitalism and development. Biopower takes over and becomes the controller of making species to live and die. On account of biopower, do we really accept and pursue the idea of biopower replaced with sovereign power? Supposedly the answer should be searched for within the epistemological hypothesis not in this context. The biopower concept from Foucault came till to Agamben's *Homo Sacer*. It cannot be declared that Agamben corrected the Foucault's leftovers but yet it can be declared that he almost completed it. In return for his completion, the discussions about Foucault and Agamben's philosophy arose in modern contemporary politics.

Before detailing Agamben's work, he catches a glimpse of the language deprivation. For instance 'life' is a word which identifies all the living species in world but Agamben refers about 'zoè' and 'bios' which he purposes have to different meanings. Zoè is the life of living species but bios is the life of a certain person or a community. When the subject comes to the modernity, Hannah Arendt agrees with Foucault on the view of, '... the entrancing to zoè into the sphere of the

polis lies with the politicization of bare life as such.’ (Agamben, 1998, 7) Agamben comes to a conclusion which *zoè* is excluded; the natural life will be added into the polis. This summation actually refers to Agamben’s inclusive exclusion. This on the other hand has a link to Carl Schmitt, when it comes to differentiate the distinction between being inside and being left in outside. From Ancient Greeks until now, Agamben professes that the politics has been shaped by its inclusive exclusion of life. (Agamben, 1998, 1-12)

Tom Frost briefly mentions ‘ to make his move from Foucault clear, Agamben characterizes Foucault as having moved away from juridical notions which Agamben (re)introduces into biopower,’ (Frost, 2010, 550) As a matter of fact Agamben considers that Foucault’s version of power collapses to acknowledge the model of sovereignty according to the basics of natural life. Agamben also finds himself in *Homo Sacer* to clear up their differences. The consequences about power sanctions can be considered as fundamental level of analysis but due to this, one can declare that Agamben provokes his arguments on sovereignty as being more historic than Foucault.

Reconciling Foucault and Agamben is beyond the scope of this thesis. Neither Foucauldian understanding of power nor Agambenian understanding of sovereignty are accurate for this thesis. Both of them are considered as theoretical perspectives. Yet, these theoretical perspective comparisons are highly useful to create a framework for this study.

1.5.4: State of Exception

According to Agamben, exception is a model of exclusion. Suspension which is the state in which legal norm is not cut off but still a relation exists with the exception. To sum up, the state of emergency is an outcome of suspension of power. The sovereign declares a state of emergency and the legal system changes its positions with the state of emergency. “The original political relation is the ban (the state of exception as zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exclusion and inclusion).” (Agamben, 1998, 31) When the power of the legal

system is suspended, the state of exception becomes possible. Agamben declares in *Homo Sacer*, the “exception refers to what is taken outside and not simply included,” (Agamben, 1998, 18) Agamben also states in his book *State of Exception*, “The state of exception is not a special kind of law (like the war law); rather, insofar as it is a suspension of the juridical order itself, it defines law’s threshold or limit concept.” (Agamben, 2005, 4) As I mentioned before when the sovereign declares a state of emergency, the main purpose of this decision and the declaration is to place the exception within its own order. This purpose of sovereign power in modernity is to locate and to place the ones which are outside and inside-excluded and included. And also in modernity this performance on locating them is a consequence of calculating the threshold of being placed outside and inside.

Homo Sacer is sacred who may be killed yet not sacrificed. There is abandonment in homo sacer and the banned becomes homo sacer and also it is not to be mourned. To sum up these phrases, it is very accurate to claim that the Struma Passengers are the Homo Sacer.

The suspension creates that the state of emergency transforms to the norm, the norm transforms into the state of emergency like a circle. Agamben clears out the impossibility of differentiation between them with his own words. “The camp is the space of this absolute impossibility of deciding between fact and law, rule and application, exception and rule.” (Agamben, 1998, 173)

The law is not applicable under the terms of state of emergency. This leads us to a space where bare life and biopolitics become ambiguous and indistinctive. This summary is the explanation of Struma passengers. In a state of emergency, homo sacer (Struma passengers) lives under the rule of law which is in force, but is not enforced, then the law remains without its content. “The state of exception is an anomic space in which what is at stake is a force of law without law,” (Agamben, 2005, 39) Agamben’s ideas about law are not very complex to comprehend. He adds that the act of violence can determine the execution of law. “For law, this empty space is the state of exception as its constitutive dimension. The relation between norm and reality involves the suspension of the norm; just as in ontology

the relation between language and world involves the suspension of denotation in the form of a langue.” (Agamben, 2005, 60)

1.5.5: The Conditio Inhumana: Camp Nomos as Gray Zones⁹

1.5.5.1: Lebensraum¹⁰

The contemporary philosophy creates a link between power and violence. As a result of this link, one could claim that the unspeakable occurs. (Diken) However contemporary politics deal with the unspeakable, Hobbes created this paradox in Leviathan. The manifestation of the state of nature lies in Leviathan within the scope of violence and power. On account of the contradiction between violence and power it is not a debate which will be centered in this thesis. But here, regardless of the law articles and definitions absence, it is an advantage to know if the violence is legitimate or power justifiable. This violence could occur in passive ways just like the society in Istanbul kept a blind eye to the passengers in Struma while they were on hold, suspended on the Bosphorus. Yet, my response to this violence paradox comes from Arendt who believes violence should never be considered legitimate. “To be political, to live in polis, meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence,” (Arendt, 1959). The idea of Benjamin introduces the possible potential of violence which we face as human beings. If this potential comes with the sphere of means it cannot be considered justified or legitimized cause, it does not carry any ethical or legal concern. (Benjamin, 1996) Arendt gives permissible responses again, “violence can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate. Its justification loses plausibility the farther it’s intended and recedes into the future,” (Arendt, 1970) Moreover, violence may be justified but it never should be legitimized. The power

⁹ Primo Levi mentions Gray Zone

¹⁰ Lebensraum: Space for life.

of the bureaucracy of the Turks kept people away from giving humanitarian aid by the Turkish Jews in Istanbul to Struma. This is another violence legitimization forcedly done by the authorities.

According to Arendt, nothing in life can be parallel to life in the concentration camps. And our minds will never be enough to imagine that horror entirely. (Arendt, 1958) In addition to this, the camp is the place of exception. Lives do not matter, everything is permissible and possible. A prisoner's life can be taken easily. Literally, this prisoner is not a man, if he would be then they would be breaking the law, yet his life is bare.

The violence concept was mentioned before. The reason of this is because the concentration camps are the places where there is neither a limit nor a power to control it. Researchers agree that Nazi Germany built three different types of camps in their time. They started with ghettos, later labor camps were established, and lastly, concentration/death camps were built. With the camps, they could easily hide the violence inside of it. They wanted to maintain the violence. This power and violence paradox became easily adaptable to the contemporary politics of Agamben. The concentration camps can be everywhere. The power made the Struma ship a floating camp. As well as that Struma was a vessel not a barrack but can be considered as a camp.

The foundation of the camps is very controversial to discuss. Some scholars believe that they have emerged through totalitarian regimes, such as Fascism and some say it belonged to imperialism which made them kill people in order. However, this is not a discussion I want to explore in this thesis.

Agamben (1998) declares, "The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule." He was inspired from Foucault's prison analysis and he derives the camps are still exist in today's world. Camps don't only consist of wooden walls in the barracks or buildings. They do separate the political and the bare life. When I apply this to Struma, it becomes clearer than before, Syrian refugee camps and the apartments (which they barely live), Gulags in Soviet Russia and the asylum seekers are held at the island of Australia are the consisted camp models, hypothetically like the one I modeled for Struma. They do

belong to the Sovereign's behalf rather than belonging to the law. *Conditio Inhumana* (Agamben, 2000) is the camp level of prisoner's bare life. Thanks to the state of exception, the politics of the camp would be on hold to process to law. Agamben's version of state of exception outlines where the law and fact, rule and exception overlap. (Lemke, 2005)

When the biopolitics started to flow in Nazi Germany and also in Soviet Russia, identity notion fundamentally became as nationalistic level. It became so easy to eliminate citizens at the nation-identity level. As a result of this, they became excluded.

1.5.5.2: Todesraum¹¹

Agamben believes camp nomos helped the segregation gradually. On the grounds of suspended law, camps now have become the permanent state of exception. The concentration camps keep maintaining their existence in modern world. Like the given example before; refugee detention holdings are the other faces of camps. When I apply this to Struma, humans and those treated inhumanely become inseparable. All the sick people in Struma could not get proper medical care and medicine and were treated as less than human. The sovereign was forcing their policy which was the suspension of the ship, sent it back eventually. The camp is not only the space but where the exception turns into a norm, Struma becomes a camp when state of exception took 76 days on Turkish waters.

The Nuremberg Laws in 1935 abolished the Jewish citizens' rights in Nazi Germany. These rights included their professions, marriages, businesses and gradually excluded them from society. Dehumanization processes kept continuing with the Star of David just like Agamben mentions, they did not have names, they were just numbers. This continued with ghettos and concentration camps. The horrors of the conditions placed on them are quite known. What I can add in here

¹¹ Todesraum: Space for death.

would be, state of exception emerged to exclude Jews by making new laws and using violence.

In this part, I wanted to show the link between state of exception and the camp. According to Agamben, suspension of law, exclusion of the human as a dehumanization process (bare life); these are the dynamics of a camp. To sum up, with this camp nomos as Struma, one needs to know what the camp is. And then, how the camp establishes in early modern world, even today. I suppose the arguments of Agamben conducted these questions just to answer them in proper way. The mechanisms of biopower from Foucault categorize people in modern states. Furthermore when biopower functions, the state of exception becomes the political stage in every regime. When the detainees were cut from political life and the only possible life occurred as bare life; it is *conditio inhumana*, Agamben adds.

Diken argues, "... as the exception, the camp can refer to both extreme exclusion and extreme inclusion. At both extremes, the distinction between the biological and the political tends to disappear and it becomes increasingly difficult to refer to the polis and politics in the classical sense." (Diken, 2004, 98) This extreme exclusion may also refer to the Struma case as an exceptional example.

When we trace the intimate connection between the fundamentals of the camp with the fundamentals of the state of exception, the camp is the obvious manifestation of that political geography. "The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule. In the camp, the state of exception, which was essentially a temporary suspension of the rule on the basis of a factual state of danger, is now given a permanent spatial arrangement, which as such remains outside the normal order." (Agamben, 1998, 169) This biopolitical sphere and the state of exception create the location of the camp, whether it is a barrack or not. From all above approaches one must declare that Agamben's version of camp is based on the power of creation such as *Lebensraum* not like the power of destruction such as *Todesraum*. This critique may be understood in a discriminative sense yet the intention of this critique was to clarify his agenda on the nomos of the camp. Agamben's account on this is; "It is then possible to understand the decisive function of the camps and the system of Nazi biopolitics.

They are not merely the place of death and extermination; they are also, and above all, the site of the production of the *Muselman*, the final biopolitical substance to be isolated in the biological continuum.” (Agamben, 2000, 8)

1.6.: Introducing the Theoretical Approach

Agamben addresses his analysis in a number of ways; there is no point to put different approaches with the same meanings into this study. The theoretical approach should be short enough to make an analysis at the end of it. In doing so, in *Homo Sacer*, Agamben reduces the European political sphere into a set of concepts. He uses the concept of sovereignty, Foucault's biopolitics and he incorporates ideas from Arendt's totalitarianism. He was motivated to write on the state of exception, refugees and the camp. By doing so, the differentiations between public and private, the law and the power and also the human beings to citizen concepts should be clear according to his arguments. At the end of his analysis, he concludes that the western liberal democracies have a tendency to become similar with the totalitarian regimes and the state of exception in turn becomes the lawless law furthermore, the camp turns into a habitat of the political space.

When Agamben talks about the ones who are excluded or excepted from liberty and law – in contemporary democracies; ‘fundamentalists’ or ‘terrorists’ – they are not placed outside modern politics, they are brought into a more fundamental political relation. Moreover, Agamben takes the Schmitt's argument: “The rule proves nothing; the exception proves everything: It confirms not only the rule but also its existence, which derives only from the exception.” (Schmitt 1985, 15) Agamben was influenced by Schmitt's arguments. According to Schmitt, the sovereign is the one who decides on the state of exception. Yet for Schmitt, this is still something exceptional, which usually happens in war times. On the other hand for Agamben in modern societies, it transforms into a rule. In Hobbes's *Leviathan* that which is the sovereign, is obliged to escape the state of nature. This state of nature is the state of possible war and this creates the resolution of the state of exception. Agamben interprets Hobbes' arguments as a permanent state of

exception so; it means the sovereignty includes the fundamentals of the state of exception. To sustain the state the sovereign can disregard the law. As it was mentioned before Foucault's society according to Agamben is the '...-threshold of biological modernity- to create docile bodies' (Agamben, 1998, 3) Furthermore, according to Foucault, the sovereignty was originally capable of causing death or allowing life it has transformed into to make live and to let die with the prologue of biopolitics.

The theoretical approach of this study is to claim that camps are the potential and ultimate outcomes of biopolitics. Arendt claims that the destruction and the collapse of the Europe resulted with the birth of the camps. On the other hand Agamben displays that the collapse of Europe and also the birth of the camps both linked and tied with the biopolitical. Being a refugee is who has no right to have any rights, is forced to leave a nation state and also forced to try to find another nation state. After the two world wars, these refugees without any rights and out of placed have become the detainees in camps. Both Arendt and Agamben agree on the subject that the detention camps became the answer for these people. Agamben differentiates himself from Arendt and also from Foucault because they never come to a conclusion such as Agamben does, which camps are the spaces in which human life is reduced to bare life.

The analysis of the theoretical approaches may repeat similar sounding arguments but in order to reveal the outcomes of the connections, must be followed. According to Agamben, the camps are the places which reduce the bare life and leave detainees unsafe. Even Dachau, the internment camp, Auschwitz and the refugee camp consist of the elements of the state power. From this perspective Auschwitz and Guantanamo are principally identical. In the sense of this Agamben describes them as, "Neither prisoners nor persons accused, but simply 'detainees', they are the object of a pure de facto rule, of a detention that is indefinite not only in the temporal sense but in its very nature as well, since it is entirely removed from the law and juridical oversight," (Agamben, 2005, 3) This identical places approach keeps a terrible horror behind it. Auschwitz occurred in Nazi Germany, Guantanamo occurred under the war era but behind that the biopolitical practice

the problem arises in here, according to Agamben, when the sovereign rules the camps as well.

It seems to be reviewing the same concepts over again but in the meantime the formulation of the intent will be characterized. The concept of state will lead us to an analysis of the right to sovereignty which is a fundamental notion for Agamben. The integrity and the sovereignty of the state are too delicate to talk about. We can talk about the psychical boundaries as integrity. For being sovereign, it needs to be controlled by itself internally. If the intention would be moral research, arguments would not be enough. What I really want to say is, if the rights of the state; territorial integrity and political sovereignty are functioning, any intervention from a third state would not be allowed. It would violate them. Let us imagine the humanitarian aid – which Struma needed when it was on hold – this aid needs an act, as the name suggests it is concerned with the humanity. This new element – humanitarian aid- becomes a philosophical problem, sovereignty towards intervention. Should third parties – such as NGOs or other corporations- should intervene and violate the right to sovereignty or should they let people die in state of exception? This is a conflict between the right of the state committing and atrocity and the concept of human rights. You may strictly forbid the intervention or you may allow it. Like I stated earlier, the philosophical question arises in itself. Humanitarian aids – aid needs an action – are permissible but they should be exceptional. But I would not search deeper for the answer about the moral requirements of aid and the rest because I want to stay on the politics layer. While asking these questions, a conclusion must be reached. It is not possible to make a general rule from these. In other words, this work will be based on Agamben's sovereignty concept. But if I must say, the best way to deal with aid - intervention – is not to consider it is as obligatory, but as permissible. The criteria of the just war theory are, on one hand, strong enough to allow some liberty for the target. On the other hand, they allow aids – interventions – in extreme cases like exceptions. The

third parties and states also do not have a duty to intervene, but they are allowed to do so.¹²

1.6.1: The Phenomenon of Struma

Here, I would like to add my short argument about state of exception and Struma which is very helpful to stay in context and not to be too philosophical. On December 1941, a ship called Struma departed from Costanza with 769 passengers who were Romanian Jews. On their route they must have passed through Istanbul, Bosphorus. But the engines were broken and it was carrying many more people than it should have. The ship Struma is a case, which can be considered as state of exception in Turkey. Non-Turkish citizens, who were Romanian Jewish people, were on board and the rule of law has been suspended for them to sail to Palestine with exceptional means. To be specific about Jewish problems, it needs to be said that when Jews were in route to Palestine, thousands of them were killed and died due to the unstable transits and unhealthy ships. The forces of the states illegally helped to exterminate of their lives. Also, illnesses of the passengers and its' contingency declarations about ship, were enough to determine the unworthy lives of the passengers as excluded, and they were not getting any aid from the Turkish institutions. Therefore, the Struma ship is not only a kind of state of exception but also is a certain state of exception. Non-citizen Jewish people were deprived of their means of subsistence while they were on Bosphorus. They had lived 79 days on the sea in an exceptional state and later were forced to sail to be bombed in the end. Modernity and violence are intrinsic to each other and life is in many times threshold of law. "The sovereign decision renews its threshold of indistinction between outside and inside, exclusion and inclusion, nomos and physics, in which life is originally excepted in law."(Agamben 1998, 27)

¹² While working on different concepts of Agamben, I was asking these questions to myself all the time. To act and to have a duty are different things. This discussion is not over, but I would like to continue my own work instead of asking moral questions.

declares that these places may even occur in modern democracies which we belong to today. In the future sections The Syrian Refugee conflict will find a place to itself in this work and the previous arguments will support these identical places. Syria might be involved with the war but the refugees try to migrate to the modern democratic states and they are faced with places which are no better than Dachau or Auschwitz hence their lives are becoming homo sacer. When Agamben presents his strong claim, 'the camp is the fundamental paradigm of the West.' (Agamben, 1998, 181) he exposes the public space in modern democracies. The detainees at Guantanamo have been abandoned by the law, faced with the sovereign and they are homo sacer. They are allowed to be killed without questioning. Agamben enlarges, "the sovereign is the one with respect to whom all men are potentially homines sacri, and homo sacer is the one with respect to whom all men act as sovereigns." (Agamben 1998, 84) This helps to complete the Struma being considered the same as other identical places.

The telos of the camp is now eliminating the extermination period. It reaches the point of the annihilation of freedom. This annihilation rises from the codification of the human nature. According to Agamben, his codification finds a name in his book *Remnants of Auschwitz*, called Muselmann. They are reduced to bare life; their will or consciousness that is almost or already lost. Agamben provokes that the Muselmann uncovers itself within the biopolitical sphere of the camp. This destruction creates biopolitical evidence on its own following Arendt's argument. Taking into account Agamben's considerations, one might declare that the Muselmann is the telos of the camp. The destruction and the collapse of the humanity at the end of this, is why Arendt and Agamben share the telos of the camp phenomenon. To cover up all implementations about this, one should talk about the totalitarianism of Arendt and yet this would not tie with this study.

When we review Agamben, the state of exception, also the state of nature is bound to with the modern democracies, and then it can be considered as the nomos of the exception. The camps can exist in cities under the name of the humanitarian cooperations without failing themselves for a long period of time. As a matter of fact, the sovereign is the one who rules the camps and chooses to close,

The liberty and the sovereignty contradictions will also be in the 2nd chapter, added to the Kemalist ideology which feeds nationalism from civil liberty policies. The scope of the chapter will be different than the others but in order to maintain the structure I surely believe it is necessary.

CHAPTER 2: TURKIFICATION PROCESS FOR JEWS IN THE EARLY REPUBLICAN ERA

2.1: Turkish Minority Politics

Before starting the 2nd chapter, the bounding relation between state of exception and Struma was explained in the 1st one. Understanding Turkey's attitudes towards the minorities would make this thesis extensively historic but yet it is needed to create a review about the situation.

The Early Republican period of 1923 to 1945 is marked by the abolishment of Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic. This period witnessed the rule of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Republican People's Party (RPP) during which Turkish people were introduced to the Kemalist ideology and its components such as republicanism, nationalism, statism, populism, secularism and revolutionism. These ideologies cultivated RPP's need to create a Turkish nation which is constituted by a public that is motivated by its ideologies and which has a common idea of Turkey that brings the society together. For non-Muslim minority groups, the most significant agreement of this period that defined their relationship with the newly emerging Turkish state was the Lausanne Treaty. But before that it is widely well known that majority of the Jews in Turkey respected Atatürk and his policies. (Toktaş, 2004, 65) Yet again, besides Atatürk, minorities had problems with his successor İnönü. Nevertheless, the period was marked by RPP's implementation of Turkification policies which were aimed at building a homogenized Turkish nation but eventually led to a breakdown in society and

resulted in a hostile environment for the non-Muslim groups of Turkey. Introduction of these policies meant associating with the state led definition of what a Turk should be. This definition played a major role in defining Turkish citizenship and the place of non-Muslim minority groups within this strict definition. Even though the Lausanne Treaty gave a secure position to Greeks, Armenians and Jews living under the Turkish Republic, the early Republican era's nation building policies pushed them to the periphery making them outsiders, as excluded ones. Suddenly there was no collective memory in Turkish authorities. In the War of Independence non-Muslim citizens were tested for their reliability and for their loyalty. They felt betrayed after Lausanne. (Bali, 1998a, 171) After the War of Independence, one of the major results was the cases of Greeks and Armenians not specifically Jews. The Armenians and Greeks were forced to immigrate sharply.¹³ Furthermore, they were judged with the radical groups who protested everyday like they are same as always. On the other hand foreignness and being one of the minorities had become the same kind of thought. "No matter what they have done to protect their Jewish Turkish belonging, Jewish community has failed to prove that," (Bali, 1998a, 175).

The nation-state formation of Turkey can be argued to have had an impact on the planned forced immigration of non-Muslim minorities from Turkey to various countries around the world. This section of the chapter will also include an analysis on the effects of the World War II on Turkey's domestic policies especially towards its Jewish population.

¹³ Jewish population of Turkey has never seen planned forced immigration such as Armenians, *techir* as Catastrophe (see footnote: 1), *mübadele* as Exchange. (Techir and Mübadele are the Turkish words in order to name the cases.)

2.1.1: Rules and Regulations

The era following the end of World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire was followed by the War of Independence under the leadership of the Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The Jewish community in Turkey supported the War of Independence and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk at that time. But this support was not good enough for the Turkish bureaucracy in front of the eyes of the Muslim side of the country. There was always distrust towards the non-Muslim communities as mentioned before. It can be called common sense in the society where all the non-Muslim communities once broke faith with the Ottoman times. The techir of the Armenian community and the population exchange between the Greek and Turkish populations can be seen as planned punishments for being part of the minorities and also these minorities are the possible members of radical groups. Yet the number of the population of the minorities started to decrease in light of these acts.¹⁴ Nonetheless, they did not consider the fact that most of the non-Muslim people were in the business of trade. And this wrong and unjust social transformation of the people did affect the economy.

Henceforth the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 had to face the Treaty of Lausanne in the same year. The Treaty was signed between the Allied countries which include; Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece and Turkey as the successor of the Ottoman Empire. Although it is known that hours of negotiations took place and despite major decisions recognizing borders of the new Turkish state, Articles 37 to 45 of the Lausanne Treaty defined the most up-to-date agreement for the rights and the duties of the non-Muslim minority groups. According to Lausanne Treaty's Article 38; minority groups were granted full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion. Article 39 granted them equality before the law and Turkey declared that Turkish nationals belonging to non-Muslim minorities will enjoy the same civil and political rights as Muslims. Furthermore, through

¹⁴ For specific numbers of the populations between Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic see Toktaş, 2004, 68. My intention of this chapter does not include the numbers and figures.

Article 40 the minority groups were also granted an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein.

While similar rights were introduced with the reform packages of the Ottoman Period, The Lausanne Treaty was the first international agreement to legalize and internationally secure these rights. Through this, non-Muslim minorities were granted autonomy in terms of their practice in family law, marriage and divorce. Article 42 of the Treaty is concerned with the non-Muslims' family law or personal status measures permitting the settlement of these questions in accordance with the minority groups' customs. Through Lausanne, non-Muslim minorities also gained the right to establish schools that would educate the students in their own languages. With Article 45, it was agreed that the rights provided for the non-Muslim minorities in Turkey would also be valid for the Turks living under the Greek rule in Western Thrace. Even though Lausanne Treaty was signed between the Allied Powers and Turkey, its repercussions were discussed among the Turkish public. Since the rights granted by the Lausanne Treaty promoted certain level of autonomy to non-Muslim minorities, in areas such as education, family law, and use of language and establishment of foundations, it contributed to the ongoing skepticism among Turkish society considering the non-Muslim minority groups as tools for Western powers to intervene in the domestic politics of Turkey. As Bali (2000, 62) states, "the regulation of the minority issues by special articles of the Lausanne Treaty created a handicap for the social homogenization and nation-building aims of the new Turkish state." As the most loyal non-Muslim minority group, the Jewish community was expected to give up on these rights as they would prioritize equal status over privileged autonomy in internal affairs. Among Turkish state officials and society there was a belief that the Armenian and Greek minorities would follow the Jewish community in giving up these rights.

In choosing to opt out of the rights provided by the Lausanne Treaty, the leaders of the Jewish community advocated that the Jewish people did not need differential treatment as they intended to become equal citizens of the Turkish state.

This understanding by the community leaders can account for the commitment of the Turkish Jewish community to strengthen its relations with newly emerging Turkish state, which is a prerequisite for obtaining the transnational community character. The decision of Jewish community was followed by the Greek and Armenian communities. Significantly as Toktaş (2004, 74) points out, “while the non-Muslim minorities unilaterally opted out of the rights provided to them by the Lausanne Treaty, this withdrawal had no legal standing in terms of international norms since the treaties’ signatory parties were the states, not the minorities.” However, once the minority groups voluntarily withdrew from these rights, the minority issue of Turkey was no longer discussed in light of the rights granted by the Treaty of Lausanne.

Following the War of Independence, The Turkish Republic reestablished the boundaries of the newly emerging Turkish state. Despite this attempt to define the nation of this newly emerging state, a common understanding of Turkey and the components of Turkishness were not defined by that time. As the newly emerging Turkish state was founded on the ruins of Ottoman Empire, RPP felt the need to start a nation-building process that would provide a common ideology to unify the Turkish society. Accordingly, a common definition of the term Turk became necessary.

Despite an inclusive understanding of citizenship in law, during the Early Republican period ‘Turk’ was generally equated with ‘Muslim’. To this end, the Kemalist bureaucratic elite tried to establish state authority over ethnic and religious groups (Toprak, 1986), redefined the components of Turkish citizenship in 1928 with a supplement to Article 88 of the Turkish constitution. Law no.1312 stated that children born from a Turkish father or mother whether in Turkey or in a foreign country are considered Turkish citizens (Nomer, 1989, 45). Through this law, the Turkish state tried to define a common ground for specifying Turkish citizenship through the blood principle. However, this definition did not define the situation of the non-Muslim minorities since it was a need on the side of the Republican elite, to Turkify the minority groups to be able to fit them in the newly emerging Turkish nation-state (Bali, 2003, 102).

Within this period, the differences of the non-Muslim minorities in terms of religion, language and other practices served to benefit the RPP as it helped them to define what a Turk should be. "Policies following this definition and therefore prioritizing the Muslim Turks aimed to put the autonomy and the weight of the Turkish ethnic identity without any concessions in every level of the social life." (Aktar, 2004, 101) The social and economic activities of the non-Muslims were restructured in line with this aim. As a result, for all of the non-Muslim minority groups the Early Republican Period was marked by the attempts of RPP to pursue the nation-building process through creating a Turkish society that did not tolerate their differences. Accordingly, the Early Republican Period was marked by the attempts of RPP to create a homogeneous Turkish society through the Turkification policies. For non-Muslim minority groups both the implementation and aftermath of these policies played a significant role in defining their relationship to the new Turkish state. Use of Turkish in the daily life and education was one of the most important requirements of the nation building process.

The inability of the non-Muslim minority groups to speak Turkish gave rise to the introduction of the *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!* Campaign (Citizen Speak Turkish!). The campaign was initiated by the law students of Istanbul University on the 13th January 1928. The non-Muslim minority groups who were unable to speak Turkish were the targets of this campaign which aimed at forcing them to learn and speak Turkish in every aspect of their daily lives. Many propaganda tools such as posters, bulletins and newspaper articles were used to draw attention to the campaign. Moreover, public demonstrations were held to give the common message that focused on the necessity to speak Turkish in order to be considered a Turk. The efforts by the law students proved to be successful and soon the Citizen Speak Turkish Campaign gained the support of the Turkish public. Turkish media also supported this attempt. Through articles Turkish people were asked to warn those who did not speak in Turkish. Some of the Jewish intellectuals also supported the campaign as language was seen as a barrier to social unification. For the Jewish community this campaign was seen as yet another chance to prove their loyalty to the Turkish state. Language differences were evaluated through the lens of

citizenship question, therefore to become full citizens Jewish leaders encouraged the community to learn and use Turkish (Bali, 1996, 44). In order to spread Turkish among the Jewish community, institutions such as The Union for Speaking in Turkish (Türkçe Konuşurma Birliği), The Jewish Commission of Disseminating the Turkish Language (Türk Dilini Yaygınlaştırma Komisyonu), The Union of Culture (Kültür Birliği), The Turkish Culture Association (Türk Kültür Birliği) and The Balat Association of Turkish Culture and Aid (Balat Türk Kültür ve Yardım Derneği) were established.

The Turkification policies of the Early Republican Period also had implications on the non-Turkish education institutions of the minority groups. Since all education institutions were united after the establishment of the new Turkish state, Turkish became the main language of education. Due to this transition, the younger generations started using Turkish as their mother tongue which caused an overall decrease in the number of non-Turkish speaking Jews. Additionally in 1934, the Law on Surnames was passed. Through this law, non-Muslim minority groups were obliged to acquire surnames that were easily pronounceable in Turkish.

In addition to the Law on Surnames, the Law on Settlement no.2510 also passed in 1934. This law restructured the immigration policies of the Turkish state and the need to integrate the non-Muslim groups with the rest of the Turkish society was underlined once again. In terms of settlement, this need of integration was realized through dismantling the neighborhoods where Jews lived together. Despite its contradiction to the essence of the rights provided by the Lausanne Treaty, the Law on Settlement was passed by the Turkish parliament.

Most historians agree that the interpretation of this law by the public became the basis of the 1934 Thrace Incidents. While interpretation of the law constitutes the reasoning for one side of the incident, it is also necessary to analyze it within the context of the international political agenda. This was the period when Nazi Germany was rising and Turkey was feeling under threat due to a possible territorial occupancy. The Jewish population around the world was the common enemy for Nazi Germany. Therefore, the Jewish settlement in Thrace which is the European border of Turkey constituted a strategically important yet dangerous area.

The rising anti-Semitism in Germany at the time was also supported in Turkey especially through the voices of right wing media organs like Milli İnkılap periodical. The Thrace Incidents began in the province of Çanakkale when members of the Jewish population started receiving unsigned letters telling them to leave the area. Following these threats, community leaders tried to get in touch with Prime Minister İsmet İnönü to inform him about the situation and ask for guidance but this attempt proved to be unsuccessful. The violent acts of the Thrace Incident began on July 3rd, 1934. Jews living in the Thrace provinces like Çanakkale, Tekirdağ, Kırklareli and Edirne were attacked, and their houses and shops were destroyed. The Turkish government intervened in the incidents only after the violent acts had started and therefore the actions taken focused on restoring peace in the area. Following the incident, anti-Semitism was condemned publicly and the ideologies spread by Nazi Germany were blamed for the Thrace Incidents. RPP also took more active actions such as closing down the right wing press organs that promoted anti-Semitism as well as removing the governors and mayors of the cities where the incidents took place.

Despite the actions taken by the RPP government, Jews were already affected by the incidents both financially and psychologically which resulted in their migration within and outside of Turkey. According to the 1927 census, the number of Jews in Çanakkale was 1.845; it was 6.098 in Edirne and 1.481 in Tekirdağ. Following the Thrace Incident of 1934, there had been major immigration flows to Istanbul or outside of Turkey. In the 1945 census, the number of Jews living in the Thrace provinces decreased by 52 % (Dündar, 1952, 61). While Istanbul and Izmir became a common destination for immigration, Palestine was also a destination for those who left the provinces of Thrace. RPP's public condemnation of the incidents was not enough to terminate the overall suspicion and reactions against the Jewish community. The Majority of the Turkish public was not convinced that the Jewish community was complying with the necessary conditions of being a Turk. And this unconvinced attitude towards to community was discriminative enough.

2.1.2: Theoretical Connection

To sum up, this chapter I tried to link the theory to the case. It started by introducing the life of Jews in The Ottoman Empire and Turkey in a historical perspective and pursuing to emphasize the historical situations that contributed to the community in Turkey. In Turkey's collective memory there are so many traumas throughout history. The approaches from the 1st chapter from Agamben whom took over the ideas from Schmitt and Foucault may seem not correlated with the 2nd chapters' outcomes.

This limited conditions correspond to the sphere of the sovereign ban, in which bare life is included through its exclusion. The consequence is that: "The sovereign sphere is the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life - that is, life that may be killed but not sacrificed - is the life that has been captured in this sphere." (Agamben 1998, 83) Jewish studies in today's contemporary academia use Agamben's quote in order to analyze the Holocaust during the WWII. Even though it may seem dispersed, I strongly claim that the Struma ship is a camp and the law of lawlessness - state of exception as a theoretical concept bounded with each other and the sacred life has been captured in this sphere. Hence, they combine and fill the other precisely. The methodology which I use made me divide them apart from each other but to sum up the same methodology made it easier to make a conclusion about it. The Turkification period of non-Muslims and its policies allowed Turkish authorities to have an environment in which state of exception occurred. In addition to non-Muslim communities, ethnic communities were (still) banned in this period. It had been a gap between civil war and resistance in order to identify the state of exception. The ambiguous spots are the places which the state uses its power abusively. Yet, living in the East part of Turkey, people have been faced with this ambiguous gray zone since the 1980s. They are the excluded whose life is on hold, with their rights suspended.

During the British mandatory contributed the laws of lawlessness to the Turkish state which created a space that later created a camp called the Struma ship.

Regardless of this, Turkish Jews were also faced with pogroms (1934 Trakya Events) and labor camps (Aşkale-Erzurum). At the end of the previous section, Turkish Schindlers were mentioned. Turkish ambassadors and bureaucrats from Europe helped the Turkish origin of Jews escape from Nazi restrictions with trains from France. These diplomats are highly popular in historical documentaries from the official narrative. But as a matter of fact they helped the Jewish people because they had Turkish origins with a Turkish passport. Their rights were mattered as they were legally citizens of Turkish Republic. On the other hand, Struma was carrying Romanian Jews so they had no Turkish citizenships and the authorities did not solve the same hierarchical issues, even though the Bosphorus was (is) in Istanbul but legally it became its' exception. This exception became a camp with the people of another country who lacked Turkish citizenship. Literally, suspension of Struma ship can be known as a floating camp.

CHAPTER 3: HISTORIOGRAPHY OF STRUMA CASE

3.1: Struma resonates in Romania

In the 2nd chapter the history of World War II and Turkish policies are the subjects which scholars find prefer and they tend to work on it each time. But when the subject comes to the analysis of the role played by Turkey during World War II in connection to the Jews, Rifat Bali, Corry Guttstadt and İzzet Bahar are the scholars who put an effort to research and analyze the unknown and unheard. (Şeni, 2016, 291)¹⁵ From the Balfour Declaration, British consent for the Jewish land in Palestine was given. The declaration was clearly encouraging the Jews to immigrate to the Promised Lands. But British policies were controversially ambiguous. After World War I, it was not a secret that Britain had Palestine as its colony as well as Jordan and Iraq. The Arab population in Palestine was not satisfied with the results.

¹⁵ R.Bali 'Parita Gemisinin Serüveni', (The Adventure of the Parita Liner), *Tarih ve Toplum*, No. 214 (October 2001). 4-10. C.Guttstadt. *Turkey, the Jews, and the Holocaust*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013. İ.Bahar. *Turkey and the Rescue of the European Jews*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

They increased many conflicts between Jewish people. Britain started to mix its policies because of the conflicts. These actions from Britain were the initial acts of future Arab-Israel Wars. So, British authorities wanted to put limitations on the number of Jewish immigrants. It is not wrong to claim that this limitation policy is the reason why Struma passengers could not survive.

A Romanian filmmaker Radu Gabara directed a documentary called *Struma* (2001)¹⁶. Stelian Tanase wrote the screenplay. The documentary starts with an epilogue from Rabbi Akiba; 'The death of a single person is the death of the entire world.' This can be understandable from the director's perspective. When we are faced with lack of primary sources, documentary option is permissible.¹⁷

During World War II, when the fascist regime was in power in Romania and when Nazi troops were settled in this country, Romanian Jews wanted to leave. The reason was clear: In June 1941, around 4,000 Jews were massacred in Iasi/Jassy, Northern Romania and thousands more were obliged to leave their hometowns and transported to Southern Romania. In the very same month, the Jews were forced to wear yellow bands. At first, since the Romanian authority agreed to allow Jews to depart from the country, Jews were able to organize ships to the Promised Land and they had the chance to leave the Holocaust behind. Nevertheless, the destination of their route to Palestine was controlled by British authorities and they were not willing to give permission to every ship. In order to achieve their route plan, they must have passed through Turkish waters. The ships, which consisted of Jewish refugees who were expelled from Germany to the German occupied Countries, destined for Palestine had to face with Turkish authorities as well as the British ones. (Bali, 2010, 342)

769 Romanian Jews started on a journey with the ship called *Struma* to Palestine on the 12th December 1941 from Costanza harbor, Romania and three days later it reached Istanbul. However, due to a problem in its engine and because it was originally built to carry animals, it was not able to continue to its route. The

¹⁶ The VHS version of the documentary *Struma* can be reached at Bilgi University, Kuştepe Library.

¹⁷ From this point of my thesis, I will use (Gabrea, 2001, 00.00) as a reference in order to mention quotations from the documentary *Struma*, 2001.

fact of the matter is, their visas were not ready as promised by the Palestinian authorities. British policies were forcing them not to give a high number of visas every day. To be politically correct, the British government did not want the Jewish population to become extreme. While Struma was waiting on hold in Istanbul for days, only five passengers were able to depart from the ship during this time. Because of the struggles of the Turkish police, passengers became more worried about their unknown future. (Gabrea, 2001, 01:19) Eventually, the ship was sent back to the Black Sea. It had to leave Bosphorus on February 23rd and went down the next morning following an explosion at sea where it was sunk by a Soviet torpedo with 769 Romanian Jews. On the 24th February 1942, David Stoliar was the only person who survived from Struma.

In order to understand all the aspects of the Struma case, analyzing countries' policies are crucial. This chapter will not be covered with the German policies, which can be easily found in every Holocaust work, and also the previous chapter was focused on Turkish policies. So initially, I will try to examine not the policies but the situation of Romania and Britain at that time. Citizens of Germany and also to be exact the governments of Europe did not take the Mein-Kampf seriously although Hitler's future intentions were too obvious not to see. (Gabrea, 2001, 04:09) German people and later Romanians, when Romania started to use German laws, started to get one copy of Mein Kampf during their baptism or wedding ceremonies. Even this example is enough to imagine how cruelty began to be structured in the society.

The narrator from the documentary continues to talk about people who wrote their diaries during 1937, how millions of Jews were get slapped in the faces with the applying rules. (Gabrea, 2001, 07:25) Romania had changed their entire organization with the new political orders. (Gabrea, 2001, 08:25)¹⁸ It meant that, in order to take action to solve the necessity of the Jewish problem they started to use Nazi Germany laws, (lawlessness- state of exception) which became totalitarian. After getting Chekoslavakia Germans headed to Danzig, there was no other way

¹⁸ In the documentary from 08:25 till 14:08, many of the historians who were interviewed on documentary, speaking Romanian without any translation as a subtitle.

around for them to get to Poland. No one knew or even imagined what was going to happen to Romania.

Romania was isolated within the European context. Yet, it became so easy for the Kingdom to apply antisemitic rules and law. (Gabrea, 2001, 14:08) Everything had started to become more serious for Romanian Jews because the Romanian General visited Hitler several times. The definitions and categories were defined by the antisemitic laws just to find a solution to the Jewish Problem. David Stoliar remembers his childhood within mourning; he had problems at school about being Jewish. Later the authorities insisted that they should wear bands.¹⁹ After a coup attempt, pogroms had started in Bucharest for Jews. They were killed and forced to move outside of Bucharest. No house was left outside of Jewish quarters. The most shocking slaughter happened in Bucharest, 93 individuals were assassinated at night. They were first undressed and shot later; they were thrown over one another. The bodies were part of the dehumanization element of biopolitics. One Romanian Jew asked another; 'How are you, how did you escape? – Thank God, they took my neighbor,' (Gabrea, 2001, 19:27)

In the beginning of 1933 Romania had become a place of transit for European Jews. One of the reasons for this was because Italian harbors were closed to the Jews. Only Romanian harbors were open for them. Especially Jews from Germany and Austria were using this route illegally. It is very clear to understand that harbors were the escape gates for them. During 1930-40 Romania was known for their vessels with refugees on board. One secret Police note from Romania says 'we must facilitate the departure of Jews in order to free this country of this problem.' (Gabrea, 2001, 21:22)

Some Zionist groups started to organize illegal immigrations. Their approvals, passports and visas were not taken. Without having any insurance, the ships were taking people who were able to make the payment. The New Zionist Organization called ALYA committee collected 450 future immigrants' money. But the committee lacked a ship and was postponing sailing each time while people

¹⁹ Each country had different bands. Some of them were sewed yellow David star, the other were arm bands with blue star.

were becoming impatient. The secret police note says a ship was renamed as S.S. Struma and would be ready soon to sail. The situation of the ship was unclear but ALYA committee kept selling tickets. (Gabrea, 2001, 27:00) The announcements became frequent for the ship. The tourism companies made flyers just to promote selling the tickets, which were covered with the picture of the transatlantic Queen Mary as if this was the ship to take the Jewish passengers to the Promised Land. Romanian Jews were taken to labor camps outside of the Bucharest.²⁰ Legalizing lawlessness was happening throughout Romania. Furthermore, ALYA sent a letter to the authorities that they must free the Jews from labor camps in order to take them to the ship that already paid their tickets. (Gabrea, 2001, 34:50) After weeks passed, several events occurred affecting the ship. They were saying that the ship was outfitted. When the authorities heard about it, the only thing they were doing was postponing the departure each time. The essential part for this chapter has become the secret police notes from the documentary. We accept these notes as primary sources for the case and they make my argument more solid. "This ship will never reach its destination," (Gabrea, 2001, 36:54) this note from the secret police was sent to internal affairs.

Meanwhile like I mentioned in the 2nd chapter, Turkey was neutral officially but it was under very strict mandates. One day before the Struma's departure from Costanza harbor, England declared war with Nazi Germany. All of a sudden Romanian Jewish Passengers of Struma had become the citizens of an enemy country.²¹ (Gabrea, 2001, 40:01)

3.2: Struma resonates as a "Floating Camp"

When the Pearl Harbor attack was changing the US policies in the Pacific front, the Eastern front had struggles as well. Romania had declared war against US. The documentary starts the 2nd part with the title of "The Floating Coffin".

²⁰ David Stoliar who was the only survivor from Struma, was taken one of these camps when he was 17 years old.

²¹ Romania was under Nazi rule, for more information see Corry Guttstadt.

When I was articulating my aim for this thesis, from the beginning till now, I only want to represent the Struma ship as a concentration camp. The ship was a camp with the only difference being that it was floating. This part of the documentary confirms my aim with full satisfaction. After one year of waiting and several postponements, 769 Jews were ready to get aboard from Constanza harbor. But in meantime, they were kept in a train for a couple of days until officials said the vessel was ready for boarding. David Stoliar remembers that day saying, "There was not enough space to sit. I wouldn't call that a ship, it was just steel and wood on top of it. It was divided as cubicles. We could not even move. We were so close to each other."²² (Gabrea, 2001, 53:57) According to Agamben, the camp is a biopolitical space where power does not practice on law but it practices on biological bodies. It is a space where the sovereign is in control but the law does not even exist. To be precise, state of exception is concrete and reduced bare life and ambiguous creations of the space create the camps. Başkır adds that if all these functions existed then these kinds of places can be considered as camps; it does not matter what names they are being called. (Başkır, 2008, 4)

While they were kept in a train, customs took whatever they could from the passengers. Later, the engines were getting broken one by one. It took four days instead of 14 hours to get to their destination. People may think that customs took all the valuables but that was not the whole story. 'When the engines were broken, the crew of the tag boat asked their wedding rings to start repairing the engine which did not start back one whole night.' (Stoliar in Gabrea, 2001, 58:50) Stoliar adds that it was actually more than a prison; they had been told that they cannot go up or back. According to Agamben, the camp is a space in which pure power meets bare life, state of exception became the rule. The expected claim I would like to insist upon is that 'the Struma is a space in which pure power meets bare life, state of exception became the rule.'

David Stoliar kept his silence about Struma for many years, but the interview with him changed the historical facts. He explains the later hours with,

²² The video document with the interview of Mr. David Stoliar by courtesy of United States of Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington.

“when we got closer to Istanbul, the engine stopped working and the boat was floating to the shore.” (Stoliar in Gabrea, 2001, 01:02:23) From now on, the official Turkish narrative about the Struma was about to change. Stoliar remembers that a Turkish tug boat from the Bosphorus took them up and placed them in front of the harbor. Later, Turkish police came on board. The interviews of the 2nd part of the documentary continue with one of the historians from Turkey, Rifat Bali.²³ Bali talks about the procedure of the situation. “In december 1941, Struma came to Istanbul. The ship was put in to quarantine immediately. The reason was that the passengers did not have visas to go to Palestine. Turkey was a neutral country. As a national policy, Turkey could not accept foreign immigrants and let these Struma passengers enter Istanbul because it would be an example, and more foreign immigrants would likely follow them.” (Bali in Gabrea, 2001, 01:03:24)

While Struma passengers were deprived of their basic human rights simultaneously Turkish Jews were not capable of changing the authority decisions against the Struma’s future. Regardless of having not many documents of David Stoliar or rest of the passengers’ views, on behalf of the Stoliar’s account, it is permissible to declare that Turks would not allow them to go to the Mediterranean. They could not go further and they could not go backwards. The Jewish Community of Istanbul and Turkish Red Crescent organized aid and transmitted the information about the Struma situation. The information reached Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, London and Washington. ‘We expected possibly to be taken somewhere else instead of Palestine. Even if the place were a camp, the condition could not be as bad as on the vessel,’ (Stoliar in Gabrea, 2001, 01:05:46)

The British Ambassador in Ankara stayed with the London government. Ankara (Foreign Ministry) intended to send the Struma to the Black Sea. In respond to this, London stated that it was a question of illegal immigration. Britain decided that if the illegal immigrants reached Palestine, this would create diplomatic problems. ‘16 young children’s visas were obtained during the negotiations but Turkish authorities did not permit them to land...’ (Bali in Gabrea, 2001, 01:11:14)

²³ His books and articles are very detailed and convincing to draw the framework of this thesis. He is one of the people from Turkey who can be interviewed..

According to the documentary, a pregnant woman was allowed to go to the Jewish Hospital in Balat. She eventually made it to Palestine using an overland route. Also 5 other people who had Pakistan visas could also leave the vessel. 'When we had a little hope, it was the time they let 9 people land on the shore.' (Stoliar in Gabrea, 2001, 01:12:00) 'The Turkish Jewish community tried to help them by giving food, medicine... but they were all checked from the port because food, medicines were counted as exports.'²⁴ (Bali in Gabrea, 2001, 01:12:49) After a while Turkey announced that they couldn't keep having the vessel on Turkish waters. Not all the Turkish people but at least people from Istanbul were clearly aware of what had been going on Bosphorus but the rules were incredibly strict from the military; due to this reason no one was allowed to make any solidarity demonstrations.²⁵ 'On Christmas Eve 1941, the officers of a royal navy cruiser invited their friends for a cruise on Bosphorus. The ship searchlight was over the sea. Suddenly, it revealed a ship full of people, which looked like a floating coffin. The people on board looked like *ghosts*. They had pale faces and they were looking straight back to us.' (Manning in Gabrea, 2001, 01:13:00)²⁶ These descriptions about people on the vessel identify Agamben's Muselmann. The Muselmann reveals the biopolitical nature of the ship (camp). They were reduced to bare life, living dead. The Muselmann is the telos of the Nazi camp, biopower's ultimate outcome. Yet this can be applied to the Struma passengers.

The living conditions of the ship got worse and worse. The passengers were starting to get dysentery. The sanitary conditions of the situation were horrible. According to Stoliar, they were not able to get clean water even to wash themselves. According to the official names and occupations documentation there were 20 medical doctors on board to treat all kinds of illnesses. The rumors about the ship's fate were spreading around. One of the scariest rumors for the passengers was that

²⁴ So, this is another reason why the Turkish Jewish community was not sufficient enough to change the fate of the Struma easily.

²⁵ Bali mentions a memoir in the documentary that there was a rumor from the local community that some people burned a flag on the shore just to show to the immigrants that they will not be forgotten.

²⁶ Manning, Olivia, (1970). The Tragedy of the Struma. The Observer (March 1):8-17 cited in McLaughlin, M. (2015). Deirdre David, Olivia Manning: A Woman at War. Notes and Queries, 62(2), 342-344.

the ship would be sent back to Romania. Although it was very difficult to survive in those conditions ‘... they were human, highly skilled and organized people even managed a wedding on the vessel. They were somehow trying to live.’ (Bali in Gabrea, 2001, 01:15:12). ‘The tag cut the ropes and left us to the Black Sea – police managed to push us back- , we shouted like, what are we supposed to do now? But they were already starting to go back to Burgazada. It was already night, we could hear the noises of the shore and we were highly afraid of mines.’ (Stoliar in Gabrea 2001, 01:17:00) It is not wrong to claim that the Turkish police were not friendly toward the passengers from the beginning to the end. They greatly increased the passengers’ fears and worries.

The Soviet Union is the country which sank the Struma on Turkish waters but they never accepted that they participated in the Struma’s fate. But in 1978, it was discovered in the Soviet archives that the torpedo belonged to the Soviets. In the 1990s Turkish divers found the Struma, 7 miles away from where the Soviet documents located it. But the scientists claimed that the Struma does not look like it was hit by a torpedo. Still today, the Struma preserves its mystery. This mystery claim becomes the epilogue for our only visual source for this chapter. Whereby mentioning this claim, this chapter’s intention was not relevant with who is responsible for the incident. Also on account of the Soviets it was wartime and they were striking against every moving thing in the fear that they might be German vessels.

After the explosion, Stoliar was the one of the survivors on water. There was another person, a Bulgarian chief officer who became exhausted and sank. Stoliar’s body parts were almost frozen and the ‘lighthouse’ sailors picked him up. ‘Even today, I cannot explain why I survived when everybody else did not,’ (Stoliar in Gabrea, 2001, 01:25:23) In addition to this speech, he added that for many years he avoided talking about the Struma. This can be explained by the survivor’s guilt condition.²⁷ He finds it hard to process why he is still alive.

²⁷ *Survivor’s guilt* can be explained, as the person feels heavily guilty by surviving from a traumatic situation. This is a mental stage, which is open to debate moral sides of it. It is the perception which is to do wrong by being alive, when the rest of the population is not.

Regarding the Struma issue, it is still not possible to be able to get the information from the sources in the Turkish National Archive. The archives as I mentioned several times before cannot be accessed. The only primary source is the British Public Record Office. This leaves another moral question in history. It is clear that Turkey was under the control of British. Concerning the responsibility and acceptance issues from the past, Turkey does not making a clear policy by not opening the archives today.

The Struma, a Bulgarian ship sank with its Romanian Jewish passengers and the crew off the coast of Şile on February 24th, 1942. (Bali, 2010, 342) And the only reliable information we can get is the survivor David Stoliar's interview. Is memory reliable in every aspect? This is another field of work. But the attitude of Turkey and incredible research done by Corry Guttstadt and Rifat Bali together with Mr. Stoliar's remarks, made clear that Turkey should take the responsibility on Struma. The act of Turkey was cutting the ropes connecting the Struma to land and sending the vessel to the sea.

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 4: ANALYZING THE APPROACH

4.1: Turkey's Status

As a newly nation state just passed a decade after the declaration of the Republic of Turkey, Turkey was being formed. And, The Turkish authorities stated that their position is neutral, Turkey was not participating in the World War II. Turkey was not a participant in the unimaginable horror the world was faced with. This geographical area had struggles with minorities also during the Ottoman periods. Yet, the 1915 Armenian Catastrophe affected their policies in order to be cautious enough in their own circumstances. Revolts and Resistances highly damaged the creation process of the republic. The authorities did not want to risk their neutral position. There are not many historical narratives about Turkey's

position towards the Holocaust. Manipulations and distortions about Turkish history which had many Schindler's who helped the European Jewish people – who already had Turkish origin with a Turkish passport –.

In previous chapters, quite theoretical commentaries have been placed so far. What I always intend to accomplish is to leave the historical reviews behind and to create an objective history to analyze. The hypothesis I want to declare and which also guides my research is that Turkey became an actor in turning the Struma into a camp indirectly while trying not to be being involved in times of emergencies. Analyzing Agamben, made me come to realize that the camp preserves the stateless and refused, it does not matter if they come from outside, like the transits – such as Struma passengers- like the refugees, or from the inside, like the minorities; Gypsies and the Jews.

4.2: Political Asylum and Responsibility

The controversial debates about asylum seekers are ongoing today. Agamben's bare life concept can be applied for the asylum seekers. This might look like another field to focus on. This thesis does not include the refugee rights or asylum seekers. But for the sake of this tempting subject; I want to also add some reviews from Agamben in order to understand his theories better.

Agamben refers to bare life as life that is 'exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable. (Agamben, 1998, 28) He adopts Carl Schmitt's state of exception to describe spaces (the camp) in which the rule of law is suspended through the use of a legal allowance, which provides the state capacity to 'ban' bare life or 'to say that anyone may harm him.' (Agamben, 1998, 105) Agamben's state of exception and Homo Sacer reflects the asylum seekers' situations. On the grounds of this bare life can be applied to both Struma passengers and to asylum seekers. Their legal rights are on hold. (It started when Romania started to use Nazi laws)

<<Never Again>> is the motto of Holocaust education in the world today. I roughly mentioned in the previous chapters that Turkey is not established enough

to give this education in history classes. It has been put as sections into the Milli Eğitim books recently. It is not possible to analyze today's catastrophes without knowing the Holocaust.

Through the Turkification processes of the republic and mandated by British authorities, Turkey has failed to accept its own responsibility to save Struma passengers. Çetin Yetkin says in his book, *Batılıların Kirli Yüzü*, Struma was only a British policy failure. He did not mention German and Romanian rules and regulations against Jewish people. According to him, Turkey was under serious threats of German and also British policies forcing the country to behave as they were told. Additionally, Yetkin adds that Turkey did everything that was possible to do and it cannot be stated as responsible from the death of passengers. This is a summary of this book, which I do not need for my work. Perhaps as a historian he wanted to eliminate all the charges (political and economic sanctions) against Turkey might face in the future. In response to these reviews about Struma we are facing, the historical approaches are written to defend the nation state's autonomy regardless of the truthful narratives of history.

4.3: Political Outcomes

One of the most famous quotes of Adorno is 'Poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.' It is partially another work of expertise to examine this quote although it can be accepted to understand Auschwitz and other camps as a separate world from this one. Holocaust scholars often discuss that such an emphasis on the incomprehensibility of the camps obscures reality. Giorgio Agamben with his camp nomos helps us to analyze the camps within the context of modern world politics and philosophy. On account of Agamben, concentration camps came as the spaces of exception. The suspension of law gives the freedom of access on to these spaces. There were not any legally binding rights given to any of the people who were barely living in the zones of state of exception. Besides this historical summary of

evaluation of the camps, the essential argument he makes is that camps are the figures of the political space of modernity.

The deprivation of any political recognition leads to the human life is no longer a subject for the constitutional perspective. Agamben insists that the birth of the camp is a modern phenomenon and today the world faces this phenomenon through the absence of legal rights on refugee crisis. This phenomenon pursues going under the question of that camp are extremely fundamental for the politics of nation-states in modernity.

Homo Sacer and the State of Exception hypotheses are potentially applicable on the world crises that we face every day. Linking a Jewish body to homo sacer and being forced to live under permanent lawlessness (state of exception) is the fundamental aim of what I have intended to create so far. When it comes to conclusion, Syrian refugees, Asylum seekers and also the Black Lives Matter movement are some virtual cases to apply on state of exception.

Forcing the Struma to sail out of Turkish seas reveals a political outcome by the state. It means within the state territory; abandoned bodies (dead or alive) become the subjects of crime and punishment. The authorities wanted to eliminate this potential guilt. So, in this sense forcing the Struma to sail becomes a political weapon to underpin the state's power.

4.4: Epilogue

The proclamation that the Holocaust existed in Turkey may sound too radical to declare for this thesis. According to my literature reviews and findings, the affects of the Holocaust in Turkey were far greater than has been officially recorded. Some may disagree with my argument. However, this Holocaust prototype (Keskin, Ferda uses this prototype for Armenian catastrophe²⁸) occurred in different aspects in Turkey as much as Struma did.

²⁸ <http://www.altust.org/2015/06/toplama-kampi-olarak-ermeni-tehciri/> (Last access: 22.10.2017)

Antisemitism is still a critical subject in today's contemporary research. Meanwhile the Ottoman times were difficult to handle for Jews. There were restrictions on their freedoms. Their houses' heights and their clothing colors mattered for their existence. To illustrate Judaism, it is not wrong to say that especially in these soils a Jew has been always a figure which was built as an enemy. During my research the 1934 Trakya Events was mentioned by only Rıfat Bali. There are verbal historical stories and newspaper titles but it is almost impossible to access official documents to search through. For the sake of these findings, I easily claim that the antisemitism movement feeds itself constantly with hatred regardless of Armenian and Greek hatred. But Turkey never faces this hatred. During the Holocaust, Jews were massacred and a ship – was full of Jews – was sunk in a Turkish sea. The responsibility of this situation actually lies with the people who let this happen. But the world did not see any consequence for the crime. Almost 90 years later Mavi Marmara ship situation occurred and not even in Turkish sea, the authorities cried for help for days. The pain of people is not open for comparison in this thesis. As long as people behave fairly in every situation these pros and cons would matter.

Asylum seekers are faced with very tough conditions on Syrian refugee escape routes. The population exchange during the 1920s resulted in the same outcomes. World wars created the same horror each time. Lemos in his work of *Round Voyage* emphasizes the refugees' hopes and fears with metaphors. One of the installations was built in Santral. As Keskin mentions on *Round Voyage*; "Escaping or expelled by a law that is left behind, and with hardly any hope to find a legal status ahead, the voyager is exposed in this space to the absence of all law except that of nature and is reduced to zoe or bare life as Giorgio Agamben would later put it in his seminal work *Homo Sacer*." (Keskin in Lemos and Kountouri, 2007, 59) Agamben does not tell us how to go beyond camps in the world we live in but yet thinking about politics in a different way might be a good place to start. We might come to a conclusion of exterminating the camps one day.

The resemblances between transitory Jewish Refugees and the Syrian Refugees on boats today are not a coincidence. These insignificant others keep

remaining as the leftovers in this world. The photography of the crises makes my approach even more solid. In 2015, Germany announced that they would place the Syrian refugees in former concentration camp, Buchenwald.²⁹ They interviewed the people who started to live in there and they were even very content about it. This shows that since the Holocaust the world has not been faced with this type of refugee flow. (The image was taken from the website as well, please see footnote: 28)



The disturbance of this resemblance from history and today brought me to the point of working on Agamben who was established by his works about camps. The insignificant others in Struma are also like the insignificant others on refugee boats. They were both over capacity carrying passengers, excluded from the society. However, this resemblance has been an inspiration for many scholars and artists to pursue their work with the aim of addressing the refugee crisis. These borders between decision on life and decision on death have become unstable to analyze. The corpus of individuals is the new subject of politics. Democracy is the assertion and also the presentation of the corpus. The intention of this thesis scope overwhelmed the concepts but without those concepts it would not be possible to show the distinctions and the resemblances. To conclude, a master's thesis should be written to learn more about one specific subject and to lead to further research.

²⁹ <https://tr.sputniknews.com/avrupa/201509131017711619/> (Last Access: 01.01.2017)

I hereby would like to acknowledge that my further research subjects will become more precise with the help of this thesis.

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