

World War II and population displacement from Europe: refugees from Greece in the Middle East and Africa (1941-1946)

The research project explores the understudied trajectory of war displacement between Europe, the Middle East and Africa during WWII. During the war more than 200.000 Polish, Greek, and Yugoslav nationals were displaced to several places in the Middle East and Africa. The scant, until very recently, literature studied the phenomenon solely within national frameworks and each case of displacement in isolation. Focusing on the case study of the c. 80.000 Greek refugees, this project explicitly moves beyond the frame of national history and attempts to incorporate the Greek case into the broader transnational experience of displacement during the war and immediate post-war years. This research starts from the premise that the study of wartime displacement from Europe to the colonial geography of the Middle East and Africa is vital for the understanding of war displacement, the emergence of post-war refugee regimes, and their entanglements with colonial technologies and regimes of displacement management. By studying the Greek case of displacement the research relates Europe to a colonial and trans-imperial space, and explores the continuum of displacement and its management between the Middle East, Africa and Europe during and after World War II. In exploring the colonial entanglements of Greek wartime case of displacement, the research investigates the interaction of Greek refugees with the Greek diaspora and their entanglement in irredentist and colonialist projects of the Greek state, while it explores the negotiation of colonial hierarchies, gender relations, and politics between refugees, colonial authorities, and colonized peoples.