

S. 1. 2. – THE INTERWAR PERIOD BETWEEN COMMERCIALISM AND SECURITY

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«Freeing» the trade: the function and the evolution of the Free Economic Zone of Thessaloniki during the Interwar (1925-1939)

THANASIS NASIARAS (Institute For Mediterranean Studies)

Abstract

Free ports and Free Economic Zones played a crucial role in the development of world economy, as they integrated dispersed places and seas creating transport, trade, and investment links. The aim of this article is to explore the nature and explain the function and evolution of the Free Economic Zone of the Port of Thessaloniki during the Interwar. The accession of Thessaloniki to the Greek state in 1912 redefined its political, social and economic development. The creation of the Free Economic Zone, the first one that occurred in Aegean and also one of the first in the whole Mediterranean area, was the result of Greek's state policy in order to maximize the city's trade. Our aim is to analyze the pioneering role of Economic Zone of Thessaloniki in establishing trade links find out its connectivity in regional, national and global level. Also, we will try to evaluate its function in city's trade. Our framework encompasses quantitative and qualitative tools form economic and social history, in conjunction with economic geography. Our research is based on a combination of a wide range of archival material and secondary sources.

Keywords

Free Economic Zones, ports, trade

Biography

Thanasis Nasiaras was born in Larisa, Greece in 1987. He studied history at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. After his graduation in 2010, he took his first Master Degree in Modern and Contemporary European and World History when he was specialized in social and economic modern and contemporary Greek history. The topic of his Master's thesis was related to the history of the three official defaults of the Greek State in 1843, 1893 and 1932. His second Master Degree was in Political Theory and Philosophy, when he explored the methodology and the analytical tools of political science. In this Master's thesis he tried to analyze some aspects of the phenomenon of neoliberalism, such as the role of antagonism, of state and market and finally debt. Now he is studying for a PhD at the Ionian University in social and economic history, especially in maritime history. The title of his thesis is «Thessaloniki in transition. Economic and social evolution of a port-city from the beginning

The unexpected compensations: Merchant seamen in Norwegian foreign policy after first world war

ELISABETH S. KOREN (Norwegian Maritime Museum)

Abstract

First world war had devastating effects upon the Norwegian merchant fleet and traumatic consequences for the men working onboard. Even though Norway was neutral during the war, more than 800 Norwegian ships were lost in shipwrecks caused by naval mines or submarine warfare. More than 2100 seafarers lost their lives in such incidents. It is estimated that approximately 10 000 seafarers survived the sinking of Norwegian vessels. However, the fate of these men has received little attention. This paper presents how these men were treated by the Norwegian society, and it will demonstrate that this was influenced by Norwegian foreign policy. In fact, terms set by both Germany and Great Britain shaped the Norwegian social policies to help seafarers after first world war.

In 1919, an agreement between Great Britain and Norway about the surplus of the coal trade during the war included terms regarding seafarers. Great Britain demanded that some of the surplus should benefit Norwegian merchant seamen.

Further, it is not well known that Norway in 1928 received six million marks as a compensation from Germany. The money was to be distributed among seafarers with war injuries and widows of the seafarers who died due to the U-boat campaign. Six million marks was a modest sum, compared to the damages the U-boat campaign had caused to the Norwegian fleet. However, it improved the income in the seamen's families afflicted by the war. The president of the Norwegian ship owners' association called the compensation a "blessing from above". This paper presents the agreements with Great Britain and Germany and demonstrate that the welfare of merchant seamen played a more important role in these agreements than formerly acknowledged.

Keywords

First world war, foreign policy, merchant seamen

Biography

Elisabeth S. Koren is a senior curator at the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo. She has a PhD in history. Her research interests include the history of seafarers and the the social and cultural history of merchant seafaring.

By seaplane across the oceans: commercial maritime aviation and exploration during the interwar period

MARION WECKERLE (PhD candidate in History, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Abstract

Invented in 1910, the seaplane was first seen as a mechanical sport machine, then as a more secure aircraft than the landplane in island, river and maritime environments, on the one hand for military purposes, on the other hand to transport mail and passengers across the seas, especially the Atlantic Ocean. During World War One, seaplanes served in the different fleets involved in the conflict (in the Mediterranean sea, the Adriatic, the North Sea, the Channel, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and Europe's Atlantic Coast). After the war, operating aviation for commercial purposes did not only fulfill the need to recycle available military material. Progress made in seaplane technology henceforth participated in re-shaping frontiers and possibilities of aerial transport, as a direct rival to airships and planes for transatlantic crossing (by the north or the south routes). They were also used for the exploration of extreme climatic conditions areas, like the 1925 expedition of Roald Amundsen to Arctic in a Dornier Wal seaplane. In the 1930s, giant flying boats even competed with cruise ships as luxury transatlantic means of transport. Various companies, such as the Aéropostale, the Deutsche Lufthansa and Pan Am, not only acquired available seaplanes from the aircraft manufacturers but also developed their own. They competed in technological innovations to open new and always faster lines. We propose, in this communication, to show how the main dynamics and technological challenges taking place, formed an entirely new innovative system that played a key role in the exploration of the oceans and their commercial exploitation through the air before the outbreak of World War Two.

Keywords

Maritime aviation, history of technology, seaplane, flying boat

Biography

Marion Weckerle is a PhD candidate in History of Technology at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. Her research relates to history of inventions and innovations, hybridizations and transfers of objects and technical knowledge in contexts of peace and war. Thus, her thesis topic deals with the analysis of the history of seaplanes from the 1910s to the 1930s in a systemic approach, and is directed by Anne-Françoise Garçon. The French Ministry of Defence and the Defence Historical Service (Service Historique de la Défense) support her PhD through a research grant. Clarinet player, she also applied these thematics to organology and historically informed music. She carried out several research missions in history of technology in the research laboratory of the Paris Museum of Music, and one on a French submarine exhibited at the Ecomuseum of Saint-Nazaire.