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The Significance of the Armenian Genocide after Ninety Years

Roger W. Smith

Each genocide provides a foundation for subsequent horrors. Each historical misrepresentation of efforts to exterminate a particular ethnic group increases the likelihood that such efforts will be undertaken again in another time and place.

That over one million Armenian men, women, and children could have been subjected to genocide by the Young Turk government in 1915 and that the world for many years would not remember is profoundly disturbing. Not to remember the suffering of the victims is, above all, a failure of humanity and compassion on our part—a lack of respect and care for fellow humans who have fallen victim to the ultimate outrage against justice, the death of a people. We do not ordinarily think of the dead as having rights, but there is at least one they possess: the right to have the world “hear and learn the truth about the circumstances of their death.”¹ This is the one right that, ninety years later, can still be restored to them, and surely we can do no less.

But genocide is not only a crime against a particular people; it is also a crime against humankind. Its inherent potential is to distort and alter the very meaning of “humankind,” erasing for all time particular biological and cultural possibilities. Furthermore, for a particular group to claim for itself a right to determine what groups are, in effect, human, possessing the right to life, is a threat to the existence of all other humans. In a period in which genocide has claimed an enormous number of victims, with no end to the carnage in sight, the prevention of future acts of genocide becomes a task for all human beings and governments throughout the world.

Yet without remembrance of past examples of genocide, there will be no sense of urgency in the present, no perceived need to prevent future atrocities. Further, we will cut ourselves off from the knowledge of the causes and sequences of genocide, knowledge that might help prevent other peoples from being subjected to this crime against humanity. The Armenian Genocide is particularly instructive in that it is the prototype for much of the genocide in the twentieth century and the new millennium.

However, when governments look the other way or actively cover up genocide out of short-term self-interest, a signal is sent to would-be perpetrators that they can resolve political and social issues through massive destruction without danger of outside intervention and, through a continual denial of the atrocities, can expect the world to forget these events entirely. Not remembering is not a neutral act—not to remember is to side with the executioners of whole groups and peoples.

The Armenian Genocide, in fact, illuminates with special clarity the dangers inherent in the political manipulation of truth through distortion, denial, intimidation, and economic blackmail. In no other instance has a government gone to such extreme lengths to deny that a massive genocide took place. That democratic governments (the United States and Israel) have supported Turkey in that effort raises significant

questions about governmental accountability and the role of citizenship in a world in which truth increasingly comes in two forms—"official" and "alleged."

Finally, by helping us to recognize genocide for the radical evil it is, the Armenian example makes possible a transformation of consciousness, one that rejects every manifestation of genocide, including denial, as an instrument of state policy.

Rulers in an earlier age boasted of their annihilation of whole peoples and erected monuments to commemorate their deeds. More recently, however, denial of genocide has become the universal strategy of perpetrators. Those who initiate, or otherwise participate in, genocide typically deny that the events took place, that they bear any responsibility for the destruction, or that the term "genocide" is applicable to what occurred. Denial, unchecked, turns politically-imposed death into a "non-event": in place of words of recognition, indignation, and compassion, there is, with time, only silence. But denial can enter into the very fabric of a society, so that those who come after sustain and even intensify the denial begun by the perpetrators. The most strident and elaborate denial of genocide in history follows this pattern. The Turkish Republic, established in 1923, may not be guilty of physical genocide against Armenians, but it continues today to deny that the Young Turk government engaged in massive destruction of Armenians from 1915 to 1918, resulting in the death of over one million persons and in the elimination of the Armenian people from its homeland of nearly 3,000 years.

Turkey, of course, has also made special efforts in recent years to recognize the Jewish Holocaust and to show compassion for its victims. Yet it has gone to extraordinary lengths to prevent Jews from learning about the Armenian Genocide. The tactic of appealing to moral sentiment, self-interest, and fear has not been without some effect, but Jews might well be suspicious of overtures by a government that is engaged in the massive fabrication of history while the Holocaust itself is being subjected to major distortions and, among "revisionists," its very existence is denied.

Turkey's goal, however, is to prevent recognition of the fact that what was done to the Jews and what was done to the Armenians belong to a common category: genocide. It is especially important for Turkey to stifle this awareness among Jews because for victims of Nazism to state publicly that Armenians and Jews alike have been subjected to genocide carries a kind of moral persuasiveness that non-victims may lack, a power to authenticate the common victimage.

The distortion of history for political ends has significant implications for both the practice of democracy and the protection of human rights. Whatever else democracy means, it means that the government is accountable to the public. But if a government lies to its citizens, acquiesces in the intimidation of scholarship, suppresses freedom of speech, and tolerates attempts by the successor state to control what is taught in public schools, we have entered an Orwellian world where power dictates reality: truth is simply what the government says it is. Under these conditions, accountability is, at best, a fiction—a subversion of democracy on behalf of a regime unwilling to confront its country's past and accept its responsibilities in the present.

Unless genocide is seen as a serious problem, no action will be taken to prevent it. And if previous examples of genocide are consigned to oblivion, the problem of prevention (a complicated and difficult task at best) will lack urgency—distraction, narrow conceptions of interest, and a politics that is blind to the fate of others will take over. Oblivion, however, contributes neither to the role of "innocent bystander" nor to neutrality: if one forgets the atrocities against the Armenians, the Cambodians, the people of East Timor, and others, one is, in effect, rewarding those who have managed

successfully to use genocide as an instrument of state policy. Oblivion not only reduces the incentive to action, it cuts us off from the very knowledge that might help us to anticipate genocidal situations and to act before the destruction of life begins. If we were aware of the history of genocide in the past ninety years, we might be led to ask, for a range of cases, How did this genocide begin? What were its warning signs? What was the sequence of events? How might this genocide have been prevented or, once in progress, stopped?

The Armenian Genocide is instructive with respect to each of these issues: the question of political will, the reward for successful genocide, and the extraction of useful knowledge from the study of crimes against a subject population. Had the international community focused more on the Armenian case, more active steps to prevent genocide might have been taken. On the other hand, would-be perpetrators of genocide have seen what has happened with the Armenians: they think they can commit genocide and get away with it, and, through denial, eventually erase any recollection of their crime. And by ignoring the Armenian Genocide, we have lost, for too long, knowledge important to the prevention of genocide. No one, including the Jews, foresaw the Holocaust, yet the signs now look inescapable; when mounting evidence of mass death in extermination centers was presented to the Allies and to the media of the day, it simply was not believed. This, after all, was the twentieth century; no government would destroy a people en masse. But, of course, one already had—the trouble was that the Armenian tragedy had become, within only a few years, an “unremembered genocide.”

Recognition and remembrance involve more than regard for truth: they express compassion for those who have suffered, respect for their dignity as persons, and revolt against the injustice done to them. In the deepest sense, recognition and remembrance are related not only to what happened but to questions of who we are, what society is, and how life and community can be protected against the visions that would destroy both.

Faced openly, the Armenian Genocide may lead not only to recognition and remembrance but to a deeper awareness of the nature of genocide. The accounts of suffering and brutality that are available to us, especially those of women and children in the caravans of death moving toward the Syrian desert, have the capacity to evoke in the least sentimental of us a sense of rage and shame at what human beings are capable of. From such accounts we gain knowledge that is both existential and cognitive, allowing us to recognize genocide as not only cruelty but radical evil.

In the next stage of awareness one realizes that genocide is a crime not only against a particular group but against humankind itself. Thus, out of solidarity with the victims and consciousness of the nature of genocide, one reaches a third stage in which mass murder as an instrument of state policy is rejected under any and all circumstances, whether attempted by one’s own government or by those who have no claim to one’s loyalty. The commitments of the third stage of consciousness have important consequences, for they imply that one must not lend support under any circumstances, including denial, to genocide. Further, one must attempt to prevent genocide where possible and, failing in that, must oppose it to the extent that one can. Where past genocides are denied, one has a responsibility to point out and correct such distortions of fact. Where physical genocide ceases but genocide continues at the cultural level, one must oppose it. Where reparation and restitution for past acts of genocide are rejected, one has an obligation to seek justice to the extent possible.

Faced openly, the Armenian Genocide can also provide knowledge that may assist directly in saving lives in the future. For the Armenian case is the prototype for much of the genocide that followed it, especially that arising from what genocide scholars refer to as the “plural society.” These are societies characterized by sharp divisions between ethnic, racial, or religious groups; different degrees of power; and inequality of rights. In such societies, genocide is often resorted to when struggle breaks out over a demand, real or imaginary, for greater equality, partial autonomy, or complete separation. Analyzed from the perspective of a theory of pluralistic genocide, the Armenian example could be particularly suggestive about why a certain type of genocide (the most common form in recent history) occurs and how it might be prevented. In a little over a century in which state-sponsored mass murder has already claimed the lives of some sixty million human beings, the importance of this kind of inquiry speaks for itself.

Yet the scale and frequency of genocide since 1915 can make us feel that the task of prevention is futile. Despair stands in the way of action; knowledge leads to a sense of hopelessness. We cannot bring back to life the dead of the past century or those who have been victims of political mass murder throughout the ages, but, through courage as well as knowledge, we can act to bring about a world free from the scourge of mass killing. In committing ourselves to creating a world of peace, freedom, and mutual respect, we honor the memory of those who have fallen victim to the ultimate crime.

Note

1. Representative Henry Waxman, speaking for House Joint Resolution 132 for a National Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923, on 7 August 1987, to the US House of Representatives, 100th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 133 (7 August 1987): H7333.

The ‘‘Odious Scourge’’: Evolving Interpretations of the Crime of Genocide

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The crime of genocide was defined in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in reaction to the concept of crimes against humanity developed at Nuremberg, which insisted upon a connection with aggressive war in prosecutions for atrocity crimes. The convention stated genocide could be committed in time of peace, but it also narrowed the scope of the crime itself to the intentional destruction of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. Cultural genocide was intentionally excluded. Although the text of the definition remains unchanged, judicial interpretation has broadened it significantly. Recent decisions have held that there is no requirement of a state plan or policy. They have also set out a subjective approach to identification of the protected group. Although cultural genocide in an extensive sense is still not recognized within the definition, there is a definite tendency to extend the concept to what is colloquially called ‘‘ethnic cleansing.’’ These broadening definitions influence determinations about genocides, even those committed many years ago.

When hundreds of thousands of Armenians living within the Ottoman Empire perished in 1915,¹ the governments of France, Great Britain, and Russia responded with an unprecedented declaration. Dated 24 May 1915, it asserts that ‘‘in the presence of these new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization, the allied Governments publicly inform the Sublime Porte that they will hold personally responsible for the said crimes all members of the Ottoman Government as well as those of its agents who are found to be involved in such massacres.’’² It has been suggested that this constitutes the first use, at least within an international law context, of the term ‘‘crimes against humanity.’’³

According to the Treaty of Sèvres, signed on 10 August 1920, Turkey recognized the right of trial ‘‘notwithstanding any proceedings or prosecution before a tribunal in Turkey’’ and was obliged to surrender ‘‘all persons accused of having committed an act in violation of the laws and customs of war, who are specified either by name or by rank, office or employment which they held under Turkish authorities.’’⁴ This formulation is similar to the war crimes clauses in the Treaty of Versailles.⁵ But the Treaty of Sèvres contains a major innovation, contemplating prosecution for the massacres committed within Turkey by the Turkish regime, as well as of war crimes committed against Allied soldiers or civilians within occupied territories. Pursuant to article 230,

The Turkish Government undertakes to hand over to the Allied Powers the persons whose surrender may be required by the latter as being responsible for the massacres committed during the continuance of the state of war on territory which formed part of the Turkish Empire on the 1st August, 1914. The Allied Powers reserve to themselves

the right to designate the Tribunal which shall try the persons so accused, and the Turkish Government undertakes to recognise such Tribunal. In the event of the League of Nations having created in sufficient time a Tribunal competent to deal with the said massacres, the Allied Powers reserve to themselves the right to bring the accused persons mentioned above before the Tribunal, and the Turkish Government undertakes equally to recognise such Tribunal.⁶

Though signed by all the parties, including Turkey, the Treaty of Sèvres was never ratified and never, therefore, came into force. As Kay Holloway writes, the failure of the signatories to bring the treaty into effect “resulted in the abandonment of thousands of defenceless peoples—Armenians and Greeks—to the fury of their persecutors, by engendering subsequent holocausts in which the few survivors of the 1915 Armenian massacres perished.”⁷ The Treaty of Sèvres was replaced on 24 July 1923 by the Treaty of Lausanne,⁸ an instrument that contains a “Declaration of Amnesty” for all offences committed between 1 August 1914 and 20 November 1922.

When the Armenian massacres took place, the term “genocide” did not yet exist. It was not devised until three decades later, in 1944, by a Polish-Jewish law professor, Raphael Lemkin, by then living in exile in the United States, in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*.⁹ Rarely has a neologism had such rapid success.¹⁰ Within little more than a year of its introduction into the English language,¹¹ the word “genocide” was being used in the indictment of the International Military Tribunal, and within two, it was the subject of a UN General Assembly resolution.¹² But the resolution spoke in the past tense, describing genocide as crimes that “have occurred.” By the time the General Assembly had completed its initial standard setting in this area, with the 1948 adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG), “genocide” had a detailed and quite technical definition as a crime against the law of nations. The preamble of that instrument recognizes “that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity.” Genocide is described as “the odious scourge.”¹³

“Crimes against Humanity” or “Genocide”

When the term “crimes against humanity” was initially used by the Allies in 1915 to describe the Armenian massacres, it had no recognized definition. In 1945, the London Conference, composed of the four victorious powers (the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union), codified the term as a basis for the prosecution of Nazi criminals. They defined it as follows:

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY: namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war, or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the court where perpetrated.¹⁴

The term was meant to cover atrocities committed within Germany against Germans, as distinction from war crimes, which were committed against non-German combatants or against civilians in occupied territories. The concept of “war crimes” had long been recognized as customary international law and was codified in the regulations annexed to the fourth Hague Convention of 1907.¹⁵ It was more than adequate to deal with the atrocities committed by the Nazis in occupied territories. But the idea that a government and its own officials could be held responsible for atrocities committed within their own borders against their own nationals was a bold leap forward in international law. This helps us to understand the guarded remarks of US

Secretary of State Robert Lansing, who, in 1915, admitted what he called the “more or less justifiable” right of the Turkish government to deport the Armenians to the extent that they lived “within the zone of military operations.” But, he said,

it was not to my mind the deportation which was objectionable but the horrible brutality which attended its execution. It is one of the blackest pages in the history of this war, and I think we were fully justified in intervening as we did on behalf of the wretched people, even though they were Turkish subjects.¹⁶

In 1945, although the victorious great powers accepted that the post-war prosecutions should include crimes committed within Germany against German civilians, they were nervous about the extent of the concept of “crimes against humanity,” because, in recognizing that application of international law to atrocities committed against a state’s own civilian population, they left themselves vulnerable to eventual prosecution as well. At the time, lynching of African-Americans was relatively widespread within the United States, and several American jurisdictions imposed a form of apartheid whose features are well known. The British and the French, with their colonial territories in Africa and Asia, and the Soviets, who had just deported millions from Chechnya and Ingushetia, were similarly exposed. For this reason, the four parties at the London Conference imposed what has come to be known as the “nexus,” namely, a requirement that crimes against humanity be committed “in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal.” Consequently, crimes against humanity, as defined at Nuremberg, could be committed only within the context of war crimes or crimes against peace. They could not, pursuant to the definition, be committed in peacetime.¹⁷

Robert Jackson, the head of the US delegation at the London Conference, speaking of the proposed crime of “atrocities, persecutions, and deportations on political, racial or religious grounds” (this was how the concept of “crimes against humanity” was first identified in the debates), revealed the lingering concerns of his government:

Ordinarily we do not consider that the acts of a government toward its own citizens warrant our interference. We have some regrettable circumstances at times in our own country in which minorities are unfairly treated. We think it is justifiable that we interfere or attempt to bring retribution to individuals or to states only because the concentration camps and the deportations were in pursuance of a common plan or enterprise of making an unjust or illegal war in which we became involved. We see no other basis on which we are justified in reaching the atrocities which were committed inside Germany, under German law, or even in violation of German law, by authorities of the German state.¹⁸

The International Military Tribunal, sitting at Nuremberg in 1945 and 1946, confirmed the limited scope of crimes against humanity in its final judgment. Although there was frequent reference to the preparations for the war and to the Nazi atrocities committed in the early years of the Third Reich, no conviction was registered for any act committed prior to 1 September 1939.¹⁹ Despite what has sometimes been suggested as an ambiguity in the Nuremberg Charter, the judges of the International Military Tribunal were faithful to the intent of the drafters. They entrenched the nexus between crimes against humanity and aggressive war.

Defining Genocide

Dissatisfaction and frustration with this limited concept of “crimes against humanity” emerged in the final months of 1946, within days of the judgment at Nuremberg. The initiatives came from states in what would later be called the Third World,

specifically India, Cuba, Panama, and Saudi Arabia. Unlike the great powers, who feared that a broad scope for the term “crimes against humanity” might ultimately rebound to challenge repressive acts committed by them within their far-flung empires, the vulnerable emerging states of the underdeveloped world contemplated an instrument that would protect them. For the latter, it was a priority to recognize international criminalization of atrocities in peacetime, that is, applicable during the banal everyday reality of colonial and postcolonial societies. They sought and obtained this recognition, but only for a more narrowly described form of crime against humanity: genocide. Article II of the 1948 UNCG defines genocide as follows:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

This was not the first attempt to define the term. In 1944, Lemkin had proposed the following definition:

a co-ordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objective of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.²⁰

In a sense, Lemkin’s definition is narrow, in that it addresses crimes directed against “national groups” rather than against “groups” in general. At the same time, it is broad, to the extent that it contemplates not only physical genocide but also acts aimed at destroying the culture and livelihood of the group.

When Cuba, India, and Panama proposed that the question of genocide be put on the agenda of the first session of the UN General Assembly, in late 1946,²¹ they did not have a full-blown definition to suggest. Their draft resolution states that “genocide is a denial of the right to existence of entire human groups in the same way as homicide is the denial of the right to live for individual human beings.”²² The result of this initiative, Resolution 96(I), adopted on 11 December 1946, went somewhat further in defining the crime:

Genocide is a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings; such denial of the right of existence shocks the conscience of mankind, results in great losses to humanity in the form of cultural and other contributions represented by these human groups, and is contrary to moral law and to the spirit and aims of the United Nations. Many instances of such crimes of genocide have occurred when racial, religious, political and other groups have been destroyed, entirely or in part. . . .²³

These efforts at definition were taken into account during the subsequent work of drafting the UNCG, but none was adopted. Lemkin's emphasis on what would be called "cultural genocide," that is, the destruction of the group's institutions rather than of its physical existence, was bluntly dismissed,²⁴ although a shadow of the idea reappeared in the final version, which lists the forcible transfer of children from one group to the other as a punishable act.²⁵ As for the 1946 resolution of the General Assembly, its inclusion of political groups was not reaffirmed. The result, in Article II of the 1948 convention, is a definition that is exceedingly narrow. Arguably, it covers only physical (and biological) destruction, with the minor exception of transferring children. Moreover, the enumeration of targeted groups is limited to four cognate concepts: race, religion, ethnicity, and nationality. For example, political and "other" groups are excluded, a tragic "blind spot" according to some critics.²⁶ Other commentators have proposed new definitions in order to enlarge the scope of the term, especially the list of protected groups; among them are Stefan Glaser,²⁷ Israel W. Charny,²⁸ Vahakn Dadrian,²⁹ Helen Fein,³⁰ and Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn.³¹ The most extreme position applies the term "genocide" to any and all groups. According to Pieter Drost, one of the early advocates of this view, "a convention on genocide cannot effectively contribute to the protection of certain described minorities when it is limited to particular defined groups... It serves no purpose to restrict international legal protection to some groups; firstly, because the protected members always belong at the same time to other unprotected groups."³²

This is not, however, the course that international law has followed. The 1948 definition has stood the test of time. Recently, it was included without significant change in such instruments as the statutes of the ad hoc criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda,³³ the International Law Commission's Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind,³⁴ and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.³⁵ Implementing legislation of the Rome Statute adopted in many countries has confirmed the dominance of the 1948 definition in national criminal law as well. To a large extent, the push to amend the definition became less important with the parallel evolution in the definition of crimes against humanity, principally in its extension to atrocities committed during peacetime. But if the definition of genocide has remained unchanged, in recent years its interpretation has undergone a process of considerable dynamism and radical evolution.

The Evolving Definition of Genocide

The decisions of the Israeli courts in *Eichmann* were the only significant judicial interpretations of the definition in the 1948 UNCG for nearly five decades.³⁶ On 4 September 1998, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) issued its first major judgment, convicting the *bourgmestre* of Taba commune of genocide for his role in the 1994 slaughter of Tutsi civilians, including the systematic rape of women and girls.³⁷ Many similar judgments were to follow, as one by one the architects of the 1994 genocide were brought to book. The case law of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) developed more slowly, to a large extent because of a cautious policy on the part of the prosecutor in the indictment of suspects for genocide, in addition to the ubiquitous counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes. The hesitation was not misguided, because, of the handful of ICTY prosecutions that proceeded in which genocide has been alleged, the majority has resulted in acquittals on that count.³⁸ But even the acquittals have provided important judicial guidance as to the parameters of the concept. In August 2001, an ICTY Trial

Chamber registered a first conviction for genocide, condemning a Bosnian Serb general who had participated, albeit in a secondary role, in the massacre of 7,000 Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica in July 1995.³⁹ The conviction was subsequently upheld on appeal.⁴⁰ In January 2005, an ICTY Trial Chamber issued the second conviction for genocide in what is arguably the most expansive interpretation yet.⁴¹ This now relatively rich reservoir of judicial interpretation of the definition of genocide indicates a tendency to enlarge the scope of the crime so as to cover cases of “ethnic cleansing,” which some jurists might think is better described under the rubric of “crimes against humanity.” This trend toward a large and liberal interpretation may ultimately dilute the terrible stigma that is attached to the crime of genocide. At the same time, it can only complicate the attempts of those who attempt to challenge the use of the term “genocide” to characterize the 1915 massacres of the Armenian minority within Turkey.

State Plan or Policy

It may seem self-evident that genocide cannot be committed without the existence of a state plan or policy to physically exterminate the targeted group. Certainly, in the cases of all three of the major genocides of the twentieth century—those of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the Jews in occupied Europe, and the Rwandan Tutsi—there is ample evidence of and little argument about the role played by the state. Nevertheless, if this factor is implicit in the definition in the 1948 convention, nothing in the text actually requires it. The ICTY has ruled that proof of a plan or policy is not a legal ingredient of the crime of genocide. The Appeals Chamber has noted, nevertheless, that “in the context of proving specific intent, the existence of a plan or policy may become an important factor in most cases. The evidence may be consistent with the existence of a plan or policy, or may even show such existence, and the existence of a plan or policy may facilitate proof of the crime.”⁴² Thus, at least theoretically, an individual acting alone, without any state involvement, may still perpetrate the crime of genocide, provided that he or she intends to destroy a protected group in whole or in part.

Groups Protected

In *Akayesu*, the ICTR provided an imaginative and somewhat radical construction of the groups protected by the 1948 definition, which uses the adjectives “national, ethnical, racial or religious.” Concerned that none of the four terms of the definition might apply to Rwanda’s Tutsi minority, the principal victim of the 1994 atrocities, the tribunal concluded that the UNCG could still extend to certain other groups, although their precise definition was elusive. Pledging fidelity to the convention’s drafters, the *Akayesu* judgment declares,

On reading through the *travaux préparatoires* of the Genocide Convention (Summary Records of the meetings of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, 21 September–10 December 1948, Official Records of the General Assembly), it appears that the crime of genocide was allegedly perceived as targeting only “stable” groups, constituted in a permanent fashion and membership of which is determined by birth, with the exclusion of the more “mobile” groups which one joins through individual voluntary commitment, such as political and economic groups. Therefore, a common criterion in the four types of groups protected by the Genocide Convention is that membership in such groups would seem to be normally not challengeable by its

members, who belong to it automatically, by birth, in a continuous and often irremediable manner.

The Trial Chamber continues,

Moreover, the Chamber considered whether the groups protected by the Genocide Convention, echoed in Article 2 of the Statute, should be limited to only the four groups expressly mentioned and whether they should not also include any group which is stable and permanent like the said four groups. In other words, the question that arises is whether it would be impossible to punish the physical destruction of a group as such under the Genocide Convention, if the said group, although stable and membership is by birth, does not meet the definition of any one of the four groups expressly protected by the Genocide Convention. In the opinion of the Chamber, it is particularly important to respect the intention of the drafters of the Genocide Convention, which according to the *travaux préparatoires*, was patently to ensure the protection of any stable and permanent group.⁴³

The same ICTR chamber, in a subsequent decision, seems to hedge its remarks somewhat: “It appears from a reading of the *travaux préparatoires* of the Genocide Convention that certain groups, such as political and economic groups have been excluded from the protected groups, because they are considered to be “mobile groups” which one joins through individual, political commitment. That would seem to suggest *a contrario* that the Convention was presumably intended to cover relatively stable and permanent groups.”⁴⁴

This interpretation appeared to many at the time to be creative and progressive, but it has not been confirmed by the Appeals Chambers of the tribunals, and it looks increasingly idiosyncratic as time goes by. Nevertheless, other authorities confirm that the list of groups in the UNGC definition should receive a large and liberal interpretation. In January 2005, a non-judicial commission of inquiry established by the United Nations to investigate allegations of genocide in Darfur, in western Sudan, wrote that “the principle of interpretation of international rules whereby one should give such rules their maximum effect (principle of effectiveness, also expressed by the Latin maxim *ut res magis valeat quam pereat*) suggests that the rules on genocide should be construed in such a manner as to give them their maximum legal effects.”⁴⁵

“In whole or in part”

The 1948 definition of genocide speaks of the destruction of a group “in whole or in part.” It was a noble attempt by the drafters to reach consensus, but in reality the General Assembly used ambiguous terms and left their clarification to judges in subsequent prosecutions. The 1995 Srebrenica massacre confronted the ICTY with the need to expound upon the meaning of “in whole or in part.” According to the ICTY Appeals Chamber, a perpetrator of genocide must intend to destroy a *substantial* part of the group. The chamber explains,

The determination of when the targeted part is substantial enough to meet this requirement may involve a number of considerations. The numeric size of the targeted part of the group is the necessary and important starting point, though not in all cases the ending point of the inquiry. The number of individuals targeted should be evaluated not only in absolute terms, but also in relation to the overall size of the entire group. In addition to the numeric size of the targeted portion, its prominence within the group can be a useful consideration. If a specific part of the group is emblematic of the overall

group, or is essential to its survival, that may support a finding that the part qualifies as substantial.⁴⁶

The Appeals Chamber notes that the Bosnian Muslim population in Srebrenica, or the Bosnian Muslims of Eastern Bosnia, a group estimated to comprise about 40,000 people, met this definition. Though numerically not very significant compared to the Bosnian Muslim population as a whole, it occupied a strategic location and was thus key to the survival of the Bosnian Muslim nation as a whole.⁴⁷

Ethnic Cleansing

The expression “ethnic cleansing” may have been used for the first time immediately after World War II by Poles and Czechs intending to “purify” their countries of Germans and Ukrainians. But if this is the case, the language is the direct descendant of expressions used by the Nazis in their racial “hygiene” programs. The term for the latter was *sauberung* (“cleaning”), and their goal was to make Germany territory *judenrein*, that is, clean of Jews.⁴⁸ “Ethnic cleansing” resurfaced in 1981 in Yugoslav media accounts of the establishment of “ethnically clean territories” in Kosovo.⁴⁹ The term entered the international vocabulary in 1992 when it was used to describe policies pursued by the various parties to the Yugoslav conflict in order to create ethnically homogeneous territories.⁵⁰ There have been several attempts at definition. According to the Security Council’s Commission of Experts on violations of humanitarian law during the Yugoslav war, “the expression ‘ethnic cleansing’ is relatively new. Considered in the context of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, ‘ethnic cleansing’ means rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the area.”⁵¹ The commission considered techniques of ethnic cleansing to include murder, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, extrajudicial executions, sexual assault, confinement of civilian populations in ghetto areas, forcible removal, displacement and deportation of civilian populations, deliberate military attacks or threats of attacks on civilians and civilian areas, and wanton destruction of property.⁵²

In *Krstić*, the ICTY Trial Chamber said “there are obvious similarities between a genocidal policy and the policy commonly known as ‘ethnic cleansing.’”⁵³ The Trial Chamber seemed to understand that it was necessary to expand the scope of the term “destroy” in the introductory sentence, or *chapeau*, of the definition of genocide in order to cover “acts that involved cultural and other non-physical forms of group destruction.”⁵⁴ But the judgment also states,

Customary international law limits the definition of genocide to those acts seeking the physical or biological destruction of all or part of the group. An enterprise attacking only the cultural or sociological characteristics of a human group in order to annihilate these elements which give to that group its own identity distinct from the rest of the community would not fall under the definition of genocide.⁵⁵

The Appeals Chamber appeared to endorse this approach.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, in a very recent decision, another trial chamber has ruled that genocide occurs when there is deportation or some other forced displacement of populations, even in the absence of evidence of a plan for physical extermination. Although the Srebrenica massacre involved the summary execution of approximately 7,000 men and boys, the women, children, and elderly were moved from the area in buses, raising questions about whether the Bosnian Serb forces really intended the physical extermination of the entire group or whether they only sought to eliminate persons likely to be enemy combatants. A massacre of prisoners would not,

in and of itself, amount to genocide. In *Blagojević*, the ICTY Trial Chamber concluded that the forced displacement of women, children, and elderly people amounted to genocide:

The Trial Chamber is convinced that the forced displacement of women, children, and elderly people was itself a traumatic experience, which, in the circumstances of this case, reaches the requisite level of causing serious mental harm under Article 4(2)(b) of the Statute. The forced displacement began with the Bosnian Muslim population fleeing from the enclave after a five-day military offensive, while being shot at as they moved from Srebrenica town to Potočari in search of refuge from the fighting. Leaving their homes and possessions, the Bosnian Muslims did so after determining that it was simply impossible to remain safe in Srebrenica town . . . Having left Srebrenica to escape from the Bosnian Serbs, the Bosnian Muslim population saw that they must move farther than Potočari to be safe. As they boarded the buses, without being asked even for their name, the Bosnian Muslims saw the smoke from their homes being burned and knew that this was not a temporary displacement for their immediate safety. Rather, this displacement was a critical step in achieving the ultimate objective of the attack on the Srebrenica enclave to eliminate the Bosnian Muslim population from the enclave.⁵⁷

The Trial Chamber concludes the discussion of this point by stating that “the perpetrators intended that the forcible transfer, and the way it was carried out, would cause serious mental harm to the victims” and that this fulfills the requirements of Article II of the 1948 definition, set out without significant change in Article 4(2) of the ICTY Statute.⁵⁸

Complicity in Genocide

The ad hoc tribunals have addressed cases in which senior officials played a secondary role in genocidal acts but there were doubts that these people actually intended to destroy the group. In prosecuting these officials as accomplices rather than principal perpetrators, the ICTY and ICTR Appeals Chambers have held that a conviction may be entered for “aiding and abetting” genocide,⁵⁹ or for “complicity” in genocide,⁶⁰ even in the absence of sufficient evidence that the accused person possessed criminal intent to commit genocide. These decisions are not exactly elegant in their legal reasoning, and they strongly hint at compromises among a divided bench. Nevertheless, they now stand as the state of the law, and they provide a further demonstration of the general trend toward enlargement of the definition of genocide that appears in the 1948 UNCG.

The ICTY Appeals Chamber has also found that it is possible to commit genocide as part of a “joint criminal enterprise.” The expression “joint criminal enterprise” is used to describe the liability of an individual who participates in a criminal activity with others. As a member of this “joint criminal enterprise,” the accused may be convicted of acts that he or she did not actually intend, to the extent that these were reasonably foreseeable consequences of the criminal activity. To some judges, it appeared that a conviction for genocide, which requires proof that the offender committed acts “with intent to destroy” the group, in whole or in part, was theoretically incompatible with the entire concept of the joint criminal enterprise.⁶¹ However, the prosecutor successfully challenged one of these rulings, and the ICTY Appeals Chamber has established that convictions for genocide are possible under the “joint criminal enterprise” mode of liability.⁶²

Conclusions

The definition of genocide adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1948 represents a dilution of a relatively broad concept proposed by Raphael Lemkin four years earlier. The narrowness of the definition must be appreciated in the context of the time. States were being asked to accept an unprecedented encroachment on their sovereignty, namely, the existence of international obligations with respect to their treatment of civilians of their own nationality within their own borders. The only comparable commitments with respect to human-rights abuses committed in peacetime are the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid⁶³ and the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.⁶⁴ Both apartheid and torture may constitute crimes against humanity, but a more general undertaking with respect to crimes against humanity in their broad sense had to wait until 1998, with the adoption of the Rome Statute.

Had the Nuremberg trial taken a larger view of crimes against humanity by acknowledging that they could be committed in peacetime as well as in wartime, there might never have been a UNCG. Work on that convention was largely an initiative to correct the lacuna in the Nuremberg definition of crimes against humanity. But the tension that existed between genocide and crimes against humanity in the post-war years no longer exists, given recognition under contemporary international law that crimes against humanity, like genocide, may be committed in time of peace.

Debates about historic cases of genocide need to be reassessed in light of evolving case law. In a series of recent decisions, the international criminal tribunals have broadened the reach of the 1948 definition; it has been held to apply to a somewhat more expansive category of groups than is listed in the text of the definition. No proof of state involvement, or of a policy or plan, is necessary to establish that genocide has been committed; it may even be perpetrated by an individual acting alone. As for those who participate in the crime of genocide, prosecutors need not establish that they actually had a genocidal intent, as long as they were in some way accomplices to the crime. Finally, and perhaps most importantly of all, the concept of genocide has been extended to acts that compromise the survival of a group, such as forced displacements, even when there are doubts about the intent to physically exterminate the group.

None of this can be particularly comforting to those who have tried to deny that the massacres of Armenians within Turkey in 1915 constituted one of the great genocides of the twentieth century.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); R. Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origin of the Armenian Genocide and of the Holocaust* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

2. English translation quoted in United Nations War Crimes Commission, *History of the United Nations War Crimes Commission and the Development of the Laws of War* (London: HMSO, 1948), 35.
3. This initial use of the term “crimes against humanity” was noted in some of the first judgments of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (*Prosecutor v. Tadić*, Opinion and Judgment, IT-94-1-T (7 May 1997), para. 618, n. 87) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (*Prosecutor v. Akayesu*, Judgment, ICTR-96-4-T [2 September 1998], para. 29). The concept of crimes against humanity, however, had been in existence long before 1915. During debates in the National Assembly, French revolutionary Robespierre described King Louis XVI as a “[c]riminal against humanity”: Maximilien Robespierre, *Œuvres, IX* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1952), 130. In 1890, an American observer, George Washington Williams, wrote to the US Secretary of State that King Leopold’s regime in Congo was responsible for “crimes against humanity”: Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 112.
4. “Traité de Sèvres,” 1920, art. 226, *Recueil général des traités*, 1924, *UK Treaty Series* 11; DeMartens, 99, 3e série, 12, p. 720 [French version].
5. “Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany” [“Treaty of Versailles”], 1919, *Treaty Ser.* no. 4, arts. 228–30. There were similar penal provisions in the other peace treaties adopted in Paris at the same time: “Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye,” 1919, *Treaty Ser.* no. 11, art. 173; “Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine,” 1920, *Treaty Ser.* no. 5, art. 118; “Treaty of Trianon,” 1919, 6 *L.N.T.S.* 187, art. 15.
6. “Traité de Sèvres,” art. 226.
7. Kay Holloway, *Modern Trends in Treaty Law* (London: Stevens & Sons, 1967), 60–61.
8. “Treaty of Lausanne between Principal Allied and Associated Powers and Turkey,” 1923, *Treaty Ser.* no. 28: 11.
9. Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for World Peace, 1944).
10. Lemkin later wrote that “an important factor in the comparatively quick reception of the concept of genocide in international law was the understanding and support of this idea by the press of the United States and other countries.” Raphael Lemkin, “Genocide as a Crime in International Law,” *American Journal of International Law* 41 (1947): 145–51, 149, n. 9.
11. And the French language as well: Raphael Lemkin, “Le crime de génocide,” *Revue de Droit International, de Sciences Diplomatiques et Politiques* 24 (1946): 213–22.
12. *The Crime of Genocide*, UN General Assembly Resolution 96(I), UN Doc. A/64/Add. 1 (11 December 1946).
13. *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, 9 December 1948, *UN Treaty Ser.* no. 78: 277. On the convention generally, see William A. Schabas, *Genocide in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); William A. Schabas, *Genozid im Völkerrecht* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2003).
14. *Agreement for the Prosecution and Punishment of Major War Criminals of the European Axis, and Establishing the Charter of the International Military Tribunal (I.M.T.)*, 1951, *U.N. Treaty Ser.* 82: 279, art. VI(c).
15. *International Convention Concerning the Laws and Customs of War by Land*, 1910, *British Treaty Ser.* no. 9.
16. Quoted in Vahakn N. Dadrian, “Genocide as a Problem of National and International Law: The World War I Armenian Case and Its Contemporary Legal Ramifications,” *Yale Journal of International Law* 14 (1989): 221–334.
17. Recent advances in human rights and humanitarian law have now eliminated the nexus between crimes against humanity and international armed conflict: *Prosecutor v. Tadić*, IT-94-1-AR72, Decision on the Defense Motion for Interlocutory Appeal on Jurisdiction (2 October 1995), paras. 78, 140, 141; *Prosecutor v. Kordić & Čerkez*,

- IT-95-14/2-T (26 February 2001), para. 33; *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*, UN Doc. A/CONF.183/9, (1998) 37 I.L.M. 999, art. 7.
18. International Conference on Military Tribunals (London, 1945), minutes of conference session of 23 July 1945, 333.
 19. *France et al. v. Goering et al.*, 22 IMT 203 (1946).
 20. Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 79.
 21. UN Doc. A/BUR.50. For a summary of the history of the resolution, see UN Doc. E/621.
 22. *Ibid.* The General Assembly decided to include the point in its agenda (UN Doc. A/181), and the matter was referred to the Sixth Committee (UN Doc. A/C.6/64).
 23. UN GA, *The Crime of Genocide*.
 24. UN Doc. A/C.6/232/Rev.1. See also UN Doc. A/C.6/233; UN Doc. A/C.6/223.
 25. See UN Doc. A/C.6/SR.82.
 26. Beth Van Schaack, "The Crime of Political Genocide: Repairing the Genocide Convention's Blind Spot," *Yale Law Journal* 106 (1997): 2259–91. See also Lawrence J. LeBlanc, "The United Nations Genocide Convention and Political Groups: Should the United States Propose an Amendment?" *Yale Journal of International Law* 13 (1988): 268–95; Stefan Glaser, *Droit international pénal conventionnel* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1970), 112; Stanislaw Plawski, *Étude des principes fondamentaux du droit international pénal* (Paris: Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence, 1972), 114; "Study of the Question of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: Study prepared by Mr. Nicodème Ruhashyankiko, Special Rapporteur," UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/416, para. 87.
 27. Glaser, *Droit international*, para. 83.
 28. Israel W. Charny, "Toward a Generic Definition of Genocide," in *Genocide Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, ed. George J. Andreopoulos, 64–94 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 75: "Genocide in the generic sense is the mass killing of substantial numbers of human beings, when not in the course of military action against the military forces of an avowed enemy, under conditions of the essential defenselessness and helplessness of the victims."
 29. Vahakn Dadrian, "A Typology of Genocide," *International Review of Modern Sociology* 5 (1975): 201–12, 201: "Genocide is the successful attempt by a dominant group, vested with formal authority and/or with preponderant access to the overall resources of power, to reduce by coercion or lethal violence the number of a minority group whose ultimate extermination is held desirable and useful and whose respective vulnerability is a major factor contributing to the decision for genocide."
 30. Helen Fein, "Genocide, Terror, Life Integrity, and War Crimes," in *Genocide, Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, ed. George J. Andreopoulos, 95–107 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 97: "Genocide is sustained purposeful action by a perpetrator to physically destroy a collectivity directly or through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members."
 31. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, "The Conceptual Framework," in *The History and Sociology of Genocide*, ed. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, 3–43 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 23: "Genocide is a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and members in it are defined by the perpetrator." See also Frank Chalk, "Redefining Genocide," *Genocide, Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, ed. George J. Andreopoulos, 47–63 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 52; Frank Chalk, "Definitions of Genocide and Their Implications for Prediction and Prevention," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4 (1989): 149–60. Chalk and Jonassohn's proposed definition is endorsed by Irving Louis Horowitz, in *Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power*, 4th ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 12–13.
 32. Pieter Nicolaas Drost, *The Crime of State*, vol. 2, *Genocide* (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1959), 122–23.

33. *Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia*, UN Doc. S/RES/827, annex, art. 4; *Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda*, UN Doc. S/RES/955, annex, art. 2.
34. *Report of the International Law Commission on the Work of Its Forty-Eighth Session, 6 May–26 July 1996*, UN Doc. A/51/10, 86–87.
35. *Rome Statute*; see William A. Schabas, “Article 6,” in *Commentary on the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Observers’ Notes, Article by Article*, ed. Otto Triffterer, 107–16 (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1999).
36. *Israel (A.G.) v. Eichmann* (1968), 36 ILR 18 (District Court, Jerusalem); *Israel (A.G.) v. Eichmann* (1968), 36 ILR 277 (Israel Supreme Court).
37. *Akayesu*.
38. *Prosecutor v. Jelisić*, Judgment, IT-95-10-T (14 December 1999); *Prosecutor v. Sikirica et al.*, Judgment on Defense Motions to Acquit, IT-95-8-I (3 September 2001); *Prosecutor v. Stakić*, Judgment, IT-97-24-T (31 July 2003); *Prosecutor v. Brđanin*, Judgment, IT-99-36-T (1 September 2004).
39. *Prosecutor v. Krstić*, Judgment, IT-98-33-T (2 August 2001) [Krstić Trial Judgment].
40. *Prosecutor v. Krstić*, Judgment, IT-98-33-A (19 April 2004) [Krstić Appeals Judgment].
41. *Prosecutor v. Blagojević et al.*, Judgment, IT-02-60-T (17 January 2005).
42. *Prosecutor v. Jelisić*, Judgment, IT-95-10-A (5 July 2001), para. 48.
43. *Akayesu*, para. 515.
44. *Prosecutor v. Rutaganda*, Judgment, ICTR-96-3-T (6 December 1999) [reference omitted]. See also *Prosecutor v. Musema*, Judgment, ICTR-96-13-T (27 January 2000), para. 162.
45. *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary-General* (25 January 2005), http://www.un.org/News/dh/sudan/com_inq_darfur.pdf (accessed 14 July 2006), para. 494.
46. Krstić Appeals Judgment, para. 12.
47. *Ibid.*, paras. 15–16.
48. Mark Kramer, “Introduction,” in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East Central Europe*, ed. Mark Kramer, 1–41 (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 1.
49. Drazen Petrovic, “Ethnic Cleansing: An Attempt at Methodology,” *European Journal of International Law* 5 (1994): 343–59.
50. See Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of Ethnic Cleansing* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995); Nathan Lerner, “Ethnic Cleansing,” *Israel Yearbook of Human Rights* 24 (1994): 103–17; John Webb, “Genocide Treaty—Ethnic Cleansing—Substantive and Procedural Hurdles in the Application of the Genocide Convention to Alleged Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia,” *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law* 23 (1993): 377–408; Damir Mirkovic, “Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide: Reflections on Ethnic Cleansing in the Former Yugoslavia,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 548 (1996): 191–99; Andrew Bell-Fialkoff, “A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing,” *Foreign Affairs* 72 (1993): 110–21.
51. *Interim Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992)*, UN Doc. S/25274 (1993), para. 55.
52. *Ibid.*, para. 56.
53. Krstić Trial Judgment, para. 562.
54. *Ibid.*, para. 577.
55. *Ibid.*, para. 580.
56. Krstić Appeals Judgment, para. 25.
57. *Blagojević*, para. 650.
58. *Ibid.*, para. 654.
59. Krstić Appeals Judgment, paras. 135–44.
60. *Prosecutor v. Ntakirutimana et al.*, Judgment, ICTR-96-10-A, ICTR-96-17-A (13 December 2004), para. 500.

61. *Prosecutor v. Stakić*, Decision on Rule 98 *bis* Motion for Judgment of Acquittal, IT-97-24-T (31 October 2002), para. 93; *Prosecutor v. Brđanin*, Decision on Motion for Acquittal Pursuant to Rule 98 *bis*, IT-99-36-T (8 November 2003), paras. 30, 55–57.
62. *Prosecutor v. Brđanin*, Decision on Interlocutory Appeal, IT-99-36-A (19 March 2004).
63. *International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid*, 30 November 1973, 1015 U.N.T.S., 243, 244.
64. *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, 10 December 1984, 1465 U.N.T.S., 85.

The Agency of ‘‘Triggering Mechanisms’’ as a Factor in the Organization of the Genocide Against the Armenians of Kayseri District

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Using the notion of a ‘‘triggering mechanism’’ as a guidepost, this article details the sequence of events precipitated by the accidental explosion of a bomb a young Armenian was tinkering with in anticipation of a new round of massacres he hoped to obviate. The ensuing massive and indiscriminate arrests throughout the length and breadth of the district, the attendant use of a variety of methods of torture, and the eventual eradication of the bulk of the district’s Armenian population through courts-martial, followed by serial executions through hanging, deportation, and massacre, are depicted and analyzed to demonstrate the exterminatory thrust of the ensemble of the counter-active governmental measures. The study concludes that the accidental explosion of the bomb was a welcome opportunity for the perpetrators, directed by the local leaders of the monolithic political party, the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), to proceed with their pre-existing germinal plan of regional genocide.

Introduction

Generally, in conflictual intergroup relations, powerful perpetrators facing relatively weak victims tend to rely on a number of standard techniques to either rationalize or justify their criminal acts. One such technique is provocation.¹ The victims’ patience and endurance is insidiously taxed to the limit, forcing them, if possible, to resist the provocation effectively. Another technique relates to the sudden commission of a violent act by a member of the victim group, which signals ominous intent to the perpetrator group and is seized by it as a pretext for repression. Absent an existing and simmering conflict between these two antithetical groups, the incident, as a rule, might lend itself to localization and be handled accordingly. But that very simmering conflict and the advantage of the huge power differential accruing to the potential perpetrator group favor the latter’s resort to opportunism. Deliberate acts of provocation by powerful antagonists always involve calculations, seeking favorable vantage grounds for projected future actions; hence, they are driven by goal-directed opportunism. Within the context of perpetrator–victim conflicts, such acts of provocation tend to acquire a circular thrust that is propelled by the perpetrator. By way of aggressive and threatening behavior, the potential perpetrator intentionally produces a level of provocation strong enough to drive the potential victim to respond, in turn, in a way that is conveniently defined by the former as provocation. Conditions of acute crisis in interethnic or international relations afford just such opportunities, whereby the more powerful party to the conflict can proceed to provoke in order to be provoked subsequently. In brief, the welcome eruption of a crisis combines with

the substantial vulnerability of the group with which the precipitator of the crisis is identified to create the triggering mechanism for a magnified response to it.

The initiation of a genocidal campaign in the Kayseri district exemplifies the lethal role such triggering mechanisms can play, especially under conditions of acute international conflict. An outlying district of Ankara province in central Turkey, at the foot of snow-capped Mt. Erciyas and bestriding the course of Kızılırmak River immediately below Sivas, Kayseri first emerged in history as Caesarea when Emperor Tiberius took possession of Cappadocia in 17 CE. In 1419, Sultan Selim I incorporated Kayseri into the Ottoman Empire. In this context it is tempting to refer to the assassination by a Jewish youth of Ernst vom Rath, a third secretary in the German embassy in Paris, on 7 November 1938. This incident unleashed a violent anti-Jewish campaign that eventually culminated in the World War II Jewish Holocaust. Central to that genocidal response was the way the Nazis chose to define the crisis precipitated by the assassination. An editorial in *Völkischer Beobachter*, the organ of Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Göbbels, declared on 9 November 1938, one day after the death of Rath, "The German people are entitled to identify the Jews in Germany with this crime." Three days later at a conclave attended by top Nazi leaders, including Göbbels, Reinhard Heydrich, Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick, and Economics Minister Walther Funk, Herman Göring, who was chairing the meeting, made a dramatic announcement. Göring declared that in the course of lengthy discussions that he had held with Hitler for two days following the anti-Jewish *Kristallnacht* riots of 10 November, Hitler had issued an order "requesting that the Jewish question be now, once and for all, coordinated or solved one way or another."² Even though the Final Solution (*Endlösung*) would require nearly three more years to evolve and to materialize, the incident of the assassination helped precipitate matters not only in terms of administrative policies but also in terms of public agitation and incitement. The Nazi co-optation of the German public is intimately linked with the broader functions of the triggering mechanism at issue here.

Within this general purview, this study proposes to examine the role of a similar incident in the precipitation of cataclysmic events that entailed the violent liquidation of the entire Armenian population of the Kayseri district during World War I. Driven by personal revenge, like the Jewish youth mentioned above, a young Armenian who had witnessed the slaughter of his relatives during the Sultan Abdul Hamit-era massacres was tinkering with a homemade bomb when it suddenly and prematurely exploded, simultaneously killing him and creating havoc in his Armenian neighborhood. The severity of the authorities' response is revealed in the draconian measures they instituted against the entire Armenian population of the district. Everek, the town where the bomb went off, was but a sub-unit of that district. The mass arrest, torture, and execution of hundreds of its Armenian inhabitants, on the one hand, and the murderous deportation of the rest of district's Armenian population, on the other, formed part of these measures. The focus of this study will be on assembling the details of the retaliatory response by the authorities with a view to demonstrating the underlying genocidal thrust and aim.

Kayseri's Governmental Set-Up and the Distribution of Its Armenian Population

Until its final dissolution in 1923, when the new Turkish Republic was inaugurated, the Ottoman Empire for centuries was run on a system of provincial administration

whose level and degree of control by a central authority often depended upon the nature of that authority. The more autocratic or despotic the central authority, the stricter and more pervasive its control proved to be, especially in the area of conflict with the national minorities that constituted a large segment of the multiethnic empire.

Because the bulk of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire was located in its Asiatic provinces, the organization and function of this Ottoman provincial administration bore heavily on the type of treatment the empire’s Armenian population in general, and Kayseri’s in particular, received during the war. It might, therefore, be useful to provide here a sketch of that administrative system. The highest civilian authority was vested in a governor-general (*vali*) who presided over the governmental affairs of a province (*vilayet*). The number of provinces constituting the empire changed often because the empire kept shrinking, fluctuating between twenty-eight and thirty-six. The provinces, in turn, were partitioned into districts (*liva* or *sancak*), which were run by district governors (*mutassarrif*). The districts were further divided into counties (*kaza*) governed by county executives (*kaymakam*), who, more often than not, were religious judges (*kadi*).³ The counties were further subdivided into townships (*nahiye*) comprising groups of small rural villages, each of which encompassed at least twenty families; these were governed by an administrator (*müdir*). The smallest administrative unit was the *karye*, the village, comprising about forty or fifty houses and administered by a headman (*muhtar*).

There functioned as an accessory component of this provincial administrative system, however, an adjunct group of so-called independent districts. The designation “independent” denoted the idea of a status interposed between a province and a district and connoted that of an administrative link with either a province or a county.⁴ On 20 April 1914 (a few months before the outbreak of World War I), Kayseri was granted the status of an independent district⁵ by Interior Minister and Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) ruling party boss Mehmet Talât. Still maintaining some links with the administration of Ankara province, from which it had been detached and declared independent, Kayseri district comprised four sub-units (i.e., counties): its capital, Kayseri, plus the other counties of Bünyan, Develi (also called Everek), and Incesu. Because of their proximity to each other, Develi (or Everek) and Fenese were often lumped together as twin cities; Armenians mostly used the Everek-Fenese twin designation. Combined together, these four counties encompassed some 200 sub-units (i.e., townships and villages) containing a sizeable Armenian population. Altogether, Kayseri district had ninety-eight villages, twenty-four of which were attached to the district’s capital, Kayseri.⁶

According to official Ottoman statistics released in 1914, Kayseri district’s total Armenian population was 52,192 persons, of whom 48,659 belonged to the Gregorian-Apostolic Mother Church; 2,018 were Armenian Protestants; and 1,515 were Armenian Catholics.⁷ Armenian community life was, by and large, organized around a network of thirty-two churches and thirty-one affiliated parishes.⁸

Triple-Layered Authority in Wartime Kayseri

As in every other part of the Ottoman Empire, three distinct kinds of authority held sway in Kayseri during the war. The principal domain, of course, was civilian provincial administration, the make-up of which is outlined above. A network composed of a district governor, four county executives, and several administrators and headmen was in charge of the mundane affairs of the district. Moreover, because

of the ongoing war and the incidence of martial law, the military had gained a foothold in the power structure of the entire district. It not only took care of such matters as recruitment, logistics, and transport but handled two additional matters that would have grave consequences for the Armenians: exorbitant requisitions, of all kinds and at all levels, and the administration of military justice through courts-martial.

The overall authority for all these matters except court-martial devolved upon Colonel Şahabeddin, the military commander of Kayseri district as well as the Deputy Commander of the 15th Infantry Division, with headquarters in Kayseri city. Moreover, Şahabeddin supervised the operations of the sub-units of the region's gendarmerie regiment that served as the principal escort-guards of the many Armenian deportee convoys. Accordingly, he regularly reported on the massacres attending these rounds of deportation to Colonel Halil Recayi, his superior, who was also the Deputy Commander of Ankara's 5th Army Corps, of which Kayseri's 15th Division was a sub-unit. As to the Military Tribunal sitting in Kayseri city and serially court-martialing the hundreds of Armenians of the district in the wake of the explosion, typically it functioned as an ad hoc instrument of military justice.

As to the third component of the structure of authority in Kayseri district, it may be readily argued that it represented the most potent and, therefore, the most formidable matrix of power in the entire configuration. This component was the CUP's omnipotent party organization, whose superordinate functionaries had, as in other parts of the provinces, the final say in determining the collective fate of Kayseri's Armenians. They were part and parcel of a kind of power structure akin to an iceberg: its submerged part packed all the power needed to conspire, organize, and execute mass murder. In this sense they ultimately proved themselves to be the controlling agents of the direction of the cataclysmic events triggered by the explosion of the bomb described above. Indeed, acting in tandem with Atif, Ankara province's provisional governor-general, Hüseyin Necati, CUP's regional functionary, discreetly transmitted to the district's civilian authorities that politburo's inexorable directive: the objective of the deportations was the annihilation of the deportee population.⁹

As will be described below, Kayseri district's governor, Aziz Zekâi (Apaydın), himself a CUP functionary, did implement this directive when ordering the exterminatory liquidation of the hundreds of Armenians court-martialed, convicted, and sentenced to long terms of hard labor and prison—in addition to the fifty-five sentenced to death by hanging.

As might be expected, because of turf wars, personality conflicts, and other discordant variables, the relationships of the three power tiers were not always smooth. Despite the developing frictions, however, they did, in the main, know how to coordinate their actions in a cooperative spirit. In the final analysis, the supremacy of CUP party leverage and the iron discipline flowing from it were factors in ensuring the optimal success of the central goal of annihilation.

Precipitation of the Sweeping Crisis

The crisis in question was set off on 24 February 1915 (11 February according to the Ottoman calendar in use at that time) by the accidental explosion of a homemade bomb with which a young Armenian was tinkering in his home. Having migrated to the United States some years earlier, Kevork Hampartzoumian, also known as Defjian, had recently returned to his native town of Everek, located some twenty-five miles south of Kayseri city. A solitary and melancholy youth, he had witnessed the ghastly

murders of his brother and uncle during the 18 November 1895 massacre, though he himself had miraculously survived the carnage. It was reported that the fear of imminent new massacres had agitated him enough to try to equip himself with the means of “defensive resistance.” The subsequent 1909 Adana massacre and the intensification of the anti-Armenian campaign in the pre–World War I period served to amplify these fears. It appears that exasperation and a measure of despair drove Hampartzoumian to a recourse that would soon prove as reckless as it was perilous for the district’s Armenian population. Severely wounded and in excruciating pain, he eventually succumbed to his injuries.¹⁰

Given the solitary and secretive nature of Hampartzoumian’s venture, the Armenians of the town were both frightened and surprised by the incident. Aware of the enormous danger hovering over the Armenian community as a whole, its leaders, for a very brief period, succeeded in hushing up the incident. Even Adil Bey, the *kaymakam* on duty in Everek, went along with this initiative, as he did not consider the matter of critical importance, given the law-abiding reputation and record of the town’s Armenian population. The understanding was that a reckless individual with no organizational ties or support whatsoever had indulged in a dangerous adventure.

Nevertheless, it did not take very long for the district’s central authorities to learn about the explosion, and they intervened immediately and with a vengeance. A handyman employed in the local bakery (by a remarkable coincidence, the only Turk residing in that Armenian neighborhood) contacted higher authorities to inform them about the explosion. The investigation that ensued resulted in an official report, a copy of which was relayed to Interior Minister Talât. The die was cast. Everek’s *kaymakam* was immediately dismissed and was replaced by Salihzeki, who was not only his deputy but also the *kaymakam* of the neighboring smaller town of Incesu. After taking up his position on 4 March 1915, Salihzeki launched a fierce and sweeping investigation. Starting with the arrest of the bomb-maker’s family members, relatives, and even casual acquaintances, and continuing with the arrest of Armenians who had returned from America for short visits, Salihzeki extended the number of arrests to include hundreds of other Armenians in neighboring villages and towns, the district’s capital city, and other major cities of the empire, including its capital, Constantinople. The Armenians arrested were from all walks of life, including many priests and even the prominent Armenian parliamentarian Mourad (Hampartzoum Boyajian), a member of the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies, the parliament’s lower house—in total disregard of his parliamentary immunity.

What followed was an intense regime of torture manifested in various forms. As one survivor averred, Everek’s prison was transformed into “Dante’s Inferno.”¹¹ Within a short time the other prisons of the district, such as Incesu, Çomakhlu, and especially the dungeon of Cafer Bey police station in the district’s capital, Kayseri city, followed suit.¹² Ostensibly, the main purpose of this regime of terror was to extract as many confessions as possible regarding substantial caches of arms, weapons, and explosives. The main technique was the gradual intensification of pain. Using the bastinado method, for example, 300 slashes would be administered to the soles of the victim’s feet; in cases of sustained resistance and recalcitrance, however, that number would be doubled. Among the victims were some who lost their minds, while others committed suicide in prison and still others were crippled beyond repair. The torture of Deputy Mourad is noteworthy in this respect:

Thrown to the ground, he was administered slashes to his feet, his back, his ribs until such time as, unconscious, he would end up resembling a cadaver. After having been

revived through the application of cold water, he vainly would be warned—and the tortures would be resumed and continued for three days, until his ravaged body was thrown into the prison's hospital... Mourad was adamant about his rights and his refusal to yield to violence.¹³

His superhuman endurance led one of the chieftains of the brigand bands participating in the massacre of Kayseri's Armenian population to express his admiration of such uncommon intrepidity.¹⁴

An ancillary and perhaps equally potent driving force in the resort to torture was the insistence of Salihzeki and his cohorts on obtaining lists and names of presumed accomplices. In one case, the subject, unable to endure

the torture hour and after hour, for so many days on end, that... blurted out, "Yes, that is the way it was." But this confession did not bring respite. The tortures continued. The aim was to get [him] to reveal the names of accomplices... The resulting brutality knew no bounds. At one point he became so exasperated that he exploded. "Take me to him [Salihzeki]. I have things to confess." When the police ushered him into the latter's room, he smashed one of the windows with his fist, and with a morsel of broken glass slashed his own stomach and fell down unconscious.¹⁵

When the same procedure similarly failed to elicit information from another subject, likewise totally unconnected with the bomb and related acts of conspiracy, Salihzeki, unable to contain his frustration and rage, "had the prisoner bound up hands and feet and had him thrown from the prison roof to the cobblestone yard below."¹⁶

The sequence of events demonstrated nevertheless that Everek's governor had a plan of his own. He was determined to show his superiors—thereby receiving the requisite accolades and rewards—that he had uncovered a widespread Armenian conspiracy to sabotage the Ottoman-Turkish war effort in pursuit of certain goals set forth by the two Armenian political parties, the Hunchaks and the Dashnaks.¹⁷ The crisis precipitated by the above-described explosion afforded wide-ranging opportunities to pursue and successfully carry out this agenda. Foremost among these opportunities was the atmosphere of pervasive hostility directed against the Armenians, which had been prevalent in the district since before World War I. As one historian of Kayseri Armenians points out, with the outbreak of World War I, the Turkish authorities began doing everything they could to provoke the Armenians of Kayseri:

In order to agitate the Turkish mobs, they needed to disseminate the story of an Armenian uprising. The ruinous requisitions, the brutal treatment of Armenian conscripts, the scandalous methods of house searches, and the severity of attendant punitive methods had pushed the victim population to paralyzing despair. We, the Armenians, were bracing ourselves for the terrible fate awaiting us.¹⁸

However, the conditions described above were necessary but not sufficient for the implementation of the plan of wholesale liquidation of the district's Armenian population. Other contingencies also need to be considered.

The Devastating Role of Armenian Informers

One of these contingencies involved the successful co-optation of Armenian informers. Given religious, linguistic, and related cultural differences that often served to maintain cleavages between Armenian and Turkish communities, the authorities had very little access to the inner workings of Armenian community life. But the terror applied in Everek by Salihzeki, the new *kaymakam*, soon yielded unexpected results.

Two prominent local Armenians were co-opted to serve as informers for Salihzeki. In order to enshrine their loyalty and their fidelity to the state, both of them converted to Islam and adopted Turkish names.¹⁹

With the active and eager help of these two convert-informers, the authorities first obtained a list of all members of Kayseri district’s Hunchak political party. They then secured the membership list of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, an organization solely and entirely dedicated to charity work and, in this sense, a decidedly apolitical body. Based on the information in these lists, a program of massive arrests was launched, and it was carried out with inexorable severity. The grip of the arrests extended to such other villages as Incesu, Çomaklı, and Tomarza and, inevitably and ultimately, to Kayseri city itself. Hundreds of Armenians from all walks of life were taken into custody and, without any formalities or even the pretense of formalities, were cast into the dungeons of the district’s various prisons.

This act of co-optation was replicated in Kayseri city itself when the head of that city’s Hunchak party agreed to hand over to the authorities all the party’s records and registers. Because the Hunchak party had been recognized by the Ottoman government as a legitimate political party, its leadership, unlike that of the rival Dashnak party, did not have a sense of urgency relative to the need for secrecy and concealment. Contrary to expectations, however, the authorities proceeded to arrest not only the officially registered members of the Hunchak party but also their male and female relatives, including their children.²⁰ They were assisted in this task by three additional informers in Kayseri.²¹

The fate of all those taken into custody was in fact sealed when the two original informers from Everek signed a statement declaring that there was a definite plan of Armenian conspiracy. Its aim was, they asserted, an uprising to be spearheaded by the leaders of the two political parties, Hunchak and Dashnak. This declaration prompted Salihzeki to push for the adoption by the Turkish government of a radical policy of persecution and subsequently the framing of a major criminal charge against the Armenians. The essence of the accusation was that the caches of arms uncovered during the investigation were intended for an organized rebellion against the government.²²

Despite their persistent and massive investigations, however, the authorities could not move beyond the discovery of arms caches to establish, by any credible or substantive evidence, that there was any plan of insurgency on the part of any Armenian faction or party. Nor could they establish any link at all between the incident of the bomb and either of the political parties. Perhaps the most bizarre and wanton aspect of the anti-Armenian campaign at this stage was the arrest and torture of multitudes of Armenians, including women and children, who had absolutely no connection with politics, let alone with conspiracy of any sort. But as the discussion below will indicate, these draconian measures were the signposts of an insidious covert scheme targeting the entire Armenian population of the district.

Escalated Incrimination: The Government Plants Bombs in Armenian Residences

The government’s firm resolve to implicate Armenians collectively in the discovery of concealed caches of arms and explosives was pursued in the twin cities of Everek-Fenese with such ferocity that some Armenians resorted to an unusual step: they began to pay exorbitant prices to Turkish neighbors for handguns, only to surrender

the weapons to the authorities tormenting them.²³ The authorities in Kayseri city, emulating the procedures followed in the twin cities, proved equally ferocious. Like Salihzeki, they too were trying to impress Interior Minister Talât in Istanbul. But the value of these acts of overzealousness hinged on tangible results.

Accordingly, A. Midhat, then the *mutassarif* of Kayseri district, embarked on a plan to secure, one way or another, caches of arms. He approached and persuaded Bishop Khosrov, the district's Armenian primate, to have the caches surrendered in return for "a benevolent treatment by the government." Enthused by this proposal, the bishop convened the district's Armenian Provincial Council, urging the delegates to comply. But the two Hunchak and Dashnak leaders, who were invited to the meeting for consultation, advised against such compliance. They argued that this was a Turkish trap into which Armenians had fallen time and again, each time paying dearly as a result. Notwithstanding, the council unanimously voted for compliance to demonstrate its loyalty to the government. In line with this attitude, Garabed Camjian, the council's president, went so far as to threaten to assist the government in challenging all those who might dare to contravene the collective will of the Armenian community, as duly represented by the council.²⁴ Nevertheless, for a variety of reasons, the council's decision could not be carried out effectively.

Irrespective of all these Armenian efforts to comply with the demands of Turkish authorities, however, the district's central government evidently had its own plan. Straight compliance by the Armenians might disrupt, if not pre-empt, that plan. Accordingly, a plot was hatched with a view to gravely incriminating the Armenians as lethal conspirators. The district governor, along with Kayseri's police chief, Zeki, and, equally important, CUP's regional representative, Cemil Yakub, conspired to have a number of bombs planted in the residence and vineyards of a local Armenian.²⁵ The ensuing explosions produced the intended results.²⁶

As the Armenians, bewildered and frightened, sought refuge in their homes, the house where the bomb had been planted was immediately surrounded by pre-positioned police and gendarmes, led by the police chief, Zeki. Nothing incriminating was found in the house, which was thoroughly searched following the explosion. But the other bombs, planted in the vineyards, were "discovered." The Turkish mobs, already aroused by inflammatory stories about the previous bomb explosion in Everek, were ready to pounce upon the Armenians. A similar scheme was brought to bear upon the above-mentioned Garabed Camjian, the chairman of Kayseri's Armenian Provincial Council (see note 24). Having surreptitiously entered the basement of his house, a team of policemen planted a bomb and a handgun there. By pre-arrangement, a second team then proceeded to "discover" these weapons, following a search that caused the desired pandemonium.²⁷

What is so remarkable about these two men who were so deceitfully incriminated is that neither was politically active, not to mention involved in anti-Turkish political activity. As one contemporary author observed of the first case, "In reality the poor man was a totally ignorant person, quite indifferent toward national affairs and, therefore, unaware even of the existence of revolutionary activity."²⁸

As Salihzeki had done in Everek, Zeki prepared an invidious report in which this totally apolitical man was depicted as an integral part of an Armenian conspiracy. The stage was now set to implement a plan of massive arrests. Because of their pre-eminence among the arrestees, it is necessary to review briefly the attitudes and related actions of the district's Armenian political leaders.

The Stance of Armenian Political Leaders

The episodes of anti-Armenian massacres predating World War I left their imprint on many Kayseri Armenians. The main lesson they drew from these episodes was the realization that defenselessness creates all the conditions of perilous vulnerability, which, in turn, emboldens potential perpetrators. During the 1894–1896 Sultan Abdul Hamit–era massacres, and subsequently during the 1909 two-tier Adana massacres, which together claimed some 200,000 Armenians, directly and indirectly, this condition of total vulnerability proved decisive. However, Kayseri Armenians had sustained relatively minor losses during the November 1895 massacre and completely averted a similar massacre in 1909 for which “thousands of slaughterers in baggy pants armed to the hilt... were poised, ready to strike. The Armenians were not idle, however.”²⁹ Armenian volunteer squads, likewise armed, strategically deployed, and ready to die in self-defense, had succeeded in deterring the potential massacrers.

Thus, the memory of these historical experiences had prompted a significant number of Kayseri Armenians, including members of the two political parties, to procure caches of arms, handguns, and explosives, many of them quite old and rusty. These were stored in well-concealed locations. Neither the volume of the weapons nor their uneven quality, as far as their actual usefulness was concerned, nor the scant number of volunteers poised for self-defense were such as to tip the balance in case of a real clash with regular units of the Turkish armed and security forces. This being the case, the evident purpose of all these measures of arming was the hope of disabusing potential perpetrators of the notion that the Armenians, as usual, would be easy prey, and thereby to avert a great massacre—as had been done in the past.³⁰ Of all those Armenian leaders subjected to excruciating tortures, one from Chomakhlou village ended up admitting this. “The torturers detailed for this job had stuffed excrement into his mouth, had shackled his body with iron hoops, and had lit a fire upon his chest.” When he succumbed to these atrocities, he exclaimed, “We made these acquisitions [of arms] in order to avoid dying like despicable dogs.”³¹

Despite their turbulent history of rivalry and strife, the Dashnaks and Hunchaks, facing an imminent national calamity, set aside their differences to form a united front³² for purposes of defensive resistance. Accordingly, a joint committee was established for cooperation, while the parameters were left to be determined by the higher echelons of both parties. It is of utmost significance that the Hunchak leadership in Istanbul and that of the Dashnaks in Sivas both advised their cohorts in Kayseri “*not to resort to any uprising and to comply with the demands of the government.*”³³ The sequence of events indicates, however, that such compliance was not what the authorities wanted. Rather, the execution of their plan hinged on resistance and confrontation capable of producing violent clashes and bloodshed. The consummation of such clashes required the arousal, enlistment, and active participation of Turkish mobs, and the authorities went out of their way to attain this goal. As one chronicler writes, “The Turkish government set out to incite the Turkish people in order to secure its support in its exterminatory designs. It needed the Armenians to dare to provoke the Turks by way of an insurrection, or even a plain act of disobedience.”³⁴ As the war progressed, in addition to the devastating military requisitions described above, the level of general depredations and the attendant verbal abuses and insults escalated ominously.

The Resort to Summary Proceedings through Court-Martial

The central purpose of the elaborate measures of interrogation and torture detailed above was to pave the way for criminal prosecutions against those in custody. The ultimate purpose, however, appears to have been to establish a legal framework for the justification of the draconian measures soon to be launched against Kayseri's entire Armenian population. The authorities therefore needed a plethora of confessions of a particular type. All those taken into custody for possessing arms, or for presumed possession of arms, had a simple but basic justification: the CUP regime had granted to non-Muslims the right to possess such arms. When crushing the 1909 counter-revolution, the guardians of that regime had significantly benefited from the help of armed Armenian support groups. As one Kemalist deputy recalls in his memoirs, "Whether in the market, the streets, or in stores, all kinds of weapons were freely available for sale... Town criers and traveling salesmen peddling their arms with loud voices were part of this picture."³⁵

The Armenians incurred a legal liability, however, when many of them failed to comply with the government's wartime order to surrender their arms and weapons, including knives.³⁶ Disregarding the inveterate anxieties and premonitions about impending new massacres with which the Armenians were suffused, the authorities deliberately chose to interpret this reluctance to surrender their arms as a clear indication of an insurrectionary plan. By this time between 800 and 900 Armenians from all walks of life were incarcerated in Kayseri's notorious Depot prison. In this large, spacious, three-story military barracks that could hold as many as a thousand prisoners, the incarcerated Armenians were arranged there according to provenance.³⁷

The Military Tribunal, an expanded version of the small court-martial instituted in Kayseri by the proclamation of general mobilization to handle minor offenses committed by the military, was formed for the express purpose of prosecuting the Armenians. It consisted of a president (retired Lieutenant-Colonel Tevfik), Major Şahab, two other military officers, the deputy public prosecutor, and a record-keeper. Except for a six-month interval in the second half of 1912, the CUP had been maintaining throughout the empire a state of siege, and hence martial law, since 19 August/1 September 1910.³⁸ The requisite indictments were prepared, on the one hand, by Evrek's *kaymakam*, Salihzeki, and, on the other, by Kayseri city's police chief, Zeki. The Armenians were uniformly charged with premeditated conspiracy against the Turkish army. More specifically, the two Armenian political parties of Kayseri district were, as collective entities, identified as principal agents of conspiracy; on account of their presumed consent to this conspiracy, on the other hand, the regional Armenian notables (*eşraf*) were charged as accessories.

The proceedings had all the characteristics of a kangaroo-court set-up. No defense counsel was allowed; the defendants were tried in groups of various sizes, each court session lasting an average of three to four hours. The standard procedure was as follows: the prosecutor would pose an accusatory question, and before the defendant could complete his answer, he would be dressed down with a torrent of new accusatory questions. The common line of defense of the accused was that their acquisition of weapons and arms was a legitimate act, since it was allowed by the new constitution. Moreover, they all maintained, these arms had come in handy when the Armenians had come to the defense of the imperiled CUP regime in 1909. But this line of defense was typically twisted by the prosecutor, when he intoned,

Against whom would you have to defend the Constitution? Of course against the other Turks. And how would you proceed? Of course by massacring the regime's opponents,

who happen to be all Turks also. There it is. Your own explicit confession of your conspiratorial plan.

Allowed to articulate his defense, Kevork Vişabian, the top Dashnak leader among the accused, made, among others, the following statement:

Do not exaggerate the practical value of a few obsolescent and antiquated handguns and rusty bombs. They all served a mere precautionary purpose . . . Don't be carried away by the exertions of haphazard imagination . . . Is it a sin for a father or brother to be tempted to think of self-defense when he sees with his own eyes his child or sister being mutilated and butchered? Can the law ever forbid that elemental right that is granted by God, is sanctified by religion, and is found enshrined in the annals of history? Some may counter by saying, “Don't you trust the government enough to dare to organize your own defense?” The government can surely protect, provided it can jar itself loose from confusion and paralysis while it tries to maintain its authority and attends to the needs of its citizens. But we have already seen that with the outbreak of revolutionary unrest even cabinet ministers tried to save their heads. As you all know, one of the most influential one among them had sought refuge in the home of an Armenian and thereby escaped a tragedy. Esteemed judges, remain true to your calling, follow the path of justice and stop persecuting the Armenians.³⁹

Neither this oratorical plea nor the discreet religious services held daily in the Depot barracks prison yielded any tangible results. With predictable regularity the court found the overwhelming majority of the defendants guilty as charged. The text of the verdict was published in the district's official journal in connection with the court-martial of the first batch of defendants.⁴⁰ All twelve of them were sentenced to death by hanging. The other thirty-two defendants were sentenced to various terms of hard labor and prison. In addition to the official Turkish publication of the record of conviction and sentencing, the official files of the foreign ministry of allied Imperial Germany contain the same record in German translation.⁴¹

The serial convictions, sentence renditions, and associated hangings of eventually fifty-five Armenians were staggered during the subsequent weeks, and the hangings were carried out at a locale called the Coal Pit (*Kömürlük*).⁴²

The core of the verdict is encapsulated in the following two sentences:

With the intent of unleashing a general uprising against the Ottoman Empire, the revolutionary Hunchak and Dashnak Committees conspired against the government at a joint meeting convened at Bucharest. Besides resolving to incite parts of the Armenian population of the Empire against the government, the said committees also accumulated hand grenades, dynamite and other destructive weapons.⁴³

There are three ingredients in this judgment: conspiracy, public incitement, and the accumulation of weapons and explosives (but not any use of them). Clearly the last item cannot be subject to dispute, with the caveat that it applied only to a segment of Kayseri's Armenian community. But the other two elements require closer scrutiny.

The Genocidal Sequela of the Courts-Martial

The recurrent harping on the theme of “conspiracy” as a major weapon aimed at the Armenians lends itself to projective interpretation. As Shakespeare, through Hamlet, warned with the dictum “doth protest too much,”⁴⁴ the entire pattern of the exterminatory persecution of Kayseri Armenians indicates that the perpetrators were merely projecting when accusing the Armenians of conspiracy: in other words, they were ascribing to the latter plans entertained by themselves. An array of evidence underscores the relevance and significance of this social-psychological mechanism.

Here are some examples. By governmental fiat, the matter of the wartime deportation of the Armenians had been declared a *peremptory response to anticipated Armenian insurrections*; as such, they were declared military business and a military responsibility. The Temporary Law of Deportation of 13/26 May 1915 explicitly stipulates this in articles 1 and, particularly, 2. Colonel Şahabeddin, referred to above, emphatically reiterated this point in cipher telegrams he sent to Colonel Recayi, his superior in Ankara,⁴⁵ who had expressed his displeasure at the civilian authorities' intervention in the matter.

In early August 1915, however, at Talât Pasha's behest, military commanders were advised by a circular from the High Command that in areas outside the theaters of war, the responsibility for handling the deportations would henceforth devolve upon civilian authorities. The emerging cleavage between civilian and military authorities on this issue found its expression in several reports dispatched by Colonel Şahabeddin to his superior in Ankara, in which he complained about the instigations alleging rebellious activities by the Armenians. With special reference to such Kayseri-district villages as Erkilet and Mancusun, for example, he accused Zekâi, the district's governor, of falsely accusing the Armenians of armed assaults. This prompted Colonel Recayi, Şahabeddin's superior, to instruct him to henceforth discount civilian sources and rely only on the military ones. An integral part of these reports, prepared by the regional military authorities, were references to numerous acts of pillage, plunder, and robbery committed by the security forces harassing and tormenting the targeted Armenians.⁴⁶ However, in the overall picture of a relatively well-coordinated genocide undertaking, this discordant aspect of the conduct of the region's military commanders was but an accidental aberration, due mainly to the CUP's conspiratorial secrecy.

To emphasize the supremacy of his authority over the matter of Armenian deportations and to underscore the related urgency of draconian measures, interior minister and CUP party boss Talât Pasha paid a visit to Kayseri. At a specially convened meeting to which prominent Turkish-Muslim leaders were invited, he denounced the Armenians as a disloyal (*sadakatsız*) internal foe in league with the Ottoman Empire's external enemies. Therefore, he said, it had become imperative that they be expelled and deported as disloyal elements.⁴⁷

For his part, Enver, minister of war and de facto commander-in-chief of the Ottoman Armed Forces, rebuked the Kayseri courts-martial for not being harsh enough, and for not sentencing all the hundreds of defendants uniformly to death by hanging. He particularly took issue with the text of the verdict, in which the victims were accused merely of having formed a revolutionary movement and of incitement against the empire's Muslims. He wanted the Military Tribunal to focus on a principal charge, that is, the aim of creating "an autonomous and independent [*sic*] Armenia." That charge, the focus of the Istanbul courts-martial that had simultaneously tried, convicted, and sentenced to death twenty Hunchakist leaders,⁴⁸ was connected with the annex of article 54 of the Ottoman Penal Code stipulating the sentence of death.⁴⁹ Enver ended his directive with the admonition that it had to be treated as a "secret matter" (*sureti mahremane*). Irrespective of individual merits and differences, Armenians being court-martialed within this purview were to be uniformly treated (*tevhidî tatbikat*) as candidates for the death penalty.

Nevertheless, the supreme authority, the CUP's so-called politburo, was growing impatient with the piecemeal and protracted handling of the 800 to 900 Armenians remanded to the courts-martial for criminal prosecution and punishment. The district's governor, Aziz Zekâi (Apaydın), a CUP leader originally from Bosnia,

where his Christian ancestors, like so many others, had converted to Islam, was particularly restive in this respect. In tandem with local CUP functionaries, he began to agitate against the tribunal’s judges, attacking them as too formalistic and hence not as efficient as they were expected to be. The CUP’s Kayseri branch had already prepared a list of those Armenians they wanted liquidated wholesale and swiftly.⁵⁰ But most of them were languishing in prison, either awaiting their turn for court-martial or serving out their sentences. Zekâi decided to pay a visit to the main Depot prison. Here is the narrative of one of the prisoners there, an eyewitness to that visit:

I still vividly remember his sudden appearance at our prison. Gruff-looking, he inspected the prisoners in the first and second floors without uttering a single word. As he was about to exit from the main door of the prison, he turned to his two companions and with a hateful voice intoned, “Why keep them here? Make a clean sweep of them forthwith.” We overheard this deadly exhortation with dizzying gloom.⁵¹

In defiance of the verdict dispositions of the Military Tribunal, the underlings of the district governor proceeded to systematically remove almost all of the 1,095 Armenian inmates from their prison cells. Over a period of several weeks, they were tied together with heavy-duty ropes and were marched out in seventeen separate batches to the various valleys of neighboring Sivas province, where they were massacred. Several detachments of brigands (i.e., convicts released from various prisons) were deployed in the area of Kanlıdere (“Bloody Valley”), a triangular region formed by the towns of Gemerek, Şarkışla, and Aziziye, for such massacre duty.⁵²

The final stage in the process of liquidating Kayseri district’s Armenian population was the official proclamation (actually a decree) of 26 July/8 August 1915, ordering the wholesale deportation of the rest of the victim population. Like those convicted by the courts-martial, the overwhelming majority of that population perished in the process, either through massacres⁵³ or by attrition, dying of exhaustion, disease, or starvation.

In the end, the agency of the triggering mechanism proved pivotal, as the Armenian presence in Kayseri was terminated through a cataclysm that replicated itself in many other provinces of the moribund Ottoman Empire in the relatively brief period between spring 1915 and summer 1916. But there occurred an event in Kayseri, in the aftermath of this cataclysm, that was both distinct and peculiar: a criminal investigation was initiated to identify and prosecute the ensemble of the Turkish leaders responsible for that cataclysm. The man in charge of that pre-trial investigation was the wartime mayor of Kayseri, who, remarkably, at the time of the investigation, had remained in his job as mayor. This study will conclude with an examination of the significance of this post-war Turkish attempt at retributive justice.

The Aftermath: The Aborted Post-war Initiative of Retributive Justice

Unwilling to concede and confess to a crime, perpetrators tend to resort to denial or, in other cases, to explanations that aim to justify their actions. This aim becomes most urgent with respect to the capital crime of genocide. The institution of courts-martial in Kayseri and the proceedings associated with them were initiatives intended to justify the crime of genocide in progress. Even the Turkophile Arthur Zimmermann, at the time foreign minister of Germany, in a “very confidential” communication to Count Paul Wolff-Metternich, Germany’s ambassador to Ottoman Turkey, conceded that Turkey’s anti-Armenian campaign, placed under the rubric of “national security,” could conceivably be defended “with an appearance of legality” (“*mit einem Schein des Rechtes verteidigt werden konnte*”).⁵⁴ Thus, in plain language, what these authorities

needed were plausible pretexts. The errors that sometimes crept into the process, however, inevitably revealed the totally false, and even farcical, character of these pretexts. The following example illustrates this point. In its verdict of 2 June 1915, pronouncing a sentence of “death by hanging” for the first batch of the fifty-five doomed Armenians, the court-martial erroneously, or falsely, declared that “Hunchak and Dashnak party leaders had decided in a Congress in Bucharest to initiate action against the Turkish government.” The fact is, however, that that congress was convened only by a faction of Hunchak party and that the Dashnaks had absolutely nothing to do with it and hence could not have participated. This falsehood found expression in the two propaganda pamphlets issued by the central government during the war.⁵⁵ In commenting on one of them as a “cleverly framed” pamphlet, the veteran Austrian ambassador to Turkey, Johann Margrave von Pallavicini, wrote the following to his foreign minister in Vienna:

To massacre the men and to deport women and children who, due to lack of transport and provisions, arrive in frightfully diminishing numbers, is a procedure which not only cannot be justified, but forever will remain a blot [*Schandfleck*] on the reputation of the Turkish government.⁵⁶

That reputation would be a test case for a succession of post-war Turkish governments desperately trying to cope with the consequences of the wartime Armenian cataclysm. Indeed, the full scale of that cataclysm came into full relief when courts-martial were established in the Ottoman capital to deal with the problem legally. (These proceedings have been detailed and analyzed in a previous article).⁵⁷ Departing from this *modus operandi* of confining the criminal proceedings to the Ottoman capital, post-war authorities in Kayseri decided to prosecute *in loco* the respective Kayseri officials and their accomplices. The man responsible for this initiative was Ahmet Rifat (Çalika), the long-sitting mayor of Kayseri city. Commenting on the attributes and virtues of this Turkish official, a Kemalist deputy wrote, “Rifat was an enlightened jurist; he was free from any kind of fanaticism . . . scant on words and correct in his behavior . . . he obeyed the dictates of his conscience allowing to determine that behavior.”⁵⁸ After the advent of the Kemalist regime, Rifat was elected as a deputy to the new Grand National Assembly and was subsequently appointed to the post of minister of justice. For all these reasons, his plan to prosecute the wartime Kayseri perpetrators and the specifics of the related charges acquire inordinate significance.

In a book edited by his son and containing Rifat’s memoirs, these specifics are embedded in the texts of a series of formal indictments. These legal charges were made public in 1992 and are exceptionally significant in that the issue involved touched the taboo subject of the Armenian Genocide, which had been aggressively denied throughout the entire history of modern Turkey. In separate tables included in this book one can identify all the names of the principal perpetrators in the Kayseri district, along with the specific charges and the requisite measures of punishment. Rifat indicates in a note attached to the indictments that the indictments were framed on the basis of “documents secured in the course of pre-trial investigations.”⁵⁹ Foremost among the inditees were the two principal perpetrators of the cataclysm that fully merits the designation “Armenian Genocide.” One of them, Salihzeki, the inexorable *kaymakam* of Develi (Everek), was charged with torture, bribery, and rape. The other, Zekâî, the governor of the Kayseri district, was charged with multiple murders. Three dozen other officials, particularly gendarmes of various ranks, ranking police officers, lower-level governors, CUP party functionaries, and local party leaders, identified by

name and status, were among the indictees. The punishments proposed variably referred to articles 45, 103, and 170 of the Ottoman Penal Code, providing for sentences ranging from death to terms of hard labor.

A noteworthy aspect of this series of indictments is the prominence of charges of pillage, plunder, robbery, and thievery, not to speak of serial rape, which were depicted as crimes ancillary to that of organized mass murder. It appears that with very few exceptions, practically all the perpetrators, from the highest to the lowest rank—especially Salihzeki, the arch-perpetrator—actively engaged in this type of license, raising the fundamental issue of the role of personal incentives involving greed and cupidity in genocide. As the veteran wartime US consul at Aleppo, Jesse Jackson, reported to Washington, DC, an integral part of the organized, wholesale extermination of the Armenian population involved “a gigantic plundering scheme.”⁶⁰

But, as far as the ultimate decision makers in the Ottoman capital were concerned, superseding these incentives in the first place was the more basic, pervasive, and compelling drive to radically exterminate the people subsequently to be disposed of. As Jackson was trying to inform Washington, the supreme, superordinate goal of the CUP was to deliver the “final blow to extinguish the [Armenian] race.”⁶¹ The explanation and the allied justification for this lethal attitude was provided by Salihzeki. When a delegation of Armenian notables was pleading with him to relent in his persecution, he responded thus:

You Armenians are progressive people, you are industrious and productive. I wish we Turks could be like you. The trouble is that these conditions are inimical with our national interests. How can we acquiesce to the fact that the Turk, the master of this land, has become your servant. The Armenians live in comfortable homes, but the Turks are confined to huts and sheds. The Armenians dress well, eat well, while the Turks have to contend with rags and dry bread. Now that the opportunity has presented itself, we are determined to annihilate you. Your sympathies for the Allied Powers make this even more expedient. Your annihilation will not be carried out quickly and swiftly but will be accompanied by torment and torture.⁶²

The ascendancy of Kemalism in defeated and prostrate post–World War I Turkey, and its ultimate triumph, nipped in the bud any and all prosecutorial efforts. As a result, for example, Zekâi, Kayseri’s district governor, first escaped to his native Bosnia to avoid prosecution, then proceeded to join the Kemalist movement. He subsequently rose to such high positions in the new Republic of Turkey as deputy in the new Grand National Assembly; twice ambassador at London, then at Moscow; and minister of public works and minister of defense.⁶³ As to the other principal perpetrator, Salihzeki, he fled to Baku to join a new group of Turkish communists, with the aim of importing that ideology and movement into Kemalist Turkey.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to show that triggering mechanisms, often intimately connected with the outbreak of large-scale conflagrations and cataclysms, may under certain circumstances be considered necessary conditions for the explosion and consummation of the underlying conflicts. But they are not at the same time *sufficient* conditions. The elements of the conflict, the power relations between a potential perpetrator and a potential victim, and the level of opportunity available for the consummation of conflict are variables to factor in when assessing the matter of sufficiency. What happened in Kayseri during World War I was the sanguinary culmination⁶⁴ of a protracted historical conflict between an omnipotent state

organization and a highly vulnerable minority group. Moreover, the advantages of the resulting power differential were monopolized by a monolithic political party that reigned supreme in directing the internal and external policies of the state.⁶⁵ This exercise of supreme power by a political party could be achieved because the most powerful CUP leaders were at the same time ministers, Army commanders, and other state officials, such as provincial governors. Not only were the two pre-eminent organizers of the Armenian Genocide top CUP leaders, for example, but one of them, Talât Pasha, was interior minister and subsequently grand vizier (a sort of prime minister), while the other, Enver, was both deputy commander-in chief of the Ottoman Armed Forces and minister of defense. Both men played a decisive role in the organizational and legal arrangements that ensured the wholesale liquidation of the Armenians.

In brief, the genocide of the Armenians as enacted in Kayseri during the war, just as in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, was predicated upon such major determinants as the history of lingering Turko-Armenian conflict; a critical disparity of power relations between perpetrator and victim, yielding the vulnerability ingredient; and the optimal opportunity afforded by the war. Above all, however, it was predicated, just as in Nazi Germany, upon a fusion of government and party machineries, with the latter holding implacable sway and, accordingly, giving content and direction to that fusion. The more or less unhindered configuration of these factors was such as to ensure a very high degree of success in the implementation of the genocide. Ultimately, however, the genocidal fate of the Kayseri Armenians emerges here as a function of critically disparate power relations, as noted above. The dominant Turks took full advantage of their overwhelming power position vis-à-vis a near totally defenseless minority. The conditions of the war were such as to maximize the statutory vulnerabilities of that minority, trapped in the vortex of a consuming global war. Problems of prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion, compounded by the formal declaration of holy war, *jihad*, combined to aggravate the plight of the victim population. Determined to avoid any and all provocations, the bulk of that victim population tried desperately to be as accommodating as possible toward the authorities and their incremental demands. Yet all this proved futile. It may be fitting to conclude with a statement in which Henry Morgenthau, wartime US ambassador to Turkey, succinctly highlights the twin problems of vulnerability and provocation as twin pivotal factors.

In the organization of the Armenian Genocide as a whole:

Though the air all during the autumn and winter of 1914–15 was filled with premonitions of trouble, the Armenians behaved with remarkable self-restraint. For years it has been Turkish policy to provoke the Christian population into committing overt acts and then seizing upon such misbehavior as an excuse for massacres. The Armenian clergy and political leaders saw many evidences that the Turks were now up to their old tactics, and they therefore went among the people, cautioning them to keep quiet, to bear all insults and even outrages patiently, so as to not give the Moslems the opening which they were seeking . . . “even if they burn a few of our villages . . .” these leaders would say, “do not retaliate, for it is better that a few be destroyed than that the whole nation be massacred.”⁶⁶

Notes

1. For a pertinent analysis of this practice, see Robert Melson, “Provocation or Nationalism: A Critical Inquiry into the Armenian Genocide of 1915,” in *The Armenian Genocide in*

- Perspective*, ed. Richard Hovannisian, 61–84 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987).
2. Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy toward German Jews 1933–1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 245–46, 289.
 3. Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 8.
 4. Zübeyir Kars, *Milli Mücadelede Kayseri [Kayseri During the National Struggle]* (Ankara: Ministry of Culture, 1993), 75.
 5. Ibid.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi* (Ankara: Yeni Matbaa, 1950), 144; the same book appears in a revised and enlarged edition in English: Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question* (Ankara: Documentary Publications of Historical Research Publishing Unit, 1988), 364. The respective population figures for Kayseri district Armenians may be broken down as follows: Kayseri city, 15,000–16,000; Efkere, 2,000; Erkilet, 60; Germir, 500; Talas, 3,200; Chomaklou, 1,760; Tomarza (Göster), 8,000; Incesu, 1,100; Everek-Fenese, 8,600.
 8. Malachia Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia: Her History, Doctrine, Rule, Discipline, Liturgy, Literature, and Existing Condition*, trans. G.M. Gregory, 2nd rev. ed by T. Poladian (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1955), 205.
 9. Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Documentation of the World War I Armenian Massacres in the Proceedings of the Turkish Military Tribunal,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23 (1991): 549–76, 563.
 10. Kapriel Takvorian, *Yerazankeê û Darabankee Dariner 1908–1915 [Years of Dreams and Sufferings, 1908–1915]* (Cairo: Housaper, 1961), 143–44.
 11. Aris Kalfaian, *Chomaklou: The History of an Armenian Village*, ed. M. Ekizian (New York: Chomaklou Compatriotic Society, 1982), 106. For some unexplained reason this English version has dropped the word “Dante’s,” which is found in the Armenian-language original. See Kalfaian, *Chomaklou* (New York: Gochnak Publishing House, 1930), 85.
 12. According to a chronicler of these events, the man who inflicted these tortures in Kayseri’s Cafer Bey police station was police captain Bessim Bey, “a savage cruel man . . . who tortured his victims beyond description.” One such victim was Setrag Elmayan, “who lived in our street . . . They beat him so severely that he died . . . Those who lived near that police station, both Turks and Armenians, would say that they couldn’t stand the cries and suffering of the prisoners who were tortured all night . . . several died, and others, including Parsegh Balian, contracted gangrene from the excessive bastinadoing of their feet.” Stephen G. Svajian, *A Trip Through Historic Armenia* (New York: Green Hill Publishing, 1977), 357.
 13. Kapriel Takvorian, *Korsh Kaylu Gadgher er.1915. Vugayoutunner û Dubavoroutunner [The Gray Wolf Was Enraged: Testimonies and Impressions, 1915]* (Cairo: Housaper, 1953), 261–62. Unless otherwise stated, all English translations are my own.
 14. Arshag A. Alboyajian, *Badmoutiun Hai Gesario [History of Kayseri’s Armenians]*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Papazian Printing House, 1937), 1442–43. This is what brigand chief Süreyya is reported to have said: “I have often been present at sessions of beating and torture. I couldn’t help but admire Mourad, along with Çigdemian and Vişabian, for their bravery . . . Perhaps it might be possible to extract answers from rocky stones subjected to pummeling blows but it hasn’t been possible to wrench a word from them.”
 15. Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, 101.
 16. Ibid.
 17. Kapriel Takvorian, *Humayitch ê Veradzountu [The Renaissance Is Magnificent]* (Beirut: Sevan Edition, 1968), 23.
 18. Vahan Elmayan, “Turk Vayrakoutiunneru Gesario Metch [Turkish Savageries in Kayseri],” *Yeridasart Haiasdan* (August 1920), quoted in Alboyajian, *Badmoutiun*, 1436–37.

19. The older of the two, Sarkis Donigian, was the long-time director of the local Armenian high school and had a sterling reputation as a patriotic Armenian. For years he had been infusing into his pupils a spirit of dedication to Armenian culture and civilization. Upon converting, he adopted the Turkish name Hacı Yusuf Kenan and became the right-hand man of Salihzeki. His junior partner, Gülbenk Bedrosian, was another teacher, a colleague of his. In fact, it was Bedrosian who finally persuaded his senior to become an informer too. Bedrosian also formally converted into Islam, adopting the Turkish name Şahabeddin Zeki. Takvorian, *Humayitch*, 24–30; Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, 82, 102; Takvorian, *Korsh Kaylu*, 174–78.
20. Takvorian, *Korsh Kaylu*, 213, 222–24.
21. Alboyajian, *Badmoutiun*, 1410–11. The names of four additional informers are listed briefly in this source and are briefly described: Minas Minassian, the Hunchak leader; two Dashnaks, Kevork Yılanjian and Mihran Yazıdjian; and Hovagim Yezegielian, the caretaker of Kayseri's St. Mary Armenian Church. Unlike the Hunchak leader, Yılanjian and Yazıdjian could not produce the Dashnak party's membership lists, which were promptly made to disappear by the executive secretary of the party as soon as the crisis broke out.
22. Takvorian, *Yerazankee*, 144, 158–59.
23. Takvorian, *Korsh Kaylu*, 247.
24. The council chairman, Garabed Camjian, was a respected member of the Turkish municipal government and at the same time chairman of several Armenian educational and charitable organizations. Despite his manifest loyalty to the government, he was court-martialed and hanged, along with dozens of other Armenian community and party leaders. Shortly before his execution, one of the latter rebuked him for having trusted the government and for having urged compliance. *Ibid.*, 287.
25. V. Gesaratzee, "Gesario Yev Shurchagayetz Aryan Dourku Hayotz Medz Yegerneen [The High Cost of Blood the Armenians of Kayseri and Its Environs Paid During the Great Calamity]," in *Houshamadian Medz Yegernee 1915–1965 [Compendium on the Great Calamity]*, ed. Kersam Aharonian, 336–61 (Beirut: Zartok Publications, 1965), 349.
26. The targeted victim was Hagop Urgandjian (Kayayan). Two policemen were assigned to place a bomb with a timer on the roof of his house during the night. Several other explosives were likewise planted in his vineyards, located half an hour's distance from his home.
27. Takvorian, *Korsh Kaylu*, 210–19, 227.
28. *Ibid.*, 220.
29. Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, 82.
30. Takvorian, *Korsh Kaylu*, 249–50; *Humayitch*, 30–31.
31. Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, 115.
32. Cenani Gürbüz, *Milli Mücadele 'de Develi (Everek) ve Ermeniler [Develi and the Armenians in Our National Struggle]* (Ankara: Turkish Ministry of Culture, 1996).
33. Alboyajian, *Badmoutiun*, 1438 (original emphasis).
34. *Ibid.*, 1436.
35. Damar Arıkoğlu, *Hâtıralarım [My Memoirs]* (Istanbul: Pan Newspaper Printing House, 1961), 45, 47.
36. Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, 102; Takvorian, *Korsh Kaylu*, 156, 250–51.
37. Those from Everek (Develi) and its environs were put in the space located on the left-hand side of the upper floor of the barracks, and Armenians from Kayseri city on the right-hand side. The Armenians from the environs of Kayseri city were housed on the right-hand side of the first floor; the left-hand side was converted into a prison hospital, which had none of the essentials of a normal hospital to handle many cases involving broken bones, lacerated feet, smashed bodies, and so on. Stretchers were used to carry prisoners to and from the courtroom. *Ibid.*, 264.

38. Vahakn N. Dadrian, “Genocide as a Problem of National and International Law: The World War I Armenian Case and Its Contemporary Legal Ramifications,” *Yale Journal of International Law* 14 (1989): 221–334, 303 n. 316, 305 n. 331.
39. Takvorian, *Korsh Kaylu*, 277–78.
40. *Kayseri* [the official weekly of Kayseri district], 4 June 1915. The executions on the scaffold were carried out on 2 June 1915, the day the convictions and sentence renditions were officially announced. The text of the verdict can also be found in Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, 139–40.
41. German Foreign Ministry Archives, A.A. Bokon (Botsehaft Konstantinopel), vol. 169, no. 407 (R14086), report of Hans Wangenheim, German ambassador to Istanbul, to German Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, 27 June 1915.
42. Eleven people were hanged on 2/15 June 1915; one on 3/16 June; eight on 11/24 July; two on 30 July/12 August; fifteen on 31 July/13 August; seven on 20 August/2 September; one on 5/18 September; two on 13/26 September; five on 20 November/3 December; one on 9/22 November 1916; and two on 15/28 November, fifty-five in all. Gesaratzee, *Gesario*, 350–54; Takvorian, *Korsh Kaylu*, 285–382.
43. Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, 139.
44. “The lady doth protest too much, me thinks.” *Hamlet*, in *Complete Works*, ed. Peter Alexander (New York: Random House, 1952), 3.2.242 (reference is to act, scene, and line).
45. Archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, ser. 17, file H, doc. no. 615, telegrams from Colonel Şahabeddin to Colonel Recayi, 16/29 July 1915 and 21 July/3 August 1915.
46. *Ibid.*, file H, doc. nos. 603, 604, 606, 609, 611.
47. Hurşit Çalika, ed., *Kurtuluş Savaşında Adalet Bakanı Ahmet Rifat Çalika'nın Anıları [The Memoirs of Ahmet Rifat Çalika, Minister of Justice during the War of Independence]* (Istanbul: n. pub., 1992), 26.
48. For an analysis of the farcical aspects of this trial, see Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Secret Young-Turk Ittihadist Conference and the Decision for the World War I Genocide of the Armenians,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 7 (1993): 173–201, 190–91.
49. Archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, ser. 17, file H, doc. no. 587.
50. Takvorian, *Korsh Kaylu*, 280.
51. *Ibid.*, 239–40.
52. *Ibid.*, 296–97, 302, 313; Gesaratzee, “Gesario,” 355.
53. Several survivors have recorded their eyewitness accounts of these butcheries, in which mobs enlisted from surrounding localities, carried out the massacres, some of them armed only with scythes. Kalfaian, *Chomaklou*, 143. A narrative by another survivor relates the ghastly carnage at a place called Moudrasin, near Gemerek village, where the victims were killed by mutilation by a mob of women armed with hatchets, axes, and vegetable knives; in all cases the victims had been rendered defenseless through the use of chains or, more commonly, ropes. *Ibid.*
54. Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, K 174/27; also Türkei 183/44, A26071 (R14093), report no. 1048, Zimmermann to Wolf-Metternich, 2 October 1916.
55. See, e.g., *Vérité sur le mouvement révolutionnaire arménien et les mesures gouvernementales* (Istanbul: 1916), 12; published also in *Revue de Hongrie* 19 (15 June 1917): 34–52, and in the Austrian Foreign Affairs Archives, PA X11/463, enclosure of 10 March 1916. See also *Aspirations et agissements révolutionnaires des comités arméniens avant et après la proclamation de la constitution ottomane* (Istanbul: Ingan, 1915).
56. Austrian Foreign Affairs Archives, PA X11/463, no. 21/P.B., Pallavicini to Zimmermann, 10 March 1916.
57. Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Turkish Military Tribunal’s Prosecution of the Authors of the Armenian Genocide: Four Major Court-Martial Series,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 11 (1997): 28–59.
58. Arıkoğlu, *Hâtıralarım*, 175–77.
59. Çalika, *Kurtuluş*, 11, 12–13, 34–35.

60. US National Archives, R.G. 59.867.4016/148, enclosure in report from US Ambassador Henry Morgenthau to Washington, 30 August 1915.
61. Ibid.
62. Noubar Library Archive, Paris, file no. 6 (Kayseri), report signed by five survivors of Kayseri, 25 December 1918, p. 10.
63. Ali Çetinkaya, *Mülkiye Tarihi ve Mülkiyeliler [History of the Civil Service and Graduates of the Civil Service School]*, vol. 3 (Ankara: Mars Publishers, 1968–1969), 989–91.
64. For further study of the details of this episode of organized mass murder, the following works may be consulted: Toros M. Madaghian, *Houshamadian Tomarzayee [Compendium on Tomarza]* (Beirut: Donigian, 1959), 271–304, 315–30; Aleksan Krikorian, *Evereg-Feness: Its Armenian History and Traditions*, trans. R. Norsigian (Detroit: E.F. Society, 1990), 124–50; Stella Loughridge, “Facts in Regard to Armenian Atrocities in the Cesarea District, Asia Minor,” in *“Turkish Atrocities”: Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915–1917*, comp. James L. Barton, 116–17 (Charlotte, NC: Gomidas Institute, 1998); Clara Childs Richmond, “Cesarea and Talas: Turkish Atrocities,” in *“Turkish Atrocities”: Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915–1917*, comp. James L. Barton, 120–28 (Charlotte, NC: Gomidas Institute, 1998); Theda B. Phelps, “Story of Talas 1914–17,” in *“Turkish Atrocities”: Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915–1917*, comp. James L. Barton, 130–42 (Charlotte, NC: Gomidas Institute, 1998).
65. Dadrian, “Secret Young-Turk Ittihadist Conference,” 186–89, 194–95.
66. Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* (New York: Doubleday, 1918), 295–96.

The Ottoman Documents and the Genocidal Policies of the Committee for Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki) toward the Armenians in 1915

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The author analyzes the Ottoman Archives as a source of information on the Armenian Genocide of 1915. He discusses the contradictory positions of two broad groups of scholars on the reliability of these archives, concluding that the Ottoman Archives agree with the information found in the archives of the United States, Britain, Germany, and Austria. He discusses the various categories of Ottoman documents, which mostly came out during the trials related to the Armenian Genocide, which took place from 1919 to 1921, and makes clear that there was a wide-ranging cleansing operation of the archives after the armistice in 1918. The author explores the reliability of this evidence and, based on the existing documents that remain, tries to reconstruct the structure and implementation of the genocide. He concludes that the Ottoman documents clearly show the genocidal intent of the Ottoman authorities and puts the Armenian genocide within the broader context of an overarching plan to homogenize the ethnic population of Anatolia.

This article seeks to shed light on the issue of the “cleansing of the Ottoman archives” and to summarize some of the remaining documents, which could be classified as direct evidence illustrating the genocidal intent of the policies enacted by the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) against the Armenians in 1915.¹

The Categories of Ottoman Materials

Seven categories of Ottoman documents attest that during World War I, the CUP maintained and executed a policy of extermination toward the Armenians:

- (1) *The Prime Ministerial Archive* (Başbakanlık Arşivi), and especially the archives of the Ministry of the Interior. When scholars speak commonly of the “Ottoman Archives,” they essentially refer to the archive in Istanbul known as the Prime Ministerial Archives, or BOA (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri). The documents of the Interior Ministry there are considered the most significant.²
- (2) *Trial transcripts of the cases brought before the Military Tribunal (1919–1921)* against the central and provincial directors of the CUP, as published in the official register of court cases, the *Ottoman Gazette* (Takvim-i Vekayi). Of the twelve chronicled cases, we have complete transcripts of the two trials against the responsible members of the CUP’s Central Committee, the “Special Organization” (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa), and the trial of the wartime cabinet ministers, comprising the minutes of the hearings, indictments, and final

court rulings, fourteen in all. In one of the trials, that against the Party secretaries (Katib-i Mesuller), only the first three of thirteen hearings, along with the final ruling, were published in the *Ottoman Gazette*. The remaining nine trials are documented either only as final court rulings, as in the Yozgat and Trabzon trials, or as Sultan's Approvals, as in the Erzincan and Bayburt trials.

- (3) *The Istanbul press, 1919–1922*. Contemporary newspapers published detailed information about sixty-three separate trials, including complete transcripts—which appear nowhere else—of the Erzincan and Bayburt trials.³ The criminal charges included the murder and deportation of Armenians and the misappropriation of their possessions. Presented at length were eyewitness accounts by such highly placed individuals as Third Army Commander Vehip Pasha, Governor Celal of Aleppo, and “Circassian Uncle” (Çerkez Amca) Hasan, the officer in charge of Armenian “resettlement” in Syria.⁴
- (4) *The Archives of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem* are the only known repository of the documents and trial files of the Commission for the Investigation of Evil Acts (Tedkik-i Seyyiat Komisyonu),⁵ along with the Military Tribunals (Divan-ı Harb-i Örfi). Armenians employed by the Military Tribunals during the armistice years made handwritten copies of these documents, the originals of which are missing. Even though the documents in Patriarchate archive are handwritten copies, they are very valuable and can be considered first-hand sources, since we can verify their authenticity.⁶
- (5) *The Minutes of the Fifth Department's* (Beşinci Şube) *Inquiry Commission*, established in November 1918 by the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies (*Meclis-i Mebusani*) to investigate the allegations against government officials during the war years.⁷
- (6) *Minutes of the Ottoman Parliament* during November and December 1918, when the Armenian deportation and murders were the subject of intense debate in the Senate (Meclis-i Ayan) and the Chamber of Deputies.
- (7) *Memoirs and certain diaries*, including those published soon after the event. There may be memoirs yet to be published.

It is not an exaggeration to say that there exists a double standard among historians on the assessment of these documents. Just as with the Armenian Genocide itself, two factions have formed around different assessments of the above-listed Ottoman materials. Those who defend the “official Turkish thesis,” which considers the events of 1915 unexpected consequences of the relocation during the war years, rely exclusively on the Ottoman documents in the Prime Ministerial Archive (Başbakanlık Arşivi) as the only trustworthy source. This faction not only distrusts the US, British, German, and Austrian documents as politically motivated distortions of the events but also considers the documents presented in points (2) through (7) above unreliable. Most Western scholars, meanwhile, maintain that only the Western archives are reliable, while the Ottoman archival materials in the Başbakanlık Arşivi have been sanitized in order to cover up the genocide and are thus unreliable. These scholars have used the materials presented in points (2) to (7) extensively to corroborate the thesis of genocide.

My central argument in this article is that there is no major contradiction either between different Ottoman materials or between Ottoman and foreign

archival materials. It is therefore erroneous to assume that the Ottoman documents (the term refers here mostly to documents from the Prime Ministerial Archive) were created solely in order to obscure the actions of the Ottoman government. In fact, as I will show in a further article intended for this journal, they contain information that runs completely counter to the official Turkish thesis, elucidating the intent of Ottoman authorities and how the genocide was organized. Ottoman archival materials support and corroborate the narrative of the Armenian Genocide as shown in the Western archival sources. We should therefore change our selective approach to the Ottoman materials, which is based on the belief that they are trustworthy only when they confirm our positions, and begin to consider the archival materials as a whole.

The Matter of the Destruction of Documents

The following statement was published in the 7 November 1918 issue of the daily newspaper *Sabah*: “Despite being researched by the government,” documents relaying information about the “Armenian massacre have not been found”; before abandoning his office, “it is probable that Talât Pasha and the officers under his command had burned all documentation of the general directives regarding the massacres.”⁸ The news was accurate.

The reliable sources cited below indicate that some of the documents from that era were stolen or destroyed. The most explicit of this information can be pulled from the indictment of what has come to be called the “Main Trial,” which is the action brought against the directors of the CUP in the Istanbul Military Tribunal. The prosecutor’s office stated that three separate groups of documents had been either destroyed or “purloined.” The first group consisted of documents of the “Special Organization” (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa), which were nowhere to be found. In the indictment, the words of the prosecution are as follows: “Investigation of what had occurred reveals that important documents pertaining to this office (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa)...have been purloined.”⁹

The second group consists of documents belonging to the Central Committee of the CUP. The prosecution’s indictment states that, again, “all of the documents and ledgers of the Central Committee have been purloined.” Thus, in various hearings led by the prosecution, witnesses Midhat Şükrü, K. Talât, and Ziya Gökalp would all testify that the documents of the CUP had been taken by Central Committee member Dr. Nazım. From those hearings:

Judge: The Union and Progress Party, which was transformed into the Reformation Group [Teceddüd Fırkası] at the direction of the Central Committee, were the official registers and other ledgers belonging to the Central Administration transferred to the Reformation Group?¹⁰

Midhat Şükrü Bey: Of course, sir. However, later I heard that unfortunately Dr. Nazım Bey had taken them. I learned that from conversations with other officials.

Judge: Was that investigated by the Reformation Group?

Midhat Şükrü Bey: No, sir. At the formation of the Reformation Group, your humble servant was questioned; I was called before the Central Committee and questioned about a document. Based upon the testimony of a Records official, it was learned that the entire document had been taken by Dr. Nazım Bey.¹¹

Another Central Committee member, Ziya Gökalp, was to give similar testimony:

Judge: It is being said that important documents such as these were removed by Dr. Nazım Bey. Is that true?

Ziya Gökalp Bey: Your humble servant heard from the office of the general secretary that Dr. Nazım Bey asked for the documents related to the society's history. He had reportedly said that he'd brought them from Europe and that he was taking them for safekeeping. The office said, "Fine, then take them." I heard this afterwards from Midhat Şükürü Bey. However, even later, when I was in prison, I found out that they had removed the other documents. Apparently, it turns out he'd taken all of the documents in a trunk. I learned that later.¹²

The third group is composed of certain documents from the Ministry of the Interior (Dahiliye Nezareti). In order to understand this category, one need only look at the indictment: "Aziz Bey, former Director of General Security, revealed with solid evidence and testimony that was laid out in a memo from the esteemed Ministry of the Interior that important reports and information taken from the office by Talât Bey prior to his resignation were not returned afterwards."¹³ Thus, many memoirs of the era recite an incident in which Talât Pasha, prior to escaping out of the country, had gone "to the shores of Arnavutköy, to the home of a friend . . . with a suitcase full of documents" and "proceeded to burn them in the furnace on the first floor of the house."¹⁴

Removal of documents was not confined to the Unionists; many documents were taken out of the country by German officers. Despite promising that he "wouldn't take any documents" with him when returning to Germany, Hans F.L. Von Seeckt, president of the Ottoman General Staff during the war years, did exactly that. On 6 November 1918, Sadrazam Izzet Pasha made a vocal protest concerning the removal of documents, and Berlin responded with promises to return the records, but nothing was returned.¹⁵

It is also important to note that the removal and destruction of documents did not occur solely during the post-war period. Directives sent by the CUP leaders by telegram were ordered to be destroyed. In a telegram dated 22 June 1915, bearing Talât Pasha's signature but issued by the Office of General Security, sent to all of the regional and governor's offices, instructions are given on how to behave toward those who, in the process of being expelled, converted to Islam. After this message the telegram includes the "demand that the copies of this telegram be seized from the telegraph office and destroyed after this notice has been confidentially communicated to those necessary."¹⁶

There are other sources of information that tell us that the directives sent to the regional offices were ordered destroyed. For example, the indictment mentioned earlier, for the trial of the directors of the CUP, states that the telegram sent to the governor of Der Zor, Ali Suat, was ordered to be destroyed after it was read.¹⁷ In another case, during the third hearing for the Yozgat trial, on 10 February 1919, the judge read out the statement given by the witness, Kemal, mayor of Boğazlayan, before the investigating committee during the course of his arrest. The statement established that the telegrams sent to Kemal had been ordered destroyed after being read.¹⁸ In the hearing on 24 March, the judge reminded Kemal of his statement "before the Commission for the Investigation of Evil Acts [Tedkik-i Seyyiat Komisyonu] that some of the documents related to the deportation had been ordered to be destroyed after they were read."¹⁹

One other piece of evidence that the directives containing orders to annihilate Armenians were ordered destroyed comes from Ahmet Esat (known today by the name Esat Uras), director of the Second Precinct of the Office of General Security. Esat, who was arrested by the British authorities, gave a statement that the many directives regarding annihilation of the Armenians had been sent out to the regional governors

by couriers who had been ordered to read the messages and then return with the originals, which were to be destroyed upon return.²⁰ This information would be confirmed by similar testimony from Yozgat Governor Cemal. In his written statement to the aforementioned commission on 12 December 1918, Cemal reported that “Necati Bey (Secretary to the Union and Progress party for the region) came to Yozgat . . . [H]e executed the letter, signed by Governor Atif Bey, which he held in the palm of his hand . . . I demanded the letter in question from the aforementioned Necati Bey but he wouldn’t give it.”²¹ This statement would be confirmed by similar testimony by Governor Cemal at the eleventh hearing in the Yozgat trial on 5 March 1919. Cemal stated that Party Secretary Necati showed him an order for the annihilation of the Armenians and that, upon his request, Necati refused to hand over the paper; he only showed it. This was also the written statement of Cemal to the aforementioned commission.²²

The Destruction Continues after the War

Once it became clear that the war would end in defeat, the process of destroying documents continued unabated. For example, the following testimony is taken from the Istanbul Military Tribunal hearing that took place on 3 June 1919 for the trial against members of the cabinet. The witness is the former minister of postal services, Hüseyin Haşim, and he is testifying as to how the documents from the War Ministry were destroyed:

Judge: As was understood from the testimony given by the officials from Çatalca, in their defense regarding the issuance of a directive to burn and destroy all communications by telegraph, do you have any recollection as to why this directive was issued?

Hâşim Bey: I cannot remember anything, although there was in fact a notice from Headquarters about the prevention of military communications falling into the hands of the enemy. It was done in furtherance of that no doubt. In fact some of the telegrams weren’t burned but were shredded and sold. It occurred two to three days before your humble servant was working at the ministry. The ministry was dispatching accounting department officials to the Military Tribunal and demanding that they be burned. It’s likely that it’s related to that business. Your humble servant doesn’t recall.

Judge: Sir, it was related only to military communications?

Hâşim Bey: Yes sir, it had to do with military communication and nothing else. Military communication along with communications with headquarters.²³

The individual referred to by the judge, the former deputy director of the Çatalca Postal and Telegraph Office, Osman Nuri Efendi, would be prosecuted for burning documents. His trial began on 4 August 1919. The defendant testified that “I was following orders when I burned some documents. Under the authority of my supervisors I was to burn certain documents from one year to another and I did.” We know that these documents related to military matters. [It is unknown what the final judgment was.]²⁴

After the defeat in war, the burning of documents continued during the armistice period. Upon the resignation of the cabinet of Talât Pasha, the new cabinet under Ahmet Izzet Pasha was formed on 14 October 1918. Izzet Pasha took on the role of minister of war. The first action the Pasha took was “to order the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* [Special Organization, otherwise known as the ‘Eastern Bureau’ within the Ministry of War at the time] to stop all activities, destroy their archival records”²⁵ Ahmet Esat, director of the Second Precinct of the Interior Ministry, gave similar testimony to the

British: "Just before the treaty to lay down our weapons, the staff went into the archives at night and cleaned out most of the records."²⁶

Nor were documents destroyed only in Istanbul during the armistice period. Orders were sent out to the regional offices to destroy the documents in their possession. Refik Halid Karay was the general director of the Postal-Telegraph Office during that time. When Karay's memoirs of the period were published in *Aydede* magazine in 1948, he received a lengthy letter from H. Sadik Durakan, a longtime employee of the Postal Telegraph and Telephone Office (PTT). Later, when Karay compiled his work into a book, the letter was published in full, unedited. Here is an excerpt:

I wish to recount to your honor, an event which I witnessed at that office during the armistice period. As you know, following the Mondros Armistice agreement, the armed forces of the Allied powers, coming in from all directions, began to capture and invade our land. During this invasion, thinking that the documents and communications which were in the possession of the PTT Central offices would be targeted, and in an attempt to prevent those documents from falling into the hands of the enemy, Mehmet Emin Bey, sending an official telegraphic notice to all of the offices, ordered that all official documents, copies of telegrams and their originals, which were in our possession, be completely destroyed.²⁷

It is apparent that some of these telegrams fell into the hands of British forces. On 24 October 1919, a telegram sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Antep regional office was in fact intercepted by the British. The telegram orders that all original telegraphic messages sent to the region since the mobilization for war began be destroyed.²⁸ On 17 June 1919, the then minister of foreign affairs, Safa Bey, while protesting the interception of communications in the presence of the British High Command, admitted that a notice had been sent to the towns and townships of the telegraph office of Diyarbekir to destroy all original documents received by them between 1914 and 1918.²⁹

Despite the fact that there was a systematic effort to cleanse certain documents from the archive, no matter how thorough the effort may have been, a complete purging of any trace of Ottoman policies toward its non-Muslim populations was nearly impossible to achieve. While destroying all the records of the CUP, for example, might be feasible, doing the same for all the communications that went back and forth between the Ministry of the Interior and all the regional offices is another thing altogether. A memo sent to one office was not registered only there but was disseminated to other offices so often that the probability of its appearance elsewhere is extremely high.

Although annihilation of the Armenians came onto the agenda as a party policy, deportation was taken up as a state policy, and the entire state mechanism was put into play in order to execute that policy. As a result, hundreds and thousands of written communications were sent between state offices, between the smallest towns and villages and their regional offices, and between those regional offices and the highest political decision-making bodies. It would be impossible to destroy all that documentation.

Measures against Armenians Were Part of a General Population Policy

The available documents from the seven sources listed above lead inexorably to a single conclusion.³⁰ Before World War I, the CUP formulated a policy that they began to execute in the Aegean region against the Greeks and, during the war years,

expanded to include the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Syrians, and especially the Armenians, a policy that eventually became genocidal. The main goal of this policy was, in the CUP's own words, "liquidating the concentrations of non-Turkish population that had accumulated at strategic points, and which were susceptible to negative foreign influences."³¹ The origin of this plan (or plans), which I call "the homogenization of Anatolia," can be traced to the conclusion of the Balkan Wars.

The concrete preparation of these plans, according to the memoirs of many leading figures, such as member of the "Special Organization" (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa) Kuşçubaşı Eşref, leading Unionist leader Halil Menteşe,³² and CUP Izmir Secretary Celal Bayar (later third state president of Turkey), was made at the beginning of 1914 and especially with the appointment of Enver Pasha to the Ministry of War in January 1914. Kuşçubaşı Eşref mentions a meeting with Enver Pasha in the Ministry of War on 23 February 1914,³³ during which Enver laid out some thoughts about the importance of getting rid of non-Muslims because "the non-Muslims had proven that they did not support the continued existence of the state. The salvation of the Ottoman State would be linked to stern measures against them." In the words of Kuşçubaşı Eşref, the non-Muslims were "an internal tumor" whose "purging" was a "matter of national importance."³⁴ In Kuşçubaşı's words, "the first task was to separate the loyal from the traitors."³⁵ Halil Menteşe states in his memoirs that "Talât Pasha made the removal of all traitorous sources from the nation a top priority."³⁶

For this purpose, according to Kuşçubaşı, the newly established Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa devised a broad plan to eliminate the long-existing burden posed by dangers from within the Christian communities of the Empire.³⁷ Detailed reports were prepared outlining the elimination of the Christian population. These measures were implemented in the Aegean region in the spring of 1914.³⁸

As in the case of the Armenian Genocide, the first measures against the Greeks on the Aegean coast followed a two-track communication and operation system. On the one hand, the Special Organization carried out the illegal operations, including the "services which the forces of the government and public organizations could never hope to perform."³⁹ On the other hand, the government had official population exchange agreements with Greece and Bulgaria, according to which Muslims and Christians should be exchanged and resettled in their respective villages.

With the beginning of 1913, the Ottoman government, in separate treaties with Bulgaria and Greece, had agreed to the exchange of ethnic populations across national borders. The dozens of communiqués that appear in the records of the Ministry of Interior's Office of Tribal and Refugee Settlement (hereinafter known as the IAMM)⁴⁰ prove that the resettlement of Muslim immigrants was organized in a systematic way without waiting for final agreements with the respective governments in the Balkans. In a telegram sent from the office of the IAMM to the province of Aydın, for example, it is ordered that "even though we, upon the proposal of Venizelos, agreed to exchange the Greek population in the Province of Aydın with the Muslim population in Macedonia," since it will take a long time to establish a commission to deal with the details of the population exchange, it is advised to resettle the Muslims who have been arriving step by step in the Greek villages.⁴¹ This document makes it clear that measures were taken in a systematic way to settle Muslims in the villages of Western Anatolia that had been emptied of their Greek inhabitants:

Information is needed as to which villages and towns from the region, the number of residences and the number of Greeks who emigrated from them thus far, along with the names of these villages and towns and number of residences and the property that was

left behind, the general and specific agricultural pursuits they pursued, their industrial and agricultural trades, in type and kind and following their emigration, if there have been refugees who have resettled in their place, whether or not they intend to stay.⁴²

As much as the writers of these communications use the expression “liquidation of non-Turkish elements,” the real target to be purged was non-Muslims. Coded telegrams issuing from the Ministry of the Interior made it clear that non-Turkish Muslims who needed to be resettled were to be “assimilated.” For example, a telegram sent by Talât Pasha to Diyarbekir on 2 May 1916, after making it clear that the Kurds, who would continue to maintain their identity in the region, should not be settled in the areas of Urfa and Zor, states that priority should be given to ensuring that “they [Kurds] should not be permitted to continue their tribal existence nor ethnic identity.”⁴³ Similarly, on 4 May 1916, a coded telegram to the governors’ offices in Urfa, Marash, and Antep urged that the Kurdish refugees be “discouraged from living communally” and that everything be done to ensure that “they abandon use of their language and customs.”⁴⁴

It is helpful to think of this plan to create a new state composed primarily of Turks as having two main goals. The first aim of the plan was to remove all non-Muslims, regarded as a serious threat to the state, from Anatolia. The second aim was to make changes in the structure of the population so that non-Turkish Muslims could more easily be assimilated into the greater body of society.

These policies, which were put into force during the period between 1913 and 1917, resulted in a complete change in the ethnic makeup of Anatolia.⁴⁵ The estimated 17.5 million people who lived in Anatolia at the time were so uprooted that at the end of this period, at least one-third of them had been either resettled somewhere else, deported, or annihilated.

It is important that a clarification be made here in order to avoid confusion or misinformation. What is *not* being claimed is that the deportation or resettlement of the entire Anatolian population between 1913 and 1917 was the result of a preconceived comprehensive plan. The coded communications of the Ministry of the Interior of that period, in particular, point to forty-four different reasons for the movement in population, among them the following:

- (1) For the Greeks in the Aegean region and the Armenians in general, all of whom were perceived as threats to the nation, forced deportation was the main tactic of choice. This took the form of threats, looting of businesses and homes, limited cases of murders, and forced deportation to Greece; the Armenians were more often subjected to killings en route to settlements elsewhere or were left for dead on the road, deserted in remote locations.
- (2) (a) The deportations and forced emigration of Christian citizens were justified on the basis of military objectives; as an example, one can look at the forced emigrations of Nestorians and Assyrians from the Van region at the end of 1914, while the same tactic was used against the Greeks of Ayvalik and the Black Sea shore. The first deportations of Armenians that took place between February and April of 1915 from the Çukurova region would fit into this category also.
(b) Some Arab families were deported for political reasons. The deportation of

Arab families and important individuals from Syria by Cemal Pasha fits into this category.

- (3) The settlement of Muslims who had escaped from the war zones into the regions in the interior was necessitated by the resettlement policies.

There developed a planned policy of resettling the areas that had been emptied of Armenians with Muslims who had come from the Balkans and Caucasus regions at different times and were settled mainly in Western Anatolia.

It is undeniable that there were plenty of instances in which the categories overlapped. For example, in September 1914, from the areas closest to Iran, “the Nestorians who were ripe for provocation from outside” were settled into Ankara and Konya. In order to prevent them from creating a community in their new locations, they were settled in Muslim-dominated areas with strict orders that their settlements must not exceed twenty residences in number.⁴⁶ When, as a result of war conditions and the Russian advance, some Kurds were to leave their places, despite the movement not being planned in advance, they had to be resettled to the interior regions. In their resettlement special attention was paid to keeping them from being too numerous in any of the newly settled locations. A telegram from the Ministry of the Interior demands that attention be paid to “ensuring that the Kurdish refugees who have been moved from the war zones be kept apart from their leaders, Imams and Sheiks, and that they not exceed 5% of the local populations in the interior of Anatolia where they have been dispatched.”⁴⁷

It is extremely important to observe the parallels in organization and staff between the forced emigration of Greeks, which began in the summer of 1914 in Western Anatolia, and the equivalent action of Armenian cleansing from Eastern Anatolia during the war years. Dozens of examples of similarities were documented and reported by US Ambassador Henry Morgenthau and Arnold Toynbee, a British diplomat, from the way the state kept itself in the background while the dirty work was performed by the Special Organization (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa) to the fact that people were forced to emigrate under threats of terrorism and murder and the formation of labor battalions by gun-wielding youths.⁴⁸

The Decision That Followed Extensive Debate

As the above summary indicates, the decision to deport Armenians did not arise as an objective of war but was a part of a larger plan. That decision was also based on a deeper issue, known as the “Eastern Question,” and aimed to put an end to the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire. As one element of a larger problem, the Armenian Reform Agreement signed with Russia in February 1914 for reforms in the eastern provinces can be viewed as the catalyst for a decision that the Armenians constituted a serious threat to the existence of the Ottoman state. The most important document to reveal the true intent underlying the decision for the deportation of the Armenians is an official statement issued by the Ministry of the Interior on 26 May 1915 and sent to the office of the Grand Vizier. This document states that deportation of the Armenians needs to be undertaken so that the Armenian question can be “brought to an end in a manner that is comprehensive and absolute [*leşâslı bir suretde hal ve faslı ile külliyyen izâlesi*].” Although this document has been mentioned in various publications on the subject, the complete text has not appeared in modern studies, except for an extensive summary in one of them.⁴⁹

This document was published in its entirety in the newspaper *Ati* during the armistice period⁵⁰ and explains the reasoning behind the deportation decision from a historical perspective:

[A] reform that was entirely related to Ottoman internal affairs turned into an international issue, wherein by some regions of the Empire coming under the influence of foreigners certain privileges and special administrative organizational regulations were demanded. As a matter of fact, it became bitterly clear that this reform and reorganization, made under duress and foreign influence, caused the fragmentation of the Ottoman nation. This problem, for which a real solution has been sought . . . [as a result of various Armenian actions he describes], the state, by necessity, after consultation with local officials and the military commanders, started . . . an action believed to be completely within the interest of the state, begun necessarily according to proper rules and procedures . . .⁵¹

One sentence that carries enormous weight in this passage is the following: “While the preparations and presentations have been proposed and considered for a *final end, in a manner that is comprehensive and absolute*, to this issue constituting an important matter in the list of vital issues for the State.”⁵² Talât Pasha made similar remarks to Henry Morgenthau. In his memoirs, Morgenthau comments as follows on a meeting he had with Talât on 9 July 1915: “Talaat said that they had discussed the matter very thoroughly and arrived at a decision to which they would adhere. When I said they would be condemned by the world, he said they would know how to defend themselves; in other words, he does not give a damn.”⁵³

The fact that the decision about the Armenians was made after a great deal of thought, based on extensive debate and discussion by the Central Committee of the CUP, can be understood by looking at other sources of information as well. The indictment of the Main Trial states as follows: “The murder and annihilation of the Armenians was a decision taken by the Central Committee of the Union and Progress Party.” These decisions were the result of “long and extensive discussions.” In the indictment are the statements of Dr. Nazım to the effect that “it was a matter taken by the Central Committee after thinking through all sides of the issue” and that it was “an attempt to reach a final solution to the Eastern Question.”⁵⁴

In his memoirs, which were published in the newspaper *Vakit*, Celal, the governor of Aleppo, describes the same words being spoken to him by a deputy of the Ottoman Parliament from Konya, coming as a “greeting of a member of the Central Committee.” This deputy told Celal that if he had “expressed an opinion that opposed the point of view of the others, [he would] have been expelled.”⁵⁵

That the decision regarding deportation went beyond temporary military expediency and was instead intended to resolve the “Eastern Question” forever can be seen in a letter written by Bahaeddin Şakir, published by Ahmet Emin Yalman in his memoirs.⁵⁶ In his work, Yalman introduces Bahaeddin Şakir as a supporter and defender of the policy of “complete annihilation” of the Armenians. Şakir’s letter reads, “It is understood that the presence of Armenians, living as they do straddling the Russian border, constitutes a major danger to the future of our nation. Our nation’s salvation depends on doing whatever is necessary to remove this danger.”⁵⁷ Yalman adds that the purpose of the policy was understood by “some politicians” to be necessary for the “annihilation of the Armenians in order to create a racially homogeneous Anatolia.”⁵⁸

The Aim of the Deportation Was the Annihilation of the Armenians

Many of the documents that came out during the trials state that the purpose behind the deportation was the annihilation of the Armenians. The indictment of the Main Trial refers to many documents that touch on this subject. Among these, the testimony of Ihsan Bey, director of special letters of the Ministry of the Interior, is a good example. While Ihsan Bey was mayor of Kilis, Abdu'lahad Nuri, who had been sent from Istanbul to Aleppo, relayed to him that the deportation was being executed for the actual purpose of annihilating the Armenians. Nuri tried to convince Ihsan Bey of the wisdom of the policy by stating that "I was with Talât Bey and was given the orders about annihilation from him personally. The salvation of the nation is dependent on it."⁵⁹

Vehip Pasha, who had been appointed commander of the Third Army in February 1916, gave this written statement in December 1918 to the Commission for the Investigation of Evil Acts (Tekdid-i Seyyiat Komisyonu), which had been assigned the job of investigating the Armenian deportations and killings: "The massacre and annihilation of Armenians and the looting and plunder perpetrated by their murderers was decided and envisioned by the Central Committee of the Union and Progress Party." According to Vehip Pasha, "A program that had been pre-ordained and executed under an absolute and clear intention for atrocities, firstly by the delegates of the Central Committee of Union and Progress and secondly, pushing the law and conscience aside, using the leaders of the state like tools for the furtherance of the wishes and intentions of that party, having their orders and judgments and persecutions performed."⁶⁰ The Pasha added that the fact that government officers, despite seeing and hearing of the crimes committed, did nothing to stop them and, in fact, often aided and abetted the crimes shows without a doubt that the actions were planned.⁶¹

Vehip Pasha's assertion that there was direct involvement of state officials can also be corroborated. Many governors and mayors who steadfastly tried to limit their actions to deportation alone were relieved of their duties or, worse, killed. One particular piece of evidence that the actual aim was the killing of Armenians relates to an incident witnessed by the Trabzon representative of the CUP, Hazîf Mehmet Emin, wherein Armenians were loaded onto boats and drowned at sea. During a session of the Ottoman Assembly on 11 December 1918, when the incident was being debated, Mehmet Emin Bey, considered an ardent Unionist, commented on the record, "[y]our humble servant saw this incident, I mean, I saw an actual Armenian incident." He then added, "There was a mayor in the Ordu district [a city on the Black Sea]. He loaded up a boat with Armenians on the excuse that he was sending them to Samsun and then proceeded to dump them into the sea. I heard that governor Cemal Azmi did the same thing . . . As soon as I got here [Istanbul], I relayed what I'd witnessed to the Ministry of the Interior . . . But I couldn't get anything done about the governor. I tried for about three years but nothing. They said it was this, it was that, it was war; in short, nothing came of it."⁶²

What is understood from the dozens of transcribed telegrams issued by Talât Pasha documented in the indictment of the Main Trial is not that he wanted state officials to prevent the killings or to initiate investigations but that he wanted all the dead, the casualties of the policy, who were lining the roadways to be taken away. In the telegrams he makes clear that anyone not following his orders to have the corpses cleared from the roads would be punished. For example, a coded telegram sent on 21 July 1915 to the governor's offices of Mamuretulaziz, Urfa, and Zor

demands “the removal of the dead in the streets, with care taken that they are not thrown into streams, lakes or rivers, and that their possessions left behind in the streets be burned.” Again, a coded telegram from the governor of Mamuretulaziz to the governor’s office of Malatya states that “despite the urgency of the notice, the presence of so many dead in the streets” is being brought to the attention of officials in Malatya and threatens “the harshest of punishments to all officials who express any distress over this fact will be reported by office of the Ministry of the Interior.”⁶³

We have other direct evidence to show that the decision to deport Armenians was ultimately meant to lead to annihilation. A telegram dated 21 June 1915, sent by Bahaeddin Şakir, member of the Central Committee of the CUP, to the party secretary of Harput, Resneli Nazım, which was published in the indictment of the Main Trial, contains the following statement: “Are the Armenians who have been sent from there being liquidated? Are the trouble-makers you told us you had expelled being exterminated, or are they just being expelled?”⁶⁴ This telegram was not only used in the indictment of the Main Trial but played an important role in the Mamuretulaziz and the party secretaries’ trials as well.

Similar examples of telegrams were read into the record during the Yozgat trial, which started on 5 February 1919. By the ninth hearing (22 February 1919), twelve telegrams had been read in court that contained statements related to deportation, annihilation, and massacres. For example, in a telegram dated 5 August 1915 sent by the Boğazlıyan detachment commander, Mustafa, to 5th Army Corps Deputy Commander Halil Recayi is the statement that a group of “troublemaker Armenians obtained from town and by chance” were “sent to their destinations.”⁶⁵ Halil Recayi’s response of the same date asks for an explanation of what the term “sent to their destinations” means.⁶⁶ The gendarmerie commander answered the same day with “Since the aforementioned Armenians were troublemakers...they were killed.”⁶⁷ From the same trial, a different telegram, this one from Boğazlıyan Gendarmerie Commander Hulusiye, uses similar language, stating, “‘sent out’ means they were exterminated.”⁶⁸

One comes across many reports from German officers, as well as from the German embassy and consulates, documenting their belief that the Unionist leaders’ plan for deportation had as its ultimate purpose the annihilation of all Armenians.⁶⁹ One of the most damning pieces of evidence is a statement by Talât Pasha recounted by the head of the Armenian desk at the German embassy in Istanbul, Dr. Holleg Mordtmann. In a telegram, Mordtmann states that Talât Pasha had told him, concerning the deportation, that “the subject of it was the annihilation of the Armenians.”⁷⁰ Additionally, a “confidential” report dated 23 August 1915, sent by one Colonel Stange, a German officer, to the embassy in Istanbul, is of utmost relevance. Stange, who had worked with Bahaeddin Şakir in 1914–1915 in the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa (Special Organization), reports that based on his observations, the deportation and murder of Armenians was not being done for reasons related to war or to the military; the deportation, which so often relied on taking advantage of certain circumstances, was the realization of a “plan that had been thought out over many years.” Stange further states that the “deportation and annihilation was a decision taken by the ‘Young Turks’ committee in Istanbul” and that Bahaeddin Şakir was coordinating it from Erzurum.⁷¹

How Were the Deportation and Massacres Organized?

There is no need to discuss in detail the process by which the final decision for annihilation of the Armenians came about, as this topic has been covered elsewhere.⁷² However, the matter can be linked to the defeats of the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa in the Caucasus and Lake Van regions and to the defeat of the Ottoman army by the Russians at Sarıkamış in January 1915. Bahaeddin Şakir, who had lived through this experience and had barely escaped death, was “of the opinion” that as a result of “the behavior which the Armenians had exhibited towards Turkey and the support which they extended to the Russian army . . . one needed to fear the enemy within as much as the enemy beyond.”⁷³ Şakir, who had obtained documents related to the activities of Armenian gangs in the region, traveled to Istanbul near the end of February 1915 and tried to convince his friends in Istanbul that the country had to rid itself of this threat.⁷⁴

There is a very high probability that the decision to exterminate was made during the debates that took place in Istanbul near the end of March. At the conclusion of these discussions, “it was decided that Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir Bey should turn away from the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa’s work that focused on foreign enemies and start dealing with the enemies who are within.”⁷⁵ In other words, Şakir had been assigned the task of dealing with the “internal Armenians.” Arif Cemil commented that “the end result of all this discussion and debate was that the promulgation of deportation had been turned into law” and that “when Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir Bey returned to the Caucasian front, the new agenda completely took over.”⁷⁶ In fact, based on a telegram sent by Talât Pasha on 5 April 1915 from the Special Letters Office of the Ministry of the Interior, which states that “Bahaeddin Şakir Bey will be returning soon and special appropriations will be sent for the refugees,” one can conclude that the decision regarding deportation was made sometime between the end of March and the beginning of April.⁷⁷

According to the documents we have, the deportation orders for the complete and fundamental elimination of this concern were sent to the regions by the Ministry of the Interior sometime around the end of April or the beginning of May.⁷⁸ The earliest document available is a telegram dated 24 April 1915 and sent to Cemal Pasha, ordering that the Armenians who had already been sent to Konya from the Zeytun and Marash regions be further dispatched in the direction of Aleppo, Urfa, and Zor.⁷⁹ Another telegram was sent to some of the regions on 26 April 1915. This telegram stated that the Armenians who are to be sent out of “Zeytun and Marash, Iskenderun, Dörtüol, and Haçin” were to be “sent to the “southeast and Zor and Urfa districts.”⁸⁰ Another coded telegram sent to the governor’s office of Marash on 3 May 1915 ordered the Armenians of Zeytun to be “completely expelled.”⁸¹

Following these telegrams, Talât Pasha began to send telegrams requesting the numbers of Armenians who had been expelled and settled elsewhere. For example, a telegram dated 5 May 1915 was sent to Aleppo, seeking information as to where the Armenians who had been moved there could be settled.⁸² Another was sent to Adana, asking, “How many Armenians have been expelled from Haçin, Dörtüol, and other localities since 7 May 1915, and where have they been sent?”⁸³

When news of an uprising in Van reached Istanbul, the Ministry of the Interior followed up with a coded telegram to the Van and Bitlis regional offices, dated 9 May 1915, stating that the Armenians in the region of Van were to be deported and that the action must “be handled personally.” The telegram states that the deportation will

encompass Bitlis, the south of Erzurum, Mush, and the areas around Sasun and that a similar telegram has been sent to Erzurum.⁸⁴

Based on the coded telegram from Talât Pasha on 5 April 1915, eyewitness accounts, and the reports from German consular offices, it is possible to conclude that the purging of Armenians from Erzurum and its surrounding villages started in the second half of April. In his memoirs, Ragıp Bey, a high-ranking Ottoman bureaucrat, after explaining that he arrived in Erzurum on 14 April 1915 and left on 26 April, states that, “as a result of the Armenian deportations, the poor Armenian girls and women in the area were in the most deplorable, wretched and miserable state. Our hearts were quite wounded at the sight.”⁸⁵ According to reports issued by the German consulate, the emptying-out of the villages surrounding Erzurum had started in early May: “by May 15th, all of the villages... had been emptied out.”⁸⁶

It is probable that during March and April of that year, the CUP's Central Committee had taken two parallel decisions: one for deportation by the Ministry of the Interior, the second for extermination. The Ministry of the Interior was in charge of sending out the orders regarding deportation by way of its official lines of communication to the governors. In contrast, the order to exterminate was disseminated through the *Katib-i Mesuller* (Responsible Secretaries). The annihilation was actually executed with the help of the Ministry of the Interior's gendarmerie and the CUP's *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (Special Organization) gangs.

The most revealing statement in support of the argument that the decisions taken in March and April 1915 were on parallel lines comes from Reşit Akif Pasha. When Talât Pasha resigned in October 1918, and the first government of the armistice period was formed under Ahmet Izzet Pasha, Reşit Akif Pasha was appointed president of the Council of State. He gave a very important speech before the newly formed Assembly on 12 November 1918. According to Reşit Akif Pasha, the Armenian genocide began with a secret order for deportation that was issued by the Ministry of the Interior to all regional offices:

While humbly occupying my last post in the Cabinet, which barely lasted 25 to 30 days, I became cognizant of some secrets. I came across something strange in this respect. It was this official order for deportation, issued by the notorious Interior Ministry and relayed to the provinces. However, following [the issuance of] this official order, the Central Committee [of Union and Progress] undertook to send an ominous circular order to all points [in the provinces], urging the expediting of the execution of the accursed mission of the brigands. Thereupon, the brigands proceeded to act and the atrocious massacres were the result.⁸⁷

This speech was defined by many of the newspapers as “extremely remarkable and noteworthy,” and it was published “in full for its special importance.”⁸⁸

The information given by Reşit Akif Pasha was repeated by Vehip Pasha. In the written statement noted above, Vehip Pasha relates how, based on the statements of witnesses whom he had interrogated himself, the official orders were distributed by way of the governors' offices, while the orders related to the annihilation were organized by Bahaeddin Şakir. Vehip Pasha began an investigation of the crimes and arrested the gendarmerie officers and their assistants whom he suspected. These persons told Vehip Pasha that “Memduh Bey, from the governor's office of Erzincan, had given the order to take action this way, while those who had been directly involved in the deplorable acts had taken their direct orders from Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir Bey.”⁸⁹

The mechanism operated in the following way: the official deportation command moved from the Ministry of the Interior's channels of communication to the governors, who then transferred the orders down to the gendarmerie of the security branch of the Ministry of the Interior. Meanwhile, the attack and annihilation of the caravans of people were organized by the Central Committee through Bahaeddin Şakir. The most important service provided was by the Katib-i Mesuller, whose job it was to distribute the coded orders to all regions.

The Role of the Katib-i Mesuller and Bahaeddin Şakir

The responsible party secretaries (Katib-i Mesuller) played an extremely important role in the Armenian deportation and killings. With the general mobilization on 2 August 1914, the Katib-i Mesuller were responsible not only for establishing the units of the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa but even for directing the actions of some of the gangs. Many telegrams read out during hearings of the Main Trial established their role in these actions.⁹⁰ During the Main Trial, a statement in the second indictment brought against the cabinet members refers to the Katib-i Mesuller as acting like *erkani Mahsusa* ("special high officials") in the party and constituting a secret branch of the government.⁹¹ Because of the special role they played in the events being tried, their prosecution was separated from that of others, and a separate action was initiated against them. In the final court ruling for that trial, the Katib-i Mesuller were referred to as the "secondary criminals on the side, for the society's aforementioned criminal actions."⁹²

There is a great deal of evidence that the Katib-i Mesuller were responsible for disseminating the orders regarding the annihilation of the Armenians to the regions. For example, during the Main Trial, the presiding judge repeated that there was much evidence to show that the party's commands were disseminated to the regions by way of the secretaries and that there were many instances where governors did not obey the orders and were removed from office. Additionally, the judge questioned almost every witness with statements such as, "The responsible delegates went to Ankara, Kastamonu, Erzincan, Yozgat, Trabzon, Sivas and similar places, giving the governors and their offices sometimes confidential instructions. Were you aware of this?"⁹³ The Ankara governor, Mazhar Bey; the governor of Kastamonu, Reşit Bey; and the governor of Yozgat, Cemal Bey, all repeated throughout their testimony in the hearings that they had been removed from their positions upon the application of the Katib-i Mesuller.⁹⁴

In fact, these governors all gave testimony before both the Commission for the Investigation of Evil Acts and the hearings mentioned above to the effect that they had been removed from their positions for failure to obey orders. For example, Mazhar Bey, describing his particular situation, stated,

I pretended I didn't understand the order that was sent from the Ministry of the Interior for the deportation of the Armenians. As you know, while there were other provinces that had already completed the deportation, I had never even started it. Atif Bey came . . . he gave me the order to massacre and kill the Armenians, personally. And I said, "No, Atif Bey. I'm the governor, not a criminal. I can't do it. I'll get up from this chair and you come do it if you like."⁹⁵

The story for the governor of Kastamonu, Reşit Bey, was the same. The court ruling against the Katib-i Mesuller indicates that because Reşit Bey had stated, "I won't paint my hands with blood," he had been removed from the governor's office upon the application of Katib-i Mesul Hasan Fehmi.⁹⁶

The governor of Yozgat, Cemal Bey, gave a written statement to the Commission for the Investigation of Evil Acts on 12 December 1918 that contained similar information. In his statement he explained that Necati Bey, a Katib-i Mesul, had shown him an official written order demanding that the Armenians be annihilated; when Cemal asked for the written order, however, the Katib-i Mesul would not give it to him. Cemal further stated that he told Necati Bey that, “since you don’t appear to have official authority, I can’t at this juncture engage in a sinful act,” thus refusing to obey the order. Within a few days Cemal was removed from office.⁹⁷ At the eleventh hearing of the Yozgat trial on 11 March 1919, Cemal recounted how Necati Bey had told him that the order was in furtherance of the wishes of the Central Committee of the CUP.⁹⁸

Not only did officials risk of being removed from office, there were mayors who were killed for failing to obey an order. The mayor of Lice, Hüseyin Nesimi, did not obey the order to massacre the Armenians. When he demanded that the order be given to him in writing, he was removed from office and later given orders to travel to Diyarbakir; he was killed on the way there.⁹⁹ In his memoirs, the mayor’s son, Abidin Nesimi, recounts that the removal of state officials was done at the behest of the governor of Diyarbakir, Dr. Reşit, and that there were others who were as unlucky. “Ferit, the governor of Basra, Bedi Nuri, the governor of Müntefak, Sabit, deputy mayor of Beşiri, [and] Ismail Mestan, the journalist,” were among those who were killed. The reason for the murders was clear: “the removal of administrative staff who would oppose [the annihilation of Armenians] was inescapable. In furtherance of this...the removal of the individuals named was considered absolutely necessary.”¹⁰⁰ The mayor of Midyat was also among the dead, “by order of the Governor of Diyarbakir, for resisting the command to murder the Christians living within his township.”¹⁰¹ During the 11 May 1919 hearing of the Trabzon trial, Justice Department Inspector Kenan Bey remarked that he had gone to Samsun to conduct an investigation and, while there, “was a witness to an occurrence in the deportation... [in which] the mayor of Bafra was killed.”¹⁰²

Along with the Katib-i Mesuller, Bahaeddin Şakir “traveled around the eastern provinces meeting with governors and others” in an effort to publicize the decision of the CUP’s Central Committee.¹⁰³ During the hearings of the Main Trial, the judge declared that Bahaeddin Şakir had become the commander of the body of all units constituting the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, he would question witnesses as to whether they had knowledge of the fact that both Nail Bey (another Katib-i Mesul) and Bahaeddin Şakir had gone among some of the brigades of the towns in Trabzon province and given secret commands.¹⁰⁵ During the 2 August 1919 hearing for the Mamüretülaziz trial, Erzurum Governor Tahsin testified that units of the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa under Bahaeddin Şakir’s control were responsible for the annihilation of the Armenians:

During the deportation of the Armenians I was in Erzurum... The caravans which were subject to attacks and killings resulted from the actions of those who’d assembled under the name “Teş-ı Mahsusa.” The Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa was composed of two units. When I came back from Erzurum, the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa had turned into a major power and they’d become involved in the war. The Army knew about it. Then there was another Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, and that one had Bahaeddin Şakir’s signature on it. In other words, he was sending telegrams around as the head of the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa... Bahaeddin Şakir had a code. He’d communicate with the Sublime Porte and with the Ministry of the Interior with it. During the deportation he communicated with the Army as

well . . . Bahaeddin Şakir had two different codes with which to communicate with both the Sublime Porte and the Ministry of War.¹⁰⁶

From the telegrams that he issued, which were used extensively to build prosecution cases during the hearings, one comes to an understanding that Bahaeddin Şakir was responsible for all actions that took place in the region. For example, in the following telegram, which was incorporated into the court ruling of the Mamüretülaziz case, Şakir asks the former governor of Antalya, Sabûr Sami Bey, “[s]ince there isn’t a single Armenian left in the vicinity of Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Diyar-i Bekir, Sivas, and Trabzon and they have all been sent to Mosul and Zor, what’s been happening in Antalya?”¹⁰⁷ Another example of such a telegram is the one from Şakir mentioned earlier, during the discussion of the Main Trial: “Are the troublemakers you told us you had expelled being exterminated, or are they just being expelled?”¹⁰⁸

There is still other evidence to corroborate the fact that the Central Committee’s decision to annihilate the Armenians was distributed by special couriers. After the armistice, Ahmet Esat, director of the Second Precinct of General Security, which was tied to the Ministry of the Interior, tried to sell to the British what he claimed were the minutes of a meeting having to do with the massacres of Armenians. He gave the British four separate documents, two of them in his own handwriting. According to the information he provided, messages were supposed to be disseminated to the various districts by couriers who were ordered to read them aloud and then return with the originals, which were to be destroyed.¹⁰⁹

Some Orders for Annihilation Were Sent by Telegram

There were instances in which the orders to annihilate had to be sent by telegram. The final court ruling of the Bayburt trial confirms that the decision to annihilate was sent by the Central Committee to the regions by way of special couriers. The ruling also includes the statement of Nusret, who was convicted and executed as a result of this trial. Nusret’s statement declared that he had received a confidential order from Istanbul stating that not a single Armenian was to be left alive and that those who did not obey this order would be executed.¹¹⁰

Evidence clearly shows that the orders sent by telegram were to be destroyed immediately after they were read. For example, the indictment of the Main Trial recounts that the governor of Der Zor, Ali Suat, was told to destroy a telegram after it had been read.¹¹¹ For another example, during the third hearing of the Yozgat trial on 10 February 1919, the judge read aloud the statement given by the mayor of Boğazlıyan, Kemal, before the Commission for the Investigation of Evil Acts. In this statement, Kemal describes how he was sent telegrams that ordered him to destroy them after they had been read.¹¹² In the hearing of 24 March 1919, when the judge read him his statement, Kemal denied the information with the explanation that he was tired when he wrote it. The prosecutor remarked that Kemal had “thought over [the statement] for about three to four hours” before writing it down.¹¹³ Finally, I should add that the Katib-i Mesuller did not limit themselves to forming gangs and disseminating the order for annihilation. Their activities also included putting on demonstrations that inflamed the locals’ emotions against the Armenians and looting Armenian properties, enriching themselves in the process. In the action brought against them, witnesses were questioned on precisely these types of activities. The final court ruling lists many examples of how the Katib-i Mesuller had inflamed people’s emotions (as in the meeting organized by Dr. Mithat in Bolu), seized the

homes of Armenians, taken over their property and their accounts, and generally organized looting against Armenians.¹¹⁴

These documents, taken mostly from the sources numbered (2) to (7) above, openly show the genocidal intent of the Ottoman authorities and can be considered direct evidence of the Armenian Genocide.

Notes

1. Some of the direct evidence in this article is presented for summary purposes and has already been published. See, for example, Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The Armenian Genocide in Official Turkish Records*, special issue of *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 22, No. 1 (Summer 1994) (reprinted with corrections, Spring 1995). See also Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006).
2. For more information on the Başbakanlık Arşivi, see www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr. Another important archive is that of the General Staff's Military History and Strategic Studies Institute, or ATASE (Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüd Bakanlığı) in Ankara. The first archive is open to researchers, but the second has many restrictions; if one is able to get access to the ATASE, it is only with great difficulty. The administrators control the materials very strictly and, in most cases, deny the requested files in whole or in part.
3. For a complete list of the sixty-three trials, see Taner Akçam and Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Protocols of the Istanbul Military Tribunals on the Investigation of the Armenian Genocide" (forthcoming, 2006, in Turkish and English).
4. The memoirs of Aleppo Governor Celal Bey were published in the newspaper *Vakit* in three installments on 10–13 December (Kanunievvel) 1918. Vehip Pasha's testimony was also published in *Vakit*, on 31 March 1919. "Circassian Uncle" Hasan's story was published as a series called "Tehçir'in İç Yüzü [The Inside Story of Deportation]" in the newspaper *Alemdar*, beginning on 19 June 1919 and ending on 28 June 1919 with the eighth installment, despite a statement that it was to be continued. According to an Armenian newspaper, the threat from the CUP against *Alemdar* caused it to stop publication. Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Naim-Andonian Documents on the World War I Destruction of Ottoman Armenians: The Anatomy of a Genocide," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18 (1986): p. 353, n. 78.
5. This commission was formed on 23 November 1918 for the purpose of investigating the Armenian deportation and the crimes against Armenians. *Vakit* and *İkdam*, 24 Teşrinisani (November) 1918.
6. For example, Interior Minister Talât's cipher of 10/23 May 1915, reproduced by several Turkish authors, can be found in the original Ottoman-Turkish, and in Armenian script in the archive of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Series 17, Dossier H, nos. 571–72. See Kamuran Gürün, *Ermeni Dasyası* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983), 2218; Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 210; Muammer Demirel, *Birinci Dünya Harbinde Erzurum Ve Çevresinde Ermeni Hareketleri (1914–1918)* (Ankara: Genelkurmay, 1996), 52. Telegrams sent from the governor of Mamuretulaziz to the governor's office of Malatya regarding the presence of so many dead in the streets and urging the cleaning of the streets, which was quoted in the indictment of the Main Trial, can be found in Jerusalem. Vehip Pasha's testimony, which was published in *Vakit* on 31 March 1919, is yet another example.
7. These minutes have been published as a book: Osman Selim Kocahanoglu, *İttihat-Terakki'nin Sorgulanması ve Yargılanması* (Istanbul: Timel, 1998).
8. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations into English are my own.
9. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3540; from the first hearing, which took place on 27 April 1919.
10. The final congress of the CUP opened with a speech by Talât Pasha on 1 November 1918. On 5 November 1918, the party would announce that it was passing into history and would formally dissolve. At the same congress the establishment of the Teceddüt Party

- (Reformation Party) was announced. The constitutional makeup and the assets of the CUP were transferred in total to the new party. The judge at the hearing is questioning Midhat Şükrü about the transfer. Zeki Sarıhan, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Günlüğü Mondros'tan Erzurum Kongresine*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Öğretmen Yayınları 1986), 19, 25. For more information about the Teceddüt Fırkası, see Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Mütareke Dönemi*, vol. 2 of *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler* (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1986), 92–138.
11. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3543, 4 May 1919.
 12. Ibid.
 13. Ibid., no. 3540.
 14. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Makedonya'dan Ortaasya'ya Enver Pasha*, vol. 3, 1914–1922 (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1978), 468.
 15. The telegram of Ahmet Izzet Pasha was issued on 11 November and sent by way of the Berlin Consulate for the German state. AA.Türkei 158/21, A48179.
 16. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 54-100, coded telegram from Interior Minister Talât dated 22 June 1915.
 17. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3540.
 18. *İkdam*, 11 February 1919.
 19. *Alemdar*, 25 March 1919.
 20. UK Foreign Office [FO] 371/4172/31307, report dated 10 February 1919.
 21. From the archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Carton 21, File M, no. 494.
 22. *Renaissance*, 6–7 March 1919. *Renaissance* was a French-language newspaper published in Istanbul.
 23. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3573, from the hearing on 3 June 1919 (published 12 June 1919).
 24. *Alemdar*, 5–6 August 1919. According to the Armenian newspaper *Joghovurt*, 6 August 1919, the order was meant for documents dealing with the deportation and massacres; cited in Vahakn N. Dadrian.
 25. Hüsamettin Ertürk, “Milli Mücadele Senelerinde Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa” (typescript), 14, “Ankara Stratejik Araştırmalar ve Askerlik Tarihi Enstitüsü” (undated). Transcribed by Bilge Criss, *İşgal Altında İstanbul* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1983), 147.
 26. FO 371/4172/31307, folio 385, from the report of Heathcote Smith, 4 February 1919.
 27. R.H. Karay, *Minelbab İlelmihrab (Mütareke Devri Anıları)* (Istanbul: İnkilap Kitabevi, 1992), 271–72.
 28. FO 371/4174/15450, folio 182, transcribed in V.N. Dadrian, “Documentation of the Armenian Genocide in Turkish Sources,” in *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review*, vol. 2, ed. Israel W. Charny, 86–138 (London: Mansell Publishing; New York: Facts on File, 1991), 105, facsimile.
 29. FO 371/4174/102551, folios 108–111, transcribed in Dadrian, *ibid.*
 30. I will deal with the documents from category (1) in a subsequent article.
 31. Celal Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım*, vol. 5 (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1967), 1573.
 32. Menteşe held important posts during the war years, such as parliamentary president, and different posts in cabinet (foreign minister, ministry of justice, etc.)
 33. Cemal Kutay, *Birinci Dünya Harbi'nde Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa ve Heyber'de Türk Cengi* (Istanbul: Ercan matbaası, 1962), 10.
 34. From the memoirs of Kuşçubaşı Eşref, who was in charge of running the “liquidation” operation to rid Anatolia of “not-Turcic” elements, as described in Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım*, 1578.
 35. Cemal Kutay, *Türkiye Nereye Gidiyor?* (sohbetter #10) (Istanbul, Halk Matbaası, 1969), 69.
 36. Halil Menteş, *Osmanlı Mebusan Meclisi Reisi Halil Menteş'nin Anıları* (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1986), 165.
 37. Cemal Kutay, *Birinci*, 18.
 38. Since I have written extensively on this subject elsewhere, here I will not go into details of the plan and the preparations for it. See Akçam, *A Shameful Act*.
 39. Cemal Kutay, “Türkiye Nereye Gidiyor?”, 69.

40. The IAMM was established at the beginning of 1914 within the Ministry of the Interior. On 14 March 1916, this office was transformed by a law that granted it expanded authority, after which it comprised many sub-offices. It would grow in power and influence as the years wore on. This new office was called the Ministry of the Interior's Directorate of Tribes and Immigrants (Aşair ve Muhacirin Müdüriyet Umumiyesi, hereinafter AMMU).
41. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 37-1332-C25, coded telegram from Interior Minister Talât to the province of Aydın, 21 May 1914.
42. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 42-158-1332, telegram from the Ministry of the Interior (Bâb-i Ali Dahiliye Nezareti IAMM) to the Regional Office of Aydın, Governorship of Çanakkale (*Kale-i Sultanıyeve karesi Mutasarrıflığı*), 30 July 1914.
43. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 63-172, coded telegram from Talât Pasha to the regional office in Diyarbakir, 2 May 1916.
44. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 63-187, telegram from Interior Minister Talât, 4 May 1916, quoted in Fuat Dundar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskan Politikası (1913-1918)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 141-42.
45. The aim of this article is not to deal with the general population policy of that time. For this aspect of the problem, see Dünder, *ibid.*
46. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 46-78, coded telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to the regional offices at Van, (26 September 1914).
47. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 63-188-1334.B.1, telegram from the Office of Tribal Refugees (IAMM) to Ankara, Konya, Kayseri, Niğde, and other regional and governors' offices, 13 May 1916.
48. Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), 140, 143, 280; Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, 1918), 212. This relationship needs to be the subject of further examination.
49. The summary appears in Demirel, *Birinci Dünya Harbinde*, 53. Sources that mention the document are Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*, 277-78; Azmi Süslü, *Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı* (Van: Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü Yayını, 1990), 110.
50. *Atı*, 24 February 1920.
51. Demirel, *Birinci Dünya Harbide*, 53.
52. *Atı*, 24 February 1920 (emphasis added): "Devlet-i Aliyye'nin Fihrist-i Mesail-i Hayatiyyesi arasında mühim bir fasıl iştigâl olan bu gailenin eşâsh bir suretde hal ve fash ile külliyyen izâlesi esbâbının tehiyye ve ihzârı tasavvur ve mülâhaza edilmekte iken . . ."
53. Henry Morgenthau, *United States Diplomacy on the Bosphorus: The Diaries of Ambassador Morgenthau, 1913-1916* compiled by Ara Sarafian (London: Taderon Press with Gomidas Institute, 2004), 273.
54. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3540.
55. Memoirs of Aleppo Governor Celal, *Vakit*, 12 December 1918.
56. It is important to note here that there is a striking similarity between this letter by Bahaeddin Şakir, sent to Yalman, and other letters attributed to Şakir by Aram Andonian. See Aram Andonian, *The Memoirs of Naim Bey* (Newton Square, PA: Armenian Historical Research Association, 1965), 49-52.
57. Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Turkey in the World War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1930), 220. The same letter by Şakir is described by Yalman in another work: Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Yakin Tarihte Gördüklerimiz ve Geçirdiklerimiz*, vol. 1 (1988-1918) (Istanbul: Yenilik Basımevi, 1970), 332. The critical comments that appear in his English work do not appear in the Turkish one.
58. Yalman, *Turkey in the World War*, 220.
59. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3540.
60. Written statement of Vehip Pasha to the Commission for the Investigation of Evil Acts of the Office of General Security, 12 December 1918. The copy in my possession is located at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, carton 7, file H, no. 171-82. This statement by Vehip Pasha played an important role not only in the Main Trial but also in the

- Trabzon and Harput trials. The entire statement was read into the record during the second hearing of the Trabzon trial on 29 March 1919 and was incorporated into the court ruling for the Harput Trial.
61. Ibid.
 62. M.M.Z.C., Cycle 3, Assembly Year 5, vol. 1, 11 Kanunievvel (December) 1918, 24th Session, p. 300.
 63. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3540, first hearing (indictment), 27 April 1919.
 64. Ibid.
 65. Archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, carton 17, file H, no. 616.
 66. Ibid., carton 21, file M, no. 511.
 67. Ibid. For information on the ninth hearing, see accounts in *Renaissance*, *Yeni Gün*, and *İkdam* from 23 February 1919.
 68. Archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, carton 21, file M, no. 506; *Renaissance*, 7 March 1919.
 69. Just two examples: Grosses Hauptquarteer 194, Türkei 41/1, telegram from Count Wolff-Metternich to Foreign Minister Javo, 1 July 1916; PA/AA/R 14094, report from Scheubner Richter, 4 December 1916.
 70. PA/AA/Bo.Kons./Band 169, report from Head Consulate officer Holleg Mordtmann, 30 June 1915.
 71. PA/AA/Bo.Kons./Band, report from Colonel Stange to German embassy in Istanbul, 23 August 1915.
 72. See Akçam, *A Shameful Act*.
 73. A. Mil, "Umumi Harpte Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa," *Vakit Gazetesi* (10 February 1934), installment no. 98.
 74. "By putting them [the documents obtained] before the attention of the Union and Progress Central Committee, Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir Bey was occupied with the arguments in favor of taking precautions to save the army from a very serious threat." Ibid. (12 February 1934), installment no. 100.
 75. Ibid., installment no. 98.
 76. Ibid., installment no. 100.
 77. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 51-215, 1333CA20. I thank Fuat Dunder for bringing this document to my attention.
 78. I would like to emphasize that here I am only discussing the subject of annihilation during the deportation. Prior to this date Armenians were deported and resettled for reasons that were almost exclusively militarily motivated. For more information, particularly about the deportations that started first in Dörtyol and Iskenderun around February 1915 and later in March and April around the Zeytun and Marash regions, see Akçam, *A Shameful Act*.
 79. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 52-93-1333C9, telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to Cemal Pasha, 24 April 1915. For the document also see Prime Minister's State Archives, General Office, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler*, 23–24.
 80. BA/DH/ŞFR, 52-112-1333-C11, coded telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to the governors' offices of Marash, Adana, and Aleppo, 24 April 1915.
 81. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 52-253-1333-C21, coded telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to the Governor's Office of Marash, 6 May 1915.
 82. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 52-267, coded telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to the governor of Aleppo, 7 May 1915.
 83. BOA/DH/ŞFR, 52-338, coded telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to Adana, 11 May 1915.
 84. Prime Minister's State Archives, General Office, *Osmanlı Belgelerinde, Ermeniler*, p. 28.
 85. Ragıp Bey, *Tarih-i Hayatim* (Ankara: Kebikeç Yayınları, 1996), 59–60.
 86. J. Lepsius, *Der Todesgang des Armenischen Volkes, Bericht über das Schicksal des Armenischen Volkes in der Türkei während des Weltkrieges* (Potsdam: Missionshandlung und Verlag, 1919), 43.

87. *Meclisi Ayan Zabıt Ceridesi* [Register of Assembly Senate Minutes], Devre [Cycle] III, Assembly year 5, vol. 1, p. 123 (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 1990). I use here the translation made by Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Complicity of the Party, the Government, and the Military. Selected Parliamentary and Judicial Documents," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 22, 1 (summer 1994): 29–96, 81.
88. *İkdam*, 5 Kanunievvel 1918 (18 December 1918).
89. Written statement of Vehip Pasha, 12 December 1918.
90. An example of this is a telegram sent by Katib-i Mesul Rüştü, from Samsun on 27 May 1919, wherein he confirms that he has formed the gangs needed in his region. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3554, 5th hearing, 14 May 1919.
91. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3571, 13 Temmuz 1919 (13 June 1919).
92. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3772 (Katib-i Mesuller trial, final court ruling, 8 January 1920).
93. For an example, see *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3549, 4th hearing, 8 Mayıs 1335 (8 May 1919).
94. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3557, 6th hearing, 14 Mayıs 1335 (14 May 1919).
95. Archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, carton 21, file M, no. 492.
96. This information can be found in *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3772, in the final court ruling dated 8 January 1920 for the Katib-i Mesuller Trial.
97. Archives of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, carton 21, file M, no. 494.
98. *Renaissance*, 7 March 1919.
99. Lepsius, *Der Todesgang*, 76.
100. Abidin Nesimi, *Yılların İçinden* (Istanbul: Gözlem Yayınları, 1977), 39–40.
101. PA-AA/Bo.Kons./Band 169, telegram from Walter Holstein, Vice-Consul of Mosul, to German Embassy in Istanbul, 16 July 1915.
102. *Alemdar*, 11 May 1919.
103. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, *Siyasi Anılar* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1976), 236.
104. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3549, 8 Mayıs 1335 (8 May 1919).
105. *Ibid.*
106. *Alemdar*, 3 August 1919.
107. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3771, 9 February 1920, final court ruling from the Mamüretülaziz trial.
108. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3540, 27 Nisan 1335 (27 April 1919).
109. FO 371/4172/31307, p. 396, report dated 10 February 1919.
110. *Tercümanı Hakikat*, 5 August 1920; *Vakit*, 6 August 1920.
111. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3540, 1st hearing, indictment from the Main Trial, 27 Nisan 1335 (27 April 1919).
112. *Renaissance*, 12 February 1919; *İkdam*, 11 February 1919.
113. *Alemdar*, 25 March 1919.
114. *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 3772, Katib-i Mesuller trial, court ruling dated 8 January 1920.

The Destruction of the Armenian Church during the Genocide

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The scholarship on the Armenian Genocide has expanded enormously during the past three decades. Most of these works have focused on the causes and consequences of the genocide, Western responses to and Turkish denial of the genocide, and, more recently, Armenian-Turkish reconciliation. The role of the Armenian Apostolic Church, however, has received little attention in the literature. In addition to its ecclesiastical duties, the Armenian Church has over the centuries performed various secular functions, including, in the Ottoman Empire, acting as the principal representative agency for the Armenian millet. This article briefly examines the responses of the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople to the internationalization of the Armenian Question and then focuses on the three ecclesiastical leaders who played a central role in attempts to address the crises enveloping the Armenian people during World War I: Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan of the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople, Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan of the Great House of Cilicia at Sis, and Catholicos Kevork V Surenyants of the Mother See at Echmiadzin. All three witnessed the destruction of their people and had the unenviable task of searching for the means to end the human catastrophe. Indeed, the Armenian Church itself, a most conservative institution harboring the utmost loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, in the end became a victim of the genocidal scheme of the Young Turk regime.

Introduction

G. Marcar Gregory prefaces his English translation of *The Church of Armenia* by Archbishop Maghakia Ormanian, who served as the Armenian patriarch at Constantinople from 1896 to 1908, with the following observation: “The Church of Armenia has been crushed for centuries between the upper and the nether millstones of political rivalry and conquest, and during these long ages of ‘religious liberty’ has had to be secured by sheer independence of character and the shedding of much blood.”¹ Indeed, since its emergence in the fourth century, the Armenian Church has played a central role in Armenian community life, and Christianity has remained deeply intertwined with national institutions and identity. The Church, in addition to representing spiritual leadership, has also performed various ecclesiastical and secular functions, including diplomacy between Armenians and other nations and religious communities.

The Armenian Church was first established at the Holy See of the Mother Church at Echmiadzin, now in the Republic of Armenia. The vagaries of regional geopolitics and cycles of Armenian political and cultural awakening and decline led to the emergence of other ecclesiastical centers, most prominent among them the Catholicosate of Aghtamar, the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia at Sis,² the Patriarchate in Constantinople, and the Patriarchate in Jerusalem. By the late nineteenth century, when historic Armenian lands had been divided between the Russian and Ottoman empires, the Holy See of Echmiadzin represented Armenians in

the former, while the Patriarchate in Constantinople, established in 1461 as the *millet başı* (head of the nation) under Sultan Mehmed II, represented Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The Catholicosate of Cilicia had emerged as an autonomous entity in 1441 at Sis, once the capital of the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia, but the prominent role assigned to the patriarchate in the imperial capital reduced its status and limited its jurisdiction to a handful of dioceses. The Patriarchate in Jerusalem, whose roots are said to date back to the fourth century, had been closely associated with the authority of its counterpart in the Ottoman capital but served in a subordinate position until after World War I. The Catholicosate of Aghtamar, located in the Armenian *vilayet* (province) of Van, was founded in the twelfth century by the opponents of the Mother See. When the last catholicos at Aghtamar, Khachadur Rshduntsi, died in 1895, the Ottoman authorities left it dormant; by the time war broke out in 1914, vacancy had bred atrophy.³

After the outbreak of World War I, as the genocidal crises began to envelope the Ottoman Armenians, Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan of the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople (1913–1922), Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan of the Great House of Cilicia at Sis (1903–1939), and Catholicos Kevork V Surenyants at the Mother See of Echmiadzin (1911–1930) witnessed the destruction of their people and had the unenviable task of searching for the means to end the human catastrophe. Indeed, the Armenian Church itself, a conservative institution with a long tradition of loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, in the end became a victim of the genocidal scheme of the Young Turk regime.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Armenian Question

The Ottoman state was in essence a theocratic political system, whereby the sultan, as the Caliph (successor to the Prophet Mohammed), represented the supreme political and religious authority. The political system was based on the *millets* (religious communities) that provided for representation and supervision of the ethno-religious communities in the empire, and within that system the Armenian Apostolic community constituted a separate millet, headed by the Patriarchate in Constantinople, where the patriarch served not only as the spiritual leader of the Armenian Apostolic community in the empire but also as the administrative agency responsible for Armenian educational and judicial affairs. Following Islamic tenets, Ottoman society was divided between believers (Muslims) and “tolerated infidels” (non-Muslims), a system that rested on the principle of inequality: Ottoman law relegated non-Muslim communities to a subordinate status, subject to various officially sanctioned discriminatory policies. Conditions across the empire deteriorated rapidly as a result of the economic and military decline experienced by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By the late nineteenth century, the ethno-religious boundaries had not only hardened but also become an integral part of the escalating conflict between Turks and Armenians, although the Armenian community had for centuries represented the exemplary loyal millet (*Millet-i Sadıka*).⁴ The role of the patriarch grew immeasurably more complicated as Ottoman officials and bands of marauding Kurds and Circassians routinely subjected Armenians to various forms of officially sanctioned and unofficial brutalities. While the Ottoman government resorted more frequently to repressive measures toward the Armenian millet, especially in matters of taxation, the Armenian ecclesiastical leadership nevertheless continued to advocate cooperation with officials at all levels of government.⁵

In the meantime, international and domestic pressures from both Muslims and non-Muslim communities demanding administrative reforms, liberalization, and democratization had led to the promulgation of the *Tanzimat* (reorganization) reforms. Sultan Abdul Mecid (1839–1861) had introduced the *Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane* (the Noble Rescript) in 1839 and in 1856 the *Hatt-ı Humayun* (the Imperial Rescript), promising civil and political rights, physical security, and equality.⁶ In 1847, the Sublime Porte had approved the creation of the Armenian Spiritual Council (religious) and the Supreme Council (lay), both under the directorship of the Patriarchate in Constantinople; in 1863, the government had issued an imperial *iradé* (decree) also ratifying the Armenian National Constitution.⁷

Promises of structural reform and just governance, however, remained confined to the halls of pomp and ceremony. Armenian calls for security of life and property and for an end to arbitrary rule, corruption, and heavy taxation went unheeded. The Ottoman government, increasingly mired in economic and military difficulties, especially in the aftermath of the Crimean War (1853–1856), was determined to reverse the course of imperial decline. In fact, rather than implement the promised reforms, it resorted to repressing and persecuting opposition movements, which, in turn, instigated further agitation for anti-government action among various groups, particularly young intellectuals, including Armenians, trained in European universities. Some Armenians also organized self-defense societies for protection against atrocities.⁸

Meanwhile, eastern Armenia, which was drawn into the Russian orbit during the reigns of Peter the Great (1689–1725) and Catherine the Great (1762–1796), was similarly subjected to repressive government measures in the first half of the nineteenth century, as the Russian Empire consolidated power in the Caucasus. While Yerevan and Nakhichevan were granted the status of *Armianskaia Oblast*—an “autonomous” Armenian province—Czar Nicholas I, in March 1836, instituted the *Polozhenie* restricting the activities of the Armenian Church in political matters and establishing czarist control over the church.⁹ The *Polozhenie* required that the Catholicosate at Echmiadzin conduct its relations with the outside world through the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Mother See at Echmiadzin nearly lost its autonomy under czarist pressure.¹⁰

In both Russian and Ottoman Armenias, matters had improved little when the Russo-Turkish war broke out in 1877. In the Ottoman Empire, the outbreak of the war resulted in the suspension of the constitution of 1876 and the termination of the *Tanzimat* in 1878, as the new sultan, Abdul Hamid II (1876–1908/9), deeply distrustful of people beyond his immediate control, could not countenance even the facade of reforms. The sultan’s resistance notwithstanding, the San Stefano and Berlin treaties signed after the Russo-Turkish war led to the internationalization of the Armenian Question.¹¹ Neither the Mother See at Echmiadzin nor the Catholicosate of Cilicia was in a position to assume an active role in the process, since they lacked formal jurisdiction in matters of Ottoman diplomacy. Instead, as had been the case during most of the nineteenth century, the strenuous responsibility of pursuing the Armenian Question fell most heavily upon the shoulders of the Patriarchate in Constantinople. The patriarchate was the only official representative institution for Ottoman Armenians, but the involvement of the higher clergy in European diplomacy ineluctably antagonized the Sublime Porte and raised suspicions about the role of the church in its professions of loyalty.

In fact, two contradictory patterns were set in motion in the orientation of the Armenian Patriarchate with the internationalization of the Armenian Question in the late nineteenth century. On the one hand, despite the deepening crisis, the church in general remained a conservative institution and rejected association with the opposition. Only a small minority among the clergy participated in political activities. On the other hand, the Patriarchate in Constantinople was also compelled to serve as a conduit for the expression of Armenian grievances before the Sublime Porte, as well as in international diplomatic relations. Patriarch Nerses Varzhabedian (1874–1884) and the higher clergy generally encouraged loyalty to the sultan, and during the Russo-Turkish war the patriarch issued an encyclical urging Armenians to support the Ottoman army. However, chronic maladministration on the part of Ottoman officials at all levels of government and the geopolitical situation created by the Russo-Turkish war denied the Armenian patriarchate the luxury of facile solutions through declarations. Growing protests by Armenians in the eastern provinces demanding protection from their Turkish, Kurdish, and Circassian attackers, coupled with the Russian military victories during the war, emboldened Patriarch Nerses to travel to San Stefano to petition the czarist government to include in the post-war peace treaty a provision granting administrative autonomy and protection for the physical security of his flock in the Armenian provinces. Russia, after all, Armenians believed, had repeatedly presented itself as the “liberator” of Christians from the Turkish yoke, and the convergence of interests might finally lead to the desired outcome.¹²

Under the Treaty of San Stefano (3 March 1878), Russia gained vast territories in historic Armenian lands. This treaty also stipulated that the Sublime Porte would ameliorate conditions in the Armenian provinces “without further delay” and protect Armenians against Kurdish and Circassian attacks. The Russian military would withdraw from the conquered territories only after conditions for the Armenians had improved. European powers, most prominently Britain, viewed the treaty as a Russian pan-Slavic attempt to dismember the Ottoman Empire and, accordingly, insisted that it be renegotiated. The Russian government agreed and sent its representatives to Berlin to meet with the European powers.¹³

With the blessing of the Patriarchate in Constantinople, an Armenian delegation of two archbishops and two laymen, led by Archbishop Mgrdich Khrimian, who had served as patriarch at Constantinople from 1869 to 1873 (later Catholicos at Echmiadzin, 1892–1907), traveled to Western capitals hoping to garner diplomatic support for the Armenian cause at the Berlin conference. While representatives of the major powers met, however, the Armenian delegation was simply ignored and left to wait outside. Armenian disillusionment at Berlin turned into utter frustration upon learning the results of the conference. The Russian government had succumbed to British pressure and signed a new treaty (the Treaty of Berlin, 13 July 1878), thereby agreeing to withdraw its army from the conquered territories. To save face on the home front, the European powers included a provision requiring that the Sublime Porte implement, under European collective supervision, the necessary reforms for the safety of its Armenian subjects. The Armenian patriarchate and, most notably, Archbishop Khrimian protested the bankruptcy of Western arbitration regarding Armenian concerns.¹⁴

Growing disillusionment with the European powers and the inability of the Armenian Church to effect changes led to the radicalization of Armenian nationalist movements and the emergence of loosely structured groups such as the Union of Salvation (founded in Van in 1872), the Black Cross Society (Van, 1878), and the

Protectors of the Fatherland (Erzurum, 1881). This was followed during the same decade by the founding of the three major political parties: the Armenagan Party (Van, 1885), the Hnchagian Party (Geneva, 1887), and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, or Tashnagsutiun (Tiflis, 1890).¹⁵ While Armenians in general, albeit with great trepidation, welcomed the party activists to their communities for the physical security they promised, the socialist and revolutionary ideologies these parties espoused nevertheless alarmed the more conservative institutions and classes.

The Armenian Church and members of the wealthier classes, who worked as bankers, merchants, and civil servants in the capital and other major urban centers, viewed the emerging nationalist movement among their compatriots as a nuisance and radical revolutionary activities as a direct threat to their status in official circles and society at large.¹⁶ Alarmed by the growing Armenian militancy and determined to maintain the status quo, Patriarch Nerses Varzhabedian, in a message to the Armenian National Assembly, pledged loyalty to the sultan, with the expectation that the Sublime Porte would implement the promised reforms. The patriarchate, for its part, would continue to direct all efforts to ameliorate the Armenian situation with allegiance to the Ottoman government in mind.¹⁷

No expressions of fidelity, however, could assuage the fears of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, who viewed all Armenian political activity as subversive. Armenian demands for administrative reforms and political liberalization and, more to the point, the involvement of the Armenian Patriarchate in the internationalization of the Armenian Question further antagonized the sultan, who, growing ever more suspicious of Armenian intentions, reacted by mobilizing his Muslim subjects against the Armenian community. When Armenians resorted to armed self-defense, particularly in Sasun, in the summer of 1894 to repel attacks on their villages and families by the Hamidiye regiments and Circassians, the government organized wholesale massacres that, by 1896, resulted in the deaths of more than 100,000 Armenians, with estimates as high as 300,000.¹⁸ Johannes Lepsius, a German Protestant missionary, detailed the atrocities committed against the Armenians. He reported that a clear pattern emerged in the strategy and method of the massacres, beginning in early October in the province of Trebizond (Trabzon) and rapidly spreading across the six Armenian *vilayets* of Erzurum, Bitlis, Kharpert (Mamuret ul-Aziz), Sivas, Van, and Diyarbekir, reaching Aleppo, Adana, and Ankara by late November. Lepsius estimated that 646 villages were forcibly converted to Islam, 645 churches and monasteries were desecrated and destroyed, and 328 churches were turned into mosques.¹⁹ The Patriarchate in Constantinople could not have anticipated massacres of such magnitude, despite the patently hostile attitude of the Sublime Porte toward the Armenians.

By 1894, Varzhabedian had been succeeded by the lackluster Patriarch Harutiun Vehabedian (1885–1888), followed by Khoren Ashegian (1888–1894). Neither Vehabedian nor Ashegian was prepared for the task at this juncture, and the patriarchate failed to pursue the Armenian Question. Patriarch Mateos Izmirlian (1894–1896) sought to reinvigorate the patriarchate after a decade of decline, but his open support for the Armenian nationalist movement undermined his own authority in relations with the Sublime Porte.²⁰ The fact that Patriarch Izmirlian had, in the eyes of the government, maintained close ties with nationalists only exacerbated the situation and marginalized him. Further, easily swayed by European promises of support, Izmirlian expected European humanitarian and military intervention to protect the Armenians. Convinced of that support, Izmirlian demanded that the sultan

punish all officials and individual Turks and Kurds who had committed atrocities against Armenians during the massacres. As Maghakia Ormanian has noted, there was a wide chasm between Izmirlian's expectations and political realities. The government finally removed Patriarch Izmirlian from his post in 1896 and exiled him to Jerusalem.²¹ His successor, Archbishop Ormanian, who served until 1908, brought to the patriarchate enormous energy in matters of cultural and educational affairs, as attested by such publications as *The Church of Armenia* and, more significantly, by his *Azabadum* ("History of the Nation"). He was ardently loyal to the sultanate, but his ultra-conservative stance on matters of reforms and socialist ideology rendered him unpopular among Armenian activists.²²

The repressive regime, economic difficulties, and recurring bloodshed convinced not only Armenians but also the other nationalities in the empire, including Turks, of the urgent need for fundamental structural improvements and changes in political leadership. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the Young Turks, composed of intellectual, political, and military leaders, along with the Armenian and other Muslim and non-Muslim nationalist movements, agitated for such changes. The Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), or CUP, created by the Young Turks, sought to mobilize the revolutionary movement against Sultan Abdul Hamid.²³ The Young Turk revolution in July 1908 was welcomed by both Christians and Muslims. As British ambassador Sir Gerard Lowther reported from Constantinople, "priests met with hodjas in the market place and publicly embraced, and liberty, equality, and fraternity became the order of the day."²⁴ Ormanian, too closely associated with the sultanate, resigned as patriarch under questionable circumstances immediately after the revolution, and the new regime, combining its political victory with the moral, returned Izmirlian from his exile in Jerusalem as patriarch. Within months, however, Izmirlian was elected as Catholicos of the Mother See at Echmiadzin.²⁵

The Young Turk revolution and the reinstatement of the constitution of 1876 seemed, albeit briefly, to have inaugurated a period of revival in Armenian cultural and political life. The liberal faction of the Young Turk leadership advocated the implementation of civil and political rights within a parliamentary system, but neither domestic nor international conditions proved conducive to further liberalization. The nationalist factions emphasized the economic and military revival of the Ottoman Empire and mounted an insurmountable opposition, and the new government proved too fragile in its formative stages to counter such challenges, particularly against the reactionary forces of the sultan. During the ensuing struggle for power in April 1909, two rounds of massacres were launched against the Armenians, in the region of Adana, that by the end of the month left more than 20,000 Armenians dead.²⁶ Patriarch Hovhannes Arsharuni and Catholicos Sahag pleaded for calm and an end to the bloodshed. After peace was restored, the patriarchate dispatched teams of priests, doctors, intellectuals, and other community leaders and public servants to help in the recovery process.²⁷ Such experiences, however, could not prepare the Armenian leadership for the more sinister schemes yet to unfold.

The ultra-nationalists within the CUP, led by Mehmed Talât, Ismail Enver, and Ahmed Cemal, gained in power particularly during the Balkan wars as military defeats forced the Ottoman Empire to make further territorial concessions. In 1913, Enver and his supporters orchestrated a military coup and established the Ittihadist military dictatorship. The Ittihadists relied on the ideology of Pan-Turkism/Pan-Turanism to strengthen their power and political legitimacy,

as they pressed forward to create an exclusively Turkish state at home and aspired to eastward expansionism toward Central Asia for the unification of all Turkic peoples.²⁸ Christopher Walker has correctly noted that “The Armenians failed to grasp the nature of Turkism. They continued to see themselves as Christians . . . Religion was an integral part of being an Ottoman Armenian, so a nonreligious ideology was hard to comprehend. They found it almost impossible to see what it meant to be up against a nonreligious, race-based ideology.”²⁹ The Young Turk regime viewed the Armenian people as an impediment to the Turkification of the empire and to the regime’s Pan-Turkic expansionist and unification schemes—policies that contributed to the Armenian Genocide.

The Genocide

Despite the signs of trouble, most Armenians continued to hope that conditions would improve. In 1910, Archbishop Ormanian concluded his famous treatise on the Armenian Church with the statement that the Armenian was “impressed with the conviction that the Church, which has protected him in the past, will continue to protect him in the future.”³⁰ In a letter dated 19 November 1913 (6 November according to the Ottoman calendar), the popular Armenian poet Vahan Tekeyan congratulated the newly elected Armenian Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan at Constantinople and expressed his belief that the Armenian people had found in His Holiness a person capable of leading the nation toward a better future.³¹ Such expectations were reinforced by the Reform Act of 8 February 1914, initiated by petitions to the Russian government by Catholicos Kevork V Surenyants at Echmiadzin, in cooperation with the Armenian National Assembly, the National Executive, and the Patriarchate in Constantinople. Signed by Ottoman Grand Vizier Said Halim and the Russian *chargé d'affaires* Konstantin N. Gulkevich, the Reform Act promised administrative restructuring to facilitate better distribution of bureaucratic and political authority.³² The outbreak of World War I in July dashed all such hopes, however. As the Turkish government began military mobilization (*seferberlik*), some Armenian men hesitated and even refused to enter military service. Years of Muslim hostility toward their communities had made the Armenians suspect that the mobilization was merely a ploy to remove all able-bodied men from their homes, leaving their families vulnerable to the incessant attacks by *çetes* (brigands) and armed Kurdish bands.

Contrary to the conventional view that the genocide began in April 1915, violence against Armenians began soon after the outbreak of war, and Armenian ecclesiastical leaders, clearly troubled by the developing crisis but adhering to the conservative disposition of the church, insisted on compliance with government demands so as not to give the authorities the opportunity to exploit refusal to serve in the military, and similar instances of insubordination, as a pretext for atrocities. In September 1914, for instance, about eighty Armenian deserters in the region of Maraş and Zeytun Süleymanlı (the “i” at the end is an-dotted “i” surrendered to the *mutassarif* (county governor) of Maraş, Ali Haidar Bey, who had little liking for the Armenians. Armenian community leaders, represented by the local primate, Hovhannes Vartabed Karanfilian, were concerned that such tensions could serve as a pretext for the authorities to resort to military measures against Armenians throughout the region.³³ And, as predicted, Haidar Bey, not satisfied with the number of Armenians who had surrendered to the authorities, urged local Muslims to attack Armenians and ordered the mass arrests of Armenian men. Catholicos Sahag II Khabayan of Cilicia

vehemently opposed any Armenian involvement in armed conflict with the troops; he encouraged the surrender of escapees and intervened to mediate between the local Armenians and the Turkish authorities. Although, soon thereafter, some of the arrested men were freed, most were sent into exile or executed, the fate of their families left to the whims of the local *kaimakam* (district governor), Husein Husni.³⁴

Conditions were made infinitely worse after Turkey's entry into the war in October and the official proclamation of *jihad* (holy war) in November. Far from serving as leaders of a theocratic system, the Ittihadists despised religion and religious institutions. As Henry Morgenthau, US ambassador to Constantinople, observes in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, "Practically all of them were atheists, with no more respect for Mohammedanism than for Christianity, and with them the one motive was cold-blooded, calculating state policy." Referring to Interior Minister Talât, he comments, "I can personally testify that he cared nothing for Mohammedanism for, like most of the leaders of his party, he scoffed at all religions. 'I hate all priests, rabbis, and hodjas,' he once told me—hodja being the nearest equivalent the Mohammedans have for a minister of religion."³⁵ The Ittihadists, like Sultan Abdul Hamid, employed religion as an instrument of propaganda to mobilize the Muslim masses. The *jihad* was aimed at the Allies but also at the Armenians.³⁶

Beginning in November, government policy became increasingly violent, and the political and economic situation for Armenians across the Armenian provinces and throughout the empire deteriorated rapidly. *Çete* bands attacked Armenian villages near the city of Sivas and farther north in the region of Şebinkarahisar (Shabin-Karahisar).³⁷ The newly elected prelate of Sivas, Sahag Odabashian, was killed on his way to Sivas, the murder carried out, it was suspected, with the tacit approval of, if not under direct orders from, the *vali* (provincial governor), Ahmed Muammer Bey.³⁸ On 16 December 1914, an Imperial Rescript nullified the 8 February agreement,³⁹ although the German ambassador to Constantinople, Hans von Wangenheim, hoping to improve Armenian perception of German involvement in Turkey, sought to convince Patriarch Zaven that the implementation of the Reform Act would be resumed after the war.⁴⁰

Enver's failed military campaign at Sarikamış in December 1914 and January 1915 was followed, beginning in February and through the month of March, by the intensification of organized attacks on Armenians. On 2 February 1915, the authorities seized the Monastery of the Holy Cross⁴¹ near the city of Sivas, and on 18 February, under the pretext of collecting weapons, Turkish soldiers entered Armenian houses, arrested some Armenian leaders, and attacked their families.⁴² In early April, the provinces witnessed the arrest and deportation of Armenian notables in growing numbers, while orders arrived that Armenians must surrender all arms and ammunition, and the arrests, deportations, and massacres escalated by the end of April.⁴³

Armenian community leaders, intimately familiar with the Turkish *modus operandi* in times of political turbulence, appealed to the authorities to end the crisis. Catholicos Sahag pleaded for leniency toward the deserters. Minister of the Marine and Commander of the Fourth Army in Syria, Ahmed Cemal Paşa, replied that the authorities would not harm Armenians loyal to the government. Catholicos Sahag also wrote to *vali* Celal Bey of Aleppo *vilayet* regarding the conflict in Zeytun and requested an investigation of the situation. In a letter to Patriarch Zaven, the grief-stricken catholicos wrote: "How will this tragedy brough upon the Armenian people in Cilicia be healed? We are told that appeals to Constantinople are useless."⁴⁴

On 23 April, a group of Armenian political leaders in Constantinople, including deputies Krikor Zohrab and Vartkes (Hovhannes Serengulian), met with the patriarch to assess the situation and agreed to communicate their concerns to the Sublime Porte.⁴⁵ But on Saturday 24 April, soldiers were stationed throughout Constantinople, home to some 150,000 Armenians, and the authorities arrested about 200 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders, including the renowned musicologist and priest Gomidas Vartabed Soghomonian. These arrestees were exiled to the interior, and an additional 600 people were subsequently arrested. Extensive searches for weapons followed, and within weeks more than 2,300 Armenians had been arrested in Constantinople. Some of them were sent to the predominantly Muslim town of Ayaş, west of Ankara city, and others farther east, to Çankırı and Çorum.⁴⁶

Soon the entire Armenian nation became engulfed in terror, as the Young Turk regime began the deportations while Turks and Kurds attacked Armenian towns. In March, Patriarch Zaven, in a brief but anxious message to Catholicos Sahag, expressed grave concerns about the ominous events unfolding in the empire's Armenian communities. The patriarch appealed to the authorities for a peaceful resolution of the crisis without further bloodshed and requested that the catholicos again petition the Sublime Porte.⁴⁷ In late April 1915, Catholicos Kevork V Surenyants of the Mother See at Echmiadzin sent an urgent telegram to Boghos Nubar,⁴⁸ whom the catholicos had appointed in 1912 to lead the Armenian National Delegation to secure European support in Armenian matters, stating that massacres and "bloody turbulence" had occurred in Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, and Cilicia. The catholicos further informed Boghos Nubar that he had appealed to US President Woodrow Wilson, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, and King Victor Emmanuel of Italy to use their good offices with Constantinople to find the means to end the persecutions so that at least unarmed civilians could be protected.⁴⁹ Referring to the appeal by the catholicos, US Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan directed Ambassador Morgenthau to call the Sublime Porte's attention to this matter. Interior Minister Talât replied that the Sublime Porte had instructed the authorities in the provinces "to protect all innocent people from molestation."⁵⁰

In May 1915, Armenians with no record of political involvement were being arrested in increasing numbers, condemned to hard labor to die of starvation and exhaustion, or else killed soon after their forced deportation. The Armenian prelate of Kayseri, Bishop Khosrov Behrigian, was arrested and handed over to the military courts; subsequently, accused of favoring Russian military liberation of Armenians, he was deported, together with a caravan of hundreds of refugees, and murdered along with several other prominent figures on the road to Diyarbekir.⁵¹ During the second half of May, 200 Armenians in Yozgat, including businessmen, government officials, intellectuals, and the local primate, Bishop Nerses Tanielian, were arrested, marched out of town, and finally murdered in a valley some distance away.⁵² The prelate of Erzurum, Archbishop Smpad Saadetian, along with a caravan of 7,000 Armenians, was deported to Malatya and met a similar fate in July.⁵³

Efforts by Armenian ecclesiastical leaders and their supporters to draw the attention of the Allied Powers to the Armenian crisis seemed to produce a positive result when, on 24 May 1915, Britain, France, and Russia issued a joint declaration stating that they "announce publicly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold all members of the Government, as well as such of their agents as are implicated, personally responsible for such massacres."⁵⁴ Boghos Nubar intimated to Lieutenant-Colonel G.M. Gregory, president of the United Armenian Association in London, that,

upon reading the declaration, he was satisfied that “the Allies are taking our cause seriously and are ready to offer us their complete collaboration.”⁵⁵

Such declarations had little effect on the Ittihadists’ decisions regarding the Armenians. In fact, on 29 May 1915, the government instituted the Temporary Law of Deportation, authorizing the military to oversee the wholesale deportation of the Armenian population.⁵⁶ The full ramifications of this law with respect to the Armenian people, but also with respect to the authority of the Armenian Church, were amply clear when Patriarch Zaven went to see Talât Pasha in June to plead for an end to the deportations and killings. The latter refused to see the patriarch and instead responded in a message stating, “Let him say whatever he has to the Minister of Justice; that’s the *merji’ah* [place of authority] where he should go.”⁵⁷ The patriarch then held a conference with the minister of justice and religious affairs, Pirzade Ibrahim Bey. Their heartrending conversation is worth quoting here:

Patriarch: Several [of] our Nation’s Prelates are languishing in jail, and we have no news from the rest. Priests are suffering in jail and at their places of exile. Churches are demolished or locked up, and the people are being pushed toward the desert.

Minister Ibrahim Bey: I have no information about the Prelates being jailed.

Patriarch: Yes, I know for a fact that the Prelates of Gesaria, Brusa, Trebizond, and Dikranagerd have been imprisoned. As for the other Prelates, I do not know what may have happened to them, because I have not received responses to my telegrams . . . Now that I do not have my Prelates, priests, or flock, whose spiritual leader am I?

Minister Ibrahim Bey: As Minister of Justice, I accept the petition that you are submitting to me concerning religious matters, but the part in it that pertains to the common people does not fall under my jurisdiction.

Patriarch: A spiritual leader cannot exist without the common people, just like a shepherd cannot exist without his flock, nor an *imam* [Muslim priest] without his *jemaat* [believers]. It is only natural that I should come to inquire of you as to the whereabouts of my people, so that I might take care of their needs. When my people are uprooted and driven toward the mountain and the desert, how can I be their leader any more?

Minister Ibrahim Bey: Do not say, “They are driven!” Yet, more as a friend than as an official, I assure you that the government has made and is making all the arrangements for their comfort.⁵⁸

During a meeting with Grand Vizier Salim Pasha, Patriarch Zaven pleaded, “The exceptional situation in which my Nation finds itself compels me to ask for the State’s mercy.” Salim replied that the government, although confronted with a “structured organization” and a segment of the population that “has taken up arms against us,” did not intend to annihilate the Armenians but, rather, was “implementing a *tedbir* [precautionary measure] and . . . removing the Armenians from those Provinces.” The grand vizier commented that this policy was “not a *jeza*” (i.e., not a punishment). The patriarch countered that it was a “big *jeza*, and it is not even proportionate [to] the imputed crimes!” His flock, now composed mostly of women and children, was being deported to the mountains and the desert. “What will happen to them? May God have pity on them!” The grand vizier inquired, “*Talaata getmedin mi?*” (Did you not go to Talât?). When the patriarch replied that Talât had refused to see him, the grand vizier concluded the conversation thus: “*Bunlar olmamalı idi!*” (These should not have happened).⁵⁹

Unable to move the Young Turk leaders to terminate the deportations and the bloodshed, Armenian Church leaders intensified their appeals to the Western powers

and to world public opinion. Patriarch Zaven wrote to the prelate of the Armenian Church in Bulgaria, Bishop Ghevont Turian, with appeals to disseminate information about the atrocities being committed by the Young Turk regime against the Armenians.⁶⁰ In a number of letters the patriarch implored Bishop Turian to “find a remedy to this frightful situation” by convincing the Allied Powers to put pressure on the Young Turk regime to stop further persecution and murder of the Armenians.⁶¹ The patriarch informed Turian:

One after the other, populations from Samson and Gesaria all the way to and including Dikranagerd and Edessa [Urfa] have been put on the road. The Armenian populations of Trebizond, Sepasdia, Kharpert, Paghesh, Van, and Dikranagerd, from the oldest to the youngest and excepting not a single person, have been driven to the deserts of Mesopotamia—from areas south of Aleppo to Mosul and Baghdad.⁶²

In July 1915, Catholicos Kevork V of the Mother See at Echmiadzin appealed to President Wilson to find a means “in the name of humanity and our holy Christian faith” to intervene to end the atrocities and massacres.⁶³ He also advised his envoy in London, Boghos Nubar, “to protest to the Allies and the neutral states” and to appeal for the prevention of further deportations and annihilation of the Armenians.⁶⁴ Boghos Nubar, for his part, informed Bishop Turian that “unfortunately, the authorities [of the United States and Italy] have not succeeded in persuading the Sublime Porte to change its policy toward the Armenians. As Your Eminence had mentioned in the report, this policy aims at the annihilation of the Armenian nation. Thus, in spite of these appeals, the persecutions have continued.”⁶⁵ Several weeks later, Catholicos Kevork V sent another appeal to the Western powers to intervene—but to no avail.⁶⁶ On 26 September 1915, the Ittihadists promulgated the Temporary Law on Expropriation and Confiscation, permitting the government to seize the goods and properties of the deported.⁶⁷ In December, Count Paul Wolff-Metternich, Ambassador Wangenheim’s successor in Constantinople, commented in a telegram to Berlin that “protests are useless and Turkish denials that no more deportations are to be undertaken are worthless.”⁶⁸

By the end of 1915, most of the Armenians had been deported from their ancestral homeland, with only a handful of locations evincing sufficient capability to demonstrate resistance. These included Van, Şebinkarahisar, Şanlıurfa, Zeytun, Bitlis, and Musa Dagh, the last immortalized by Franz Werfel’s *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*.⁶⁹ Most of the local Armenian priests were imprisoned and murdered or, if left alive, deported; some of them chose to depart from the customary orientation of the patriarchate and took part in local resistance movements. In a letter to Catholicos Kevork V, Father Vartan Varteresian, who for years had served as the local priest at Suedia, noted that four other local priests had participated in the resistance at Musa Dagh.⁷⁰

The genocidal policies of the Young Turk regime entered a new phase as the Ittihadists sought to liquidate the Armenian Church. In December, Talât sent an urgent telegram to authorities in Aleppo *vilayet* instructing that those Armenian clergy who had been able to reach Syria and Jerusalem be annihilated.⁷¹ Indeed, as Morgenthau states in his *Story*,

Nothing was sacred to the Turkish gendarmes; under the plea of searching for hidden arms, they ransacked churches, treated the altars and sacred utensils with the utmost indignity, and even held mock ceremonies in imitation of the Christian sacraments. They would beat the priests into insensibility, under the pretense that they were the centres of sedition. When they could discover no weapons in the churches, they would

sometimes arm the bishops and priests with guns, pistols and swords, then try them before courts-martial for possessing weapons against the law, and march them in this condition through the streets, merely to arouse the fanatical wrath of the mobs.⁷²

The Abolition of the Armenian Church⁷³

In early 1916 the central government informed the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople and the Catholicosate at Sis of their intention to terminate both institutions. Now that nearly the entire Armenian population had been removed from their homeland, the services of the patriarchate as the representative of the Armenian millet were no longer needed. In January 1916, the patriarch was notified of the Ittihadist government's intention to nullify the Armenian National Constitution, and on 28 July/10 August of the same year the government abolished the Patriarchate in Constantinople and the Catholicosate of Aghtamar, ordering the virtually defunct Catholicosate of Aghtamar to be combined with the patriarchates in Jerusalem and Constantinople. It further ordered the Catholicosate of Sis to remain permanently in Jerusalem and to assume the title of Catholicos-Patriarch.⁷⁴ The Ministry of Justice and Religion submitted a statement to the Armenian Patriarchate announcing the abolition of his authority. Addressed to Patriarch Zaven, the communication concluded: "Your position and the structure of the Armenian Patriarchate have come to an end."⁷⁵ The government also ordered the patriarch to move to Baghdad and thence to Mosul, where he remained until the conclusion of the war. The seminarians at the Armash Seminary were ordered to Jerusalem or else—very much like their compatriots—were dispersed, exiled, and murdered.⁷⁶ Former patriarch Ormanian was deported to Damascus in 1917.⁷⁷ Harry Stuermer, wartime correspondent for the *Kölnische Zeitung* in Constantinople, commented that

by dissolving the Patriarchate in the Capital, breaking off all relations with the Armenian headquarters in Etzmiadjin and allowing only a very small remainder of Patriarchate to be sent up in Jerusalem under special state supervision, the Turks, as a logical sequence to the Armenian atrocities, simply dealt a death-blow in the summer of 1916 to this important social institution.⁷⁸

In the meantime, Catholicos Sahag, who had been exiled to Aleppo in late 1915, was notified by Cemal Paşa of the decision regarding the restructuring of the Armenian Church. In so doing, the government limited what little legal protection and privileges the Armenian Church had retained during the preceding years. Immediately after Catholicos Sahag arrived at Aleppo, however, the authorities demanded that he take up residence at the Patriarchate in Jerusalem, where he remained, at the St. James Monastery, until the end of August 1916. In one of his reports to the Armenian patriarchate, Catholicos Sahag describes the conditions there:

The road from Aleppo to Damascus was lined with thousands of Armenian refugees. Some were living in tents and others in the open air, begging for bread and water and asking for news about their friends. We went through places where one *tenekeh* [tin can] of water cost six to seven piasters, but still there was no one to give it. Many refugees—no one knows the exact number—are in the area of Kerek, and in the district of Salt there are about 400 households. Every village has 100 households of refugees, and in the *sanjak* of Serai there are approximately 500 households. These people come to the monastery, where they receive 30 to 40 loaves of bread a day, which [they] eat in the kitchen. About 80 refugees from Adana—with the special favor of Jemal Pasha—have arrived in Jerusalem and are living in the monastery compound.

There are also many soldiers with their families. Every day, two or three Armenian *amele* [laborers] die.⁷⁹

Catholicos Sahag also lamented the restructuring of the Armenian Church: “I suppose I am to be congratulated for the honor bestowed upon me as the Catholicos-Patriarch of Cilicia, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. This restructuring is nothing but the destruction of our historic Church, our spiritual center, the heart and soul of our people.”⁸⁰

The deportation of Patriarch Zaven and Catholicos Sahag of Cilicia left only Catholicos Kevork V of Echmiadzin, among the ecclesiastical leaders, to pursue matters with the Western governments. After several entreaties to the latter for some form of intervention, Catholicos Kevork had, during 1915 and 1916, come to accept the fate of his compatriots across the Ottoman border. He was encouraged, however, based on communications from his envoy Boghos Nubar, that after the war the Allied Powers would provide the necessary support for an Armenian homeland free of Turkish rule. As early as 28 July 1915, Boghos Nubar reported that, having visited several high-ranking officials in London, he was pleased that “the British government will graciously agree to support our national cause until its accomplishment, when the time will come to decide the fate of the Ottoman Empire, after the victory of the Allies.” Boghos Nubar expressed confidence that his “negotiations have been quite fruitful, and Russia, France, and England show a friendly disposition toward our cause.” His next letter reiterates this point: “We can rest assured that after the final victory of the Allies, we shall have the benefit of their support to accomplish our plan.”⁸¹

While in February 1916, as a result of the Russian capture of Erzurum, Boghos Nubar urged Catholicos Kevork V to maintain close relations with the czarist government as the only reliable ally with “favorable inclination and unanimous feelings” toward the Armenian Question, the Sykes-Picot Agreement signed by the Allied Powers in April shifted Boghos Nubar’s attention to British and French post-war aims and, particularly, French aspirations concerning Cilicia.⁸² It was ironic at best that Boghos Nubar, serving as the personal envoy of the catholicos at Echmiadzin, would insist on including Cilicia as part of the envisioned Armenian homeland, when in fact the catholicos, in his capacity, could have exerted little influence in matters pertaining to the region. The catholicos sought to maintain close relations with Russia’s provisional government after the revolution that overthrew the czarist government in February 1917, but hopes for Russian engagement to provide protection for Armenian refugees began to dissipate after the Bolshevik revolution in October–November 1917.⁸³

Nevertheless, despite the calamitous events since 1914, what inspired most hope was the reestablishment, in May 1918, of an Armenian government in the Caucasus, with the city of Yerevan, about thirteen miles from Echmiadzin, as its capital. The last Armenian government in the region, the Bagratuni kingdom, had been destroyed by the Seljuk invasions in the eleventh century. The Allied victory and occupation of Constantinople and parts of the interior gave rise to expectations that the promises (such as the 24 May joint declaration) expressed during the war, when there was no Armenian government, would surely be realized now that a sovereign Armenian government had formal representation before the victors. Yet, as General Kress von Kressenstein, head of the German delegation in the Caucasus, reported to the German foreign ministry in August 1918, the deplorable conditions across the Republic of Armenia, where thousands of refugees were living in chaos and starving to death, rendered political and economic normalcy utterly inaccessible to both the government

in Yerevan and the Catholicosate at Echmiadzin.⁸⁴ With respect to the role of the Armenian Church, the Allied victory redirected international attention from the Catholicosate at Echmiadzin as the center of Armenian ecclesiastical authority to the Patriarchate in Constantinople and the Catholicosate of Sis as some of the survivors began their long-awaited return to the homeland.

Reinstitution of the Armenian Church after the War

Immediately after the Mudros Armistice of 30 October 1918, the defeated Turkish government, on 4 November, repealed the Temporary Law of Deportation,⁸⁵ and on 20 November the legal status of the Armenian Patriarchate was restored according to the National Constitution of 1863. The government also reinstated the Catholicosate of Cilicia at Sis, although it was to retain the title assigned under the 1916 decree of Catholicos-Patriarch.⁸⁶ Patriarch Zaven, known for his pro-British orientation, returned to Constantinople on the British destroyer *Acacia* on 19 February 1919.⁸⁷

Upon resuming his post on 20 February 1919, the patriarch oversaw the reorganization of the ecclesiastical and secular structures of administration, consisting of the National General Assembly and administrative assemblies. Thereafter, the patriarchate and the associated organizations in Constantinople instituted a number of social services, most prominently to care for the orphans of the massacres. They established the Orphan Collection Agency, the Orphan Care Agency, and the Society for Deportees; the latter two merged on 28 February 1919 to form the Armenian National Trusteeship.⁸⁸ The National Trusteeship supervised several orphanages and relocation posts, including, for example, the Beylerbey Orphanage and the Beşiktaş Orphanage for Girls. Armenian compatriotic societies contributed to their efforts. Armenians from Kayseri, for example, established the Compatriotic Society of Kayseri Natives,⁸⁹ which organized efforts to gather and care for the orphans from the region. The National Assembly introduced a “fatherland tax” to meet the financial needs of the orphans. By December 1922, about 3,000 Armenian orphans had been rescued, of an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 in Constantinople alone. A large number of them emigrated to Europe, the United States, and Canada. In Cilicia, Syria, Lebanon, and Armenia, tens of thousands of orphans remained in need of care in several orphanages, as in Adana, Maraş, Aleppo, Juné, and Gumri.⁹⁰ The Mother See at Echmiadzin, in cooperation with the nascent government, spearheaded the relief effort for the refugees in Gumri, in Yerevan, and across Armenia, but the post-World War I military, economic, and political chaos plaguing the Caucasus undermined all such efforts.⁹¹

In a letter to Catholicos Kevork V in May 1919, Patriarch Zaven listed the names of twenty-five prelates of the Armenian Apostolic Church who had been imprisoned, tortured, and murdered. Among them were some of the brightest leaders of the Armenian Church in the early twentieth century, including Bishop Smpad Saadetian, prelate of Erzurum; Bishop Khosrov Behrigian, prelate of Kayseri; and Bishop Nerses Tanielian, prelate of Yozgat. Patriarch Zaven added that as of yet it would be impossible to prepare a complete list of the clergy who had perished during the genocide, but he estimated that the total number of Armenian lives lost exceeded 1.25 million. The primary task now was to marshal the financial, human, and organizational resources of Armenian communities to coordinate the revival of Armenian spiritual, cultural, educational, economic, and political life—the very life that the Young Turks had sought to destroy.⁹²

Having resumed his post, Catholicos Sahag began the task of reorganizing the Armenian community in Cilicia as thousands of refugees began their homeward

journey. In January 1919, he communicated to British General Sir Edmund H.H. Allenby, then British high commissioner for Egypt and Sudan, the urgent need to disarm the Muslim population in Cilicia, as the repatriating Armenians feared a recurrence of wholesale massacres. The catholicos warned that since the architects of the genocide had thus far gone unpunished, while the repatriating Armenians were reclaiming their properties, renewed bloodshed appeared inevitable.⁹³ Despite such warnings, the Allied Powers did little to prevent further Armenian calamities. Instead, as the catholicos observed in a letter to Boghos Nubar, the Allies allowed Patriarch Zaven to return to Constantinople merely to be employed in collecting relief funds.⁹⁴

Repatriation of Armenian refugees from northern Syria began in the summer of 1919, and by early 1920 thousands of Armenians had repatriated to the region of Cilicia. Armenian life appeared to be on the road to revival as the Armenian Apostolic, Protestant, and Catholic churches and various organizations, schools, and orphanages resumed their community activities and served the repatriates.⁹⁵ The Catholicosate of Cilicia directed the organizational life of several orphanages, the largest concentrations being in Adana, Aintab, and Aleppo. In September 1919, Catholicos Sahag returned to Adana and then to Sis to begin the process of reconstruction. Beginning in March 1920, he traveled to France, England, and Italy to present the Armenian case before the victorious Allied Powers, but by the time he returned to Adana in November, a series of peace treaties—the Treaty of London (19 March 1920), the Treaty of San Remo (18 May 1920), and the Treaty of Sèvres (10 August 1920)—had so altered the geopolitical situation in Turkey and the Middle East as to render his mission superfluous. The conferences in European capitals produced much praise for the Armenians and the Cilician catholicos but little concrete support for the Armenians. The Kemalist movement and the French refusal to support Cilician Armenians led to the final destruction of the Cilician Catholicosate in Sis by the end of 1921. Catholicos Sahag departed from Cilicia for the last time on 25 November 1921, a month after the signing of the Franco-Turkish treaty (the Treaty of Ankara, 20 October 1921) that recognized the Kemalist government at Ankara.⁹⁶ By then, thousands of Muslim *muhajirs* (refugees) arriving to Cilicia from different parts of the empire had seized Armenian homes, and the seminary of the catholicosate in Sis had been converted into a school for the children of the *muhajirs*.

The Catholicosate of Cilicia in Exile

For several years, the Catholicosate of Cilicia lacked its own institutional base.⁹⁷ The ancient city of Aleppo, which had historically been one of the major dioceses of the Cilician Catholicosate, at first appeared to be the principal candidate for the post-genocide seat. After the removal of the Catholicosate from Sis and the total deportation and massacres of the Armenians across Cilicia, a considerable proportion of the refugees arriving from Cilicia and the eastern provinces were in northern Syria, and the city of Aleppo could play a central role in the organization of relief activities. The prelacy at Aleppo was already representing the Armenian refugees in official matters regarding relief funds and directing several committees engaged in the distribution of goods.⁹⁸ But it would be some years before the Armenian Church could recover from the destruction suffered during the genocide.

According to the statistics kept by the Patriarchate in Constantinople, prior to World War I there were 3,788 churches and 3,909 parishes in Ottoman and Russian Armenia.⁹⁹ Four decades later, as Table 1 shows, there was a total of 417 churches and 446 parishes.¹⁰⁰ Whereas before World War I there were 2,138

Table 1: Statistics on Armenian apostolic dioceses

	Before World War I		1954	
	Churches	Parishes	Churches	Parishes
Patriarchate of Constantinople	1,634	1,778	38	42
Catholicosate of Echmiadzin	1,650	1,660	330	354
Catholicosate of Cilicia	214	267	40	45
Patriarchate of Jerusalem	18	10	9	5
Catholicosate of Aghtamar	272	194	0	0
Total	3,788	3,909	417	446
Total in the Ottoman Empire	2,138	2,249	–	–
Total in the Republic of Turkey	–	–	38	42

Source: Maghakia Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia*, trans. G. Marcar Gregory, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: St. Vartan Press, 1988), appendices II and III, 239–45.

churches in the Ottoman Empire, the figure had dropped to thirty-eight by 1954. Equally significant, while prior to the genocide all of the Cilician churches were located in Cilicia, their number not only declined from 214 to forty as a result of the genocide, but all of them were found in foreign lands, in diasporan communities hundreds, if not thousands, of miles from the homeland. The historic Catholicosate of Cilicia at Sis, once the Holy See within a thriving Armenian kingdom, had witnessed a dramatic diminution in its authority and jurisdiction under Ottoman tutelage and was, in the end, completely destroyed under the Young Turk regime. So too did the Catholicosate of Aghtamar, with its once thriving parishes along the Lake Van basin, perish during the genocide.

To be sure, the destruction of the Armenian churches during and since the genocide was representative of the Turkish drive first to annihilate the Armenian people and then to eradicate all memories of its existence across the ancient Armenian homeland. Having nearly accomplished the first objective, the Turkish government has been engaged in a campaign of denial and eradication since the establishment of the Kemalist regime in 1923. Referring to similar comparative data, Karekin Vartabed Sarkissian—then the dean of the Armenian Theological Seminary at Antelias, Lebanon, later Catholicos of Cilicia at Antelias, and subsequently Catholicos of All Armenians at Echmiadzin—has put it most aptly: “The simple comparison is more eloquent about the consequences of the massacres than any comment made by the most highly gifted historian.”¹⁰¹

Despite the devastation, the Armenian Church has remained the principal institution in perpetuating the memory of the nation’s martyrdom; for the past nine decades, the church has led the commemoration of the genocide. On 24 April 1919, the reinstated Patriarchate in Constantinople for the first time organized a commemorative event.¹⁰² The following year, author, literary critic, and historian Vrtanes Papazian, who at the time served as principal of the secondary school in Echmiadzin, encouraged Catholicos Kevork V to issue a declaration proclaiming 24 April as a day of national mourning.¹⁰³ Since then, the Armenian Church has organized, or co-sponsored with community organizations throughout the diaspora and in Armenia, commemorations of the genocide.

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Notes

1. G. Marcar Gregory, Preface, in *The Church of Armenia*, by Maghakia Ormanian, trans. G. Marcar Gregory, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: St. Vartan Press, 1988), viii.
2. The current Turkish name is Kozan.
3. For useful historical background on the Armenian Church, see Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia*, 3–94; K.V. Sarkissian, “The Armenian Church,” in *Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict*, vol. 1, *Judaism and Christianity*, ed. A.J. Arberry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969): 482–520; F.M. Pareja, “Society and Politics,” in *Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict*, vol. 2, *Islam*, ed. A.J. Arberry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969): 492–500; Avedis K.Sanjian, *The Armenian Communities in Syria under Ottoman Dominion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), Ch.5, 95–141.
4. Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995), 4–6.
5. Hagop Barsoumian, “The Eastern Question and the Tanzimat Era,” in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 2, *Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 175–201 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 184.
6. *Ibid.*, 180–84.
7. Maghakia Ormanian, *Azkabadum [History of the Nation]*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1927; reprint, Antelias: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2001), col. 4068.
8. Barsoumian, “Eastern Question,” 199–200; Richard G. Hovannisian, “The Armenian Question in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1914,” in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 2, *Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 203–38 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 203; Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1980), 100–102, 108–17; Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), 74–78, 80–85.
9. See also George A. Bournoutian, “The Ethnic Composition and the Socio-Economic Condition of Eastern Armenia in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” in *Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change: Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia*, rev. ed. by Ronald Grigor Suny, 69–86 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 79; Ronald Grigor Suny, “Eastern Armenians under Tsarist Rule,” in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 2, *Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 109–37 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 113–15.
10. V.A. Tiloyan and V.H. Rshduni, “Arevelian Hayasdane Rusasdani gazmum [Eastern Armenia in the Russian System],” in *Hay zhoghovrti badmutyun*, vol. 5, ed. Ts.P. Aghayan et al., 201–53 (Yerevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1974), 214; Ormanian, *Azkabadum*, vol. 3, cols. 5156–59.
11. Hovannisian, “Armenian Question,” 206–209.

12. Ibid., 207–208; Suny, “Eastern Armenians,” 127; Walker, *Armenia*, 108–10.
13. Hovannisian, “Armenian Question,” 208–10; Suny, “Eastern Armenians,” 127.
14. Hovannisian, “Armenian Question,” 210, 211; Walker, *Armenia*, 117.
15. M.G. Nersissyan, *Hay zhoghovrti azadakragan baykare Turkagan prnabedutian tem, 1850–1870 [The Armenian People’s Struggle for Liberation against Turkish Tyrannical Rule, 1850–1870]* (Yerevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1955); Anahide Ter Minassian, *Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement (1887–1912)* (Cambridge, MA: Zoryan Institute, 1984); Nalbandian, *Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, 67–178.
16. Ormanian, *Azkabadum*, cols. 5058–61; Barsoumian, “Eastern Question,” 188; Mesrob K. Krikorian, *Armenians in the Service of the Ottoman Empire, 1860–1908* (London: Routledge, 1977). For a particularly revealing opinion on Armenian revolutionary activities, see Bibliothèque Nubar (Paris), Doc. 991–998, comments by Boghos Nubar in an undelivered letter to Catholicos Sahag of Cilicia, 17/30 April 1915, in *Boghos Nubar’s Papers and the Armenian Question, 1915–1918*, ed. and trans. Vatche Ghazarian (Waltham, MA: Mayrnei Publishing, 1996), 14 [*Boghos Nubar’s Papers*].
17. Hovannisian, “Armenian Question,” 212, 217.
18. Ibid., 219–20; Ormanian, *Azkabadum*, cols. 5027–30; Richard G. Hovannisian, “The Historical Dimensions of the Armenian Question, 1878–1923,” in *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 19–41 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1986), 19–26; Walker, *Armenia*, 136–42, 156–64; Christopher Walker, “From Sassun to the Ottoman Bank: Turkish Armenians in the 1890s,” *Armenian Review* 30 (March 1979): 227–64; Armen Garo, “Abrvadz orer [Days Lived],” *Hairenik amsakir* 1:9 (July 1923): 94.
19. Johannes Lepsius, *Armenia and Europe: An Indictment*, ed. and trans. J. Rendel Harris (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), 20, 21–24, 47, 49–51, 330–31.
20. Ormanian, *Azkabadum*, cols. 5006–10, 5016–20, 5058–61.
21. Ibid., cols. 5040–42, 5058–61.
22. For Ormanian’s criticism of Izmirlian and the Armenian nationalist movements, see *ibid.*, cols. 5016–20, 5058–61; Ormanian, *Church of Armenia*, 205–208. See also Pareja, “Society and Politics,” 495; Walker, *Armenia*, 408–409.
23. Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962); Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri, 1895–1908* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983); M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
24. From *Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1908*, encl., dispatch from Sir Gerard Lowther, no. 105, Feb. 17, 1908, R., Feb. 22, 1909, in *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898–1914*, vol. 5, *The Near East*, ed. G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperely (London: HMSO, 1928), 304–305. See also Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 43; Hovannisian, “Armenian Question,” 228–30.
25. Ormanian, *Azkabadum*, cols. 5395–99.
26. Hovannisian, “Armenian Question,” 230–32.
27. Ormanian, *Azkabadum*, cols. 5435–37.
28. See Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).
29. Christopher Walker, “World War I and the Armenian Genocide,” in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. 2, *Foreign Dominion to Statehood: The Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 239–73 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 242.
30. Ormanian, *Church of Armenia*, 226.

31. Zaven Der Yeghiayan, *My Patriarchal Memoirs*, trans. Ared Misirliyan, ed. Vatche Ghazarian (Barrington, RI: Mayreni Publishing, 2002), 8. The original Armenian edition was published in Cairo by Nor Asdgh in 1947.
32. Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 38–39; Simon Vratzian, *Hayasdani Hanrabedutiun [Republic of Armenia]* (Paris: A.R.F. Central Committee of America, 1928; reprint, Yerevan: Hayasdan, 1993), 5–6. See also the report by Nikoghayos Adontz on the activities of the National Assembly, the National Executive, and the Security Committee in Constantinople. Nikoghayos Adontz, “Hayagan hartsı shurch Turkiayum [Concerning the Armenian Question in Turkey],” trans. Valder Tiloyan, in *Hayagan hartsı [The Armenian Question]*, by Nikoghayos Adontz, comp. Bedros Hovhannisyan et al., 25–48 (Yerevan: Hayakidag, 1996).
33. Khoren K. Davidson, *Odyssey of an Armenian of Zeitoun* (New York: Vantage Press, 1985), 56; Krikor H. Kalustian, comp. and ed., *Marash gam Kermanig ev heros Zeytun [Marash or Germanica and Heroic Zeytun]*, 2nd ed. (Long Island City, NY: Union of Marash Armenians, 1988), 176. Johannes Lepsius concurred that the government was searching for a pretext to intervene. See Johannes Lepsius, *Rapport secret sur les massacres d’Arménie* (Paris: Payot, 1918; reprint, Beirut: Hamazkayin Press, 1980), 27. See also Germany, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PA-AA), Embassy Constantinople, vol. 168, Vice Consul Hoffmann, Alexandretta, to German Ambassador Wangenheim, Constantinople, March 7, 1915, Doc. 18, in *Deutschland und Armenien, 1914–1918: Sammlung Diplomatischer Aktenstücke*, by Johannes Lepsius, 31–32 (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919); an English translation by Linda Struck appears in *The Armenian Genocide during the First World War: Documents from German State Archives*, ed. Wolfgang and Sigrid Gust, <http://www.armenocide.de> (accessed 6 July 2006).
34. Archives of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, Doc. 4536/325, Catholicos Sahag of Cilicia to Bishop Kud, 25 September 1914; Doc. 4536/326, Catholicos Sahag of Cilicia to Patriarch Zaven, 27 September 1914, both in *Giligian gsgidzner: Vaverakrer Giligiyo gatoghigosagan tivanen, 1903–1915 [Cilician Pains: Documents from the Archives of the Cilician Catholicosate]*, comp. Zakaria Bzdigian, 110–15 (Beirut: Hrazdan, 1927); Puzant Yeghiayan, *Zhamanagagits badmutyun gatoghigosutyen hayots Giligiyo, 1914–1972 [Contemporary History of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1914–1972]* (Antelias: Catholicosate of Cilicia Press, 1975), 39–42; Arnold Toynbee, comp. and ed., *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs*, Miscellaneous no. 31, 1916, 3rd ed. (London: Sir Joseph Causton and Sons, 1916; reprint, Beirut: G. Doniguan and Sons, 1988), 479–81, Doc. 122; Levon Norashkharian, *Zeytune, 1914–1921 tt. [Zeytun, 1914–1921]* (Yerevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1984), 10–11; Haigaz M. Boghosyan, *Zeytuni badmutyune, 1409–1921 tt. [The History of Zeytun, 1409–1921]* (Yerevan: Hayasdan, 1969), 384–86.
35. Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* (New York: Doubleday, 1918), 20, 323.
36. Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 4–5, 240.
37. Haigazn Ghazarian, *Tseghasban Turke [The Genocidal Turk]* (Beirut: Hamazkayin Press, 1968), 91–92, 116.
38. Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 54–55; Toynbee, *Treatment of Armenians*, Doc. 82; Levon Chormisian, *Hamabadger arevmdahay meg taru badmutyan [A Panorama of One Century of Western Armenian History]*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Sevan, 1975), 451; Sebuhan Aguni, *Milion me hayeru charti badmutyune [The Story of the Massacre of a Million Armenians]* (Constantinople: Hayasdan, 1921), 76.
39. Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 212. On the Ittihadist reaction to the February Agreement, see Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman, 1913–1919* (New York: George H. Doran, 1922), 262–76.
40. Germany PA-AA, R14085, Wangenheim to Kaiserlich, Deutsche Botschaft, 29 December 1914, in *Deutschland und Armenien, 1914–1918: Sammlung Diplomatischer Aktenstücke*,

- by Johannes Lepsius, 23–24 (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919), Doc. 13. An English translation by Linda Struck appears in Gust and Gust, *The Armenian Genocide*.
41. In Armenian, the Monastery of Surp Nshan.
 42. Ghazarian, *Tseghasban Turke*, 92, 176.
 43. US National Archives, Record Group [RG] 59, 867.4016/288, Philip Hoffman to Secretary of State, 12 June 1916, encl., report by Dr. C.E. Clark, 31 May 1916; Aguni, *Milion*, 266; Lepsius, *Rapport secret*, 44–45; Nazaret Piranian, *Kharperti Yegherne [The Genocide in Kharpert]* (Boston: Baikar, 1937), 99; Asadur H. Magarian, “Ampop hamaynabadger [Concise Overview],” in *Hushamadyan Medz Yegherni, 1915–1965 [Memorial Volume of the Colossal Crime, 1915–1965]*, comp. and ed. Kersam Aharonian (Beirut: Atlas, 1965): 309.
 44. Archives of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, Doc. 4980/73, Catholicos Sahag of Cilicia to Patriarch Zaven, 7 April 1915, in *Giligian gsgidzner: Vaverakrer Giligiyo gatoghigosagan tivanen, 1903–1915 [Cilician Pains: Documents from the Archives of the Cilician Catholicosate]*, comp. Zakaria Bzdikian, 144–45 (Beirut: Hrazdan, 1927).
 45. Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 62–63; Germany, PA-AA, Embassy Constantinople, vol. 168, Consul General Mordtmann, 26 April 1915, in *Deutschland und Armenien, 1914–1918: Sammlung Diplomatischer Aktenstücke*, by Johannes Lepsius, 51–52 (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919), Doc. 13. An English translation by Linda Struck appears in Gust and Gust, *The Armenian Genocide*.
 46. Krikoris Balakian, *Hay koghkotan [The Armenian Calvary]* (Yerevan: Hayasdan, 1991), 46–109; Henry Barby, *Au pays de l'épouvante: l'Arménie martyre* (1917; reprint, Beirut: Edition Hamazkayin, Association Culturelle Arménienne, 1972), 56; Lepsius, *Rapport secret*, 48, 228–29, 231, 233–34; Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 221.
 47. Der Yeghiayan to Catholicos Sahag, 21 March 1915, in *Giligian gsgidzner: Vaverakrer Giligiyo gatoghigosagan tivanen, 1903–1915 [Cilician Pains: Documents from the Archives of the Cilician Catholicosate]*, comp. Zakaria Bzdikian (Beirut: Hrazdan, 1927): 140.
 48. Boghos Nubar (1851–1930) was the son of Nubar Pasha (1825–1899), who had served as prime minister of Egypt. For a succinct background on Boghos Nubar and the Armenian National Delegation, see *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, xvii–xxxiii.
 49. France, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (A.M.A.E.), Guerre 1914–1918, *Turquie*, Kévork V, Catholicos de tous les Arméniens, à Sa Majesté Victor-Emmanuel, Roi d'Italie, 22 April 1915, in *Les grandes puissances: l'empire ottoman et les arméniens dans les archives françaises (1914–1918)*, ed. and comp. Arthur Beylerian (Paris: Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1983), 14; Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar, 22 April 1915, *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, 17; US National Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/59, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, 30 April 1915; RG 59, 867.4016/60, Bryan to Bakhméteff, 3 May 1915; Library of Congress, Division of Manuscripts, Papers of Henry Morgenthau, Sr., General Correspondence, Container 7, Bryan to Morgenthau, 29 April 1915; Aguni, *Milion*, 303–305.
 50. US National Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/60, Bryan to Bakhméteff, 3 May 1915; RG 59, 867.4016/64, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, 6 May 1915.
 51. Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 82.
 52. Aguni, *Milion*, 197–98; Krieger [Krikor Gergerian], *Yosghati Hayasbanutyan vaverakragan badmutyune [The Documentary History of the Armenocide in Yozgat]* (New York: Vosgetar, 1980), 168.
 53. Makich Arzumanyan, *Hayasdan, 1914–1917 [Armenia, 1914–1917]* (Yerevan: Hayasdan, 1969), 380–81; Barby, *Au pays de l'épouvante*, 31.
 54. France, A.M.A.E., Guerre 1914–1918, *Turquie*, “Communication de l'ambassade de Russie au Département,” 11 May 1915; “Communication de l'ambassade de Grande-Bretagne au Département,” 19 May 1915; “Communication de l'ambassade de Grande-Bretagne au Département,” 21 May 1915; “Note du Département à l'Agence Havas,” 24 May 1915; M. William Sharp, ambassadeur des États-Unis à Paris, à M. Declassé, ministre des affaires étrangères, 28 May 1915, all in *Les grandes puissances: l'empire ottoman et les*

- arméniens dans les archives françaises (1914–1918)*, ed. and comp. Arthur Beylerian 23, 25–26, 27–28, 29, 31 (Paris: Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1983).
55. In fact, Boghos Nubar believed that the Allied Powers had issued the 24 May joint declaration at the initiative of Catholicos Kevork. See Bibliothèque Nubar (Paris), Doc. 67, Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V, 17 June 1915, *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, 108–9.
 56. Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 221–22.
 57. Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 73.
 58. *Ibid.*, 73–74; translated text in brackets appears in the original source.
 59. *Ibid.*, 77–79; translated text in brackets appears in the original source. Ambassador Morgenthau's diary indicates that he was aware of the meeting between the patriarch and the grand vizier. The diary notes that the patriarch "was given very little encouragement. He says they are determined to revenge themselves for the way they acted in conjunction with the Russians. When he told [the grand vizier that] they should not do so on women and children, he [the grand vizier] did not answer the Patriarch." Library of Congress, Division of Manuscripts, Papers of Henry Morgenthau, Sr., Diary, 11 July 1915.
 60. US National Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/119, Page to Secretary of State, 24 August 1915, encl., "Letter received from Constantinople on the situation of the Armenians in Asiatic Turkey," 13 July 1915. See full text in Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 85–87.
 61. The complete text of the letter, dated 25 May/7 June 1915, appears in Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 84–85. See also Aguni, *Milion*, 113–15. The place names currently used in Turkey appear in parentheses: Gesaria (Kayseri); Dikranagerd (Diyarbakir); Sepasdia (Sivas); Kharpert (Elazığ); Paghesh (Bitlis).
 62. See text of letter, dated 30 June/13 July 1915, in Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 85–87.
 63. US National Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/78, Catholicos Kevork V to President Wilson, 18 July 1915, and attached translation. See also Simon Payaslian, *United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 95.
 64. Bibliothèque Nubar (Paris), Doc. 105, Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar, telegram, 18 July 1915, *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, 180.
 65. Bibliothèque Nubar (Paris), 1443–46, Doc. 115, Boghos Nubar to Bishop Ghevont Turian, 21 July 1915, *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, 197.
 66. France, A.M.A.E., Guerre 1914–1918, *Turquie*, Kevork V, Catholicos of All Armenians, to Viviani, President of the Council, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 5/18 October 1915, in *Les grandes puissances: l'empire ottoman et les arméniens dans les archives françaises (1914–1918)*, ed. and comp. Arthur Beylerian 126–27 (Paris: Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1983).
 67. Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 222–23.
 68. "Proteste nützen nichts, und türkische Ablehnungen, daß keine Deportationen mehr vorgenommen werden sollen, sind wertlos." Germany, PA-AA, R14089, Wolff-Metternich, Ambassador, Extraordinary Mission, Constantinople, to Bethmann Hollweg, Reichskanzler, 7 December 1915, in *Deutschland und Armenien, 1914–1918: Sammlung Diplomatischer Aktenstücke*, by Johannes Lepsius, 201–202 (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919), Doc. 209. An English translation by Linda Struck appears in Gust and Gust, *The Armenian Genocide*.
 69. For an excellent discussion on Musa Dagh, see Vahram Leon Shemmassian, "The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840–1915" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1996).
 70. Hayasdani Hanrabadutyun, Badmutyan Gendronagan Bedagan Arkhiv [Republic of Armenia, State Central Historical Archives], Doc. 56, f. 57/5/108, Report concerning the Armenian refugees in Port Said, Father Vartan Varteresian, Port Said, to Catholicos Kevork V, Mother See, Echmiadzin, 9 November 1915, in *Vaverakrer hay yegeghetsu badmutyan [Documents of the History of the Armenian Church]*, vol. 4, *Sahag II Khabayan, Gatoghigos Giligioy (1891–1940 tt.) [Sahag II Khabayan, Catholicos of Cilicia (1891–1940)]*, comp. Santro Pehpudyan, 222–25 (Yerevan: Vosgan Yerevantsi, 1997). Ethel W. Putney, an American missionary stationed at Port Said at the time, reported on

- the conditions in a letter written in late December 1915. Ethel W. Putney to Lamson, 23–29 December 1915, ABC:16.9.4, vol. 7, Woman's Board of Missions, Western Turkey, Documents and Reports, 127, vol. 2, Misc. letters, M–Z, 1915–1920, ABCFM Archives, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
71. Aram Andonian, *Medz vojire [The Colossal Crime]* (Boston: Bahag, 1921; reprint, Yerevan: Arevig, 1990), 102–103.
 72. Morgenthau, Ambassador *Morgenthau's Story*, 305.
 73. The following section borrows heavily from Payaslian, *United States Policy*, 108–10.
 74. Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 119–22; Papken I. Guleserian, *Badmutyun gatoghigosats Giligoy (1441-en minchev mer orere) [History of the Catholicosates of Cilicia (from 1441 until Our Days)]* (Antelias: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1939; reprint, Antelias: Catholicosate of Cilicia, 1990), 925–26, 929–30.
 75. Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 122.
 76. *Ibid.*, 123, 125, 129–75.
 77. Walker, *Armenia*, 408–409.
 78. Harry Stuermer, *Two War Years in Constantinople*, trans. E. Allen (New York: George H. Doran, 1917), 193–94.
 79. This excerpt from the letter appears in Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 113.
 80. HH, BGBA, Doc. 58, f. 57/2/2021, Report concerning the Armenian situation in Jerusalem, Bishop Kud Mkhitarian, Jerusalem, to Catholicos Kevork V, Mother See, Echmiadzin, 3 January 1918, in *Vaverakrer hay yegeghetsu badmutyan [Documents of the History of the Armenian Church]*, vol. 4, *Sahag II Khabayan, Gatoghigos Giligoy (1891–1940 tt.) [Sahag II Khabayan, Catholicos of Cilicia (1891–1940)]*, comp. Santro Pehpudyan, 227–31 (Yerevan: Vosgan Yerevantsi, 1997).
 81. Bibliothèque Nubar (Paris), 705–716/718–723, Docs. 122, 123, Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V, 28 and 29 July 1915, *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, 209, 215.
 82. Bibliothèque Nubar (Paris), 784–791, Doc. 183, Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V, 23 March 1916, *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, 326–27. Signed on 26 April 1916, the Sykes-Picot agreement provided for a post-war partition of the Ottoman Empire whereby most of the Arab-speaking areas of the empire would be divided into French and British zones, while Russia would expand into the eastern Ottoman provinces of Trabzon, Erzurum, Bitlis, and Van. See Harry N. Howard, *The Partition of Turkey: A Diplomatic History, 1913–1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1931); M.S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923: A Study in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 340–41; Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, 59–60, 62.
 83. Bibliothèque Nubar (Paris), 845–850, Doc. 237, Boghos Nubar to Catholicos Kevork V, 11 April 1917, and 851–854, Doc. 238, Catholicos Kevork V to Boghos Nubar, 27 April 1917, *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, 431–33, 434–35.
 84. Germany, PA-AA, R14104, Kressenstein to Hertling, 4 August 1918, in *Deutschland und Armenien, 1914–1918: Sammlung Diplomatischer Aktenstücke*, by Johannes Lepsius, 420–21 (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919), Doc. 424. An English translation by Vera Draack appears in Gust and Gust, *The Armenian Genocide*.
 85. Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 221–22.
 86. Yeghiayan, *Zhamanagagits badmutyun*, 34, 57–58.
 87. Teotig [Teodos Lapjinjian], *Amenuyn daretsuytse [Everyone's Almanac]* (Constantinople: M. Hovagimian, 1921), 144–45; Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 173, 175.
 88. Orphan Collection Agency (*Vorpahavak marmin*); Orphan Care Agency (*Vorpakhnam marmin*); Society for Deportees (*Darakrelots engerutyun*); Armenian National Trusteeship (*Hay azkayin khnamagalutiun*). Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 175–76, 182.
 89. In Armenian, *Gesaratsineru hayrenagtsagan miutiun*.
 90. Der Yeghiayan, *Memoirs*, 177, 178–79, 182, 186; Chormislian, *Hamabadger*, 587–89, 595; Simon Payaslian, “United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide” (PhD diss., UCLA, 2003), 628–30.

91. See, for example, Hayasdani Hanrabedutyun, Badmutyan Gendronagan Bedagan Arkhiv [Republic of Armenia, State Central Historical Archives], Doc. 155, f. 57/5/211, Gen. Antranig to Catholicos Kevork V, Mother See, Echmiadzin, 10 November 1919, in *Vaverakrer hay yegeghetsu badmutyan [Documents of the History of the Armenian Church]*, vol. 5, *Mayr ator S. Echmiadzine arachin hanrabedutyun darinerin (1918–1920 tt.) [The Mother See, Holy Echmiadzin, during the Years of the First Republic (1918–1920)]*, comp. Santro Pehputyan, 199–200 (Yerevan: Vosgan Yerevantsi, 1999). See also Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*, 4 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971–1996).
92. HH, BGBA, Doc. 62, f. 57/2/2033, Report concerning the events during World War I, Patriarch Zaven, Constantinople, to Catholicos Kevork V, Mother See, Echmiadzin, 12 May 1919, in *Vaverakrer hay yegeghetsu badmutyan [Documents of the History of the Armenian Church]*, vol. 4, *Sahag II Khabayan, Gatoghigos Giligioy (1891–1940 tt.) [Sahag II Khabayan, Catholicos of Cilicia (1891–1940)]*, comp. Santro Pehputyan, 237–40 (Yerevan: Vosgan Yerevantsi, 1997).
93. HH, BGBA, Doc. 59a, Eghishe Charents Museum, V. Malezian papers, Doc. 9981, Catholicos Sahag to Gen. Allenby, 8 January 1919, in *Vaverakrer hay yegeghetsu badmutyan [Documents of the History of the Armenian Church]*, vol. 4, *Sahag II Khabayan, Gatoghigos Giligioy (1891–1940 tt.) [Sahag II Khabayan, Catholicos of Cilicia (1891–1940)]*, comp. Santro Pehputyan, 233–34 (Yerevan: Vosgan Yerevantsi, 1997).
94. HH, BGBA, Doc. 60, Catholicos Sahag to Boghos Nubar, 17 April 1919, in *Vaverakrer hay yegeghetsu badmutyan [Documents of the History of the Armenian Church]*, vol. 4, *Sahag II Khabayan, Gatoghigos Giligioy (1891–1940 tt.) [Sahag II Khabayan, Catholicos of Cilicia (1891–1940)]*, comp. Santro Pehputyan, 234–36 (Yerevan: Vosgan Yerevantsi, 1997).
95. Payaslian, “United States Policy,” 636–37; Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia*, vol. 2, *From Versailles to London, 1919–1920* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 416; Chormisian, *Hamabadger*, 551; Stanley E. Kerr, *The Lions of Marash* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973), 36; T.H. Greenshields, “The Settlement of Armenian Refugees in Syria and Lebanon, 1915–1939” (PhD diss., Durham University, 1978), 57.
96. Yeghiayan, *Zhamanagagits badmutyun*, 109–29, 159–61, 209.
97. The Catholicosate of Cilicia was transferred in 1924 to Antelias, Lebanon, where it remains to this day. *Ibid.*, 282.
98. *Ibid.*, 280–81; Payaslian, *United States Policy*, 145; Chormisian, *Hamabadger*, 515–17, 522.
99. For other estimates, see Dickran Kouymjian, “Confiscation and Destruction: A Manifestation of the Genocidal Process,” *Armenian Forum* 1:3 (1998): 1–12.
100. Ormanian, *Church of Armenia*, appendices II and III, 239–45; Sarkissian, “Armenian Church,” 492. The combined total of Armenian Protestants and Catholics within the jurisdiction of both the Patriarchate at Constantinople and the Catholicosate of Cilicia numbered about 118,400 individuals prior to the war; in 1954, that figure stood at 43,090, 9,500 of whom were in Turkey and 33,590 in the diaspora. Ormanian, *ibid.*
101. Sarkissian, “Armenian Church,” 492.
102. On the first decision by the Armenian Church at Echmiadzin to commemorate the genocide, see Simon Payaslian, “April 24: A Decision to Commemorate,” *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, 23 April 2005, 12.
103. HH, BGBA, Doc. 270, f. 57/5/217, Vrtanes Papazian to Catholicos Kevork V, 25 March 1920; Doc. 271, f. 207/1/249, Papazian to the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia, 25 March 1920; Doc. 272, f. 57/5/217, Catholicosate, Circular, 26 March 1920, all in *Vaverakrer hay yegeghetsu badmutyan [Documents of the History of the Armenian Church]*, vol. 5, *Mayr ator S. Echmiadzine arachin hanrabedutyun darinerin (1918–1920 tt.) [The Mother See, Holy Echmiadzin, during the Years of the First Republic (1918–1920)]*, comp. Santro Pehputyan, 360–64 (Yerevan: Vosgan Yerevantsi, 1999).

GENOCIDE STUDIES AND PREVENTION

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When Persecution Bleeds into Mass Murder: The Processive Nature of Genocide

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In the rapidly developing historiography of the Armenian Genocide, the processive character of pre-genocidal persecutions has received less attention than the genocidal process itself. This article treats the persecution of Ottoman Armenians as a cumulative process leading up to a mass-murder campaign in the summer of 1915. It addresses the evolution of CUP policy toward the Armenians through the prism of escalating persecution and the relationship between center and periphery. In order to illustrate the concrete implementation of this process, the province of Diyarbekir will serve as an example to clarify the history of the persecutions.

Introduction

This article will address the evolution of CUP policy toward the Armenians through the prism of escalating persecution and the relationship between center and periphery, within the context of the development of general Ottoman population policies between 1913 and 1915. In this period, the Ottoman Empire was under the rule of the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), or CUP. From 1914 on, a small but radical faction within this semi-official political party,¹ having seized government power, launched empire-wide campaigns of persecution, involving mass deportation, forced assimilation, and genocidal destruction of various ethnic communities. Hundreds of Arab, Armenian, Kurdish, Syriac, and other communities were affected and suffered heavy losses as a result of these forced relocations and persecutions, which combined with wartime famines due to corruption, failed harvests due to deportations, and the outbreak of contagious diseases to kill millions of human beings. The CUP put its policies into practice for the sake of a thorough ethno-religious homogenization of the empire, resulting in the establishment of a Turkish nation-state in 1923. In subsequent decades, processes of social engineering went on, as many CUP potentates remained influential and continued to formulate and implement new policies of demographic engineering in the Turkish Republic.

In his book on ethnic cleansing, Norman Naimark notes that “ethnic cleansing bleeds into genocide.”² More recently, Jacques Sémelin has offered a painstaking analysis of how precisely this occurs: born out of a political crisis, radical regimes launch persecutory measures that can subsequently escalate into a genocidal process.³ Scholarly research on the Holocaust has treated this process in great detail and with sound lucidity.⁴ In the rapidly developing historiography of the Armenian Genocide, the processive character of these pre-genocidal persecutions has received less attention than the genocidal process itself.⁵ The same may be said of the post-genocidal persecutions and violence.⁶ This article will address the persecution of

Ottoman Armenians as a cumulative process leading up to the mass-murder campaign of the bloody summer of 1915. The province of Diyarbekir will serve as an example to illustrate this process.

The Ottoman Empire was organized into provinces (*vilayet*) with governors (*vali*), districts (*sancak* or *liva*) with district governors (*mutasarrıf*), counties (*kazâ*) with mayors (*kaymakam*), and communes (*nahiye*) with directors (*müdür*). Diyarbekir was a relatively large province (42,100 km²) locked between the Euphrates in the west, the Tigris in the east, the plateau in the north, and the desert in the south. Its continental climate ensured mild winters and extremely hot summers, which at times paralyzed social life. Historically, Diyarbekir was an administrative center; it had been the headquarters of the sixteenth-century governorship (*beylerbeyliği*) from which large parts of eastern Turkey were ruled.⁷ On the eve of World War I, the Second Army was stationed in Diyarbekir city, which also harbored a court-martial and one of the largest prisons of the Ottoman Empire. Although there were regional variations in the economic conditions of the province, generally it thrived because of its favorable location on the ancient Silk Road.⁸ There were copper mines in Maden county, and the border regions with Bitlis province were known to be rich in oil, though no large-scale steps had been taken to exploit either resource. Like the rest of the empire, Diyarbekir was a pre-industrial region where subsistence farming and cyclic pastoralism were dominant economic occupations for peasants and nomads in the countryside.⁹

Diyarbekir province boasted a formidable diversity of ethnic and religious groups, whether small or large, scattered or concentrated, urban or rural. Turkish-speaking Muslims constituted the majority in urban residential areas because they had occupied most administrative positions for a long time. Armenians inhabiting the cities made their livings as merchants or craftsmen, and in most bazaars the majority of tradesmen were indeed Armenian. Some of these were quite prosperous, imbued with the privilege of having family members abroad and being active in politics. But most of Diyarbekir's Armenians were peasants organized in large extended families (*gerdastans*) in villages, most specifically in the Lice, Silvan, Beşiri, and Palu districts.¹⁰ The Kurdish population of the province can be divided in several categories: tribal versus non-tribal Kurds and (semi-) nomadic versus sedentary. The dozens of large and powerful Kurdish tribes (*eşîra*) in the region were generally commanded by chieftains and de facto controlled extensive territories. Many were able to mobilize thousands, sometimes tens of thousands, of mounted warriors, often to combat each other in pursuit of power, honor, and booty. Non-tribal Kurds could be powerless peasants (*kurmanç*) or Kurds from noted clergy families (*meşayih*). It is important to point out that most peasants, irrespective of ethnic or religious background, paid tribute and taxes to Kurdish chieftains and sometimes to other landlords.¹¹ The mere 1,000 Jews of Diyarbekir province owned one small synagogue and were generally an inconspicuous ethnic group among the much larger Christian and Muslim populations. They engaged mainly in small-scale trade and some horticulture.¹² The Yezidis, a Kurdish-speaking monotheist people, inhabited villages in the southeastern regions of the province. Ottoman state discrimination and oppression against them pushed them into a marginal social status, as a result of which they frequently engaged in organized brigandry.¹³ Most of the province's Arabs lived in Mardin and in the villages in and around Midyat, numbering no more than several thousand.¹⁴ The Syrians, an embracing denomination including all Aramaic-speaking Syrian-Orthodox, Syrian-Protestant, Syrian-Catholic, Nestorian, and Chaldean Christians, inhabited many



Figure 1: A bird's-eye view of Diyarbekir province

villages but especially the southeastern parts of the province. The mountainous region around Midyat, also known as Tur Abdin, was a Syriac stronghold, with dozens of often exclusively Syriac villages.¹⁵ Though these were only some of the ethnic and religious groups in the province, because of the absence of reliable demographic data it is very difficult to come to quantitative grips with even these. In general, it seems reasonable to contend that approximately one-third of the province's population was Christian and approximately two-thirds were Muslim.¹⁶

The heterogeneous ethnic and social composition of the population of Diyarbakir province was fueled by two additional intricacies: vagueness of identity and competing loyalties. Identities were ethnic, not homogeneous-national in the modern sense. This complex social reality of considerable overlap and indistinctness of ethnic delineation defies simple categorizations, as many people lived at the margins of ethnicity. For example, the Armenians of Mardin spoke Arabic and were mostly Catholic; many Armenian villagers spoke Kurdish and adhered to a range of rural superstitions, whereas the Armenians of Diyarbakir city spoke a local Armenian dialect and were close to the official Apostolic church.¹⁷ Tribal cleavages and loyalties were another issue. Even though Kurdish tribes had hereditary chieftains of Kurdish descent, they treated their Muslim and non-Muslim subjects alike: religious interests and loyalties were subordinated to tribal ones.

It is crucial to bear these anthropological subtleties in mind before engaging in any historical analysis of this wide spectrum of peoples. Essentialist notions of homogeneous national entities engaging in collective action or perpetual conflict are utterly ahistorical and need to be subjected to thorough deconstructionist criticism. The same is true for rosy images of a peaceful society in pre-nationalist conditions, basking in multicultural coexistence.¹⁸ Nevertheless, it is possible to state that the absence, or very feeble presence, of the state and its monopoly of violence in rural areas allowed for the maintenance of many conflicts, whether tribal or ethno-social.

Therefore, living conditions were relatively insecure, with arbitrary exertion of (mortal) violence by certain powerful tribes and state agents. This insecurity only added to the general atmosphere of distrust and generated anxiety and vulnerability among the inhabitants of the province.

Preambles: War and Surveillance

The Committee of Union and Progress had not been idle in the provinces before the war. The first CUP office in Diyarbekir, for example, was opened on 23 July 1908 by Ziyâ Gökâlp (1876–1924), who was a native of the region and became its representative on the party's Central Committee in 1910.¹⁹ Gökâlp began publishing the newspaper *Peyman*, which adopted a relatively modest tone and emphasized coexistence of the various Ottoman subjects.²⁰ After the catastrophic defeats of the Balkan wars, the atmosphere changed as relations polarized. The CUP dictatorship exerted its influence in this province through a network of mainly Kurdish members. The most influential CUP members in Diyarbekir were those related to the wealthy and powerful Piriñçizâde dynasty, who owned large estates in the province, including the rice fields west of Diyarbekir city.²¹

One of their kinsmen was Deputy Aziz Feyzi (1879–1933), who was known for his coarseness and fanatic patriotism. He was the son of Piriñçizâde Arif, who passed away in 1909 and had adhered to the Kurdish Assistance and Progress Society (*Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti*). According to a German report, Feyzi had undertaken a study trip to Germany in 1911.²² On behalf of many other Kurdish notables, he vehemently protested in the Ottoman parliament against the proposed government plan of expropriating land from Kurdish landowners. Feyzi was a CUP hard-liner. He had held fierce and hostile discussions with an Armenian member of parliament, Vartkes Serengulian (1871–1915), in which he uttered accusatory and pugnacious comments.²³ He became more and more fanatical in his anti-Armenian views and reportedly had Ohannes Kazazian, a Catholic Armenian from Mardin and his political rival in the elections, assassinated in 1913.²⁴ At the outbreak of World War I, the Ottoman civil inspector Mihran Boyadjian traveled to Diyarbekir and encountered an energetic Feyzi on the way:

While travelling, we regularly spoke about politics. In his conversations, Feyzi Bey did not fail to convey certain threats against my coreligionists. "The Armenians," he repeated, with bitterness, "have misconducted with regard to us, during the Balkan wars in our days of distress. The Catholicos of Etchmiadzin, Patriarch Zaven, and Nubar have resorted to foreign intervention; that will cost you dearly, my friend, your future is in danger."²⁵

Finally he threatened, "You will see now, what it means to demand reforms."²⁶ Other CUP sympathizers in Diyarbekir were Piriñçizâde Sıdkı (Tarancı), Yasinzâde Şevki (Ekinci), his brother Yasinzâde Yahya (Ekinci), and Müftüzâde Şeref (Ulğ), among others.²⁷

The CUP's policy toward the inhabitants of the eastern provinces varied between containment and repression. On 4 April 1914, one day after the outbreak of the Kurdish rebellion of Bitlis, the Central Committee of the CUP convened to review its policy toward the eastern provinces. Mithat Şükrü (Bleda) pointed out that Russia was gradually tightening its grip on many Kurdish tribes in both the Ottoman Empire and Persia. According to him, another danger was that of Armenian revolutionaries who were awaiting the right opportunity to revolt and could strike at any time. He concocted a divide-and-rule strategy and maintained that on no account should

Kurdish and Armenian politicians be allowed to unite. He suggested that the CUP should now adopt a more sophisticated stick-and-carrot strategy, enrolling potentially loyal chieftains through rhetoric and bribery while threatening potentially disloyal ones with deportation and incarceration.²⁸

The assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 stirred up acute international tensions. In the midst of this belligerent atmosphere, the CUP sought to forge alliances with any of the Great Powers in order to help the Ottoman Empire emerge from its diplomatic isolation. Cavid Bey, the pro-British minister of finance, had appealed to Britain in 1911, but, apart from Winston Churchill, the Foreign Office was not interested.²⁹ Talât flirted with Russia in May during his trip to the Crimea, where he spoke to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov about a possible alliance. The Russians expressed ambivalence in judgment but, in essence, were not interested.³⁰ Cemal Pasha approached France but left empty-handed, lamenting the negotiations with the French as “a huge disappointment.”³¹ On 28 July, the same day that Austria-Hungary declared war against Serbia, Enver Pasha proposed a defensive alliance between Imperial Germany and the Ottoman Empire to the German ambassador, Hans Wangenheim. In the next days Grand Vizier Said Halim, Chairman of the Parliament Halil, Enver, and Talât launched intensive negotiations with the Germans behind closed doors. Finally, on 2 August, one day after the German declaration of war against Russia, a written agreement was signed between the two states and a general mobilization was issued by the Ottoman general staff.³² The discussions were top secret, and even Cemal Pasha had no knowledge of them.³³ Three days later Austria-Hungary joined the Turko-German alliance and completed the Central Powers bloc, while Russia, France, and Britain united into the Triple Entente. The Ottoman Empire was now officially allied to Germany and, through the treaty, was inevitably obliged, in this political constellation, to prepare for war. Following the succession of declarations of war in August 1914, the Germans urged the Ottoman minister of war, Enver Pasha, at the end of October to act against Russia. Without a formal declaration of war, Enver ordered the Ottoman navy to bomb the Russian shore immediately, destroying oil tanks and sinking fourteen vessels.³⁴ Though few politicians in Istanbul knew of Enver’s action, this *fait accompli* triggered declarations of war by the Triple Entente powers. From 11 November 1914 on, the Ottoman Empire was officially at war with Russia, France, and Britain.³⁵

Although World War I immediately engulfed the Ottoman Empire, this was not incidental. The CUP consciously headed in a belligerent direction, and by participating in the war it hoped to find a radical solution to the empire’s many problems. From the first day of the war, the CUP’s dictatorial rule became more repressive toward all opposition groups. Discordant behavior of internal and external dissenters was dealt with systematically and ruthlessly. The Ottoman Armenian community, suspected of collective disloyalty, was one of the first targets. On 6 September 1914, Talât ordered the Ottoman security apparatus to closely “follow and observe” (*takib ve tarassud*) the local leadership of Armenian political parties that, according to Talât, had been engaging in “agitation and disturbance” (*mefsedet ve melanet*) against the notion of Ottomanism all along.³⁶ Another perceived problem was the foreign capitulations, a set of legal concessions under which foreign subjects enjoyed privileges such as exemption from Ottoman taxes. The CUP regarded the capitulations as humiliating³⁷ and did not wait long to confront them: all capitulations were unilaterally abrogated on 17 September.³⁸ The CUP’s bold policies not only directly caused the ranks to close, they also led to an indirect form of Turkification, as some government officials

simply left office voluntarily. On 12 November, Minister of Commerce Süleyman Bustani, a Syriac Protestant, resigned from his cabinet portfolio in protest over what he considered ongoing CUP aggression.³⁹ This trend allowed the CUP to fill these administrative positions with nationalists, and, although their *Gleichschaltung*⁴⁰ was never implemented perfectly, it was sufficient for effective rule.

Brutalizing War, Radicalizing Persecution

Meanwhile, the mobilization did not go unnoticed in Diyarbekir province. The city streets swarmed with soldiers of the Second Army Corps, led by Ahmet İzzet Pasha, which was partly lodged in large mosques such as the Nebii Mosque.⁴¹ On 3 November, the mayor of Diyarbekir made a public speech, explaining the conduct of the war to an exclusively Muslim crowd. Upon hearing that the Russian army was pushing into the provinces of Van and Erzurum, the frantic crowd yelled, "Praise to Mohammed! Death to the Russians and their allies!" The non-Muslims of the city, frightened and cautious because of this outbreak of mass rage, did not leave their homes in the following days.⁴² The army began requisitioning goods from the population and drafting men into the army. Daniel Thom, a missionary in Mardin, summarized these acts and wrote that "the Govt. has robbed the city, and the country around, of its men, of its animals, of its money," leaving the people "pennyless, shops all closed."⁴³ Gradually, the Armenian elite of Diyarbekir was targeted and persecuted. Coinciding with his earlier order, on 29 November Talât ordered the arrest of Thomas Muggerditchian, former interpreter for the British consulate in Diyarbekir. Muggerditchian was accused of espionage for the Entente Powers and was to be court-martialed.⁴⁴ He escaped arrest, fled to Egypt, and subsequently wrote his memoirs.⁴⁵

From September 1914 on, the CUP began drawing up formations of irregular brigands in order to invade Russia and Persia to provoke war. This secret military organization was integrated into the existing Special Organization (*Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa*).⁴⁶ The cadre of these new guerrilla bands (*çetes*) was to be made up of convicts, Kurdish tribesmen, and Muslim immigrants, and they were to be led by the same gangsters the CUP had used in the Balkan wars and in prior political conflicts. The convicts, called "savages and criminals" even by CUP officials,⁴⁷ were very often tribesmen, local outlaws, and bandits who had committed theft or manslaughter. According to an Ottoman bureaucrat, they were drilled in Istanbul for one week before being deployed in various regions.⁴⁸ The entire operation was led by Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir and was kept out of the control of the Ottoman army as much as possible.⁴⁹ On 18 November, Talât personally ordered the drawing up of lists of names of "those convicts who were able to exert influence on tribes."⁵⁰ A week later, the Special Organization was put together in Diyarbekir. Among the members enlisted in the paramilitary organization was the Zaza brigand Alo,⁵¹ as well as the Chechen criminal Hamid and his group of loyal warriors. Hamid was recruited by CUP Responsible Secretaries who cabled the following notification to the Central Committee in Istanbul:

The courageous brigand Chechen Hamid, resident of the town of Reşadiye in the Bergama district, has requested help to assist the army with some of his comrades and if allowed, form a significant corps in Diyarbekir. Since we hope that aforementioned gentleman is able to serve in this way, their dispatch will benefit the homeland. We would like to request a telegraphic answer on whether their patriotic venture will be necessary or not, and present our compliments, dear brothers.⁵²

During the winter of 1914, the brigands began penetrating into Russian and Persian territory to incite the Muslim populations to rise in rebellion and join the Ottoman

forces. In this guerrilla war, Special Organization operatives such as Yenibahçeli Nail, Deli Halit, and Topal Osman also attacked Armenian villages, plundering, raping, and killing with impunity. Ambassador Wangenheim wrote to the German chancellor that their anti-Russian actions across the Erzurum border frequently escalated into “encroachments and clashes” against Armenian villagers.⁵³

The war on the eastern front gained momentum when warmonger Enver Pasha, driven by expansionist designs toward the east, on 29 December attempted to attack the Russian army in Sarıkamış. Enver insisted on waging an encirclement campaign through the rugged Kars mountains. However, the Russian general Nikolai Yudenich anticipated the outflanking maneuver, outsmarted Enver, and delivered a heavy blow to his forces. Enver’s attack failed miserably, and as a result the Third Army was effectively wiped out. Of the 90,000 soldiers who fought in the battle of Sarıkamış, approximately 78,000 perished, mainly through frostbite.⁵⁴ The CUP leadership was convinced that the disastrous defeat had been caused by “treacherous Armenian elements.” Retreating Ottoman soldiers took revenge on Armenian villagers, massacring many and pillaging their goods. After returning from the front, Enver wrote a letter to the Armenian prelate of Konya, expressing his respect and admiration for the courage the Armenian soldiers had shown in the Sarıkamış battle. Enver gave the example of Sergeant Ohannes, who had received a medal for valor.⁵⁵ This may not have been how Enver really felt. In a personal discussion with publisher Hüseyin Cahit, Enver bitterly blamed the Armenians for the fiasco and proposed their deportation to somewhere where they wouldn’t cause trouble.⁵⁶

The defeat triggered a new wave of persecution, especially in the front-line provinces of Erzurum, Bitlis, and Van. On 26 December 1914 Talât ordered “the dismissal of all Armenian police officers, police chiefs, and government employees, and the deportation of anyone who opposes these measures.”⁵⁷ Talât Pasha’s involvement in the dismissal of Armenian government officials typifies his “micro-managing” qualities. In February he urged local officials to keep him abreast of the developing situation with regard to Armenian civil servants.⁵⁸ When he got the impression that the firings were not proceeding quickly enough, he personally had Police Chief Krikor and police officers Armenag, Boghos, and Shahin of the Van police squad removed from their offices and deported to Mosul.⁵⁹ Finally, in November 1916, the Interior Ministry issued an official declaration sanctioning the dismissal of all Armenian and Greek police officers.⁶⁰ These official decrees marked an acceleration in CUP suspicion of Armenian loyalty to the Ottoman state.

For the population of Diyarbekir, there was little to celebrate between Christmas and New Year’s Eve 1914. The news of Enver’s losses reverberated in Diyarbekir and had a detrimental effect on local morale. The war was experienced closely and emotionally, since both Muslims and Christians had been drafted into the army and many of them had perished in the Sarıkamış campaign. The bad news distressed both communities and strained their relationships, sparking suspicion and enmity. The Church of Saint Ephraim was vandalized and property was stolen, while gendarmes beat up a Syriac village headman.⁶¹ The governor also prohibited the use of all non-Turkish languages in some of the province’s institutions, such as the American hospital and the French mission.⁶² In February 1915 the government initiated arms searches in Christian houses in Diyarbekir. During these violent searches, the inhabitants were accused of treason and espionage and of hiding guns in secret arms stores. On 18 February, twelve young men of the large Syriac village of Qarabash were

sentenced to death on charges of alleged desertion. Four of them were publicly hanged in the central square in Diyarbekir in order to deter potential deserters.⁶³ When their compatriot villagers protested against the execution, gendarmes clubbed two men to death and dispersed the group.⁶⁴

March also saw the disarming of Armenian soldiers and their recruitment, together with many other Christian men, into labor battalions.⁶⁵ The cadre of these battalions were deemed disloyal elements, as an official decree proscribed them “at all costs” from taking up arms in the regular Ottoman army.⁶⁶ The labor battalion conscripts were deployed in road construction under dire circumstances in and around Diyarbekir. Irrespective of weather conditions, every individual, including teenagers, was forced to carry a daily load of fifty-five kilograms. Each battalion was escorted by two dozen soldiers. Many conscripts in the labor battalions perished of exhaustion, exposure, and maltreatment. On 5 March 1915 a Syriac native of Diyarbekir, Abed Mshiho, was conscripted in a labor battalion numbering 1,100 men and assigned to work on the Diyarbekir–Aleppo road. According to his account, the maltreatments increased every other day, with bastinados and other beatings becoming commonplace, and the violence escalating into sporadic murders of individual conscripts by late March.⁶⁷

March 1915 was perhaps the most fateful month for the future development of the Ottoman Empire in general and of Diyarbekir province in particular. The naval attacks upon the Dardanelles strait and the Russian move toward Van sowed panic in the hearts and minds of the CUP leaders.⁶⁸ This reinforced their established fear of a nightmare scenario in which Armenian disloyalty would pave the way for an Allied incursion into Anatolia. This apocalyptic suspicion led to a series of meetings of the Central Committee in Istanbul in mid-March. As a result of these gatherings, Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir was delegated substantial authority to deal with “the inner enemies.” The Special Organization was reorganized, expanded, and placed under his jurisdiction.⁶⁹ The army was given more autonomy, on Talât’s orders, to “turn to the Third Army for the application of measures aimed at Armenian actions.”⁷⁰ Not much later, Talât imposed total censorship on the Armenian newspaper *Azadamart* and sent Osman Bedri, police commissioner of Constantinople, to confiscate their presses.⁷¹ This radicalization at the center metastasized to the periphery as Diyarbekir saw the appointment of its new governor: Dr. Mehmed Reşid.

Center and Periphery: Minister Talât vs. Governor Reşid

On 25 March 1915 the governor of Diyarbekir, Hamid Bey, was relieved of his duties and replaced by Dr. Reşid. Mehmed Reşid (Şahingiray) was born in a Circassian family in Russian Caucasia on 8 February 1873. When the czarist government intensified its campaign against the Circassians in 1874, his family fled to the Ottoman Empire. Reşid grew up in Istanbul, where he enrolled in the Military School of Medicine and joined other students to found the kernel of a secret political party that would later adopt the name CUP. In 1897 the Abdulhamid regime exiled him to Tripoli for his politically recalcitrant activities. Having made a career in the army and risen to the rank of major, he wrote a book on the CUP revolution in 1908. He was never influential in the CUP core, however, and his power did not compare to that of party bosses such as Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir or Dr. Nâzım. In 1909 he relinquished his employment in the military and went on to serve as district governor and mayor in several provinces between 1908 and 1914. Along his professional path Reşid gradually radicalized and scapegoated Christians as the reason for the empire’s erosion and wretched condition.

By 1914 he was thoroughly convinced that the Ottoman Christians were abusing their ostensibly privileged position and were thus to blame for the empire's depressed economy. He was delegated the task of secretary-general of the international reform plan for the eastern provinces, which was annulled when the CUP engaged in war. In 1915 he became governor of Diyarbekir, and in 1916 he was appointed governor of Ankara. When the war was over, he was arrested and incarcerated in Istanbul. With the assistance of his former henchmen, he escaped from prison and lived incognito at various Istanbul addresses. Fed up with being forced to evade the law, and fearing arrest and possible execution, he committed suicide when a police chief tracked him down on 6 February 1919.⁷²

When Reşid acceded to the governorship of Diyarbekir province, he brought with him thirty, mainly Circassian, Special Organization operatives, including Çerkez Harun, Çerkez Şakir, and Çerkez Aziz.⁷³ They were joined in Diyarbekir by more troops released from the local prison.⁷⁴ In this way, Reşid absorbed more effective power than the average Ottoman governor. For Reşid, it was certainly true that "in the provinces party bosses of one kind or another often exercised substantial control, amounting in some cases, [...] to virtual autonomy."⁷⁵ Upon arrival in Diyarbekir, Reşid and his men faced poor rule of law, a serious desertion problem, and an anxious population. The bazaar, for example, was buzzing with rumors that the Russians had invaded Istanbul.⁷⁶ The Muslims feared an invasion of Diyarbekir by the Russian army, whose reputation as a valiant fighting corps had preceded its offensive into the south. The Christians were torn between fear and hope: whereas one moderate group (including the clergy) was terrified that a Russian incursion might trigger reprisals, another, discordant group (notably Armenian nationalists) expressed the audacious belief that it was possible for Christians to defend themselves against the brutal policies of the CUP dictatorship.⁷⁷

The concerns of many young men were of a more pragmatic nature. They wanted to avoid the possibility of being conscripted into the Ottoman army and sent off to an almost certain death, either at the front or in the labor battalions. Therefore, some had actually gone into hiding in the complex web of rooftops of Xançepek, a neighborhood with a large concentration of Armenians. Some of these draft evaders had acquired weapons.⁷⁸ Dr. Floyd Smith, an American doctor on the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), reported that at the end of February, the Armenian bishop Tchilgadian finally "went upon the roofs and lectured the men, telling them that they were bringing ruin upon themselves and the whole Christian quarter. As a result quite a number surrendered."⁷⁹ Still, both Muslim and Christian deserters remained when Dr. Reşid became governor.

In a post-war booklet titled *Mülâhazât* ("Reflections"),⁸⁰ Reşid defended and sought to legitimize his wartime policies as governor of Diyarbekir. These memoirs, composed of two of his four wartime notebooks (the other two were lost), are of extraordinary importance, as they allow a close look at his line of thought when he was appointed governor. From the moment he set foot in Diyarbekir, Reşid found confirmation of his expectations of a conspiracy of disloyal Christians. He wrote,

My appointment to Diyarbekir coincided with a very delicate period of the war. Large parts of Van and Bitlis had been invaded by the enemy, deserters were transgressing, pillaging and robbing everywhere. Yezidi and Nestorian uprisings in or at the border of the province required the application of drastic measures. The transgressive, offensive and impudent attitude of the Armenians was seriously endangering the honor of the government.⁸¹

In his memoirs Reşid especially targets the Armenians, accusing them of “high treason” (*hıyânet-ı vataniye*) and of “pursuing the goal of an independent Armenia” (*müstakil bir Ermenistan gayesini takib*).⁸² In his paranoia and animosity Reşid ignored the many Muslim deserters and imagined an army of Armenian deserters, who in fact may not have been as countless and organized as he visualized. He believed that the Armenian draft dodgers on the rooftops were all “formidably” (*müdhiş*) organized revolutionaries and that they numbered more than a thousand. Furthermore, according to Reşid, “there was not a single Armenian in the province who was not participating in this national endeavor.”⁸³

In order to deal with these perceived problems, Reşid organized a committee for the “solution of the Armenian question.” This council was called the Committee of Inquiry (*Tahkik Heyeti*) and had its own Militia Unit (*Milis Alayı*) at its disposal.⁸⁴ According to a German charity worker, the committee, made up of a dozen CUP loyalists, was “a sham committee for the solution of the Armenian Question” and served only one purpose: to eliminate the Hunchak and Dashnak parties.⁸⁵ It was headed by Colonel Mustafa Bey (Cemilpaşazâde) and consisted of deputy Aziz Feyzi; postal clerk İbrahim Bedreddin;⁸⁶ Majors Rüşdü Bey and Yasinzâde Şevki (Ekinci); the latter’s brother Yasinzâde Yahya (Ekinci); representative of the Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants (*İşkân-ı Aşâir ve Muhacirîn Müdüriyeti*, or IAMM) and director of the Diyarbekir branch of the Society for National Defense (*Müdafaa-ı Milliye Cemiyeti*) Veli Necdet; police chief Memduh Bey; militia commander Şevki Bey; and Şeref Uluğ, son of the mufti.⁸⁷ On Reşid’s orders, they selected the following civilians and appointed them to the rank of captain: Zazazâde Hacı Süleyman (by profession, a Zaza butcher in the Diyarbekir bazaar); Halil (also a butcher); Cercisaşazâde Abdülkerim; Direkçizâde Tahir; and Piriçizâde Sıdkı (Tarancı). The following volunteers were nominated to the rank of lieutenant: Halifezâde Salih, Ganizâde Servet (Akkaynak), Muhtarzâde Salih, Şeyhzâde Kadri (Demiray), Pirânizâde Kemal (Önen), Yazıcızâde Kemal, Zaza Alo Efendi, and Hacı Bakır.⁸⁸

At that time, a certain Hacı Zeki of Lice, a fanatical activist, incited the locals of Mardin to take up arms against the Christians. Zeki convened groups of Muslims at his house in Mardin city, where he made inflammatory political speeches, openly calling for pogroms. The district governor of Mardin, a moderate man by the name of Hilmi, was displeased by Zeki’s aggressive vilification. Since the outbreak of the war Hilmi had shown consistent efforts to restrain conflict and to maintain relative stability and moderate rule. He reprehended Zeki and expelled him from Mardin. Zeki then took off to Diyarbekir, where he found willing partners among the CUP elite who were just consolidating their rule in the provincial capital.⁸⁹ On 6 April 1915 Talât ordered Reşid to “appoint a capable, loyal, and devout İttihadist for the vacant position of mayor” in Diyarbekir.⁹⁰ Reşid immediately fired the relatively mild Cemilpaşazâde Dr. Fuad Bey and replaced him with the rabidly anti-Armenian Sıdkı.⁹¹ Police chief Dersimli Hüseyin Bey was replaced by IAMM boss Veli Necdet, who had previously occupied the office of provincial secretary.⁹² All the key positions in Diyarbekir were now occupied by CUP loyalists.

In Diyarbekir, Reşid now embarked on a relentless campaign to find and punish deserters. On 1 April he issued a proclamation demanding the surrender of all arms to the police.⁹³ When this failed to produce the results he had expected, he intensified the arms searches from 5 April on. Aided by his gendarmerie commander, Major Rüşdü, he personally supervised and participated in the warrantless searches of churches and houses.⁹⁴ While district governor Hilmi in Mardin visited the Christian

clergy to congratulate them on Easter,⁹⁵ Reşid's roundups of Armenian men became more and more arbitrary and categorical. As he wrote, "On a certain day I had the three or four most important streets in the Armenian neighborhood barricaded and ordered surprise searches on every single house in the early morning, arresting more than 500 armed deserters."⁹⁶ By 15 April Reşid had already had more than 600 Armenian notables and artisans arrested and put in jail. There he had them tortured to exact confessions on the locations of hidden arms depots. The prisoners were beaten and burned with hot irons, had their nails pulled out with pliers, and suffered prolonged bastinado.⁹⁷ Even so, Reşid was not satisfied with what had been accomplished and wired Istanbul twice to request the deployment of more manpower to assist his force of 300 gendarmes and policemen. The Interior Ministry did not comply with his requests, frustrating and galvanizing him into more severe measures.⁹⁸

The Cultural Side of Persecution: Book Burnings

Heinrich Heine's drama *Almansor* contains a passage in which a fifteenth-century Spanish Muslim named Hassan, upon witnessing the burning of the Koran by Catholics, pronounces the following sentence: "That was only a prelude: there where books are burned, ultimately people are burned." The destruction of books considered hostile cultural property seems to be a feature of practically all state-sponsored violence. A peculiar aspect of the operation in the Ottoman Empire was the hunt for "recalcitrant" books and other texts, generally written in non-Ottoman languages. In Ottoman political jargon, unpatriotic material was branded "harmful documents" (*evrâk-ı muzırre*)⁹⁹ and had to be dealt with through counter-propaganda or violence. During their nationalist rule, the CUP confiscated and destroyed an unknown but undoubtedly large number of non-Turkish-language works.

The example of the dismissal of Ottoman Armenian government officials demonstrates Talât's close involvement in the supervisory process of the anti-Armenian persecutions. It is therefore not surprising to come across evidence of his micromanaging, with surgical precision, the bureaucratic excision of Armenian culture from Ottoman society. A striking example is the fate of the books in the library of the Armenian lyceum of Sivas. In October 1916 Talât was disturbed by the idea that the library kept "important volumes on the condition of the Ottoman Empire in French, German, English, Russian, and Kurdish," and he ordered "the immediate seizure of these books and their dispatch to Istanbul by post."¹⁰⁰ Five months later, when the books still had not been sent, he repeated his order, requesting that the books be sent "urgently."¹⁰¹ Although one can only speculate as to the fate of these books, examples from Diyarbekir province demonstrate that it is most likely they were destroyed.

In Diyarbekir it was common for the authorities to target and destroy books. As Floyd Smith wrote, "Books and papers were sure to bring condemnation to a household."¹⁰² On 22 April Reşid's men went from door to door in the Xançepik and Fatihpaşa neighborhoods to find books. The Syriac tailor Habib had warned the inhabitants to hide their books, especially books in the French and Armenian languages. The militia also paid a visit to the Armenian bishop Tchilgadian and accused him of hiding arms in secret niches in the large Armenian church of St. Sarkis. They raided his room, took away all his books and documents, and sent them to Reşid for examination. The next day the books were publicly burned.¹⁰³ Vahram Dadrian was a young boy keeping a diary when he was deported with his family from Çorum. After many trials and tribulations, they arrived in the Syrian

desert and met an Armenian man named Pakrad, who had just escaped from Diyarbekir. Pakrad told them that his father, Abraham, had been caught up in the book searches. A corporal took two of their books and walked out of the house, facing a frantic crowd of Muslims:

The corporal gestured to the crowd to shut up. "Listen! Look here. Look what we found in his home," he yelled, lifting a geography book into the air. "You don't know how to read, so you don't know how dangerous this book is. But I won't have to say much before you can draw your own conclusions. In the hands of our enemies this book is a more terrifying weapon than all the guns and cannons of the army. This book gives the locations of all the cities, villages, rivers, and roads in Turkey. All of them meticulously portrayed. Anybody who goes through this book can find not only the plan of every city, but also the location of every house and whether it belongs to a Christian or a Muslim. They have marked each one with a cross or a crescent, so that one day when they rebel it will be easy for them to tell a Muslim household from the others." Grumbling from the mob—arms into the air in defiance! "Oh, oh, oh . . . clobber him, kill him, let him rot, the traitor." "Please, calm down. Not so fast," the corporal ordered with authority, "I haven't finished yet. Look. Here's another book." He held up another book—a physics text. "It tells you all you need to know about how to make gun-powder, bullets, and dynamite. These conspirators' homes are filled with books like this. Both the young and the old read these books and learn what to do to destroy our country. But thank God and the Sultan that we have been vigilant and were able to uncover their plot at the last minute. Now it's *we* who will destroy *their* homes and put *their* children to the sword." The policemen had a hard time clearing a way through the violent crowd. They finally succeeded and, pulling and pushing their victim, they took him off to jail.¹⁰⁴

Together with other owners of targeted books, Pakrad's father Abraham died in jail, where the chances of either escape or survival were very slim.

One of many examples of book burnings during the Armenian Genocide is the destruction in July 1915 of the library of Addai Sher, the Chaldean Bishop of Siirt, which contained thousands of books.¹⁰⁵ The library of the Saint John Church in Mardin was also confiscated¹⁰⁶ and the books given away to stores in Mardin or sold for practically nothing.¹⁰⁷ A teacher at the Syriac monastery of Deyrulzaferan noted in his memoirs that, thanks to the government's *carte blanche* to certain Kurdish tribes to attack Christians, the other important Syriac monastery, Mor Gabriel, was attacked in the fall of 1917 by the Kurdish brigand Şendi, who massacred inhabitants and destroyed the library.¹⁰⁸ However, attacks on books and libraries were generally coordinated by the government. In the 1920s, Hasan Reşit (Tankut) oversaw the confiscation of "many books written in foreign languages," including minority languages such as Kurmanci, Zazaki, Syriac, and Arabic, during the post-war campaign to continue homogenizing Anatolia.¹⁰⁹ Government agents often stumbled over books when dealing with recalcitrant elements. When Alişêr, a Kurdish chieftain-poet famous for inciting the Eastern Kizilbash population against the authorities, was killed, a coffer of his books was confiscated by the Kemalists.¹¹⁰

Targeting the Elite and Experimenting with Mass Violence

In late April, the Diyarbekir city prison was swarming with prisoners. Reşid ordered the large *caravanserai* of Diyarbekir evacuated, as every day several dozens of prisoners were locked up and tortured in that *khan*.¹¹¹ But these violent persecutions were not limited to Diyarbekir. In April a gradual shift occurred from discerning

between combatants and non-combatants to not differentiating them anymore. This momentum is exemplified by the crucial battle of Van, which had very high stakes for all parties. The Van front saw mutual indiscriminate massacring of Muslims by the joint Russo-Armenian forces and of Christians by Ottoman forces.¹¹² The anti-Armenian measures at the national level now became more and more categorical as well. Moreover, inspired by the brutalizing war in Persian Azerbaijan and in Transcaucasia, they were also gaining “total” traits: more and more violence was applied to more and more people. Fear of Allied landings on the western coasts added fuel to the fire. As a result, the CUP began incarcerating dissidents and assailing the Armenian community all over the Ottoman Empire. Beginning on 24 April 1915, the political and cultural elite of the Ottoman Armenian community was targeted for arrest and deportation to the interior. With very few exceptions, these men were tortured to death over the next several months. Simultaneously, deportation convoys to the interior were rerouted to Der el-Zor in the Syrian desert. The persecutions soon increased in intensity and were extended to larger parts of the Ottoman Empire.¹¹³

In Diyarbekir, Reşid had not been distinguishing himself at all since his arrival. His intensive arms searches of the first three weeks of April had delivered some results for his militia, as, indeed, arms were found. The scope of armament and the extent of its organization were blown out of proportion, and photos were taken of the armaments and of the culprits.¹¹⁴ On 27 April Reşid wired an elated telegram to Talât summarizing and evaluating his work in Diyarbekir:

For ten days, the pursuit of deserters has been carried out with utmost severity. As a result of yesterday's purges a significant amount of explosives, fifty bombs, lots of ammunition and various arms, and a great deal of dynamite powder were found. One hundred and twenty leaders and operatives of the villages were taken into custody. Until now, in the city alone more than 1,000 deserters of different regions have been apprehended, many of whom are party members. Searches and pursuit are continuing.¹¹⁵

Having incarcerated the bulk of the political elite of the Diyarbekir Christians, Reşid's militia now targeted their religious leaders. Blanket arrests of priests and monks were carried out, and their houses were ransacked. In Mardin, where Reşid's persecutions had not yet taken hold, the news from Diyarbekir nevertheless caused fear. The Armenian Catholic bishop Ignatius Maloyan had become anxious about the worsening situation and seems to have written a letter to his co-religionists, lest something happen to him. Maloyan's letter urges his parish to remain calm and loyal to the government; he wrote, “Above all, never lose your faith in the holy trinity.” The letter was sealed and entrusted to the Syriac Orthodox Bishop Gabriel Tabbuni on the first of May.¹¹⁶

While the war was raging with great intensity on the eastern front, the CUP began questioning the loyalty of the Ottoman Armenians even more. On 5 May 1915 Talât authorized the Third Army to disarm all Armenian gendarmes in Diyarbekir.¹¹⁷ This way, even loyal Armenians were categorized as disloyal and treated as such. The next day the Directorate for Employment and Supplies of the Ministry of Economy ordered all its offices to fire their Armenian staff and “deport those of whom it is necessary to areas where there are no Armenians.”¹¹⁸ Having already arrested these men in Diyarbekir, Reşid proceeded to persecute the city's clergy and extend the arrests to the villages. On 9 May he summoned the Chaldean priest Hanna Soha in Mardin to come to Diyarbekir for interrogation. Upon his arrival,

the militia publicly maltreated him before killing him in broad daylight in the street.¹¹⁹ The absence of constraints in this murder emboldened the militia and triggered a new wave of arrests and violence, this time targeting the surrounding villages as well. The predominantly Christian villages of Kabiye, Qarabash, and Qatabel, all situated on the plain of Diyarbekir, were subjected to brutal arms searches by Yasinzâde Yahya and Pirinçizâde Sıdkı between 10 and 20 May. The village men were tortured by bastinado, and dozens were taken away to the capital, filling the prison and the *caravanserai*.¹²⁰ German charity worker Friedrich Schuchardt wrote that “between the 10th and 30th of May another 1,200 of the most notable Armenians and other Christians of Diyarbekir province were arrested without distinction between the religious denominations.”¹²¹ Reşid then imposed the death penalty on any Armenian going outside the city walls.¹²² Diyarbekir had become an open-air prison and its Armenian neighborhood a de facto ghetto.

The persecutions also spread into the countryside, most notably to Mardin city, which was still ruled by Hilmi Bey, who had stalled and resisted anti-Christian persecutions in his district. On 15 May Reşid sent Aziz Feyzi to organize the round-up of the Christian elites of Mardin. During a secret meeting in which dozens of Muslim notables participated, a plan was laid out for the crackdown on the Mardin elite; however, this was practically impossible to carry out with Hilmi in office.¹²³ Talât was still busy micromanaging the national persecution of the Armenian elite. On 19 May he ordered the Hunchak leader Paramas court-martialed in the Diyarbekir prison and inquired into the whereabouts of one Krikor Nalbandian.¹²⁴ On 22 May he requested information on the Armenian politicians Agnoui and Rupen Zartarian, and their colleagues.¹²⁵

A critical event in Diyarbekir was the first large massacre involving the total destruction of entire village populations. On the morning of 20 May 1915 Reşid ordered Yahya and Sıdkı to disarm Qarabash, a village just northeast of Diyarbekir. The village was invaded with fifty men and thoroughly disarmed; even bread knives were seized. Its men incarcerated, its weapons confiscated, Qarabash was now completely emasculated. That same evening Yahya and Sıdkı visited neighboring Kurdish villages, inciting them to attack Qarabash and explicitly giving them fiat to plunder. Two days later, on 22 May, the village was invaded by mounted Kurds, who massacred its population with daggers, axes, and swords. Its two priests, Paulus and Behnam, were trampled to death under the horses' hooves. The women were raped, the houses were burnt, and valuables were seized.¹²⁶ The few survivors fled to Diyarbekir, where some of them were treated by Floyd Smith. Smith reported the arrival of the Qarabash survivors as follows:

May 21, 1915, there came to our compound in Diarbekir from the village of Karabash, three hours to the east, three or four wounded and the following day (May 22) over a score of wounded Armenian and Syrian women and children. They, the villagers, told of a night attack by the Kurds three days previous and that the next morning the government had sent gendarmes who refused to allow anyone to come to Diarbekir. Some managed to get away and finally all who could walk or be carried came on the dates mentioned. The wounds were practically all infected and I have classified them as follows: [. . .]

(c) Wounds made by heavy cutting instruments, probably axes. [. . .]

2. Two children about seven and nine years and one woman; attempted decapitations. Deep incised wounds of the nape of the neck (just below the skull), 5–8 inches long and of a depth equal to the thickness of the muscles of this region.¹²⁷

On that same evening, the 160 families of the village of Kabiye were targeted.¹²⁸ The terrified villagers—some remaining men but mostly women, children, and the elderly—had taken refuge in the Mor Kiryakos church. Sıdkı had persuaded Ömer, Mustafa, and Emîn, three sons of Perîxan, matriarch of the Reman tribe, to cooperate in the raid. They brought with them dozens of tribesmen, who combed the village for hemp rope to tie the men together. On Sıdkı's orders, the men were tortured with hot iron pins, while women and girls were raped in the church. Within five hours, the militia and the tribesmen had hacked the villagers to death with axes. Many were crammed into haylofts and barns and burned alive. After the massacre, the Reman brothers loaded two saddlebags with money and gold and carried the goods away.¹²⁹ The few survivors escaped to Diyarbekir, where some were killed by gendarmes. One woman stated that she survived the massacre “between the corpses of her relatives” (*men bayn lashat herbo*). When she fled to Diyarbekir city, a Zaza family proposed to take her into their home, but she refused out of fear. Another survivor, a boy, escaped death by hiding in a vineyard, which was overgrown by that time of the year. He was the only male survivor of the Kabiye massacre.¹³⁰

Five to Twelve: The Beginning of the End

In April 1915, some Armenians had already been sporadically deported from their native regions, though this was not an empire-wide campaign. The deportation of the entire Armenian *millet* was officially organized from 23 May 1915 on, when Talât issued orders for the wholesale deportation of all Armenians to Deyr-ul Zor, starting with the northeastern provinces.¹³¹ That same day he urged the Fourth Army Command to court-martial any Muslim who collaborated with Christians.¹³² The Third Army had been put under the command of General Mahmud Kâmil Pasha,¹³³ who had issued a similar order. His orders instructed “any Muslim who protected an Armenian hanged in front of his house, the burning of his house, his removal from office, and his appearance before a court-martial.”¹³⁴ These massive arrests and persecutions prompted the Entente Powers to make a joint declaration on 24 May, denouncing CUP policies against the Armenians. The declaration vehemently criticized these “new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization” and promised “that they will hold personally responsible . . . all members of the Ottoman government and those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres.”¹³⁵

The CUP leaders, especially Talât, panicked and attempted to disguise the deportations, requesting permission from the Grand Vizier on 26 May to issue a temporary deportation law. Although the deportations had already begun, the Grand Vizier endorsed Talât's law on 29 May, rushing the bill through Parliament the next day. This legislation gave a legal veneer to the official inception of the deportation of all Ottoman Armenians to the Syrian desert, authorizing the army to proceed with this project and delegating its daily implementation to the Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants.¹³⁶

The Armenian Genocide had now officially begun.

By Way of a Conclusion

The persecution process of the Ottoman Armenians was an internal campaign that ran parallel to the external war effort with the Great Powers, especially on the eastern front against Russia. It was no coincidence that most of the direct killing of non-combatant Ottoman Christians would occur in the eastern provinces, where the

threat of a Russian invasion backed by “Armenian insiders” was most immediate in the paranoid minds of the CUP dictatorship. However, the persecution was mostly an autonomous process and was only partly linked to the ebb and flow of the war. The initiation and conduct of the persecutions were in the hands of civilian bureaucrats in the Ministry of the Interior, not those of military personnel in the Ministry of War. The Ottoman province Diyarbekir has served as a platform for exemplifying these policies at the local level. The following two main arguments of this study may provide benchmarks for future research.

First, in the historiography of the Armenian Genocide, Talât Pasha’s role has not yet received the attention it deserves. His role as a micromanaging dictator operating from the center crystallizes from a detailed inquiry into archival documents of the Ottoman Ministry of the Interior. From the most sweeping of categorical macro-measures to the micro-level dismissals of hundreds of individuals, Talât was very much personally involved in the persecution. The overall direction of Ottoman government policies toward Armenians may seem incongruous and contradictory at times,¹³⁷ and more research on the nature of the CUP dictatorship would clarify this issue. The relationship between center and periphery can be illustrated by counter-posing Talât’s leverage as minister to Reşid’s executive power as governor. In the period between January and April 1915 Talât ordered the surveillance of Armenians to be accelerated. Eager to satisfy his superior, the overachieving Reşid took local initiative and applied considerable overkill in dealing with the issues at stake. Once the governor began experimenting with wholesale killing and demonstrated its efficiency, he also transgressed a moral boundary. From then on, Talât would not hesitate long to authorize the expansion of murder from individuals to groups.

Second, the Armenian Genocide did not fall from a clear blue sky. As in all instances of genocidal violence, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact timing of the initiation of the mass violence. As Donald Bloxham has pointed out, the Armenian Genocide arose incrementally out of the mechanism of cumulative radicalization: local radicalization was conveyed back to Istanbul, which in turn triggered new phases of persecution.¹³⁸ In other words, the output of the system was returned to its input in order to regulate further output. Therefore, it is practically impossible to speak of an absolute starting point. Nevertheless, two stages represent critical turning points in the entire process as points of no return: the general arrests of 24 April 1915 and the general deportation orders of 23 May 1915. Without these policy directives at the central level, the massive scale of the ensuing genocide would not have been reached.

Notes

1. Foremost in this radical faction were Mehmet Talât (1874–1921), İsmail Enver (1881–1922), Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir (1877–1922), Dr. Nâzım (1872–1926), and others.
2. Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3–4.
3. Jacques Sémelin, *Purifier et détruire: usages politiques des massacres et génocides* (Paris: Seuil, 2005).
4. See, e.g., Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy toward German Jews, 1933–1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970); Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1982), esp. chapter 5, “The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, 1933–1938”; John Mendelsohn, *The Holocaust: Selected Documents in Eighteen Volumes*, vol. 1: *Legalizing the Holocaust: The Early Phase, 1933–1939* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982); Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*,

- vol. 1: *The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997); Ton Zwaan, *Civilisering en decivilisering: studies over staatsvorming en geweld, nationalisme en vervolging* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2001), especially chapter 6, “De vervolging van de Joden in Duitsland, 1933–1939.”
5. An exception to this is Roderic H. Davison, “The Armenian Crisis, 1912–1914,” *The American Historical Review* 52 (1947): 481–505.
 6. Mark Levene has dubbed this mechanism “post-genocide”: Mark Levene, “The Changing Face of Mass Murder: Massacre, Genocide and Post-genocide,” *International Social Science Journal* 174 (2002): 443–52.
 7. Martin van Bruinessen, “The Ottoman Conquest of Diyarbakir and the Administrative Organisation of the Province in the 16th and 17th centuries,” in *Evlîya Çelebi in Diyarbakir*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen and Hendrik Boeschoten, 13–38 (Leiden: Brill, 1988); Alpay Bizirlik, *16. yüzyıl ortalarında Diyarbakir Beylerbeyliği’nde vakıflar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002); Nejat Göyünç, “Diyarbakir Beylerbeyliğinin İlk İdari Taksimatı,” *Tarih Dergisi* 22 (1969): 23–24.
 8. İbrahim Yılmazçelik, *XIX. yüzyılın ilk yarısında Diyarbakır* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995); Abdulhalık Bakır, “Osmanlı Öncesinde Diyarbakır’da Sanayi ve Ticaret” (paper presented at the conference *Oğuzlardan Osmanlıya Diyarbakır*, Dicle University, Diyarbakır, Turkey, 21 May 2004).
 9. Hellmut Christoff, “Kurden und Armenier: Eine Untersuchung über die Abhängigkeit ihrer Lebensformen und Charakterentwicklung von der Landschaft” (Diss., University of Hamburg, 1935), 19–73.
 10. Raymond H. Kévorkian and Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l’Empire ottoman à la veille du génocide* (Paris: Editions d’Art et d’Histoire, 1992), 392.
 11. Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed, 1992), chapters 2–4.
 12. Walther J. Fischel, “The Jews of Kurdistan a Hundred Years Ago: A Traveler’s Record,” *Jewish Social Studies* 6 (1944): 195–226; A. Medyalı, *Kürdistanlı Yahudiler* (Ankara: Berhem, 1992), 58; Erich Brauer, *The Jews of Kurdistan* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1993).
 13. Ralph H.W. Empson, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel: A Short Account of the Yezidi Tribes of Kurdistan* (London: AMS Press, 1928).
 14. Hans-Jürgen Sasse, “Linguistische Analyse des arabischen Dialekts der Mhallamiye in der Provinz Mardin (Südosttürkei)” (PhD diss., Ludwig-Maximilians University of München, 1970).
 15. Hans Hollerweger, *Turabdin* (Linz: Freunde des Tur Abdin, 1999).
 16. The study of early-twentieth-century Ottoman demography demands careful scrutiny, as it is not only difficult to produce concrete and reliable statistics, but also a political minefield in which contemporary and present-day nationalist scholarship plays a role. Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1983); Levon Marashlian, *Politics and Demography: Armenians, Turks, and Kurds in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Zoryan Institute, 1991).
 17. For a critical assessment of these arguments see Rober Koptaş, “Armenian Political Thinking in the Second Constitutional Period: The Case of Krikor Zohrab” (MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2005), 12–15.
 18. I have dealt with these delicate issues in greater detail in my MA thesis: see Uğur Ü. Üngör, “‘A Reign of Terror’: CUP Rule in Diyarbakir Province, 1913–1923” (MA thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2005), 21–32.
 19. Şevket Beysanoğlu, *Ziyâ Gökalp’in İlk Yazı Hayatı: 1894–1909* (Istanbul: Diyarbakır’ı Tanıtma Derneği Neşriyatı, 1956), 11–12.
 20. Until the Balkan wars, Gökalp compared Ottoman society to US society, as in both countries many different ethnic groups coexisted under one denomination (Ottoman

- and American, respectively). In fact, Gökalp even rejected Turkish ethnic nationalism, as it entailed nation building based on blood bonds, which he considered unreal. Mehmed Mehdî, "Türklük ve Osmanlılık," *Peyman II*, quoted in Beysanolu, *Ziyâ Gökalp'ın*, 99–101, 105.
21. According to one researcher of the period, the Pirinçizâde dynasty owned thirty villages in the vicinity of Diyarbekir city. Malmîsanij [pseud.], *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi* (Spånga, Sweden: Apec, 1998), 41.
 22. Politisches Archiv Auswärtiges Amt [PAAA], R14084, Mutius to Bethmann Hollweg, 14 June 1914.
 23. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, vol.1 (Istanbul: İletişim, 1997), 600–601.
 24. Jacques Rhétoré, "Les chrétiens aux bêtes! Souvenirs de la guerre sainte proclamée par les Turcs contre les chrétiens en 1915" (unpublished manuscript, Bibliothèque du Saulchoir), 59–60.
 25. Vartkes Yeghiayan, ed., *British Foreign Office Dossiers on Turkish War Criminals* (Pasadena, CA: AAIC, 1991), 479. Given his reputation, Aziz Feyzi's assignment to Diyarbekir caused unrest and anxiety among Armenian politicians there. Gâidz F. Minassian, "Les relations entre le Comité Union et Progrès et la Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne à la veille de la Première Guerre mondiale d'après les sources arméniennes," *Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine* 1 (1995): 45–99, 90, n. 27.
 26. Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, 480.
 27. As in CUP structures at the national level, many of these people were related to each other: Aziz Feyzi was both Ziyâ Gökalp's and Şeref's cousin, and Sıdkı was related to both of them on his maternal and paternal sides. Malmîsanij [pseud.], *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi* (Spånga, Sweden: Apec, 1998), 41.
 28. Kamal Madhar Ahmad, *Kurdistan during the First World War*, trans. Ali Maher Ibrahim (London: Saqi, 1994), 73.
 29. Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, vol. 3, *1914–1916: The Challenge of War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 189.
 30. Sergej D. Sazonov, *Les années fatales: souvenirs de M.S. Sazonov, ancien ministre des Affaires étrangères de Russie (1910–1916)* (Paris: Payot, 1927), 182.
 31. Cemal Pasha, *Hatıralar: İttihat ve Terakki ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı Anıları* (Istanbul: Çağdaş, 1977), 141. Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English are my own.
 32. For the eight articles of this treaty, see Şevket S. Aydemir, *Makedonya'dan Orta Asya'ya Enver Paşa*, vol. 2 (1908–1914) (Istanbul: Remzi, 1972), 510.
 33. Cemal Pasha, *Hatıralar*, 142–43.
 34. Paul G. Halpern, *A Naval History of World War I* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 76.
 35. John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 217.
 36. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [BOA], DH.ŞFR 44/200, Talât to provinces, 6 September 1914.
 37. In Parliament, CUP members had dubbed the capitulations "satanic angels." *Meclisi Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi*, 3rd election period, 4th sitting, 60th sess., 1028. In his memoirs Cemal Pasha confesses that they wanted to "tear them apart." Cemal Pasha, *Hatıralar*, 438. The annulment of the capitulations "was received euphorically as a military success." Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler*, vol. 3 (Istanbul: İletişim, 1997), 420.
 38. "İmtiyazat-ı Ecnebiyenin (Kapitülasyon) İlgası Hakkında İrade-i seniyye," in *Takvim-i Vekayi*, no. 1938, 17 September 1914. Together with the capitulations, the reform plan for the eastern provinces, which Russia had designed in 1913 mainly to curb abuses against Christians, was also de facto cancelled. Jan van der Dussen, "The Westenenk File: The Question of Armenian Reforms in 1913–1914," *Armenian Review* 39 (1986): 1–46.
 39. Feroz Ahmad, "Unionist Relations with the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1914," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. 1, *The Central Lands*, ed. Bernard Lewis and Benjamin Braude, 401–34 (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982), 424.

40. The German word *Gleichschaltung* (literally “synchronization”) is a typical Nazi euphemism and describes the process by which the Nazi regime successively established a system of authoritarian control and tight coordination over all aspects of society between 1933 and 1939. This process included the purification of the state bureaucracy through the removal of officials without National Socialist sympathies. Karl D. Bracher, “Stufe totalitärer Gleichschaltung: Die Befestigung der nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 4 (1956): 30–42; Volker Dahm, “Nationale Einheit und partikuläre Vielfalt: Zur Frage der kulturpolitischen Gleichschaltung im Dritten Reich,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 43 (1995): 221–66. I use this term not to associate the CUP regime with Nazi Germany but, rather, as a sociological concept that can serve as a comparative tool within the field of genocide studies: namely, the process of configuration and top-down purification of the state bureaucracy in order to exercise more power. This should be recognized and interpreted through the academic currency of terms such as *Zeitgeist*, *ancien régime*, and *Gestalt*, which are also used to describe similar phenomena in different societies and historical settings. Unlike the NSDAP, the CUP did not have enough time or power to prepare, implement, and consolidate this operation before the war; therefore, the *Gleichschaltung* of provincial bureaucracies was often carried out on an impromptu basis during the war.
41. Ali Emîrî, *Osmanlı Vilâ-yât-ı Şarkîyyesi* (Istanbul: Dâr-ul Hilâfe, 1918), 34.
42. Ishaq Armalto, *Al-Qousara fi Nakabat an-Nasar*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Al-Sharfe Monastery, 1970). This detailed chronicle was written in 1919 in Arabic by the Syriac priest Ishaq Armalto and provides a very valuable account of Diyarbekir province before and during the war. It has recently been published in Swedish: Ishaq Armalto, *De Kristnas Hemska Katastrofer: Osmanernas och Ung-turkarnas Folkmord i norra Mesopotamien 1895/1914–1918*, trans. Ingvar Rydberg (Stockholm: Beth Froso Nsibin, 2005). I have used an unofficial Turkish translation by Turan Karataş (Sweden, 1993), 22.
43. Daniel Thom to William Peet, 16 August 1914, quoted in Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede: Mission, Ethnie und Staat in den Ostprovinzen der Türkei 1839–1938* (Zurich: Chronos, 2000), 336.
44. BOA, DH.ŞFR 47/243, Talât to Diyarbekir, 28 November 1914.
45. Thomas Mugerditchian, *Dikranagerdee Nahanke Tcharteru, Aganadesee Badmoutiun* (Cairo: Djihanian, 1919). This book is alternately titled *Dikranagerdee Nahankin Tcharteru yev Kurderou Kazanioutounneru* (Cairo, 1919).
46. A Mil, “Umumi Harpte Teşkilâtı Mahsusa,” serialized in *Vakit*, 2 October 1933–18 April 1934; republished as Arif Cemil (Denker), *I. Dünya Savaşı’nda Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa* (Istanbul: Arba, 1997).
47. *Ibid.*, 196.
48. Ahmet Refik (Altnay), *Kafkas Yollarında: İki Komite, İki Kıtıl* (1919; reprint, Istanbul: Temel, 1998), 157.
49. Denker, *Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa*, 236–38.
50. BOA, DH.ŞFR 47/70, Talât to provinces, 18 November 1914.
51. *Tarihi Muhakeme* (Istanbul: Kitaphane-i Sûdî, 1919), 14.
52. Quoted from internal CUP correspondence, 23 November 1914, in Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler*, vol. 3, 349.
53. PAAA, R14085, Wangenheim to Bethmann-Hollweg, 29 December 1914.
54. Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 51–74. For a detailed account of the Sarıkamış disaster see Alptekin Müderrisoğlu, *Sarıkamış Dramı*, 2 vols. (Istanbul: Kağtaş, 1997).
55. Johannes Lepsius, *Der Todesgang des Armenischen Volkes: Bericht über das Schicksal des Armenischen Volkes in der Türkei während des Weltkrieges* (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919), 161–62.

56. Hüseyin C. Yalçın, *Siyasal Anılar* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1976), 233.
57. BOA, DH.ŞFR 48/166, Talât to the provinces of Erzurum, Bitlis, and Van, 26 December 1914.
58. BOA, DH.ŞFR 50/3, Talât to the provinces of Erzurum, Van, and Bitlis, 14 February 1915.
59. BOA, DH.ŞFR 50/179, Talât to Van province, 6 March 1915.
60. BOA, DH.EUM.MEM 80/63, 21 November 1916.
61. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 26, 27.
62. *Ibid.*, 26.
63. Abed Mshihö Na'man Qarabashi, *Vergoten Bloed: Verhalen over de gruweldaden jegens Christenen in Turkije en over het leed dat hun in 1895 en in 1914–1918 is aangedaan*, trans. George Toro and Amill Gorgis (Glanerbrug, The Netherlands: Bar Hebraeus, 2002), 60. This important diary was originally written in Aramaic under the title *Dmo Zliho* ("Shed Blood") by Na'man Qarabashi, a native of the village of Qarabash. During the war Qarabashi was a theology student at the Syriac monastery of Deyr-ul Zaferan. Along with Armalto's account, it is one of the very few survivor memoirs.
64. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 27.
65. Raymond Kévorkian, "Receuil de témoignages sur l'extermination des amele tabouri ou bataillons de soldats-ouvriers Arméniens de l'armée Ottomane pendant la première guerre mondiale," *Revue d'histoire arménienne contemporaine* 1 (1995): 289–303.
66. See the official order in Kâmuran Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası* (Ankara: Bilgi, 1988), 276.
67. Qarabashi names nine Armenians who were led away and killed. Qarabashi, *Dmo Zliho*, 62, 64–66.
68. Should the Entente navy penetrate the Straits, Talât promised that the Ottomans would blow up the Aya Sofia and retreat into the Anatolian heartland, whence they planned to resist and repel the Entente. Talât laughed at US Ambassador Henry Morgenthau's protests, saying that not even six men in the CUP would care about the building. Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas, 2000), 132.
69. For a detailed reconstruction of this decision-making process, see Taner Akçam, *İnsan hakları ve Ermeni sorunu: İttihat ve Terakki'den Kurtuluş Savaşı'na* (Istanbul: İmge, 2001), 260–65, especially 264.
70. BOA, DH.ŞFR 51/15, Talât to the provinces of Erzurum, Van, and Diyarbakir, 14 March 1915.
71. Heinrich Vierbücher, *Armenien 1915: Die Abschichtung eines Kulturvolkes durch die Türken* (1930; reprint, Bremen: Donat & Temmen Verlag, 1985), 49.
72. Hans-Lukas Kieser, "Dr. Mehmed Reshid (1873–1919): A Political Doctor," in *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah / The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller, 245–80 (Zurich: Chronos, 2002).
73. Mehmed Reşid, *Mülâhazât* (Istanbul, 1919), transliterated in Nejdet Bilgi, *Dr. Mehmed Reşid Şahingiray'ın hayatı ve hâtıraları* (İzmir: Akademi, 1997), 89, n. 28. According to Abidin Nesimî, son of the then mayor of Lice, Hüseyin Nesimî, the number of volunteers Reşid employed was twenty. Abidin Nesimî, *Yılların İçinden* (Istanbul: Gözlem, 1977), 39.
74. Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, 151.
75. Alexander L. Macfie, *The End of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1923* (London: Longman, 1998), 128.
76. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 28.
77. *Ibid.*, 28.
78. Mustafa Â. Tütenk, *Mahsûl-i Leyâlî-i Hayatım* (unpublished memoirs, Diyarbakir, 1918), fourth notebook, *Diyarbakir'de Ermeni Hâdisesi* [The Armenian Affair in Diyarbakir], 21–23, quoted in Şevket Beysanoğlu, *Anıtları ve Kitabeleri ile Diyarbakır Tarihi* (Diyarbakır: Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür ve Sanat Yayınları, 1996), 787–88.
79. Floyd Smith to James Barton, 18 September 1915, ABCFM Archives, Houghton Library (Harvard University), ABC 16.9.7, reel 716:436, quoted in Kieser, "Dr. Mehmed Reshid," 264.

80. The booklet was alternately titled *Sebat* (“Persistence”).
81. Reşid, *Mülâhazât*, 24.
82. *Ibid.*, 95, 99.
83. *Ibid.*, 103, 106.
84. Süleyman Nazif, “Doktor Reşid,” in *Hadisat*, 8 February 1919. It is possible that the establishment of these provincial committees was an empire-wide undertaking. There is evidence that in other provinces similar organizations were set up: Yale University Library, Ernst Jäckh Papers, file 49, folio 1354, “Anlage Abschrift.”
85. PAAA, R14087, director of the Deutscher Hülfsbund für christliches Liebeswerk im Orient (Frankfurt am Main), Friedrich Schuchardt, to the Auswärtiges Amt, 21 August 1915, encl. no. 6.
86. On 2 September 1914 İbrahim Bedreddin (Bedri for short) became the postal clerk of Diyarbekir province. Previously he had held this office in Basra and Mosul. After the Balkan wars of 1912–1913, he had coordinated the CUP-sponsored deportation of the Ottoman Greeks of Biga (a town between Çanakkale and Bursa). On 12 September 1915 he was officially appointed district governor of Mardin, which he remained until 11 December 1916. On 24 January 1917 he was assigned to the governorship of Diyarbekir, which he occupied until 24 November 1918. Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, 69–70.
87. A *müftü* (mufti) is a Muslim jurist who is versed in Islamic religious law (the *shari’a*) and provides binding advice on its application.
88. Beysanoğlu, *Diyarbekir Tarihi*, 793–94; Bilgi, *Dr. Mehmed Reşid*, 26–27. See also Joseph Naayem, *Shall This Nation Die?* (New York: Chaldean Rescue, 1921), 182–83. Reverend Naayem was a Chaldean priest of Urfa, where he witnessed the killing of his father and the persecution of the Christians. Disguised as a Bedouin Arab, he narrowly escaped with his life.
89. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 29, 34.
90. BOA, DH. ŞFR 51/220, Talât to Diyarbekir, 6 April 1915.
91. Reşid, *Mülâhazât*, 112. Immediately after the appointment of Sıdkı, a wave of violence swept over the labor battalions as two supervisors came to inspect the workers, yelling, “You’re not here to play, come on, I want to see blood on those rocks!” Qarabashi, *Dmo Zliho*, 65.
92. Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, 48.
93. Floyd Smith to James Barton, 18 September 1915, quoted in Kieser, “Dr. Mehmed Reshid,” 265.
94. Qarabashi, *Dmo Zliho*, 63.
95. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 29.
96. Reşid, *Mülâhazât*, 105.
97. Qarabashi, *Dmo Zliho*, 127. Fa’iz Al-Ghusayn, an Ottoman bureaucrat hailing from Damascus, was arrested for his opposition to the CUP and put in the Diyarbekir prison, where he witnessed the tortures inflicted on the Armenian notables. He later fled to Bombay and wrote his memoirs in Arabic. Fa’iz Al-Ghusayn, *Martyred Armenia* (London: C.A. Pearson, 1917).
98. Reşid, *Mülâhazât*, 103, 104.
99. BOA, ZB. 352/87, 18 June 1908.
100. BOA, DH.ŞFR 69/75, Talât to Sivas province, 23 October 1916.
101. BOA, DH.ŞFR 76/243-14, Talât to Sivas province, 24 May 1917.
102. Floyd Smith to James Barton, 18 September 1915, quoted in Kieser, “Dr. Mehmed Reshid,” 264.
103. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 29. Patriarch Rahmani, ‘Les dégâts causés à la nation syrienne’ (presentation at the 1919 Peace Conference).
104. Vahram Dadrian, *To the Desert: Pages from My Diary* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2003), 64–65.
105. Addey Şer, *Siirt Vakaynamesi*, trans. Celal Kabadayı (Istanbul: Yaba, 2002), 8–9.

106. Yves Ternon, ed., “Mardin 1915: Anatomie pathologique d’une destruction,” special issue, *Revue d’histoire arménienne contemporaine* 4 (2002), 152.
107. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 105.
108. Abed Mshihó Na’man Qarabashi, *Vergoten Bloed: Verhalen over de gruweldaden jegens Christenen in Turkije en over het leed dat hun in 1895 en in 1914–1918 is aangedaan* (Glanerbrug, The Netherlands: Bar Hebraeus Yayınları, 2002), ss. 122–23.
109. “Türk Ocakları Altıncı Kurultayı,” in *Türk Yurdu* 4/24, 29/223 (May 1930), 85, quoted in Füsün Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçilişi: Türk Ocakları (1912–1931)* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1997), 333.
110. Nazmi Sevgen, “Koçkirili Aliş,” *Tarih Dünyası* 9 (1950): 377–83. In later years, too, the confiscation (and probable destruction) of books continued, and in a sense it continues today. Murat Belge, “Kitap yakmayı seven toplum,” *Radikal*, 20 February 2005. For a comparative analysis of this phenomenon, see Rebecca Knuth, *Libricide: The Regime-Sponsored Destruction of Books and Libraries in the Twentieth Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).
111. Qarabashi, *Dmo Zliho*, 82, 128. This famous *caravanserai*, a large inn providing shelter to traveling businessmen or pilgrims, was also known as a “guest house” (*misafirhane*) or simply “khan” (*han*); it is presently known as the Deliller Hanı near the Mardin Gate. After restoration in the 1990s, it became the five-star Hotel Kervansaray.
112. Anahide Ter Minassian, “Van 1915,” in *Armenian Van/Vasurakan*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 209–44 (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2000).
113. Donald Bloxham, “The Beginning of the Armenian Catastrophe: Comparative and Contextual Considerations,” in *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah/The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller, 101–28 (Zurich: Chronos, 2002); Haig Tahta, *April 1915* (London: Taderon Press, 2006).
114. Beysanoğlu, *Diyarbakir Tarihi*, 789. A similar method was applied in Mardin, where Memduh Bey had been sent. Ara Sarafian, “The Disasters of Mardin during the Persecutions of the Christians, Especially the Armenians, 1915,” *Haigazian Armenological Review* 18 (1998): 262–93, 263.
115. Reşid to Talât, 27 April 1915, quoted in Hüsamettin Yıldırım, *Rus-Türk-Ermeni Münasebetleri (1914–1918)* (Ankara: KÖK, 1990), 57.
116. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 30.
117. BOA, DH.ŞFR 52/234, Talât to Reşid, 5 May 1915.
118. BOA, DH.ŞFR 52/249, 6 May 1915, Ministry of Economy to the provinces of Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, Sivas, Mamuret-ul Aziz, and Diyarbakir. Since there were no other educated clerks available, Syriac employees Aziz (son of Yakub) and George Meqdesi Nano of the Diyarbakir office of the Ministry of Economy were allowed to continue their work. The director of this office, Saib Ali Efendi, protected these two secretaries throughout the war. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 33. Most Armenian civil servants had already been fired and replaced by Muslims at that time. Some were still in office at the Ministry of Post. On 23 May this ministry too took action, ordering the dismissal of all its Armenian clerks and the transfer of the vacant functions to “trustworthy Muslims” (*emin ve müslim kimselere*). BOA, DH.ŞFR 53/89, Ministry of Post to the provinces of Diyarbakir, Adana, Sivas, Ankara, Van, and Erzurum, 23 May 1915. For Haleb see BOA, DH.ŞFR 53/90. The following day, the ministry had to deal with the replacement of the Armenian postal clerk responsible for the delivery of mail between Diyarbakir and Siirt. Although there were no other qualified employees available, it warned that the new postal clerk must not be an Armenian. BOA, DH.ŞFR 53/97, Ministry of Post to Bitlis, 24 May 1915.
119. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 32.
120. Qarabashi, *Dmo Zliho*, 81, 86, 92.
121. PAAA, R14087, director of the Deutscher Hülfsbund für christliches Liebeswerk im Orient (Frankfurt am Main) Friedrich Schuchardt to the Auswärtiges Amt, 21 August 1915, encl. no. 6.

122. US National Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/77, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, 20 July 1915 (encl. no. 3), in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915–1917*, ed. Ara Sarafian (London: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 103.
123. Armalto, *Al-Qousara*, 33.
124. BOA, DH.ŞFR 53/58, 19 May 1915, Talât to Reşid.
125. BOA, DH.ŞFR 53/74, 22 May 1915, Talât to Reşid.
126. Qarabashi, *Dmo Zliho*, 81.
127. ABCFM Archives, Houghton Library, Harvard University, ABC 16.9.7, vol. 25d, doc. 485, Floyd Smith to James Barton, 20 September 1919, quoted in James Barton, ed., *“Turkish Atrocities”: Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915–1917* (Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas Institute, 1998), 92.
128. In the 1960s, a professor of Semitic languages, Otto Jastrow, traveled to Diyarbekir and Beirut to conduct several very valuable interviews with survivors from many villages. Jastrow has uploaded these recordings to an online archive, <http://semarch.uni-hd.de/> (accessed 15 February 2006) and transcribed them in Aramaic, Arabic, and German translation. For the Kabiye massacre see Otto Jastrow, ed., *Die mesopotamisch-arabischen Qeltu-Dialekte*, vol. 2, *Volkskundliche Texte in Elf Dialekten* (Wiesbaden: Kommissionsverlag Franz Steiner GmbH, 1981), 309–71.
129. According to Qarabashi, the amount of money stolen was £150. Qarabashi, *Dmo Zliho*, 89.
130. Jastrow, *Die mesopotamisch-arabischen*, 310. Many survivors of the Christian villages of the plain fled to the city, but they were not received with open arms. Survivors and scared villagers came pouring into the churches. A girl survivor related that upon arrival at the Syriac Mother Mary Church, she was chased away at the door by a Syriac Orthodox priest, who cursed at her and did not even give her a morsel of bread. *Ibid.*, 324–25. According to the son of an Armenian survivor from the village of Satıköy, this priest was B’shero Abu Tuma, who had also been forced by Reşid to act as an informer and to betray houses where Armenians were hidden. Interview with David Krikorian (aged seventy-five) from Satıköy, Diyarbekir province, conducted in Turkish in Amsterdam on 16 December 2004.
131. BOA, DH.ŞFR 53/91, 53/92, and 53/93, Talât to provinces, 23 May 1915. This is the single instance in which the empire-wide nature of the deportations is reflected in one order at the most central level.
132. BOA, DH.ŞFR 53/85, Talât to Cemal Pasha, 23 May 1915.
133. On 12 February 1915 Mahmud Kâmil replaced General Hafız Hakkı, who had died in a spotted typhus epidemic. Erickson, *Ordered to Die*, 104.
134. *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, no. 3540, 7.
135. Public Record Office, FO 371/2488/51010, 28 May 1915; US National Archives, RG 59, 867.4016/67, 29 May 1915.
136. BOA, MV 198/163, 30 May 1915.
137. The Turkification of the Ottoman medical community is a good example of this apparent contradiction: at the same time the Interior Ministry began persecuting and liquidating Armenian doctors, the War Ministry was trying to cope with a severe lack of medical staff for sick and wounded Ottoman soldiers at the front. This example of a self-destructive crisis situation is not easily caught in simple formulations. Part of the answer lies in the tension between Enver and Talât, each of whom had his own agenda: Enver’s main concern was to win the war, whereas Talât most of all yearned to Turkify the country with all the coercive power he could muster.
138. Donald Bloxham, “The Armenian Genocide of 1915–1916: Cumulative Radicalization and the Development of a Destruction Policy,” *Past and Present* 181 (2003): 141–91.

GENOCIDE STUDIES AND PREVENTION

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“When the Cannons Talk, the Diplomats Must Be Silent”: A Danish Diplomat in Constantinople during the Armenian Genocide

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The envoy Carl Ellis Wandel was the sole Danish diplomatic representative in Constantinople before, during, and after World War I, and between 1914 and 1925 he wrote hundreds of detailed reports on the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians, as well as on related subjects. This article analyzes and contextualizes some of his most important reports, showing how these hitherto unknown sources contribute to the understanding of vital aspects of the Armenian Genocide, not least concerning the ongoing scholarly debate between “intentionalist” and “structuralist” interpretations of the event and concerning the destruction of the Ottoman Armenians as a particularly radical part of a Young Turk project of Turkification.

From the time of the Abdul Hamid massacres of 1894 to 1896—the systematic annihilation of some 100,000 to 300,000 Ottoman Armenians,¹ combined with the forced Islamization or displacement of several hundred thousands more²—the persecution of this Christian minority had a significant impact on a broad range of leading public figures, as well as on the general public, in the Western world.³ This was also true in Denmark, where public figures raised awareness of the Armenian atrocities and their political implications through speeches, articles, books, and organizations: secular Danish-Jewish intellectuals Georg Brandes (1842–1927) and Åge Meyer Benedictsen (1866–1927) exposed the indifference of the European governments to the sufferings of the Armenians⁴ and founded Danske Armeniervenner (DA, “Danish Friends of Armenians”), respectively, as a direct consequence of the massacres.⁵ From the other end of the spectrum, bishop and minister of cultural affairs H.V. Styhr (1838–1905), in 1897, denounced what he called Abdul Hamid’s “holy war of extermination.”⁶

Also, from 1900 onward, a number of Danish missionaries and relief workers went to work among Ottoman Armenians, in close cooperation with German, American, and Scandinavian colleagues, and some of these Danes became important witnesses to the extermination of the Armenians. One such person was Karen Jeppe (1876–1935), a schoolteacher and DA relief worker in Urfa from 1903–1919, who in 1921 became one of three members of the Commission of Inquiry for the Protection of Women and Children in the Near East from her base in Aleppo, Syria. This League of Nations commission was established in 1920 to deal with the problem of the tens of thousands of mainly Armenian women and children who had survived the genocide, many of them only to be forcibly converted to Islam, and were still kept in captivity in the

Turkish and Arabic areas of the former Ottoman Empire.⁷ Another such person was Maria Jacobsen (1882–1960), a missionary and nurse working for Kvindelige Missions Arbejdere (KMA, “Women Missionary Workers”), who was stationed in Harput (Kharpert) in the *vilayet* of Mamouret-ul-Aziz from the fall of 1907 until 1919. Both women witnessed every aspect of the Armenian Genocide—death marches, massacres, starvation, resistance, forced Islamization—from their respective geographical positions in the Ottoman Empire; and still, under these extremely difficult conditions, they managed to save the lives of literally thousands.⁸ Persons like Jacobsen and Jeppe were thus in an ideal position to give accurate accounts of the implementation of the genocide on the local and regional levels, but when it came to giving accounts of the overall political, economic, and ideological framework for the genocide, no Western observer was better suited than the diplomats in Constantinople.

A Danish Diplomat in Constantinople: Carl Ellis Wandel

At the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Denmark declared neutrality. But, the fear among the government and the general population that Germany would occupy some or all of the small country as a preventive measure to secure access through the Danish straits led to the Danish neutrality policy toward Germany being declared “benevolent.” It also had the effect of temporarily diverting interest from matters concerning, for instance, the plight of the Ottoman Armenian population some 2,000 miles away. But for Danes stationed in the Ottoman Empire during the war, the organized persecution of the Armenians was a tangible reality from the very beginning. One unknown, but important, Danish observer was Carl Ellis Wandel (1871–1940), who made up the entire diplomatic staff of the Danish legation in Constantinople (Istanbul) from 1914 to 1925.

Carl Ellis Wandel was born in Copenhagen and was commercially trained as a merchant in the family wine-importing business. When he was appointed minister (i.e., envoy) and head of the Danish legation in Constantinople in the summer of 1914, he was already an experienced diplomat. While running the family’s wine cork factory in Lisbon, he had served as consul general in that city from 1904–1909, and when he moved to Argentina in 1909, he went within a few years from consul general in Buenos Aires to minister and full-time diplomat there until 1913, when it was decided that he should be transferred to the Ottoman Empire.⁹ Wandel took over the responsibility of dealing with official Danish relations from the Swedish legation, most likely as part of a drive for Danish trade interests in an area that was gaining increasing significance in Europe as a producer of raw materials as well as a purchaser of Western products. Judging by the hundreds of confidential reports he sent to the Danish foreign ministry from 1914 onward, now held in the Danish National Archives in Copenhagen, Wandel was a thorough and conscientious diplomat, analyzing the social and political developments in the Ottoman Empire in a knowledgeable, usually detached, and often very detailed way, with a constant eye to the possible effects these developments could have on Danish trade interests in the region.

What makes Wandel an especially important and credible witness to developments in the Ottoman Empire during World War I, including the Armenian Genocide, is a combination of several factors. First, he was a neutral observer from a neutral country—or, more precisely, a country whose government, not least its powerful foreign minister, Erik Scavenius, insisted on upholding the abovementioned

“benevolent neutrality” toward neighboring Germany and her allies.¹⁰ Scavenius’s general stance was to not blame anything on any of the warring parties, since he saw the war itself as an “uncontrollable machine that crushes everything.”¹¹ He was certainly not a person to let potentially “controversial” considerations, such as a bias toward a persecuted minority in the Ottoman Empire, influence Danish foreign policy. In fact, when the Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian foreign ministries, through their respective royal courts, received an official request from the national Armenian delegation in Paris in April 1918 to intervene on behalf of the surviving Armenians in Armenia, who were being severely persecuted by Turkish troops following the withdrawal of the Russian army, the apparently unanimous answer from these neutral nations was that “nothing would be done.”¹²

Second, Wandel’s status as a diplomat from a “harmless” country (i.e., a small, neutral country without imperialistic ambitions) undoubtedly further enhanced his ability to gain the trust of the large number of influential political players he had access to. Apart from the obvious differences in economic and military strength, and therefore in diplomatic leverage, this status is somewhat reminiscent of the status of the United States in the Ottoman Empire before 1917.¹³ Also, most of Wandel’s reports and analyses were confidential, and they were drafted with the purpose of giving accurate and reliable information to the Danish foreign ministry, a ministry that an experienced diplomat like Wandel is unlikely to have expected would actually be moved to make even a symbolic gesture toward the Ottoman Armenians or, for that matter, toward any other Ottoman minority. Neither did Wandel at any point suggest or expect that any action should be taken in this direction. Indeed, at one point he states in a report, “When the cannons talk, the diplomats must be silent.”¹⁴ Unlike the legations of other then-neutral nations, such as the United States, Greece, and Bulgaria,¹⁵ the Danish legation does not seem to have been approached in the summer of 1915 by Ottoman Armenian representatives seeking diplomatic intervention on behalf of their fellow Armenians. But, Wandel agreed with his colleagues that only Germany, as the Ottoman Empire’s most powerful ally, had the potential to significantly influence the Young Turks, although during the genocide he came to believe that the Young Turks had become so thoroughly radicalized that even a forceful German intervention could no longer help the Ottoman Armenians.¹⁶

This does not mean that Wandel was indifferent to the sufferings of the Armenians. On the contrary, as both a moral and a rational human being, he was highly affected by the genocide and wrote extensively about it in his reports, in which he could also, at times, point approvingly to objections raised by diplomats from other neutral countries against the persecutions of the Armenians. In his capacity as a diplomat, however, he adhered to strict neutrality. This was the case, when, in 1917, he was strongly urged by the American ambassador, Abram I. Elkus, Henry Morgenthau’s successor, to protest against the continued persecution of the Ottoman Pontic Greeks living on the Black Sea coast. Wandel simply noted this fact in his report to the foreign ministry, and apparently neither he nor the ministry took any action.¹⁷

Also, even though Wandel was kept well informed of the increasing persecution and subsequent genocide of the Armenians by his connections in, for instance, the German, Spanish, Persian, Vatican, Dutch, American, and other embassies and legations,¹⁸ as well as in the Ottoman Turkish establishment,¹⁹ among missionaries from Denmark and other countries,²⁰ and among Armenian and other Ottoman Christian circles, his reliability as a witness is further shown by the fact that he

was not immediately ready to think the worst of the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) regarding its policy toward the Armenians. During the summer of 1915, Wandel did realize that the Young Turk dictatorship had both the desire and the means to pursue its genocidal policy to its conclusion. But still, as shown below, it was not before 4 September of that year that he finally realized that the authorities would not stop short of a policy of outright extermination of the Armenian population. He came to this realization considerably later than most other Western observers, who had already recognized and reported this fact in June or July.

Best known are the reports from well-placed contemporary diplomats, missionaries, and rescue workers, such as the German theologian Johannes Lepsius,²¹ the German ambassador Hans von Wangenheim,²² and the American ambassador Henry Morgenthau.²³ But also the very experienced Swedish ambassador to Constantinople, Per Gustaf August Cosswa Anckarsvärd, reported on 6 July 1915 that

The persecutions of the Armenians have taken on appalling proportions, and everything is pointing toward the idea that the Young Turks have wanted to take advantage of an opportunity where, for various reasons, no effective pressure from the outside needs to be feared to once and for all terminate the Armenian question. The method is simple enough and consists of the extermination of the Armenian nation.²⁴

This policy of extermination was a policy that, for Wandel and other observers, was not only cruel and unjust but also irrational, since they believed that the Empire would thus deprive itself of some of its ablest, most industrious, and best-educated citizens.²⁵

Background and Motivation for the Genocide: Ideology and the CUP

One of the key points of disagreement in the historiography of the Armenian Genocide concerns whether the Young Turk policy of extermination was conceived for political, ideological, and/or economic reasons in advance of World War I or whether the actual decision was made mainly as a consequence of (incidents and radicalization related to) the war.²⁶ This debate between what could be dubbed, in somewhat simplistic terms, “intentionalist” and “structuralist” interpretations is still ongoing. I will touch upon it only briefly here, but to me there is no doubt that scholars explaining the Armenian Genocide as the result of a mainly (but certainly not exclusively) “structural” process of cumulative radicalization have provided the most convincing interpretations, by which I mean simply that I have yet to see any truly convincing evidence that the physical destruction of the Ottoman Armenians had been planned before the spring or summer of 1915.²⁷

Two things must be stated concerning this debate, however. First, it is a purely academic debate, in the sense that the Armenian Genocide is of course a genocide whether it was decided upon years or months before World War I²⁸ or as late as the spring or summer of 1915.²⁹ The destruction was profoundly intentional as opposed to, say, “accidental”: real people were systematically and intentionally annihilated by other real people, not by faceless “structural forces.” Second, the debate is not finished. The matter has yet to be settled, especially since it is generally difficult, and sometimes impossible, to decide whether increasingly genocidal actions during wars or revolutions are mainly the results of such events, premeditated results of atrocities committed under the cover of the events, or, as has become an increasingly more common interpretative model within genocide studies, a “twisted road” (i.e., the results of a dynamic combination of premeditation and circumstances).³⁰ As in other cases

of genocide, in the case of the Armenian Genocide more evidence and more sources need to be taken into consideration.

What “structuralists” as well as “intentionalists” do agree on is that it is clear that the radicalization of the Young Turk policy toward the non-Turkish minorities of the Ottoman Empire began not only before the outbreak of World War I but also before the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913. As early as 1908, the year of the Young Turk revolution, the CUP paper *Tanin* declared that “the Turkish nation is and will remain the ruling nation,”³¹ and in July 1910, a pro-Turkish, French-language journal based in Saloniki, *Progrès de Salonique*, wrote on the growing Japanese and Turkish nationalist movements that “at the head of these movements will be found the peoples belonging to the same race—the Mongolians. Each one possesses the unquestionable title to the moral and intellectual supremacy of the great countries over which their influence extends.”³²

That same year, at the Young Turk congress in Saloniki, it was declared outright that the “Ottomanization” of the population of the empire—that is, the replacement of (for instance) a primarily ethnic Armenian identity with an Ottoman one—could not be achieved by persuasion but had to be achieved through forcible measures.³³ And, according to the memoirs of the renowned Danish Orientalist and former rector of the University of Copenhagen, Johannes Østrup, at least one crucially important CUP member had simultaneously, before rising to the very top of the Young Turk hierarchy, expressed such distrust toward the Ottoman Armenians that he had called for their extermination. In 1937 Østrup almost casually recalls a series of business meetings with Mehmet Talât Pasha in 1910:

It had really been Talat’s plan to exterminate all of the Armenian people, and the plan did not originate as the result of a war psychosis. I spoke with Talât on several occasions in the autumn of 1910, and among many other things we also talked about the Armenians. “You see,” he said, “between us and this people there is an incompatibility which cannot be solved in a peaceful manner; either they will completely undermine us, or we will have to annihilate them. If I ever come to power in this country, I will use all my might to exterminate the Armenians.” Six years later he fulfilled his promise; the persecutions which were effectuated in the years of 1915 and 1916 cost—according to the lowest counts—the lives of more than 1.5 million persons. And yet one could not but like Talât; he was a barbarian or a fanatic, whatever one wants to call it, but his soul was free from deceit.³⁴

It must be noted that Østrup, a conservative and a rather cynical *realpolitiker* who admired Kemal Atatürk as well as Talât, generally had no liking for either the Armenians or the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, sharing as he did the popular prejudice among members of the Turkish elite,³⁵ as well as among many European Orientalists and other observers at the time, that these peoples were “deceiving,” “cowardly,” and “mercantilist.” This view was opposed to that of Turks, Kurds, and/or Arabs, who were often considered “pure” and “rural” and were thought to possess a more “warlike” spirit.³⁶ Ottoman Armenians were a relatively well-educated, socially mobile minority, and, together with the Ottoman Greeks, they made up a comparatively large part of the empire’s small middle class. Whereas some 70–80% of the Armenians were in fact peasants, and many Armenian city-dwellers were relatively poor, they, like the Jews in Europe, were seen as the incarnation of the despised, Westernized “mercantile spirit.” This view is illustrated in a contemporary account of the “racial” characteristics of Entente prisoners in German POW camps, in which Russian Armenians are described as being a “cunning race of merchants.”³⁷

At the same time, Armenians were also seen by Turkish nationalists as hindering the development of an ethnic Turkish mercantile class.³⁸

But even though Ottoman Armenians were generally disliked and distrusted by many Westerners and Muslims alike, and even though, as Johannes Østrup recalls it, the main instigator of the Armenian Genocide desired their extermination as early as 1910, it does not follow that there was an actual Young Turk plan of genocide before World War I. It does suggest, however, that there is some truth in the notion shared by “intentionalist” scholars, such as Vahakn Dadrian, that a desire to seek a thoroughly radical solution, including extermination, to a perceived problem existed in influential Young Turk circles even before the beginning of the Balkan Wars.³⁹ The loss of Ottoman territory, the massacre or forced migration of hundreds of thousands of Muslims from the Balkans and Caucasus, and the World War, with its instances of initial Turkish defeat, Armenian resistance, and so on, were most likely among the main events necessary to radicalize large parts of the Turkish establishment and population to such an extent that they were willing to carry out an overtly exterminatory policy against Armenians and other, mainly Christian, Ottoman minorities. But, a perhaps rudimentary, but certainly radical and influential, ideology that was just as necessary for traditional anti-Armenian sentiments to develop into a genocidal policy did already exist before these developments, as Wandel also points out (see below).⁴⁰ As Taner Akçam has noted, Turkish nationalism came late compared not only to the nationalisms of Western Europe but also to the nationalisms of other Ottoman groups, and, like other “delayed nationalisms,” it was aggressive and belligerent, determined to revive past glory and right perceived wrongs.⁴¹

Generally, whether or not one as a Western observer before World War I knew or believed that there was a radical segment of the CUP that desired a radical solution of the “Armenian question,” the official Young Turk policy of creating a multicultural “Ottoman” identity instead of the various more or less developed national identities in the empire was regarded as unrealistic. Although some observers were, at least initially, optimistic to various degrees, others were much more cautious.⁴² The Norwegian KMA missionary in Mush, Bodil Biørn, though hopeful that the 1908 revolution would lead to reforms benefiting the Ottoman Armenians, was at the same time skeptical as to how such reforms would be implemented in a world ruled by “inequality, corruption, violence, and murder.”⁴³ In 1932, a member of the Danish KMA, Elise Bockelund, summed up in plain language the missionaries’ view of the CUP revolution: “The Young Turk rule was a disappointment; they did not keep their promises, and, though they themselves were irreligious, they still gave preference to Islam, so the Armenians were not safe.”⁴⁴ Wandel exemplified the Young Turks’ pre-war discriminatory policies by reporting that the electoral system was designed to discriminate heavily against Christians and that the authorities, despite their promises, did not want to give back Anatolian land to Armenians driven away during or after the Abdul Hamid massacres.⁴⁵

A 1911 report from the Danish embassy in Rome analyzing the ongoing uprising in the Muslim Ottoman province of Albania points out that, in spite of the promises and stated ambitions of the Young Turks, there was a fundamental discrepancy between those ambitions and the political and ethnic realities of the Empire. According to the report, well-informed observers did not believe that the Young Turks would succeed in “fusing the various, differing elements of the population in the vast, loosely connected Turkish Empire into a truly Turkish nation,”⁴⁶ a view fully shared by the contemporary Turkist ideologist Yusuf Akçura.⁴⁷ All the recent changes made by

the Young Turks, which cut deeply into what the anonymous author(s) of the report describe as “the century-old habits of a completely immature population,” would only bring confusion and rebellion throughout the empire.⁴⁸ In 1913, after the coup by the Triumvirate, the British foreign ministry even predicted that one of the consequences would be widespread massacres of Ottoman Armenians.⁴⁹ There was a sense that the perceived problems with the non-Turkish national and religious minorities of the Ottoman Empire would eventually be “solved” in a violent manner.⁵⁰ The question was when and how this “solution” would come about.

Background and Motivation for the Genocide According to Wandel

The most well-placed Danish observer of high-level Young Turk policy, Carl Ellis Wandel, tried in September 1915 to analyze how the Young Turk ideology had evolved from seemingly democratic Ottomanism to the current mix of xenophobia and extreme nationalism, a change he believed was partly ideologically and economically driven and, partly dictated by circumstances:

The CUP took the reins of power with a motto saying “equal rights for all Ottoman citizens.” But to create the unity mentioned in the title of the Committee in the vast and ethnically diverse Empire, there had to be created a sense of Ottoman solidarity that included all the peoples of the Empire, while simultaneously guarantees had to be created that this new “Ottomanism” would also in the future be led by Young Turk members of the Committee; that is, at the same time creating equal rights for all Ottoman citizens, without regard to nationality and religion (the idealistic demands of the revolution), and making sure that this new Ottomanism would still be a purely Turkish movement. The struggle between these two demands lasted a while, until the Committee, immediately after the end of the Balkan War, resolutely discarded the first demand (equal rights for all Ottomans) and decided to pursue the road of Turkification, the road characterized by the boycott in the spring of 1914 that struck Greeks who were Ottoman subjects as well as Greek subjects, the simultaneous persecutions of Greeks in Asia Minor and Thrace, and, later that year, favoured by the World War and the subsequent annulment of the Capitulations [and] the declaration of Jihad—with German assistance—[Turkification] finally led to the xenophobic and nationalist policy, the recent consequences whereof I have several times closely examined, and which at the moment has as its main purpose the extermination of the Armenian population in the Empire.⁵¹

In the months after the 1913 coup, the new, more radical Young Turk leadership did try to give the appearance of continuing efforts to “Ottomanize” and centralize the empire in a peaceful and democratic manner. But, as Wandel and other observers have noted, if this had ever in reality been CUP policy, such was no longer the case.⁵² In fact, as Feroz Ahmad has put it, “repression and violence became the order of the day.”⁵³ This process of radicalization Wandel considered so vital and intriguing that he made it the theme of a number of further reports. But, though he acknowledged that the extent of the radicalization was partly caused by events outside the control of the CUP, he also emphasized that radicalization was not simply the result of various defensive ad hoc measures against, say, Western imperialism, but was in fact an integral part of an active, deliberate policy, rooted in pre-revolutionary Turkist supremacist beliefs, whose basic goal was the preservation of power.

Since it was no longer believed that this goal could be reached by a multiethnic, multireligious, Turkish-dominated union, it would be reached by somehow creating a “Turkey for the Turks,” economically, politically, linguistically, and ethnically, increasingly combined with the more expansionist Pan-Turkist vision of Turan,

a Turkish Empire uniting ethnic Turks from all over Asia and Russia.⁵⁴ In a report from 22 September 1915, Wandel accordingly describes the nature of the CUP by describing the members of the CUP

not as great idealists or founding statesmen but as organizers using every means to further their organization It is not the ideals, but the frame, that is, the power, that they have fought and are fighting for For some there is no doubt about their integrity, but it is the general understanding that [the CUP] will continue to pursue the policy it has already initiated, a policy which has led to so many conflicts.

Wandel believed, mistakenly, that this policy would eventually lead to “national suicide.”⁵⁵ In fact, though the costs were immense, it was an important initial step leading to the creation of the relatively homogeneous, if unstable, nation-state that is the modern Turkish Republic.⁵⁶

But, as Wandel also emphasized, even though the Young Turks generally were not “great idealists,” they did share some broad ideals—ideals that, if nothing else, served to legitimize their own power monopoly in particular, and the power monopoly of ethnic Turks in general, as well as serving to secure the centralization and homogenization of a disintegrating empire.⁵⁷ The nation, beginning with the areas of trade and language, was to be cleansed from what were deemed to be “foreign elements” in order to establish the desired national culture and economy.⁵⁸ Thus began the systematic, still ongoing process of nation building by marginalizing or destroying the non-Turkish components of, first and foremost, the age-old Anatolian multicultural make-up, a process that required both the rewriting of history and the definition of non-Turks as the “Other.”⁵⁹

In a lengthy report from January 1915, titled “Political Events in Turkey in 1914,” Wandel describes how it was only after the Young Turk dictatorship had come to power that one could see Turkish shops in Constantinople advertising that “This Is a Muslim Business.”⁶⁰ The fact that, according to the Danish diplomat, the Armenians and Greeks of the Ottoman Empire were at this point generally wary but loyal even toward a dictatorship made no difference. Already on 24 July 1914, Wandel had reported that “the Christian electorate is generally opposed to the CUP’s favored system of centralization and to the principle ‘Turkey for the Turks,’ but when it comes to improving their living conditions, they see it as necessary to work with the Committee, rather than to break with it.”⁶¹ This despite the fact that the Christians of the empire were subjected to what Wandel describes as a repressive and xenophobic regime that systematically discriminated against them.⁶²

On 6 December 1915, Wandel elaborated on how the CUP elite and Turkish intellectuals had increasingly become radical nationalists. Apart from pointing to the genocide itself, his report exemplifies this by mentioning the preceding attempted “cleansing” of Greeks from Western Anatolia and of Greeks and Armenians from politics and trade; the government-controlled, xenophobic press; the nationalist schools” and the ban on street signs and so on written in “foreign,” that is, non-Turkish, languages.⁶³ Wandel refers in this report to an article in the Turkish daily *Tesfiri Efkiar* from 11 November 1915, which emphasized that

the Turkish language is the foundation of our national development. At the moment we are engaged in a war for our very existence, and the first result of this victorious war ought to be that it is confirmed that the Turkish language reigns supreme in Turkey.⁶⁴

Furthermore, in what Wandel dubbed the “Germanized-chauvinistic” Turkish press, Armenians were often described as “greedy exploiters” by journalists

who willingly participated in the forefront of the regime's xenophobic campaign.⁶⁵ One such example was Agaoglu Ahmed Bey, the editor of the French-language Young Turk daily *Hilal*, which functioned mainly as a propaganda organ in the West, as well as among Westerners in the Ottoman Empire. Ahmed Bey, who had "Turkified" his name Ahmed Agaieff, thus hiding his Azeri (Tatar) background, was a Turkist ideologist who, according to Wandel, had long been known for his extreme hatred of Armenians as one of the organizers of massacres of Armenians in the Caucasus in 1905.⁶⁶ Leading Young Turks even went so far as to openly describe Armenians and other Ottoman Christians as "tumors," a cancer that had to be removed so that the Turkish nation could be "cured."⁶⁷

For Wandel, as well as for other observers, it was obvious that the economic and linguistic discrimination, together with other official discriminatory and repressive initiatives, created a society without room for opposition or minorities. These initiatives included the establishment of a nationwide, Turkish-nationalist, militarized "scout movement"; the establishment of ethnic Turkish transport and trade companies; and the calling out of Turkish schoolchildren and workers to celebrate newly created national (i.e., exclusively Turkish) commemoration days and celebrations.⁶⁸ Although Wandel was rightfully doubtful whether these "nation-building" initiatives actually had any significant impact on the general population, for the Young Turks this whole process, and its acceleration during the war, was part of the Turkish people's "wonderful awakening, which the government has long been struggling to bring about, and which had to come sooner or later, but which has now been accelerated by the war," as the otherwise moderate *vali* of Adrianople (Edirne), Hadji Adil Bey, expressed it in a speech given in his capacity as speaker at the opening of parliamentary sessions in the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies in November 1916.⁶⁹

The deliberate and "rational" nature of this Young Turk nationalist ideology was also clearly expressed by the experienced diplomat Djevad Bey, Turkish minister to Copenhagen and a *diplomate de carrière* with close connections to the Young Turk government. In an interview given to leading Danish newspaper *Politiken* in February 1916, he stated that

We have now introduced the Turkish language in Turkey. This is the first result of a national awakening: Turkey for the Turks.... When we change old signs and street names, our enemies claim that we tear down the European inscriptions out of hatred and malice. There is no truth in that. We only do what all nations have done before us. They call us chauvinists and rebels. I assure you, we only want one thing: our economical and political independence. This we all agree upon. There are no longer both old and young Turks. There are only Turks. And during the war we are all young.⁷⁰

Paradoxically, chauvinist Turks had come to believe that in order to become truly "European"—perceived as being effective, competitive, homogenic, assertive, powerful, expansive, rich, modern, and so on—they must eliminate the perceived European elements of the Empire, that is, the Ottoman Christians, who had become an obstacle to reaching this goal. The fact that, by targeting Christians, the Young Turks also pleased the conservative, Islamist opposition was, according to Wandel, another, more opportunistic reason for this policy.⁷¹

It is contested whether the ideology of a "Turkey for the Turks" can be directly related to the subsequent "cleansing" and massacre of Ottoman Armenians and other minorities, or whether the Armenian Genocide in particular was, rather,

a “perverse and extreme security measure based in an ethnoreligious framing,” as Ronald Grigor Suny expresses it.⁷² To me, first, these explanations are not mutually exclusive; rather, they complement each other, showing the “twisted” (i.e., ideological and deliberate *as well as* circumstantial and opportunistic) nature of the Armenian Genocide. Second, the reports Wandel sent to his superiors in Copenhagen help underline that no matter the circumstances, the extremely chauvinist ideology of the Young Turks was a main reason that, from the outbreak of World War I, the Armenians immediately and violently came to be “ethno-religiously framed.” Because of the paranoid fear expressed by Talât that the Armenians as former allies knew, and therefore could destroy, the Young Turk organization, and the fact that many Armenians lived near the front lines in Eastern Anatolia, Armenians were perceived, both before and during the war, to be the most dangerous internal threat.⁷³

The war itself was most likely a crucial factor leading to the decision in favor of genocide, as it gave rise to both the opportunity of “settling scores” and the need for a scapegoat to divert criticism for the initial losses of the Ottoman army. The war also resulted in atrocities against Muslim civilians, as well as in scattered Ottoman Armenian nationalist activity and resistance that, through official campaigns of propaganda and misinformation, served to further legitimize, brutalize, and dehumanize. In 1915, if not before, the Turkish national identity was influenced by the loss of territory and prestige to an extent that resulted in a willingness to use exterminatory measures against those societal groups who were now thought to be threatening not only the traditional hegemony of ethnic Turks but the very survival of the Turkish nation.⁷⁴ This Young Turk “siege mentality” was heightened by the fact that Turks were themselves still a minority among minorities—the Kurds, Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Jews, Circassians, and other groups of the Ottoman Empire.

But the cleansing from Ottoman soil of Armenians became not only a goal in itself but also an integral part of a grand project to create a Turkish nation. The regime initiated the above-mentioned simultaneous measures (“national holidays,” etc.) aimed at imprinting a Turkish national identity upon the large majority of the Turkish population that had traditionally identified themselves mainly along (ethno-)religious lines.⁷⁵ But the removal of potential challenges to Turkish hegemony was believed to be a precondition for these “positive” measures to succeed, as expressed by Wandel in March 1916:

If the Young Turks have their way, the time will never come back when the Arabs, Armenians, and Greeks made up the majority in the Ottoman parliament, because they realize that such a majority sooner or later would demand that the Caliphate be replaced by a confederation, and that they would soon lose their power. The Turks have therefore chosen the only means available to them to preserve their control over Turkey—which is the complete extermination of the peoples who had the greatest possibilities to evolve after the introduction of the constitution, and with whom they have no way of competing in a peaceful struggle.⁷⁶

The Persecution of the Ottoman Greeks in 1914: The Beginnings of Violent Turkification

Before the outright exterminatory policies of World War I were initiated, the first attempts at violently homogenizing the ethnic and religious make-up of Anatolia had already begun. In the spring and summer of 1914, when attempts at removing

non-Turkish influences from the Ottoman economy had just been initiated in earnest, this policy was supplemented with the “cleansing” and massacre of more than 100,000 ethnic Ionian Greeks from the Aegean region.⁷⁷ This was the result of careful deliberations and preliminary research by the CUP, accompanied by a decision to hide the connection between the government and the Special Organization, the organization in charge of the operation.⁷⁸ This conclusion is confirmed by a June 1914 report to Wandel from the Danish consul in Smyrna (Izmir), Alfred van der Zee, that a large-scale, systematic, and violent banishing of what he, Van der Zee, describes as the generally very peaceful Greek population was carried out on the orders of the central government.⁷⁹

According to Van der Zee, in March 1914, the *valis* of Smyrna and the nearby regions had made tours of inspection to the coastal towns and villages of the *vilayets*, “advising” the local civil servants to force the Greek population out, first by economic boycotts, then, when this did not have the desired effect, by violent persecution: “Armed ‘bashibozuks’ [Turkish irregular troops] attacked the Greek population, raped the Greek women, killed the children, etc. Finally, the gangs also violated non-Ottoman citizens.”⁸⁰ These *bashibozuks*, alternatively called “Turkish gangs” in the reports, numbered 8,000 to 10,000 in the *vilayet* of Aidin (Smyrna) alone and were financed and run by the state. Many of these gangs consisted of members of the Special Organization and/or Muslim refugees from the Balkans or the Caucasus, the so-called *muhadjirs*, who, according to Wandel, carried out the persecutions, plundering and murdering “as many of the hated Greeks as possible.”⁸¹ Aside from economic, ethnic, and political motives, there was a military rationale behind this policy, in the sense that the Young Turk government wanted to prevent the Greeks along the coastline from eventually becoming as a fifth column, a danger believed to be particularly imminent because Greece had come to control the nearby islands of Chios and Mytilene, which, it was claimed, could be used to launch attacks.⁸²

Despite attempts to keep this policy a secret, and despite attempts to deny both the existence of and the responsibility for the policy, the Young Turk government soon had to change course, facing pressure from, especially, the French government. The Young Turks were also aware that they were not ready for the war with Greece that would most likely result if the persecutions did not stop.⁸³ But after consultations with the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Count Johann Pallavicini, Wandel was convinced that a war between Greece and the Ottoman Empire was bound to break out soon and that the Greek population of Anatolia would then “be worse off than ever before.”⁸⁴ This prediction was accurate, since, during World War I, the persecutions of the Ottoman Greeks were taken up again on a regular basis, sometimes on German initiative, and hundreds of thousands of Greeks from Anatolia and Thrace, including the Pontic Greeks from the Black Sea coast, were either killed or expelled from 1914 through 1918. In June 1917, too, Greece did join the war against the Ottoman Empire and her allies.⁸⁵

In 1914, the aim of this policy was most likely not to exterminate but, as it has been put, to “thin out” (and thereby significantly weaken) the Ottoman Greek population, as an extension of the policy of economic and cultural Turkification, while at the same time creating living space for the *muhadjirs*.⁸⁶ This policy was, as stated above, not only economically but also politically and ideologically motivated. Whatever the rationale, it was a cruel and murderous policy. As Wandel expressed it, the losses

resulting from the persecutions were obviously irreparable, since “an industrious class of people have been expelled, despite the fact that the province was already thinly populated. It can be predicted that the province will suffer from the results of this failed policy for years to come.”⁸⁷ But the practical experiences, the impunity of the perpetrators, and the relative *political* “success” of the persecutions—thousands of Greeks fleeing in terror, leaving their homes and possessions to be taken over by Muslim refugees⁸⁸—meant that even more radical and violent measures during World War I could be seen as not only possible but also as yet another extension of a policy of “social engineering” already decided upon. Besides, as Talât told Morgenthau during the Armenian Genocide, “We care nothing about the commercial loss.”⁸⁹

For the Young Turks, one of the major advantages of such a policy of homogenization was that the Western powers, particularly Britain and Russia, would be presented with a *fait accompli*, in that the mainly Christian groups would be gone, groups that historically had served as an excuse for these powers to interfere with what the Young Turks regarded as the internal matters of the Ottoman Empire. The persecutions of the Greek minority from 1914 onward therefore point toward an actual policy of extermination, if not in the sense that these policies were planned to be continuous parts of a “grand scheme” of partial and total genocides (see note 86), then certainly in the sense that both policies were the result of xenophobic deliberations that were inherently genocidal and in the sense that the two policies were closely connected, ideologically, politically, and bureaucratically.⁹⁰ This connection is perhaps most strikingly personified by the decidedly racist founding member of the CUP, Dr. Mehmed Reşid. In 1914, as *mutasarraf* (governor) of the sub-province Karesi in the province of Balıkesir, he was heavily involved with the persecution of the Aegean Greeks, while as *vali* of Diyarbakir he was responsible for the extermination of the Armenians and Assyrians in that region in 1915 and 1916.⁹¹

With respect to the developing Young Turk policy of denial, official reactions to the 1914 persecutions also point forward toward a vital aspect of the early denial of the Armenian Genocide—the claim from Constantinople that the central government, when it came to outright killings, had no control of the regional governments or of the designated killer gangs. The interior minister, Talât Pasha himself, declared in June 1914 that the occurrence of what he called “regrettable incidents” in the Smyrna region was because “many Turkish civil servants in the provinces still believe that the orders they receive from the imperial government in Constantinople [to protect the Greek population] have been issued under pressure from the Great Powers, and therefore not issued in earnest.”⁹² Therefore, according to Talât, all responsibility for wrongdoing rested with the *vali* of Smyrna. The interior minister even went on what Van der Zee calls a farcical tour of the Smyrna region, traveling from city to city, making speeches promising “complete security,” while the local Greeks had to stay at home, day and night, to avoid being beaten up or shot.⁹³

There are clear indications that while the persecutions of the Ottoman Greeks was the first major step toward the ethnic, religious, and economic Turkification of the Empire, and the genocide of the Armenians the most important and radical such step, other steps were planned or desired—for instance, concerning the Ottoman Jewish minority. By December 1914, hundreds of Jews had been deported from Jaffa in Palestine to Egypt before this particular operation was stopped because of concerted

protests from ambassadors Morgenthau and Wangenheim. It is believed that the Ottoman authorities generally distinguished between Jewish nationalists and the general Jewish population, perhaps as a result of such external pressure.⁹⁴ But Wandel and other observers, including some Ottoman Jews, were convinced that the process of Turkification was meant by the Young Turks to be total. For instance, on 16 November 1915, Welsh MP Aneurin Williams stated during a parliamentary debate on what was called “the Armenian atrocities” that “it is not only Christians. Apparently this process of exterminating all the progressive elements of the country—what is called Ottomanising the country—extends far beyond the Christians. The Zionist Jews, for some reason, have been suspected of being an enlightening force, and they, too, have been in terror.”⁹⁵ Similarly, Wandel stated that “the goal of the Zionist movement can...hardly be reconciled with the policy of the present Turkish government, which aims at removing from Turkey all foreign elements.”⁹⁶ It was feared that the policies of extermination and/or deportation would, if unchecked, sooner or later come to include the Ottoman Jews, even though, according to Wandel, this group was generally known to be particularly “well integrated” into the Turkish-dominated Ottoman society.⁹⁷

The massive deportations of Ottoman Kurds in 1916–1917 are yet another indication that the ideology of a “Turkey for the Turks” was to be realized to the fullest possible extent and that the homogenization of Anatolia was the result of a bold, criminal, highly organized, and deliberate policy. Though there are many examples showing that, during the genocide, Kurdish tribes and individuals (as well as many other Muslims) did help Armenians hide or escape from the Turkish authorities,⁹⁸ generally, Kurdish militias and villagers played a significant role as executors of the genocide. But when the vast majority of the Armenians had been cleansed from Anatolia, the Young Turks began concentrating on what they regarded as the no less troublesome Kurds.

Since it was believed that it was generally possible to assimilate Muslim minorities,⁹⁹ the Kurds were not systematically massacred but, rather, were deported to the western parts of Anatolia to be forcibly assimilated among ethnic Turks, who now began to constitute the majority in cities and regions, quite often thanks to the “disappearance” of the Ottoman Christians. Still, tens of thousands of Kurds were killed outright, and hundreds of thousands died of diseases and starvation¹⁰⁰ and they were not the only Muslim Ottoman citizens being persecuted. In 1918, George E. White, in an article titled “Some Non-conforming Turks,” wrote that

Those rumors of impending events in Turkey, which anticipated the deportation of Armenians and similar treatment for the Greeks and other Christians of the Empire, carried the foreboding that the next step taken by the governing clique would force the Alevi Turks to abandon their Moslem nonconformity. The purpose of the “Party of Union and Progress” is alleged to be to create a uniform state, one in Turkish nationality, and one in Moslem orthodoxy.¹⁰¹

From Persecution to Total Genocide: The Report of 4 September 1915

Back in August 1915, as shown above, Wandel was still hoping that the CUP would not remain what he considered to be so daring and irrational as to take its chauvinist and xenophobic policy—the massacres and persecution, the forced conversions to Islam, and so on, which it pursued, as Wandel stated, under the pretext of

“military necessity”¹⁰²—to its final conclusion, which would be the extermination of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire:

In my earlier reports, it has already been stated how the Young Turk government, with the aim of strengthening its position internally, lately has made xenophobia and hatred toward Christians a leading principle in its policy The aim of this policy is to force foreigners and Christians to leave the country by making their existence in Turkey intolerable, thereby at the same time satisfying the fanaticism that has become an asset for the government, but it is of course not possible to speak of the rational completion of this policy, at least not concerning the Greeks For Turkey’s own sake it is probably about time that the persecutions are stopped. The fanatical Committee complains that there is no patriotism in Constantinople, which it wants to transform into a Turkish-Muslim capital, but it does not seem to realize that it makes a big mistake in driving out the foreigners and the Christians, even seen from an academic point of view, since it thereby drives out the entire intelligence of the country, the entire part of the population that is in possession of spirit, insight, and means, the businessmen, the scientists and the financiers, and that, if the principle of “Turkey for the Turks” is to be carried through, there will be nothing but civil servants and peasants in the country.¹⁰³

But on 4 September 1915, less than three weeks after he had expressed his almost desperate hope that the CUP would stop short of outright extermination, Wandel for the first time informed his superiors in the Danish foreign ministry that a genocide was indeed taking place:

I will briefly allow myself to give an account of the important and sad information regarding the latest developments that has been given to me by a completely trustworthy and truthful source, and which is of such a nature that it will be regretted everywhere in the Christian world. The Turks are vigorously carrying out their cruel intent, to exterminate the Armenian people.¹⁰⁴

This was not just a statement. Wandel backed it up by giving numerous examples of the nationwide “evacuation” of Armenians, a euphemistic expression that, he emphasized, meant almost certain death by organized massacres and deprivation.¹⁰⁵

For example, Wandel had received a letter from the Armenian Catholic bishop of Erzerum, Joseph Melchisedechian, who informed him that the parish of Khodirtchour, which consisted of twelve villages, had been completely evacuated, and that no one knew what had happened to the vanished Armenian population.¹⁰⁶ The Armenian Catholic bishop of Harput, Stepan Israelian, had on 23 June informed the Patriarchate that he had received orders to leave the city for Aleppo with the whole of his congregation within twenty-four hours. Later it was discovered that Israelian and approximately 1,700 other Armenians had been attacked and killed on the road between Diyarbekir and Urfa.¹⁰⁷ Wandel’s report furthermore mentions that the archbishop of Mardin, Ignatius Maloyan, had been killed, together with approximately 700 Catholics from the congregation; that the Catholic population of Tel Armen had been wiped out completely; that the cities of Tarsus, Hedzin (Hadjin), Mersina (Mersin), and many others had been “completely evacuated”; and that Armenian women of Angora (Ankara) had been forcibly married to Muslims, while approximately 6,000 deported men, among them seventy clergy led by Bishop Gregoire Bahaban, had been shot.¹⁰⁸ In that same report, Wandel states that “even here in Constantinople Armenians are kidnapped and sent to Asia, and it is not possible to get information of their whereabouts.”¹⁰⁹ He ends the report by concluding that “the fate that has befallen the Catholic Armenians has with even greater cruelty befallen all other

Armenians, as the intention of the government, as I already have had the honour to report, is to completely annihilate the Armenian people.”¹¹⁰

As for the significance to the extermination project of the question of “Armenian loyalty”—in itself a rather meaningless phrase, since it implies some sort of general Armenian organization, mindset, and pattern of actions that did not exist—according to Wandel, it did not change significantly for the general Ottoman Armenian population after the empire entered World War I by attacking Russia and began to deport and massacre Armenians. In any case, as Wandel also pointed out, the question of “loyalty” had little, if anything, to do with the persecution of the Armenians, since, as his 4 September report emphasizes, the persecutions at this point took place with no regard to whether the targeted Armenians could even theoretically be construed to constitute any real threat to the Ottoman Empire. After having stated that the slaughter of the Armenians continued “with great intensity,” in spite of promises to the contrary that he and other diplomats had personally received from the Young Turk government, Wandel mentions that even the Armenian Catholics, who, he states, never had any political aspirations, and the Gregorian Armenians, “who have distanced themselves from nationalist ideas to such an extent that they have given up their mother tongue and adopted the Turkish language as their own,” were still subjected to “the most stubborn persecution.”¹¹¹

The Economy of Genocide: The “Confiscations” of Armenian Property

Another central aspect of the genocide, the “legal” background for the deportation of the Armenians and the confiscation of Armenian assets by the Young Turk government, was also analyzed by Wandel. On 27 May 1915, only three days after the Entente had threatened to hold Turkish civilians and military personnel responsible for “crimes against humanity,” the CUP rushed the passing of a law that basically gave the authorities *carte blanche* to deport any person they wanted.¹¹² The authorities, Wandel emphasized, had only to “sense” treason to justify the deportation of whole cities.¹¹³ On 26 September 1915, a second “temporary law” was passed, without the consent of the temporarily suspended parliamentary chambers, concerning the confiscation of (Armenian) assets. It is described by Wandel as follows:

The new temporary law prescribes that the possessions of the deported Armenians are to be confiscated by the public administration. According to the law . . . it will be possible to confiscate the land belonging to all of the deported Armenians, as well as Armenian churches and schools. It is clear that the forced sale of the property, head over heels and under the current conditions, will not come close to covering the actual value of the property. The liquidation commission mentioned in the law can act completely arbitrarily. It has been given authority to annul any claims of the deported without consulting said persons, and to hand over property to other claimants without giving the deported any right or possibility to set aside such a decision. Any surplus generated by the liquidation of the possessions of the deported will, after deduction of expenses, be deposited in the ministry of finance, without any mention of when it is supposed to be paid back to the owners. Considering that the law of 27 May 1915 has laid the legal foundation for the great deportations of the Armenians and for the connected persecutions, it is easy to imagine the far-reaching consequences of an arbitrary execution of the provisions of the new law, which practically could lead to complete ruin for the Armenians of Asia Minor.¹¹⁴

The Austrian military attaché to the Ottoman Empire, Joseph Pomiankowski, simply stated that the law was a farce.¹¹⁵ Its aim was, in reality, to “legalize” and systematize the widespread profiteering from the genocide by the state, officials, the army, Muslim refugees, and local populations. In several reports Wandel mentions that the only real high-level Turkish voice of protest against the plundering and persecution of the Armenians came from Senator Ahmed Riza.¹¹⁶ This is perhaps somewhat surprising, since the European-educated senator, formerly a leading Young Turk ideologue, president of the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies, chairman of the CUP, and still a convinced and idealistic Turkist, had earlier displayed no particular sympathy toward the Christian minorities of the empire.¹¹⁷ In fact, he was early on believed to belong to the radical wing of the Young Turks, as can be discerned from the statement of a person present at a lecture given by Riza in London in 1904:

I am not sorry that the gentleman has spoken, because it shows us how impossible it is to expect any reforms in Turkey from the Young Turk party. They are only thinking of themselves. The liberties of the Christians would be just as unsafe under a Sultan with the sentiments of the gentleman [Riza] who has just sat down, as under the present Sultan.¹¹⁸

But Riza definitely felt that, during the Great War, the Young Turk government went much too far in carrying out its oppressive policies against minorities such as the Armenians, a minority that, in large part, lived in provinces where Christians had never experienced justice or security, as he stated during a parliamentary debate in 1916.¹¹⁹ Riza’s scolding criticism of Young Turk policies could even be seen as a logical, if unusually principled, extension of his democratic beliefs, as well as of his earlier, equally scolding criticism of Western imperialism and racism.¹²⁰ He also tried constantly to convince his colleagues in the Ottoman senate that the laws “legalizing” these Young Turk policies were unconstitutional and unjust.¹²¹ Although Ahmed Riza’s protests were obviously in vain, and although he was frequently harrassed in Parliament by his colleagues, he did not give up on a subject that was, to him, a matter of conscience and principle.

As late as November 1917, Riza and the three other members of his small Young Turk parliamentary faction (Orkhan Bey, Mahmoud Pasha, and Damad Ferid Pasha) insisted on debating in the Ottoman parliament the unlawful confiscation of what were euphemistically called “abandoned properties” and the connected persecutions of Armenians, Greeks, and Arabs. This was highly unusual during the reign of the Young Turk dictatorship, since no real debate was allowed either in the government-controlled press or in Parliament; when a case was brought before the parliament, it had already been decided upon by the CUP. But Riza was occasionally allowed to speak out without being disciplined or punished, and he even made sure that the criticism he raised in the Senate was, to some extent, printed in the official parliamentary record. That record was not accessible to the public, but at least some of the legations managed to get hold of it.¹²² The reasons that Riza was allowed to speak out were that he, a man of integrity and some influence as one of the founders of the CUP, was still highly esteemed among parts of the general population and the elite, and also that, because he lacked a proper power base, he was regarded as relatively harmless, or even useful, by the Young Turks, as they could point to his presence in the Senate to claim that, since there was an opposition, the empire was ruled in a truly parliamentary fashion.¹²³

During the Senate meeting of 29 November 1917, the government proposed a law that would grant an official commission two million piastres to administer

“the preservation of the abandoned properties.” This seemingly innocent proposition would, if passed, be a de facto legalization of the Temporary Law of Expropriation and Confiscation of 1915, which allowed the government to “confiscate”—that is, steal—Armenian cash and property and to resell the property for profit. In the preceding two years the government had not dared to introduce that law to the parliamentary chambers, and the introduction of the appropriation law was thus an obvious attempt to obtain an indirect parliamentary blessing for an unconstitutional law. Orkhan Bey started the debate by saying exactly this: that, as the provisional or temporary law regarding the “abandoned properties” had not yet been introduced to and approved by the Senate, granting the requested two million piastres would give the appearance that the Senate was approving a law it had not been given the opportunity to properly debate and approve. The Senate president, without directly commenting on Orkhan Bey’s assertions, assured him that this would not be the case.

Then Riza spoke, echoing his protests in Parliament against the “temporary law” two years earlier, in the fall of 1915.¹²⁴ Among other things, he pointed to the fact that the very term “abandoned properties” was ridiculous:

We take responsibility by accepting an expression. In my opinion the expression “abandoned properties” means property that has been abandoned, left behind. But no one has left behind their property of their own free will. We must find an appropriate expression and say straight out, “Law for the Preservation of Possessions of Armenians, Greeks, and Arabs, who out of Political Necessity have been Removed from their Homes.” The expression “abandoned properties” is not accurate, and the Senate should not accept such an inaccurate expression. In reality the population has been violently driven from their homes and been abducted by force, and their property has been left behind. This line of action is also unconstitutional, because the constitution protects the inviolability of property. I will go further and say that if the rights of property do not exist in a country . . . , no government exists either The government does claim that it has had the right to such action. Since I have yet to examine the matter in its entirety, I cannot for the moment give a definite statement thereof. The government publishes brochures with its viewpoints. Let us assume that every word in these brochures is absolutely true. Some Armenians and Greeks may very well, as the government says, have been traitors. Those you find among the Turks and the Kurds, as well as among the Armenians. But the law establishes punishment for the traitors, the criminals. You execute them, shoot them; but you never deport their families or rob their fortune. This is an outright reign of terror.¹²⁵

The Senate president was of the opinion that all of this could be discussed only when the law in question, the September 1915 law, was introduced to the Senate. But, as Riza stated once again, that law had not been introduced, and there was no sign that this would actually happen. The Senate president also remarked that the Senate had earlier approved the expression “abandoned properties,” and he thought it strange not to accept it this year. Riza answered that he himself had not accepted it, nor would he. He once again demanded the introduction of the confiscation law, not the “auxiliary” appropriation law: “We have to know that the properties are not lost, that they remain to be given back to their rightful owners, and that these are not all dead.” The president said that the confiscation law had been introduced to the Chamber of Deputies, but that it had not been read because of that chamber’s workload, and that the Senate therefore could not blame the government. After further protests from Riza’s group, who knew this to be a phony explanation, the law was passed. Thus, the Senate ended up indirectly sanctioning the bill that Riza and his small group had fought so vigorously against, the bill that indirectly “legalized” what was,

according to Jesse B. Jackson, American consul to Aleppo, “a gigantic plundering scheme as well as a final blow to extinguish the [Armenian] race.”¹²⁶

Conclusion

Space permits only an introduction to some of the most important subjects covered by Carl Ellis Wandel in relation to the Armenian Genocide. For instance, his often long and analytical reports also deals extensively with subjects such as the question of “German complicity,” the dynamics and relationships within the Young Turk leadership, and the official Young Turk campaign of denial and falsification of their crimes. But the sample of documents analyzed and contextualized above should leave the impression that even an unknown diplomat from a small country has something to offer when it comes to explaining important aspects of one of the largest exterminatory projects of the twentieth century. For, as Wandel convincingly argued, this was the nature of the Armenian Genocide: it was an extremely cruel, pragmatic, and opportunistic political and economical project, fueled by a highly xenophobic, nationalist (proto-)ideology, all in the context of war and of a “grand scheme” of radical modernization by Turkification. Contemporary official justifications of the persecutions—“military necessity,” Armenian “disloyalty” or “provocation”—were dismissed as exaggerated, fabricated, or simply irrelevant. Wandel concurred with most other contemporary and later observers that the Ottoman Armenians did not bring their fate upon themselves.

In other words, pragmatic considerations, combined with a downward spiral of more and more radicalized rhetoric and actions, as well as the opportunity created by a world war, were, for Wandel, essential in understanding why the anti-Armenian policies were intended and carried out as complete destruction and not, say, ethnic cleansing or continued oppression. To him, it was what we today would call a twisted road to the Armenian Genocide, which is probably why he did not attempt to estimate the exact time of the conception of a Young Turk plan of actual genocide. This does not mean that Wandel was taking sides, in 1915 and 1916, in a debate of “intentionalists” versus “functionalists,” as such a debate obviously did not exist at the time. If it had, it would most likely not have seemed to be of even academic interest to an eyewitness, in the face of the ongoing slaughter. Wandel simply reported on what he saw, heard, and read, as the often seemingly chaotic events progressed, and he came to conclusions about important aspects of the nature of the Armenian Genocide that are quite similar to conclusions many (but not all) contemporary observers, as well as many present-day scholars (myself included), have come to on the basis of available evidence.

Notes

1. On the number of Armenian deaths, see two recent works covering these massacres: Arman J. Kirakossian, ed., *The Armenian Massacres, 1894–1896: U.S. Media Testimony* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 29, states that “more than 300,000 Armenians were massacred,” while Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 51, states that the massacres “took 80–100,000 lives directly and tens of thousands indirectly in 1894–6.”
2. G. Godet, *Forfølgelserne i Armenien* (Copenhagen: J. Frimodts Forlag, 1897), 41, 52–53.
3. See, e.g., Åge Meyer Benedictsen, *Armenien—Et Folks Liv og Kamp gennem to Aartusinder* (Copenhagen: De Danske Armeniervenner, 1925), 210–12.

4. Georg Brandes, *Udvalgte Skrifter*, vol. 8., *Journalistik og Debat*, ed. Sven Møller Kristensen (1900; reprint, Copenhagen: Tiderne skifter 1987), 133.
5. Benedictsen got the inspiration to found DA after visiting projects established by Johannes Lepsius's Deutsche Orient Mission in Van, Khoi, and Urfa: Åge Meyer Benedictsen, *Åge Meyer Benedictsen—De Undertrykte Nationers Tolk. En Mindebog*, vol. 1, ed. Katri Meyer Benedictsen (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag/Arnold Busck, 1934), 125.
6. H.V. Styhr, *Armenien og Armenierne*, special issue of *Vort Land* (1897), 15.
7. For an English-language analysis of the work of this commission, including the role of Jeppe from her post-war base in Aleppo, see Vahram L. Shemmassian, "The League of Nations and the Reclamation of the Armenian Genocide Survivors," in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 81–112.
8. Svend Cedergreen Bech, *Hos et Folk Uden Land* (Copenhagen: GEC Gad, 1982); Ingeborg Marie Sick, *Pigen Fra Danmark*, 4th ed. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1945); Eva Lous, "Karen Jeppe: Denmark's First Peace Philosopher," The Danish Peace Academy, 2003, <http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/ukjeppe.htm> (accessed 23 December 2005); Matthias Bjørnlund, "Karen Jeppe," *Folkedrab.dk*, 2004, <http://www.folkedrab.dk/folkedrabene/armenien/fokus/karenjeppe/> (accessed 23 December 2005); Ephraim K. Jernazian, *Judging unto Truth: Witnessing the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 65–67, 156; Maria Jacobsen, *Maria Jacobsen's Diary 1907–1919, Kharput—Turkey* (Antelias, Lebanon: Armenian Catholicosate, 1979); Maria Jacobsen, *Diaries of a Danish Missionary—Harpoot, 1907–1919*, ed. Ara Sarafian (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute Books, 2001); Amalie Lange, *Et Blad af Armeniens Historie—KMA 1910–1920* (Copenhagen: KMA, 1920).
9. *Kraks Blaa Bog* (Copenhagen: Kraks Legat, 1931), 1014.
10. See, e.g., Scavenius's account of the desired Danish foreign policy during World War I, in the Archives of the Foreign Ministry, Danish National Archives (UM), Gr. 5. D. 28, "Diskussionen ved det Fortrolige Møde i Rigsdagen 3. December 1915." At a confidential meeting in the Danish Parliament, Scavenius strongly (and largely unsuccessfully) urged politicians from all parties to pressure the news media to seize what he called "excesses," that is, negative or critical coverage of Germany. See also Bo Lidegaard, *Overleveren, 1914–1945* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2003), 24–37.
11. "14. Møde, fredag d. 29/12 1916," in *Ministtermødeprotokol 1916–18, Kirkeminister Th. Poulsens referater*, ed. Tage Kaarsted (Århus: Universitetsforlaget i Århus, 1973), 40.
12. UM, Gr. 139. N. 1., "Armenien," coded telegram from the Danish legation in Stockholm to Scavenius, 25 April 1918; UM, Gr. 139. N. 1., "Armenien," note from the Danish Foreign Ministry to Krieger, private secretary to Christian X, the Danish king, 27 April 1918.
13. Rouben Paul Adalian, "American Diplomatic Correspondence in the Age of Mass Murder: The Armenian Genocide in the US Archives," in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter, 146–84 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 147–48.
14. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," pakke 1, til 31. Dec. 1916, nr. CXXIX, 26 September 1915. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.
15. Wolfgang Gust, ed., *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern 1915/16: Dokumente aus dem Politischen Archiv des deutschen Auswärtigen Amtes* (Springe: zu Klampen, 2005), 173.
16. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. N. 1., "Armenien," nr. LXXXVIII, 27 April 1916.
17. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. N. 2., "Tyrkiet: Behandling af Grækere paa tyrkisk Omraade," nr. XVI, 24 January 1917.
18. On Morgenthau's meetings with Wandel, see Henry Morgenthau, *United States Diplomacy on the Bosphorus: The Diaries of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, 1913–1916*, comp. and introd. Ara Sarafian (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2004).
19. See, e.g., UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 2, Jan. 1917—1. Jan. 1919, nr. IV, 6 January 1917, in which Wandel mentions an informant who is a member of the Ottoman senate; UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 2, Jan. 1917—1. Jan. 1919, nr. CXVII, 28 July 1917, in which Wandel mentions as an

- informant who is a “high-ranking Freemason who believes he has Talât Pasha’s confidence.”
20. On information on the genocide in Harput and Mezreh received by Wandel from letters written by Danish missionaries, and delivered personally by a German physician, see UM, Gr. 139, N. 1., “Armenien” [no number], 10 April 1917.
 21. Wolfgang Gust, “Einleitung und Leitfaden,” in *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern 1915/16: Dokumente aus dem Politischen Archiv des deutschen Auswärtigen Amtes*, ed. Wolfgang Gust, 17–109 (Springer: zu Klampen, 2005), 19.
 22. Gust, *Der Völkermord*, 186. See also Vahakn N. Dadrian, *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide: A Review of the Historical Evidence of German Complicity* (Watertown, MA: Blue Crane Books, 1997), 22.
 23. Ara Sarafian, “Editor’s Introduction,” *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, by Henry Morgenthau, ed. Ara Sarafian (1918; repr., Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas Institute, 2000), x, n. 9.
 24. Quoted in Bertil Bengtsson, *Svärdets År—Om Folkmordet på de Kristna i Turkiet 1894–1922* (Södertälje: Syrianska Riksförbundet, 2004), 118.
 25. See, e.g., Stephan H. Astourian, “Modern Turkish Identity and the Armenian Genocide: From Prejudice to Racist Nationalism,” in *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 23–49 (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 40–41; Martin Niepage, *Rædslerne i Aleppo. Sete af et Tysk Øjenvidne* (London, 1917), 18.
 26. See discussion in Ronald Grigor Suny, “The Holocaust before the Holocaust: Reflections on the Armenian Genocide,” in *Der Völkermord an der Armeniern und die Shoah/The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller, 83–100 (Zurich: Kronos Verlag, 2002).
 27. For a recent example of a convincing, predominantly “structuralist” interpretation, see Bloxham, *The Great Game*, 66–68. It must be noted that few scholars of the Armenian genocide fall easily into neat “structuralist” and “intentionalist” categories. For instance, no “structuralist” scholar has, to my knowledge, denied the importance of, say, pre-war Armenian massacres and Young Turk radicalism as determinants of the genocide. Likewise, a known proponent of a predominantly “intentionalist” interpretation of the genocide, Vahakn N. Dadrian, in his review essay, “Comments on Robert Melson’s *Revolution and Genocide*,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 8 (1994): 410–15, 414–15, talks cautiously of “situational determinants” and of the “genocidal thrust” as “more of an outgrowth of interactive processes, in the course of which the conflict escalates, opportunities for radical solutions emerge, and the exercise of power through the application of lethal force becomes affordable.” For a convincing argument that genocide and other crimes against humanity usually evolve from some amount of contingency rather than from a blueprint, see Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
 28. See especially Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Secret Young Turk-Ittihadist Conference and the Decision for the World War I Genocide of the Armenians,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 7 (1993): 178–83. For a recent example, see Hayk Ghazarian, *The Genocide of the Armenian People in the Ottoman Empire* (Yerevan: Tigran Mets, 2005), 39.
 29. Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2004), 164–68; Bloxham, *The Great Game*, 87–88; Hilmar Kaiser, “‘A Scene from the Inferno’: The Armenians of Erzerum and the Genocide, 1915–1916,” in *Der Völkermord an der Armeniern und die Shoah/The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller, 129–86 (Zurich: Kronos Verlag, 2002), 172.
 30. See, e.g., Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, eds., *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003), 10–11.
 31. Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1997), 5. See also

- George Horton, *The Blight of Asia: An Account of the Systematic Extermination of Christian Populations by Mohammedans and of the Culpability of Certain Great Powers; with the True Story of the Burning of Smyrna* (1926; London: Sterndale Classics, 2003), 15ff; Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 75.
32. *Progrès de Salonique*, 22 July 1910, quoted in Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, 20. See also M. Sükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 304.
 33. Dimitri Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and Its Impact on Greece* (1962; London: Hurst & Co. 2002), 53.
 34. Johannes Østrup, *Erindringer* (Copenhagen: H. Hirschprungs Forlag, 1937), 118; see also 112, 117, 132–35. For Østrup's views on Atatürk, see *ibid.*, 212–26.
 35. On the view of Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Armenians as “womanly,” see Ronald Grigor Suny, “Religion, Ethnicity, and Nationalism: Armenians, Turks, and the End of the Ottoman Empire,” in *In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack, 23–61 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 42.
 36. Johannes Østrup, *Skiftende Horisonter—Skildringer og Iagttagelser fra et Ridt Gjennem Ørkenen og Lilleasien* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1894), 243. See also Astourian, “Modern Turkish Identity,” 28–31; Wolfgang Gust, “Die Verdrängung des Völkermords an den Armeniern—ein Signal für die Shoah,” in *Der Völkermord an der Armeniern und die Shoah/The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller, 463–80 (Zurich: Kronos Verlag, 2002), 466–69; Hilmar Kaiser, *Imperialism, Racism, and Development Theories: The Construction of a Dominant Paradigm on Ottoman Armenians* (Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas Institute, 1998). Leon Arpee, *A History of Armenian Christianity from the Beginning to Our Own Time* (New York: Armenian Missionary Association of America, 1946), 309, gives an early analysis of the background for Western Armenophobia and, by implication, for Western genocide denial, and how it echoes what Arpee calls “the Turkish need to defame the victims of his own barbarity”: “Sometimes it has a commercialistic origin, as when some foreign business adventurer goes East in the hope of making big money, runs up against Armenian competition, and vents his disappointed ire blackening the character of a whole people. Some Armenophobia, too, has had railroad, mining, oil or other Turkish concession in view, or perhaps another Turkish loan on terms advantageous to the lenders, or the readjustment of policies of state in certain European cabinets, or the protection of vested interests as in the case of certain American educators. It may sometimes even have a semi-religious motive behind it, as when a missionary lets his zeal get the better of him in painting the darker side of the picture with the purpose of impressing the home constituency with the undeniable moral and spiritual need.” It must be noted that many contemporary Western observers expressed equally deep resentment of the Muslim populations of the Ottoman Empire. Bloxham, *The Great Game*, 117, states that “almost everyone posted to the Ottoman Empire expressed disdain for one or other of the ethnic groups with which they came into contact.”
 37. O. Stiehl, *Unsere Feinde—96 Charakterköpfe aus Deutschen Kriegsgefangenenlagern* (Stuttgart: Verlag Julius Hofmann, 1917), 27. “Typical” portraits of the Armenian “racial type” are shown on pages 81–82.
 38. Bloxham, *The Great Game*, 8–9; Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 78–87. On the concept of “middlemen”—minorities envied and hated for their (perceived) economic dominance—see Stacey Gibson, “The Role of Structure and Institutions in the Genocide of the Rwandan Tutsi and the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 5 (2003): 503–22, especially 503–7.
 39. Most importantly in Dadrian, *History*; Melson, *Revolution and Genocide*. See also discussion between Ronald Grigor Suny, “Empire and Nations: Armenians, Turks, and the End of the Ottoman Empire,” *Armenian Forum* 1 (1998): 17–51, and

- Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Armenian Genocide and the Pitfalls of a 'Balanced' Analysis," *Armenian Forum* 1 (1998): 73–130.
40. See, e.g., Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller, "Einleitung . . .," in *Der Völkermord an der Armeniern und die Shoah / The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller, 17–21 (Zurich: Kronos Verlag, 2002).
 41. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 63, 92.
 42. For a very positive contemporary assessment of the Young Turk revolution, see Angus Hamilton, *Problems of the Middle East* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1909), 1–61.
 43. Quoted in Inger Marie Okkenhauge, "Bodil Biørn and the Armenian People," unpublished manuscript (2005), 8.
 44. Elise Bockelund, *En Tjenergerning blandt Martyrfolkene. Kvindelige Missions Arbejdere 1900–1930* (Elsinore: KMA, 1932), 24.
 45. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. II, 24 July 1914. See also Donald Bloxham, "Determinants of the Armenian Genocide," in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 23–50 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 28; Anahide Ter Minassian, "Van 1915," in *Armenian Van / Vaspurakan*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, 209–44 (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2000), 211.
 46. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Forholdene i Tyrkiet," nr. XIV, Rom, 1 April 1911.
 47. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 127–28.
 48. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Forholdene i Tyrkiet," nr. XIV, Rom, 1 April 1911.
 49. Akaby Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question 1915–1923* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 13.
 50. See, e.g., Akcam, *From Empire to Republic*, 130–31.
 51. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXXV, 23 September 1915. The view that Turkist ideology before the Great War was in fact radically exclusive is shared by even the well-known deniers of the Armenian Genocide, Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2, *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 262: "Of course Turkish nationalism, if brought to its logical conclusion, contradicted both Ottomanism and Islamism. If the empire was made into a Turkish national state, there would be no room not only for most of the non-Muslims but also for the non-Turkish Muslims who supported the empire because of their position as Muslims."
 52. See, e.g., Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (London: Hurst & Co., 1997), 80–81; Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 188–95; Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 65.
 53. Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 163.
 54. See, e.g., Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 132–37.
 55. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CLX, 22 September 1915.
 56. Ugur Ü. Üngör, "A Reign of Terror: CUP Rule in Diyarbekir Province, 1913–1918" (master's thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2005), 6.
 57. Suny, "The Holocaust before the Holocaust," especially 94–98; Bloxham, "Determinants of the Armenian Genocide," 24–34; Üngör, "Reign of Terror," 13–15, 17ff.
 58. See, e.g., Üngör, *ibid.*, 20–21; Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 138–39. On the direct connection between Young Turk linguistic policies and the subsequent genocide, see Kaiser, "A Scene from the Inferno," 28.
 59. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, x. On the ongoing marginalization of non-Turkish citizens in modern Turkey, see *ibid.*, 5.
 60. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Politiske Begivenheder i Tyrkiet i 1914," Gesandtskabet i Konstantinopel, 26 January 1915, 2.

61. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. II, 24 July 1914. Compare this with Morgenthau's report on 26 May 1915 (i.e., at a more radicalized and disillusioned stage for the Young Turks and the Armenians, respectively), in Ara Sarafian, comp., *The United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1917* (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 32: "The sharp oscillations in the treatment to which [the Ottoman Armenian community] has been subjected since the Turkish Revolution have taken a markedly unfavorable turn by reason of the War. The fact is that the present Ottoman Government no longer count on the Armenians as loyal to them. The hardships and oppression the Armenians have suffered in recent years, compared with the most favorable treatment received in Russia has caused them not unnaturally to contrast their lot with that of their co-religionists there. The first glamour of the constitutional era here, soon disappeared, while the recollection of the Adana Massacre in 1909 is still fresh in their minds. It is therefore not unlikely to suppose that the great majority of the Armenians in common with all non-Moslem communities, as well as many Turks ardently hope for a change in Government. Between the wish and the ability to realize this there lies, however, a wide gulf. Apart from the mountainous region in Eastern Armenia, and the Zeitoun district, North of Alexandrette, the Armenians no more than other dissatisfied communities, possess the means or the determination to give expression to their wishes."
62. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. II, 24 July 1914.
63. See also Üngör, "Reign of Terror," 20–21; Zürcher, *Turkey*, 133–35.
64. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CLXXXVIII, 6 December 1915. See also Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (1918; reprint, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 196–97.
65. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Politiske Begivenheder i Tyrkiet i 1914," Gesandtskabet i Konstantinopel, 26 January 1915, 19.
66. UM, Gr. 139, D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. LXXI, 7 June 1915. For mention of Ahmed Bey as a Turkist ideologue, see Astourian, "Modern Turkish Identity," 45, n. 41; Zürcher, *Turkey*, 133.
67. Hans-Lukas Kieser, "Dr Mehmed Reshid (1873–1919): A Political Doctor," in *Der Völkermord an der Armeniern und die Shoah / The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik J. Schaller, 245–80 (Zurich: Kronos Verlag, 2002), 257.
68. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CLVII, 23 November 1916. See also Üngör, "Reign of Terror," 16. For a photograph of a group of militarized "boy scouts," here called "Türkische Wehrkraftjungen" (literally, "Turkish defense-force boys"), see Franz Carl Endres, *Die Türkei* (München: Delphin-Verlag, 1916), 33.
69. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CLVII, 23 November 1916. On Adil Bey as a moderate, that is, opposed to the Armenian genocide, see Gust, *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern*, 315.
70. UM, 4. F. 2, "Tyrkiet: Gesandtskabet her," Oprettelse 1916, Djevad Bey, 22/2–15/12 1916. Extrakt-Afskrift af Privatbrev nr. 24 fra Ministerresident C. E. Wandel til Udenrigsminister Scavenius, Konstantinopel, 5 November 1915.
71. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. XCVII, 14 August 1915. One likely reason for the resistance to Western-style modernization among parts of the Ottoman Muslim establishment that the Young Turks encountered from the beginning was that modernization was seen to benefit Christian minorities and foreigners only: Kaiser, "A Scene from the Inferno," 36–37. This is one of the ways that modernization by Turkification could also be seen as an attempt to secure the loyalty and cooperation of the "Old Turks."
72. Suny, "The Holocaust before the Holocaust," 91.

73. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 2, Jan. 1917–1. Jan. 1919, nr. LXXII, 13 August 1918. See also Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (2003 ed.), 238.
74. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 56, 92–100. See also Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 355–56.
75. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold," Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CLVII, 23 November 1916. See also Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 117.
76. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. N. 1., "Armenien," nr. LIV, 10 March 1916.
77. Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (2003 ed.), 222–23; Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 147. According to Alfred Van der Zee, some 70,000–80,000 Ionian Greeks had been expelled already before June 1914: UM, Gr. 5. L. 15., "Grækenland-Tyrkiet: Politiske Forhold," Pakke 1, Juni 1914–31/12 1945, nr. 41, 27 June 1914.
78. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 144–49.
79. UM, Gr. 355, "Gesandtskabet i Konstantinopel—Noter og indberetninger om den politiske Udvikling 1914–1922. Rapporter fra Smyrna Nov. 1914—Marts 1916," nr. 184, 19 June 1914; nr. 202, 25 June 1914. See also Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, 28–34.
80. UM, Gr. 5. L. 15., "Grækenland-Tyrkiet: Politiske Forhold," Pakke 1, Juni 1914–31/12 1945, nr. 31, 23 June 1914.
81. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Politiske Begivenheder i Tyrkiet i 1914," indsendt af Gesandtskabet i Konstantinopel, 26 January 1915, 17. For the estimated number of *bashibozuks*, see UM, Gr. 5. L. 15., "Grækenland-Tyrkiet: Politiske Forhold," Pakke 1, Juni 1914–31/12 1945, nr. 31, 23 June 1914.
82. UM, Gr. 5. L. 15., "Grækenland-Tyrkiet: Politiske Forhold," Pakke 1, Juni 1914–31/12 1945, nr. 31, 23 June 1914.
83. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., "Politiske Begivenheder i Tyrkiet i 1914," indsendt af Gesandtskabet i Konstantinopel, 26 January 1915, 17; UM, Gr. 5. L. 15., "Grækenland-Tyrkiet: Politiske Forhold," Pakke 1, Juni 1914–31/12 1945, nr. 26, 19 June 1914; UM, Gr. 5. L. 15., "Grækenland-Tyrkiet: Politiske Forhold," Pakke 1, Juni 1914–31/12 1945, nr. 28, 20 June 1914. See also Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange*, 53–54.
84. UM, Gr. 5. L. 15., "Grækenland-Tyrkiet: Politiske Forhold," Pakke 1, Juni 1914–31/12 1945, nr. 26, 19 June 1914.
85. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 146–47; UM, Gr. 139, Afd. N. 2., "Tyrkiet: Behandling af Grækere paa tyrkisk Omraade" [ca. 1917–1922], nr. X, 14 January 1917.
86. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 148. A conceptual note: I would characterize the Young Turk persecutions of Ottoman Greeks in 1914–1918 as genocide, even though the extent and, perhaps, also the intent of the killings differ from the extermination of the Armenians, as well as the Nestorians and Assyrians, of the Ottoman Empire. Mark Levene, in "Creating a Modern 'Zone of Genocide': The Impact of Nation- and State-Formation on Eastern Anatolia, 1878–1923," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12 (1998): 393–433, makes a plausible argument that even though the Armenian Genocide, like the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide, was one of the rare instances of what he calls "total genocide," other aspects of the Young Turk campaign of "homogenizing" Anatolia can be characterized as "partial genocide." On "total" and "partial" genocide, see also Robert F. Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
87. UM, Gr. 5. L. 15., "Grækenland-Tyrkiet: Politiske Forhold," Pakke 1, Juni 1914–31/12 1945, nr. 41, 27 June 1914.
88. *Ibid.*
89. Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (2003 ed.), 232.
90. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 149; Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (2003 ed.), 34–36.
91. Kieser, "Dr Mehmed Reshid." Sükrü Bey, the director of the Ministry of the Interior's all-important Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants, is another example

- of a “modern” (i.e., biological and eliminatory) racist Young Turk: Gust, *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern*, 421.
92. UM, Gr. 5. L. 15., “Grækenland-Tyrkiet: Politiske Forhold,” Pakke 1, Juni 1914–31/12 1945, nr. 13, 9 June 1914.
93. UM, Gr. 5. L. 15., “Grækenland-Tyrkiet: Politiske Forhold,” Pakke 1, Juni 1914–31/12 1945, nr. 41, 27 June 1914. See also Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 145–46.
94. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXXV, 22 September 1915; Yair Auron, *The Banality of Indifference: Zionism and the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 64–65. See also Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 284. American sources report that outside Palestine, Ottoman Jews were generally not systematically persecuted during the Armenian genocide, but they also report exceptions to that rule: Sarafian, *United States Official Records*, e.g., 122–23, 208, 265, 351, 494, 581. Plans for deporting thousands of Jews from Palestine were initiated by Djemal Pasha in the spring of 1917, sparking fears that the Ottoman Jews would meet a fate similar to that of the Armenians, but once again, American and European protests forced the authorities to cancel the plans: Auron, *Banality of Indifference*, 73.
95. Quoted in Ara Sarafian and Eric Aveybury, eds., *British Parliamentary Debates on the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1918* (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2003), 19. See also Balakian, *Burning Tigris*, 284. On Ottoman Jewish fears, see Yair Auron, “Zionist and Israeli Attitudes toward the Armenian Genocide,” in *In God’s Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack, 267–88 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 273.
96. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXXIV, 16 June 1916.
97. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXXV, 22 September 1915; UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CVIII, 8 May 1916. On the general efforts by Jewish populations during World War I to support the countries they lived in, see Auron, *Banality of Indifference*, 60.
98. One example is the establishment of an “underground railway” that, through bribery and close cooperation between Dersim Kurds and Western missionaries in Harput and Mezreh, succeeded in smuggling a large number of Armenians into safety in the Dersim area and further on to the Caucasus: e.g., Jacobsen, *Maria Jacobsen’s Diary*, 345–46, 440–42, 461–62; James L. Barton, comp., *Turkish Atrocities”: Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915–1917* (Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas Institute, 1998), 44, 47.
99. See, e.g., Niepage, *Rædslerne i Aleppo*, 20. Some 100,000–200,000 Christian Armenian women and children were forcibly and systematically assimilated, however, rather than killed: Ara Sarafian, “The Absorption of Armenian Women and Children Into Muslim Households as a Structural Component of the Armenian Genocide,” in *In God’s Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack, 209–21 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 210. This is one of the major points that separates the Armenian genocide from the quintessential “total genocide,” the Holocaust, in which possibilities of conversion or “Germanization” did not exist as even a theoretical means of survival for Jews. It must also be noted that Turkification by conversion and assimilation as a means of survival for Ottoman Armenians was extremely brutal, as well as conditional: the alternative was almost certain death; only a limited number of Armenians were allowed to convert; with few exceptions, they had to be women or children; they had to become Muslims; they had to “become Turks” by completely dissociating themselves from anything “Armenian”; they were often sexually abused, used as slaves, and so on in Muslim households. Thus, the Armenian genocide was total in the sense that the killing of more than a million Armenians was supplemented by the attempted complete destruction of “Armenianness” in the Ottoman Empire: see, e.g., Matthias

- Bjørnlund, “‘A Fate Worse Than Dying’: Sexual Violence during the Armenian Genocide” (paper presented at War and Sexuality in Twentieth Century Europe conference, Esbjerg, Denmark, 28 June–1 July 2006).
100. David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 102–9.
 101. George E. White, “Some Non-conforming Turks,” *Moslem World* 8.3 (1918): 242–48, 248, quoted in Hans-Lukas Kieser, “Some Remarks on Alevi Responses to the Missionaries in Eastern Anatolia (19th–20th cc.),” Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO) Working Papers, March 2001, <http://www.hist.net/kieser/pu/responses.html> (accessed 23 December 2005). On the persecutions of Ottoman Arabs, see Wandel’s report of a conversation with the former governor of Lebanon, Yussuf Pacha Franco: UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrket—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31. dec. 1916, nr. CLXXXXVIII, 16 December 1915, as well as Wandel’s account of the forced starvation of the Lebanese population: UM, Gr. 139, Afd. N. 3., “Syrien,” nr. LXXXVII, 31 May 1917. See also UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 2, jan. 1917–1. jan 1919, nr. IV, 6 January 1916.
 102. The Young Turks’ common use of the phrase “military necessity” to excuse or explain their exterminatory policies was just as commonly and explicitly dismissed by first-hand witnesses: see, e.g., Niepage, *Rædslerne i Aleppo*, 3–4; Morgenthau, 10 July 1915, in Sarafian, *United States Official Records*, 51–52.
 103. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. XCVII, 14 August 1915. On the xenophobic policy of the CUP, see also UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. LXX, 3 July 1915.
 104. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXIII, 4 September 1915.
 105. See also UM, Gr. 139, Afd. N. 1., “Armenien,” nr. LIV, 10 March 1916.
 106. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXIII, 4 September 1915.
 107. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXIII, 4 September 1915. See also Leslie A. Davis, *The Slaughterhouse Province: An American Diplomat’s Report on the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1917* (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1989), 70, 158; Sarafian, *United States Official Records*, 639.
 108. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXIII, 4 September 1915. See also Jacobsen, *Maria Jacobsen’s Diary*, e.g., 829–30; Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* (2003 ed.), 215; Adalian, “American Diplomatic Correspondence,” 155, 158; James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1916*, uncensored, ed. Ara Sarafian (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2000), 57.
 109. On deportations from Constantinople, see also Vahakn N. Dadrian, “The Comparative Aspects of the Armenian and Jewish Cases of Genocide: A Sociohistorical Perspective,” in *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, ed. Alan S. Rosenbaum, 101–35, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 109.
 110. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXIII, 4 September 1915.
 111. *Ibid.* The view that the Catholic Armenians were particularly apolitical and “loyal” was shared by Austrian ambassador Pallavicini: Artem Ohandjanian, *1915: Irrefutable Evidence. The Austrian Documents on the Armenian Genocide*, rev. ed., trans. Tigran Tsulikian (Yerevan: National Academy of Sciences, 2004), 60.
 112. Hilmar Kaiser, *At the Crossroads of Der Zor: Death, Survival, and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915–1917* (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2002), 10.
 113. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXXXVIII, 3 October 1915. See also Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 221–22.
 114. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXXXVIII, 3 October 1915. See also UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, u. nr., 25 November 1915.

115. Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 231, n. 18.
116. However, Wandel does mention Rahmy Bey, World War I *vali* of Smyrna, as another high-level, but less vocal, opponent of the genocide: e.g., UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXV, 9 September 1915.
117. Akçam, *From Empire to Republic*, 75, 83–84.
118. E.F. Knight, *The Awakening of Turkey* (London: Milne, 1909), 84ff, quoted in Arpee, *History of Armenian Christianity*, 292.
119. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CLXXIII, 14 December 1916.
120. On Riza’s criticism of Western imperialism, see Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, e.g., 35–36.
121. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. XXIII, 10 March 1915; UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. CXXV, 23 September 1915; Vahakn N. Dadrian, “Genocide as a Problem of National and International Law: The World War I Armenian Case and Its Contemporary Legal Ramifications,” *Yale Journal of International Law* 14 (1989): 221–334, 267–68.
122. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 2, nr. CLXXV, 20 December 1917.
123. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 1, til 31 dec. 1916, nr. LV, 10 March 1916.
124. Dadrian, “Genocide as a Problem,” 268.
125. UM, Gr. 139, Afd. D. 1., “Tyrkiet—Indre Forhold,” Pakke 2, nr. CLXXV, 20 December 1917. Note how Ahmed Riza explicitly highlights “political necessity,” not “military necessity,” as the Young Turks’ motive for the “deportations.” On the subject of official Young Turk genocide denialist publications, what Riza dismissively calls “brochures,” see especially UM, Gr. 139, Afd. N. 1., “Armenien,” nr. LXXXII, 4 April 1916.
126. Quoted in Dadrian, *History of the Armenian Genocide*, 224. See also Kaiser, *Imperialism, Racism*, 25, n. 46. For Danish eyewitnesses to the actual implementation of the “confiscations” in the Mamouret-ul-Aziz and Diyarbekir regions, respectively, see Jacobsen, *Maria Jacobsen’s Diary*, 405–406; Hansine Marcher, *Oplevelser Derovre fra* (Copenhagen: KMA, 1919), 16–17.

GENOCIDE STUDIES AND PREVENTION

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