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“This intelligent, thoughtful and empirically rich study investigates the role that British imperialists played in shaping humanitarian discourse around the Armenian Genocide, its genealogy and its aftermath. Anyone who wants to understand the origins and implications of human rights justice in the pre-World War I era should begin here.”

Antoinette Burton, Professor of History and Bastian Professor of
Global and Transnational Studies, University of Illinois

“Michelle Tusan provides a groundbreaking account of the British policy towards the Armenian Genocide. By relying on the voices of well-known and lesser known Britons, Tusan demonstrates in a fascinating manner the ways in which the British state and society responded to the different phases of violence inflicted upon the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. In this unprecedented study Tusan highlights the role that the British played in shaping the global humanitarian response to mass violence in the twentieth century. From Gladstonian idealism to Imperial realpolitik, the book tells the story of the failure of a global hegemonic power to uphold its moral duty to prosecute the architects of one of the classical cases of genocides in the modern period. This book provides important background as to how the international community in the twentieth and the twenty-first century failed/fails to stop genocides through humanitarian and legal intervention.”

Bedross Der Matossian, Associate Professor of History,
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Humanitarianism and Imperial Politics from
Gladstone to Churchill

MICHELLE TUSAN

I.B. TAURIS

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I had anticipated finishing the book in time for the 100 year anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 2015 but my mother's long illness and eventual death from cancer slowed the push to treat this like any other project. It also ended up putting the sad stories that fill the pages of this book in a stark new light. I now view them through

the eyes of my husband, Scott Muelrath, my sister, Christina Tusan, and my children Nicholas and Sophia, along with my dad who made me see why this book should be written. The perspective from the other side of the anniversary does not make the history recounted and interpreted in the following pages any less poignant. My grandmother survived the genocide, which happened when she was a very little girl, not much younger than my daughter is now. She never spoke of it, and her own daughter, my mother, considered it part of a history now long past. This book is for the generation who remembers for those who cannot.

INTRODUCTION

THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE

On the night of April 24, 1915, more than 200 intellectuals, community and religious leaders were rounded up in Constantinople by the Ottoman imperial government.¹ It was the last time many of them would be seen alive. That night marked the beginning of what is today called the Armenian Genocide and would result in the deaths of well over one million civilians in the midst of World War I (1914–18). This book is a history of the first attempt to intervene on behalf of genocide victims and prosecute those responsible. Why this failed and why that matters is at the heart of the story that follows.

In 1919, Britain indicted the Ottoman Empire for what the international community labeled a “crime against humanity.” This act gave intervention into the affairs of other states on humanitarian grounds both a legal and moral cause. It left an important legacy and remains a guiding principle in modern attempts to stop genocide and prosecute war crimes.

Understanding the historical response to genocide requires going back to before World War I. The Ottoman Empire’s elimination of its minority Armenian, Assyrian and Greek population between 1915 and 1923 had its roots in the story of empire, nineteenth-century Great Power politics and the rise of global institutions. Massacres of civilians during times of war was nothing new. For centuries populations large and small survived in the cross-fire of foreign and civil wars. But what happened in 1915 tested the boundaries of wartime excess and crossed over into the realm of genocide due to its systematic execution, intent

and the targeting of particular civilian populations who became the objects of a state-sponsored violence which culminated in a policy of extermination.

The Ottoman Empire's minority problem started long before the fateful night of April 24. Starting in the nineteenth century, pogroms against Christian minorities periodically raged in the cities and provinces of the Empire leaving destruction in their wake. The rise of the popular press with foreign news reporters and big readerships at the end of the nineteenth century brought news of these massacres to the outside world for the first time and demanded a response. In 1876, atrocities committed by Turkish troops against Bulgarian civilians which preceded the Russo-Turkish War (1877–8) received widespread coverage in the press, as did massacres of Ottoman minority populations in Crete, Macedonia, Cyprus and Anatolia (Asia Minor). In the mid-1890s, the Hamidian Massacres in eastern Anatolia captured the attention of Britain, Europe and America. In 1909, the mass slaughter of Armenians in the town of Adana shocked the world.

No one imagined that these massacres would lead to a plan for the elimination of Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire. That the Armenians were the main population targeted in 1915 makes sense only in hindsight. Armenians, as the largest minority population in the Empire, had long been subjected to violence and political inequalities. Greeks and Assyrians, two other Ottoman minority communities, were also targeted. The rise of Turkish nationalism in the late nineteenth century, articulated by some as "Turkey for the Turks," made the position of the Ottoman Empire's non-Muslim Christian population more precarious. Armenian nationalism arose, in part, as a reaction to these claims, as did demands for more autonomy and civil rights. Although Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians lived alongside their Muslim neighbors for centuries occupying the same land, growing the same crops, trading in the same villages and cities, as Christians they could not lay claim to a Turkish identity which had become increasingly tied to Islam. Living together in a multi-confessional community, sometimes at war but mostly at peace, was a reality of the minority experience in the Ottoman Empire. When genocide came in 1915, many thought that these massacres would also run their course and survivors could get back to rebuilding their lives after the crisis passed. This did not happen as those who survived were sent

into exile as refugees, many with stamps on their passports explicitly prohibiting their “right to return”.

Reports of massacre, genocide and exile did not go unnoticed at the time and sparked a significant international response. This story is told here through the eyes of British statesmen, the public and aid workers because of the central role played by the British Empire in shaping what the global humanitarian response would look like. Historians largely have focused on American reactions to nineteenth-century massacres in the Ottoman Empire and later the Armenian Genocide.² While important, the focus on the US has obscured the wider context in which the international community attempted to mitigate the effects of genocide through humanitarian intervention and later try Ottoman official for crimes against humanity in war crimes tribunals after World War I. The European-wide response to massacre in the nineteenth century has also received attention along with the response of individual nation states.³ New research on the role of Germany regarding the genocide reveals the significance of the Armenian issue to Great Power politics and modern humanitarianism.⁴ British imperial leadership in the campaign against massacre warrants closer consideration in light of this scholarship. Ultimately, the British Empire provided the blueprint for how the international community responded to charges of “crimes against humanity” against the Ottoman Empire.

The Armenian question was one of the most prominent humanitarian causes of the Victorian period. Regularly mentioned in the same breath as the movement to reform the Belgian Congo under King Leopold II’s brutal regime in Africa, it captured the imagination of a generation of philanthropists, politicians and the wider public. Nowhere was the humanitarian campaign to aid Armenians more visible than in the press. Turn-of-the-century reviews and magazines discussed the Armenian massacres of the 1890s significantly more often than the well-publicized Congo Reform campaign.⁵

Why did the trials of a small, minority peoples living in the Near East attract so much attention and become the focus of humanitarian activism abroad? More importantly, how did this concern cross over from providing humanitarian aid to justifying the intervention in the affairs of another sovereign state? The answer to both questions lies in the late-Victorian moment when the reach and power of Britain’s empire was heavily invested in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire to protect

its own imperial advantage in the region. At the same time, Britain emerged at the center of an outward-looking humanitarian movement that understood the protection of Ottoman minority populations as central to Britain's moral mission abroad which often conveniently ignored the excesses of its own empire and crimes committed against its subjects. The Armenian cause had particular currency for liberals who understood it as the embodiment of universal humanitarian ideals and the *pax Britannica*.

W.E. Gladstone, the indefatigable Liberal Party leader, opened up the question of whether or not the British Empire should intervene on behalf of persecuted minorities to the wider public. Other voices joined Gladstone in denouncing atrocities in the Ottoman Empire. The media played a key role in shaping public opinion over what to do about the Armenian question. Those who participated in these debates left behind their own stories about why and how they chose to help. This book relies on the voices of well-known and lesser-known Britons who, starting in the 1850s, began to engage the issue of how to use foreign policy and diplomacy to stop massacre. Also included are the prejudices and bias which came to inform public and private responses to the killings. This orientalist world view cut both ways.⁶ Anti-Muslim sentiment, along with racialized understandings of both Turks and Armenians, were part of how some of these historical actors viewed their world. Rather than focus on the influence of orientalist thinking on imperial identity formation which has been undertaken by other studies, this book targets the public discourse surrounding the question of Britain's responsibility to intervene by those who became intensely involved in debates over the crisis.⁷ These included politicians, journalists, philanthropists and others who wrote, gave money and pledged support for victims. This humanitarian activism created a body of knowledge about distant strangers living in distant lands whose plight periodically became part of the everyday fabric of public discourse.

Knowledge is not always power. Protests, policy debates and media campaigns on behalf of massacre victims ultimately only had limited effect. Put bluntly, telling the public about the plight of victims did not stop the killings. Media campaigns – loud, certain and seemingly ever present in the initial stages – inevitably fade as the news cycle runs its course. Knowing what happened and responding with humanitarian aid never has been enough. The following chapters explore why this came to

be when the international community issued its first response to the crime of genocide.

The important work of tracing the road to genocide and understanding its causes has long engaged historians. Rather than focus on proving that what happened to Ottoman Christian minorities in the midst of World War I constituted genocide – this has been dealt with in another body of scholarship⁸ – what follows is the view from those who witnessed these events from abroad during the time leading up to and following, what they characterized as, the establishing of eliminating Armenians from Anatolia as an official policy of the Ottoman Empire. To see this event otherwise would be to distort the archives that I have relied on from throughout Britain in the service of hollow political agendas. Previous scholarship has studied the question of genocide in the Armenian case.⁹ The time has come to focus on the responses to genocide and how it continues to influence what nations do when confronted with humanitarian crises abroad.

The case of the British Empire and the Armenian Genocide constituted a defining moment in shaping how the international community would respond to “crimes against humanity.” It matters that this happened in the midst of a devastating world war fought against the Central Powers by Britain and its Allies. Britain’s leadership role in this regard has been overlooked, in part because of the focus on US archives and America’s remarkable role in raising over a billion dollars in aid for victims at the time. Historians have combed through diplomatic, institutional and private US archives which have led to a clear picture of the who, what, when and where of the Armenian Genocide. Much of this research engages the question of whether or not the killings constituted genocide. Recent efforts to examine the archives in Turkey, Germany, France and Britain have yielded important findings in this regard. The result is a fuller, more comprehensive picture of what happened in 1915.

But while many historians cite Foreign Office archives, no systematic study of British archives has been undertaken in light of recent scholarship on the topic. The 100th anniversary of the event in 2015 witnessed the publication of a number of important studies on why the genocide happened. Raymond Kevorkian’s *Complete History of the Armenian Genocide* uses European, Middle Eastern, Turkish, and American source material to meticulously and scrupulously document the event and offer a clear understanding of the motives of perpetrators and the cost for victims. Ronald Grigor Suny’s *They Can Live in the Desert*

but Nowhere Else explains the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire as a key causal factor in the attempt to destroy the Armenians under the cover of world war. Leading scholars consider these causal factors in the edited collection of essays, *A Question of Genocide*, and explain the social, economic and political factors that led to genocide against Armenians and other Ottoman Christian minorities, namely the Greek and Assyrian populations who lived in villages across Anatolia. Finally, Vahakn Dadrian and Taner Akçam explain the failures of the first international war crimes trials held to bring to justice perpetrators of the genocide after World War I in *Judgment at Istanbul*. To this research, this book adds the story of the response by the most powerful internationalist institutional force at the time: the British Empire.

Understanding the first global response to genocide, then, can help explain why the international community has failed to stop genocide past and present through humanitarian and legal intervention. Stories of failure often produce lessons of truth. The birth of international institutions today charged with prosecuting genocide and crimes against humanity came out of the immediate postwar moment when considerations of what to do about the Armenian Genocide were on the minds of world leaders. Leading the charge was Britain's wartime leader, David Lloyd George, and American President, Woodrow Wilson. The idea for a League of Nations that would later transform into the United Nations was a postwar one which would claim for itself the responsibility for identifying crimes against humanity and genocide and mediating charges of war crimes. Proposed in Wilson's Fourteen Points, the League was largely implemented by the British who led the organization and shaped its values after the US refused to join.¹⁰ The question of whether or not to attempt to influence the internal affairs of sovereign states on behalf of vulnerable minorities was one of its earliest charges. It is the legacy of this moment, when Britain established the rules of the international order in the wake of world war, which still influences the way war crimes are prosecuted, investigated and understood today.

Responding to Genocide

The chapters that follow chart the rise and fall of Britain's engagement with the problem of massacre and genocide before, during and

immediately following World War I. This experience influenced what the new internationalism that took hold after the war would look like and how the Allies would react to revelations of civilian massacre during wartime.¹¹ The mass killing of Armenian civilians by the Ottoman Empire led Europe's Great Powers to declare it a "crime against humanity" just weeks after the massacres commenced. The opening chapters explain why this mandate loomed so large by considering debates over humanitarian and diplomatic intervention which started in the Victorian period. The slaughter of, by some estimates, over 100,000 Armenians in a series of massacres committed in Anatolia the mid-1890s under the despotic rule of Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II further crystalized the imperative of what came to be known as Gladstone's humanitarian mission on behalf of Armenians.

The media spoke out against what one journalist in the mid-1890s labeled as a crime of historical proportions.¹² Such indignation also characterized understandings of the killing of an estimated 25,000 Armenians in 1909 in the southeastern Ottoman market town of Adana. The successful rebellion of Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, all with large minority Christian populations, against Ottoman rule emboldened prominent British politicians to lobby Parliament to find a way to enforce minority protection agreements in what remained of the Empire. The Ottoman Empire's decision in November 1914 to join World War I on the side of Germany put Allied pledges to Christian minorities in sharp relief. By this time, Britain was recognized as the primary watchdog of minority interests in the Middle East.

This analysis provides an important context for the response to the event of the genocide itself. The mass arrest of Armenian intellectuals and religious leaders was immediately followed by the Allied invasion of the Ottoman Empire at Gallipoli on April 25, 1915. News of the arrests transformed what one commentator called a "war against German militarism" into "a war of liberation" for "small nationalities" throughout Europe and Asia. Viscount James Bryce, a well-regarded British statesman known for his advocacy of Armenian causes, set to work on a document that made the defense of minority civilians during wartime a matter of honor for the international community. Published as a Parliamentary Blue Book in October 1916, his massive volume offered compelling evidence of concurrent massacres throughout Anatolia. Bryce attributed this pattern to an "exceedingly systematic" policy by the Ottoman Turks to eliminate

Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians from the Ottoman Empire. Citing examples of “pious and humane” officials and “Moslems [sic] who tried to save their Christian neighbors,” Bryce maintained that “there is nothing in the precepts of Islam which justifies this slaughter.”¹³ These findings, commissioned by the British government, brought together for the first time the proof and arguments that would shape the meaning of genocide as later understood during the Jewish Holocaust.

US Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau witnessed brutalities firsthand. He echoed Bryce, lamenting that the Armenians were being “pitilessly destroyed.” Morgenthau took the matter directly to his Turkish counterpart, declaring, “You are making a terrible mistake.”¹⁴ These two diplomats published disturbing, verifiable accounts that had wide audiences and a huge effect on public opinion. The “Armenian barbarities” required retribution, the authors argued. This “matter of vital import to the honour of humanity and the good faith and wellbeing of the world,” as the Archbishop of Canterbury put it, constituted an “outrage on civilization without historical parallel in the world.”¹⁵

An assessment of the aftermath of World War I and the attempt to try the Ottoman Empire for “crimes against humanity” concludes this study. The US supported the British push for investigations into the massacres. Divided public opinion in the US over the war delayed President Wilson’s decision to enter the conflict until April 6, 1917. However, his longstanding endorsement of British objectives was well-known, despite his initial public platform of neutrality, and extended to the aid of persecuted Ottoman Christians. He buoyed self-determination for minorities in his “14 Points” from early 1918, which had a special provision for Armenians who Wilson believed “should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.”

Humanitarian, civic, church, and missionary organizations attested that the Armenian massacres constituted what Bryce had labeled a premeditated, politically motivated offense. International channels recognized it as what today would be called state-sponsored terror against a people marked as an internal enemy. While the Ottoman government claimed that Armenians had conspired against the empire during the war which justified the slaughter, it could produce little evidence to support these claims. On May 24, 1915, a joint European declaration accused

Turkey of crimes “against humanity and civilization,” marking the first use of the term in relation to mass civilian atrocity.¹⁶ The US immediately was made privy to this declaration, which raised the stakes for the US and Britain by implicating it in the prosecution of those accused of planning and initiating the massacres.

The Allies, spurred by Britain, sought legal redress for war crimes after combat ended. They made the Ottoman Empire aware in peace negotiations that because it had sided with Germany, it would be liable for wrongs committed against minorities during the war. After the signing of the Armistice with the Ottoman Empire in late 1918 at Mudros, the press confidently affirmed that those responsible for the massacres “would come as a matter of course” due to the resolve of the Allies.¹⁷ The result was the Ottoman War Crimes Tribunals, a series of courts-martial set up to prosecute Turkish officials for the Armenian massacres, a condition of the peace. By spring 1919, the Ottoman bureaucracy, under pressure from the British had arrested more than 100 high-profile suspects, including government ministers and military officers. Trials began in early 1919 and disbanded in July 1922.

Three minor officials were executed for “crimes against humanity,” a term deployed by British representatives and Ottoman prosecutors in reference to the proceedings. Over the next three years, at least 63 additional cases came to trial involving 200 suspects, but only a fraction were convicted, and the majority of those sentences were never served.

What explains the limited punishment? The conclusion to the book assesses how the failure to fully prosecute key figures deemed responsible for the Armenian Genocide came from the problem of translating the rhetoric of imperial responsibility to protect vulnerable minorities into action. The glacial pace of the Ottoman peace settlement, when compared to the war settlement with Germany, diminished Britain’s moral posturing. Military swagger abated with the drawing down of troops in Anatolia; by summer 1919, Britain significantly reduced its military forces in the region, making it difficult for the Allies to force their will on Ottoman leadership. Also, the US preferred not to form an international body to try war crimes because it worried about foreign entanglements and, therefore, left the task to the British. Finally, and most importantly, the Ottoman War Crimes Tribunals, as they have become known, did not

fall under the legal jurisdiction of any one Allied country or the new League of Nations.

Following through with the maze of prosecutions meant balancing a commitment to intervene with concerns over what the Allies could and could not do in the early days of an unstable peace. The Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923 would finally end hostilities four years after the signing of the armistice agreement. The rise of Turkish nationalism threatened British influence in the region and stymied peace negotiations. Ideological resolve faltered as neither Britain nor the US pushed the redresses forward. Winston Churchill argued that the burden of overseeing trials that had become a matter of internal Turkish politics might result in further fomenting nationalist anger over the Allied hold in the Middle East. These dilemmas exposed the tension between a foreign policy guided by moral ideals and sobering geopolitical realities – and ultimately undermined promises to defend human rights. The first prosecution of those accused of genocide largely came to naught.

The memory of the mass killings of Armenian civilians under the cover of world war, however, continues to animate how the international community understands what Raphael Lemkin first identified as “genocide” or “race murder” in the early 1940s.¹⁸ Reflecting on the Armenian Genocide as part of the 100-year commemoration of World War I offers an opportunity to understand why the crime of genocide persists as a very real threat for marginalized minority communities around the globe. The Armenian case, and the genocides that have followed in its wake, serve as a regular reminder that genocide will not go away. Studying the failed response to the Armenian Genocide is key to understanding the relationship between the origins of modern humanitarian practice and the pursuit of human rights justice with a keen eye always looking toward the future.

CHAPTER 1

W.E. GLADSTONE AND HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

The 100th anniversary of World War I focused renewed attention on the Armenian Genocide. Commemoration activities took place all over the globe in April 2015. So did the campaign of denial. Claims that the killings of Armenians were an unfortunate but inevitable result of the protracted conflict are a relatively recent phenomenon. At the time of the event in 1915 and up through the end of the war, few among those who followed what was happening in the Ottoman Empire disputed that a government-sanctioned policy of elimination was underway. Attempts by Allied and Ottoman officials to bring perpetrators to justice evaporated in the aftermath of a devastating world war that forever changed the map of the Middle East and Eastern Europe. After the war, outrage over the mass killings of Armenians faded from the memory of the experience of World War I eventually to become the subject of debate and denial that shadowed the 100-year commemoration activities.

But rather than call further into question the events of April 1915, the controversy over the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide 100 years after the fact fueled attempts to reinstate it as part of the collective memory of the war. Pope Francis called it the “*primo genocidio*” of the twentieth century during a Sunday mass in St. Peter’s Basilica in April 2015 and condemned the Armenian Genocide as one of “three massive and unprecedented tragedies” of the last century, alongside Nazism and the Soviet famine, or Holodomor, of the early 1930s under Stalin. The German President and speaker of the lower house condemned the

killings as “genocide” and Germany admitted its “shared responsibility, possibly shared guilt, for the genocide against the Armenians” as a result of its alliance with Turkey during World War I.¹ Later, the German Parliament officially recognized the Armenian Genocide. The French and Russian presidents both commemorated the genocide in Yerevan, the capital city of modern-day Armenia. In this nation of three million people, world leaders, popular culture icons and thousands of those whose families were affected by the genocide gathered to pay tribute and remember.

Two important powers were notably absent: Great Britain and the United States. Prince Charles participated in the Gallipoli commemorations which Turkey moved up in 2015 to coincide with the commemoration events related to the Armenian Genocide.² President Obama attended no commemoration activities but noted with muted regret the killings that claimed Armenian lives during the war. He stated that the United States should acknowledge the Armenian Genocide while running for president, but repeated attempts to pass a resolution to recognize the Armenian Genocide in Congress have all failed. In Britain, the topic of what happened to the Armenians during World War I occasionally came up in Parliament but never resulted in any official acknowledgement that what happened in 1915 constituted what the world community today calls genocide.

This lack of response by Britain and the United States in 2015 stands in stark contrast to how these two states first reacted to news of the killings 100 years before. Without the investigations launched by Britain, and the humanitarian response led by the United States, the killing of Armenians during World War I would most certainly never have come to light, carried instead as a painful secret transmitted by survivors to their children and children’s children. No war crimes trials would have ensued and little evidence of mass killings in written testimony and photographic representation would remain today in the archive. Engagement with what happened to Armenians in 1915 came from a longstanding concern with violence in the Ottoman Empire against minorities that emanated from public and private channels first in Britain and, later, the United States.

This chapter takes the Armenian question back to the beginning, many decades before the genocide commenced. It might seem anachronistic to start with the Victorian period to talk about an event

that happened in 1915. The word genocide, coined over two decades later, did not yet exist. To understand the British-led response to what happened in 1915, however, the story must begin with how they saw their role in the world and especially in relation to the minority communities of the Ottoman Empire, of which the Armenians were the largest group. Global crises have long gestations that only become clear with distance and hindsight. The story of world war and genocide in the twentieth century, then, starts in the nineteenth century.

Humanitarianism and Massacre

The Armenian question began as a problem of humanitarian intervention. Starting in the nineteenth century, Britain asserted its right as defender of minority rights in the Ottoman Empire, a vast territory that before World War I spread across modern day Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.³ Nations joined in the Concert of Europe understood humanitarianism as an integral part of European politics.⁴

Though Europeans made stark distinctions among and between Christians and Jews, the Ottoman Empire did not – these minorities were part of the category of “non-Muslim” and were treated as such under Islamic Law. The rights of Jewish Ottoman minorities, in fact, were one of the first to be defended by Britain. As Abigail Green has shown, Britain’s “self-appointed role as champion of Ottoman Jewry” took hold in the 1840s, in the wake of the Damascus affair, when Britain defended a group of Ottoman Jewish subjects wrongly accused of ritual murder. Lord John Russell pledged in 1855 that Britain would attempt to secure for Jews as well as Christians “the benefits of equal law and impartial administration.”⁵ Though such promises would yield few concrete results in the coming years, it created the expectation that Britain had an obligation to champion the rights of Ottoman minorities. This pledge prompted attempts to defend the rights of others in the form of diplomatic maneuvering and international agreements.

Intervention on behalf of minority rights was prompted by actions taken by the Ottoman government in the late 1830s. The Tanzimat reforms, among other things, promised to extend equal treatment to non-Muslim minorities, which included a sizable number of Christians and Jews.⁶ Britain supported the successful Greek wars of independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 1820s and subsequently increased its

influence over Ottoman internal affairs by pressing for reforms to benefit minorities. Concerns over the stability of the British Empire, as it began its rapid expansion into India during this period, drove this involvement. So, too, did humanitarian idealism. The combination between *realpolitik* concerns and humanitarian posturing gave Britain's engagement with the Ottoman minority question its particular character.

Humanitarian intervention became officially tied to imperial diplomacy in the region, starting with the signing of the Peace of Paris that ended the Crimean War in 1856. Promises to enforce the reform of the administration of the Ottoman Empire in regard to its Christian minority population were written into the treaty. Article 23 provided civil equality for religious minorities, though the issue of Jewish emancipation remained ambiguous in part because of treaty agreements which placed many Ottoman Jews under the nominal protection of Romania.⁷ The Treaty's clause was therefore considered applicable in particular to Christian minorities still under Ottoman jurisdiction. Britain helped resolve another war fought just over 20 years later, the Russo-Turkish War, with the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. This treaty gave Britain the explicit duty to defend the rights of Christian minorities living in the Ottoman Empire and particularly the Armenians.

No other figure embodied this charge more clearly than W.E. Gladstone. His influence as leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister made politics a matter of conscience. During Gladstone's almost half-century predominance over British politics, he called for the people of Britain to have a moral engagement in imperial and foreign affairs, particularly in regard to the Ottoman Empire. This issue inspired his politics until the end of his life. The massacre of an estimated 100,000 Armenians in the mid-1890s proved an important culminating moment in what *The Times* (London) dubbed Gladstone's "humanitarian crusade" on behalf of Armenians.⁸

In September 1896, Gladstone proclaimed in his last public speech before his death in Liverpool, England that Britain and its empire had an obligation in the face of a failed response by the European powers to impose "our just demands" in the wake of the Armenian massacres that had raged for almost two years in the Ottoman Empire. The issue remained on his mind. In his next to final diary entry he listed

“The Armenian Question” as the first in a list “of matters entailing anxiety” that included, in descending order, the Liberal Party leadership, Egypt, the death of the archbishop and “the formation of my will.”⁹ As a symbol of his dedication to the fate of Armenia, a red silk handkerchief given to him by Armenian supporters as a gesture of thanks covered his feet upon his death in 1898.¹⁰

Gladstone’s “anxiety” marked the culmination of a decades-long movement that represented the Armenian cause as an imperial duty realized through British diplomacy. The vision found strongest expression in the person of Gladstone himself, described by one contemporary as a “humane man” with a “keen sense of the religious bearing of political questions.”¹¹ Born in Liverpool in 1809 to a relatively prosperous, evangelical merchant family, his life and career spanned the nineteenth century. His father was a self-made man and sent the young Gladstone to Eton in 1821 and later to Christ Church at the University of Oxford. His education taught him self-reliance and helped him to forge important relationships with notable political and religious figures of the time. These experiences, according to his biographer, Colin Matthew, led to Gladstone’s belief that the purpose of liberal education was to reinforce orthodox Anglican Christianity.¹² His interest in orthodox religion during a period when Anglicanism was undergoing intense scrutiny from within led to a lifelong respect of the Eastern Orthodox Church as a unifying national and religious institution for Near Eastern peoples and would deeply influence his personal and political life.

A life in politics beckoned the young Gladstone, who started his career as a Tory. The Greek Wars of Independence of the 1820s, which separated Greece from rule by the Ottoman Empire, would inspire his politics and personal support for the autonomy of Armenians and other Ottoman Christian minorities.¹³ In 1832, the year of the Great Reform Bill that began the process of modernizing the British electoral system, he entered the House of Commons for Newark. Gladstone was engaged with the Eastern question from his early days as a Member of Parliament. He witnessed the failure of reform regarding minorities which were part of the first set of Ottoman Tanzimat reforms of 1839, which Britain had pressed the Ottoman Empire to institute. Gladstone was dismayed that these protections instituted internally by the Ottoman government to protect minority interests in the empire did not

deliver on their promise. The failure of these reforms provided the impetus to support the idea that Britain should play a more active role in promoting the protection of Christian minorities living under Ottoman rule.¹⁴

The role of enforcer of civic and religious reform did not come immediately or easily for the British Empire. Though some joined Gladstone in supporting the idea of minority protection codified in the 1856 Treaty of Paris after the Crimean War (1854–6), many took then-Prime Minister Palmerston's line of trying to encourage internal Ottoman reforms, along the lines of the Tanzimat reforms, to improve the status of minorities from a safe distance.¹⁵ In his role as private citizen, MP and, later, Liberal party leader, supporters praised Gladstone's industry and learning. While Gladstone was admired for his work ethic and leadership, his sense that all questions were moral questions, particularly those related to politics, led to the critique that "he was never clear about a political question until he had somehow formed it into a moral issue, a question of right and wrong." This led to a zealous and passionate approach to political life: "if an appeal was made to his love of humanity and justice, he never failed to respond," observed friend and fellow advocate of Armenian causes, Viscount James Bryce. "He hated cruelty . . . He had a very strong sense of public duty. His standard of personal honor was high in small things as well as in great."

The public outcry over the "Bulgarian Atrocities" that Gladstone helped spark on the eve of the Russo-Turkish War brought this character into view. In May 1876, Ottoman soldiers massacred thousands of Bulgarian Christian civilians. The several months of advocacy work Gladstone engaged in on behalf of oppressed Bulgarian minorities allowed him to shape how Britain understood its humanitarian obligation to Ottoman Christians. Gladstone denounced the massacres and led the call for a more activist role for the British Empire as arbiter of justice.¹⁶ As he would later do with the Armenian case, Gladstone appealed to the "language of humanity, justice and wisdom" in his widely read 1876 pamphlet, "The Bulgarian Horrors".¹⁷

Gladstone believed that the British Empire had an obligation to lead the world in promoting the values of civilization, humanity and justice. The configuration of liberty, justice and empire sounds anachronistic at best and contradictory at worst to contemporary liberal ideals.

But scholars interrogating the connection between liberalism and empire have revealed the uncomfortable connection between notions of liberty and the belief in a *pax Britannica*.¹⁸ While Gladstone considered empire “part of our patrimony; born with our birth, dying only with our death” and maintained that “the dominant passion of England is extended empire,” he thought the Conservative party under Benjamin Disraeli’s leadership had gotten it wrong. In the wake of the Bulgarian Atrocity agitation, Gladstone swept the Liberal Party into office with a new vision of empire that, according to Matthew, would restore “right conduct and right principles.”¹⁹ Against the unbridled geographic expansion advocated by the Tories, Gladstone proposed that one of “the great works assigned to the Imperial State of the United Kingdom” was “the noble duty of defending, as occasion offers, the cause of public right, and of rational freedom, over the broad expanse of Christendom.”²⁰ Empire would serve a higher cause in this “mighty mission.” “Our own misdeeds, if they exist, are distant,” Gladstone asserted, “and on the whole we are admirably placed for upholding, by voice and influence, the interests . . . of sheer justice and humanity.”²¹

Religious, secular, and political advocacy organizations came to share this vision. They found inspiration in Gladstone’s advocacy on behalf of Ottoman Christian minorities who belonged to the Eastern Orthodox Church which he had embraced in his early years. Eastern orthodoxy, many believed, belonged to a religion sharing a common origin with Anglicanism.²² Anglicans and Nonconformists alike embraced the cause, raising money and performing relief work in the Ottoman Empire.²³ Such activism cast humanitarian intervention as a simultaneously moral, religious and imperial duty that Gladstone, shown as a Christian crusader in [Figure 1.1](#), maintained would “serve civilization” ([Figure 1.1](#)). In 1876, advocates founded the Eastern Question Association as an umbrella organization to advocate for Ottoman minorities that included Bulgarian, Armenian, Assyrian, and Greek Orthodox Christians.²⁴

After Bulgaria received nominal independence from the Ottoman Empire in the peace settlement that ended the Russo-Turkish War in 1878, attention turned specifically to Armenians, who remained part of the Ottoman Empire as a prominent minority population, as a distinctive case that demanded British attention. The steady loss of territory in Europe (about a third of the empire), the result of wars and

diplomatic maneuvering, meant that the Ottoman Empire by the late nineteenth century ruled over fewer Christian and Jewish minorities than it had previously. Ethnic Turks, pushed from former European lands into Anatolia after the war, increased their majority in the Ottoman Empire's eastern provinces and were governed alongside the remaining minority populations.²⁵ Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians lived in mixed ethno-religious communities in Anatolia, or Asia Minor, which is the territory occupied by modern day Turkey. The six Armenian "villyets" located in the eastern part of the country close to the border with the Russian Empire contained large minority populations but also significant Muslim populations as well. In Britain, new organizations began to support civil and religious rights for Armenians, which remained an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. They included the Anglo-Armenian Association and the Friends of Armenia.²⁶

This activism made a once-reluctant British Empire a steward of Ottoman minority rights. The 1878 Treaty of Berlin had given Britain explicit charge to defend the rights of remaining minorities. Of Berlin's 66 articles, 11 dealt with minority civil and political rights. Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty codified Britain's leadership role regarding Christians, though offered little by means of enforcement. The same can be said of Article 44, which related to Jewish minorities. However, the Jewish question became part of a separate crisis specific to Romania which had been granted autonomy in the Treaty of Paris. Article 44 was read by some as a direct response to Romanian antisemitism and granted freedom of worship while prohibiting the use of religion as a ground for withholding for "any person" "the enjoyment of civil and political rights."

In the end, these "paper threats," in the words of Carole Fink, did little to benefit Christian or Jewish minorities.²⁷ Article 61, however, left an important legacy. It marked a watershed moment in the question of whether a state had the right to intervene in the internal affairs of another on humanitarian grounds. Despite its failure as a diplomatic tool to protect minorities, the Treaty of Berlin's 61st article formalized British responsibility in the eyes of the international community for the well-being of Ottoman Christians.

The Berlin Treaty, signed in July 1878, released a wave of sentiment in favor of humanitarian intervention. By the mid-1890s, a growing

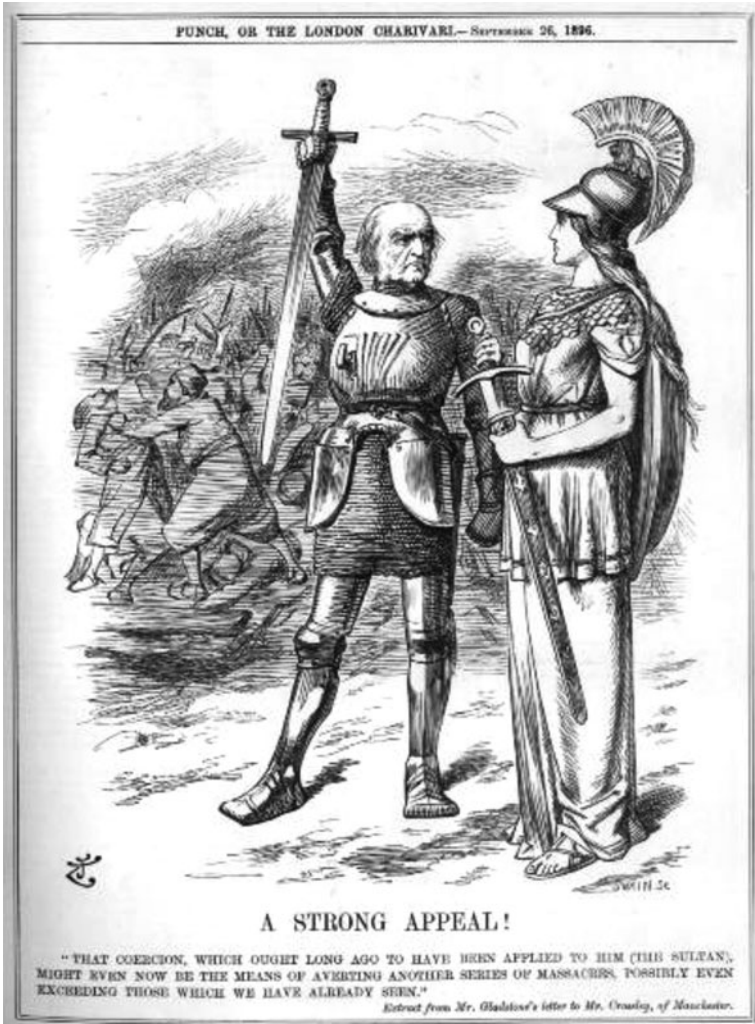


Figure 1.1 Gladstone and Britannia defending civilians from massacre. *Punch*, September 26, 1896.

pamphlet literature declared Armenia Britain's special "responsibility" and implored readers to support "our treaty obligations."²⁸ Article 61 inspired and gave legal foundation to calls for the British Empire to serve as enforcer. Orthodox Russia, too, claimed to defend Armenian interest as fellow co-religionists but had been forced to cede to Britain

this interest after the Great Powers forced the revision of the Treaty of San Stefano (March 1878) which preceded the Treaty of Berlin in the Russo-Turkish War settlement. The Berlin Treaty checked Russian territorial ambitions in the region while instituting for the first time in a treaty agreement the principle of international minority protection.²⁹ The campaign launched in Britain on behalf of Armenians over the ensuing decades derived its legitimacy from this agreement. During the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s, the press appealed to humanitarian sentiments to accept “responsibility” for stopping the “crime” of massacre.³⁰

The massacres at Adana in 1909, and later during the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, would further test this commitment and prompt influential members of the House of Commons to start the British Armenia Committee to lobby for the enforcement of Ottoman minority protections.³¹ By the time world war came to the Eastern Front, the British Empire was widely recognized as a legitimate and primary protector of minorities. Wartime massacres of Armenian civilians would inspire renewed calls by those who believed in Gladstone’s mission to honor this commitment.

The Ottoman Empire and the British Empire

Gladstone’s initial interest in Armenia came out of a religious and political fascination with the Near East, or the “Holy Land.” Armenia traced its history back to two of Christ’s Apostles, Thaddeus and Bartholomew, who founded the nation’s first church in the first century AD. Armenians declared themselves the first Christian nation in 301 AD. For Protestant Britain, Armenia’s orthodoxy and roots in ancient Christianity gave it status as an originary Christian church in both an historical and religious sense. In 1833, Gladstone took it upon himself to begin the study of the Armenian Church liturgy, or the mass performed in the Armenian Church. His early interest in the Christian Orthodox religion led him to maintain contact with members of the Armenian clergy throughout his lifetime. Gladstone scandalized his compatriots by kissing the ring of the Greek archbishop during an extended stay in Greece. Ultimately, Gladstone came to understand his relationship to Armenians in terms of a higher sense of duty. As the press quoted him as saying: “To serve Armenia is to serve civilization.”

For Britons who did not share Gladstone's fascination with the Orthodox Church or had scarcely heard of Armenians, more material interests guided the Armenian question. Imperial and economic concerns focused attention on the land and peoples of a region that separated Britain from its empire in India and Southeast Asia. In short, the geopolitics of empire inspired a curiosity about Armenia and its anomalous status within the Ottoman Empire as a region that could be useful to the British Empire. The Crimean War provided a turning point in this line of thinking. This first war in the Crimea, long before Russian leader Vladimir Putin focused his own designs on the region, pitted the British Empire alongside her European allies against Russia. The latter sought to formalize its influence over the Sublime Porte, the seat of Ottoman government in Constantinople. Called "the people's war" by *The Times*, it marked the first military conflict that had widespread coverage in the media.³² It also heated up what would prove a lasting rivalry with the Russian Empire, over the course of the nineteenth century, for predominance in the Balkans and Middle East.

The Crimean War captured the attention of the public while politicians and pundits asked how Britain could further secure its status as the reigning European power in the region. Most famous today for the role played by Florence Nightingale in aiding troops with her modern nurses' brigade, the war also had important repercussions for how Britain understood the Armenian question. After siding with the Ottoman Empire to curb Russian ambition in the region along with its French ally, Britain began to exercise increasing influence over internal Ottoman affairs by taking a forward role in negotiating the peace in Paris in 1856. The war would forever change how Britain understood what it began to call its "responsibility" to oppressed peoples living under Ottoman rule. In this way, the war codified Britain's claims to defend Ottoman minority rights over Russia and its European allies.

Why would Britain, which held dominion over vast territories all over the globe, extend its responsibility over a small group of Christian minorities who themselves were not subjects of the British Empire? By this time, war reporting and missionary activity had familiarized Britons with the Ottoman Empire, its geographical importance and the people who lived there. Closer ties seemed an inevitable outgrowth of British support for the Ottoman Empire after the war. Through the popular press the public learned about the region ruled by the

Ottomans that many had only known by reading the Bible. In this way, the peoples, in particular the Christian peoples, of the Ottoman Empire, along with their plight as second-class citizens, became increasingly familiar to the public. Gladstone had not yet established his hold over politics at the time of the war and did not have a direct hand in forging these connections at home. Ultimately, he only played a small role in determining the Crimean War's course and ultimately, its outcome. He nevertheless publicly supported proposed reforms to the status of Christian minorities, written into the Treaty of Paris, which added legitimacy to what Britons had learned about the people who Britain now pledged to defend in treaty agreements. Such provisions, due to their relatively vague enforcement mechanisms, remained relatively uncontroversial at home and enjoyed widespread support.

In the wake of Crimea, the Ottoman Empire became linked to the security of the British Empire. Stopping Russian ambition in Crimea meant that Britain's rival would not have access to the warm water port it sought in the Black Sea and would thus stall its commercial and geopolitical ambitions in the region. The press touted the benefits of capitalizing on the opportunity from this victory to build a railroad through the Euphrates region to join the Mediterranean with Persia as a "channel of commerce" that would reestablish important ties with the Near East after the Crimean war.³³ Improved communication lines would benefit commerce across the British Empire. The reputation of Armenians as shrewd merchants who shared a similar faith and lived in the Euphrates valley made them convenient allies in this project. The Euphrates Railroad route cut through the "heart of Asiatic Turkey, and touch(ed) close upon the confines of Persia," which would help facilitate both economic and cultural ties with the Ottoman Empire. Ultimately, this overland route would provide an efficient and important gateway to India and the most easterly reaches of Britain's Empire in the years before the opening of the Suez Canal.

Gladstone's invasion of Egypt in 1882 would later confirm the importance of this region to the British Empire. Although nominally under the control of the Ottoman Sultan, Egypt maintained an anomalous, semi-colonial relationship with Britain. The proposed overland route through territory inhabited by Christian minorities would take pressure off of concerns over the security of the Suez Canal and

offer an alternative route while allowing Britain to exercise greater control over the Sublime Porte after the Crimean War. The Suez Canal, which opened in 1869, ultimately proved the most operational trade route to India. But questions over the future success and security of the Suez Canal continued to fuel Britain's burgeoning interest in the Ottoman Empire and its peoples.

After the 1882 invasion, ostensibly to protect Suez as a British-controlled waterway, Egypt, too, fell more securely within the purview of the British Empire. Regardless, the British still helped finance the building of the Anatolian Railway, which connected Eastern parts of Asia Minor with Europe.³⁴ Invading Egypt was Gladstone's way of staving off European competition in the region and securing its own future. With over 80 per cent of the traffic through the Canal from British ships and investors, including Gladstone himself backing it financially, interest in securing this region using all means possible drove British foreign policy. By the end of the nineteenth century, a growing part of the Ottoman Empire, along with the people who lived there, had an undeniable connection with the British Empire, whether wanted or not.

Links with the Ottoman Empire in general, and Armenia in particular, were further strengthened by understandings of the region as the cradle of civilization and the birthplace of Christianity. Critics maintained that the end of the Crimean War offered a new opportunity for the West to reconnect with its ancient past in the East. "Since the 17th century there has been but little direct intercourse between the Orthodox East and the Protestant West," observed one journalist, "but the great events of the last few years, which have opened for England such a career in the East, cannot fail to bring the subject very prominently before every one." Anglicanism symbolically rejoined Eastern Orthodox Christianity in its birthplace in the Holy Land with the building of a memorial church at Constantinople to commemorate the war and unite Britain "with the members of the ancient churches of the East." The British built this Anglican Church as a war memorial. It was "assigned a conspicuous site upon the hills which crown the Bosphorus" and represented "a trophy of our heroism and our faith."³⁵ A monument to Christianity and victory over its Russian rival, the church promised to unite Orthodox peoples with Anglicanism in the Holy Land. The memorial church still exists today.

These symbols of unity reinforced a sense of common cause with minority Christians. In this line of thinking, forging more intimate connections with Ottoman Christians would bolster trade while effectively challenging Russia, cast as an “Asiatic invader,” in the Ottoman Empire. Influence over the Ottoman Empire, as a debate in Parliament during the Crimean War concluded, rested not in its Muslim rulers or Jewish minorities but in supporting the Ottoman Empire’s commercially minded Christian races living in Anatolia: “the system of the Porte, bad and corrupt as it may be in many ways, has yet been found compatible with the rise of a rich and increasing commerce. That commerce is almost exclusively in the hands of its Christian subjects.” Accordingly, “Their gradual improvement and amalgamation in the course of time” would offer both “the peaceful solution of a question, of which the very prospect has long perplexed the world” while securing British interests. The British also cast the Jews as having a proclivity towards trade during this time.³⁶ However, the predominance of Christian minorities, particularly along the rural trade routes that followed the proposed Anatolian Railway, singled out this population for attention. As the debate concluded, an alliance with Ottoman Christians would insure that “No one Power will be allowed to steal or to force a march on the capital of the East.”³⁷

The idea that Orthodox Christians were bound by geopolitical and cultural ties to the British Empire continued to animate thinking after the Crimean War. One journalist went as far as to claim a link between good business sense and religion: “It is strange that a nation like England, in whose inner life religion plays so important a part, should be slower than almost any of the Continental nations to recognize the all-important influence of the religion professed by a people upon its institutions and character.” Such intimacies translated into an alignment of British interests with the support of the emancipation of Christians: “No country ever thrives on the strength of natural resources without industry, knowledge, equal laws, respect for personal rights and security for property.” The unequal status of Armenians and other minorities, this source concluded, had stalled the development and modernization of the Ottoman Empire’s economy.³⁸ For some, engaging in a foreign policy that made the Ottoman government reform the legal and tax system to favor those mainly Christian minority populations carrying on trade in the cradle of civilization would serve the interests of both minorities and the British Empire.

Massacre in Bulgaria

This newly forged bond between Britons and Ottoman Christians raised an uncomfortable question: how would Britain respond to a crisis involving this group? Gladstone had an answer. The first test came not with the Armenians but another orthodox Christian minority, the Bulgarians, who lived in the western-most region of the Ottoman Empire until the Russo-Turkish War remade the region in the late 1870s. The slaughter of tens of thousands of civilians – as is often the case, exact numbers are not known – on the eve of the Russo-Turkish War inspired Gladstone's first humanitarian intervention.³⁹ It led to the accusation in the press that the Ottoman government was guilty of a "crime against humanity," one of the earliest known iterations of the term in print.⁴⁰

Gladstone dubbed it the "Bulgarian Atrocities." The episode would test Britain's purported commitment to defending minority rights in the Ottoman Empire. When the Conservative government then in power failed to act when news of the atrocities reached Britain in May 1876 through reports in the *Daily News*, Gladstone took on the cause as a calling. As he recalled toward the end of his life, "When, in 1876, the eastern question was forced forward by the disturbances in the Turkish empire, and especially by the cruel outrages in Bulgaria, I shrank naturally but perhaps unduly from recognizing the claim that they made upon me individually." He concluded: "I could no longer remain indifferent ... I made the eastern question the main business of my life."⁴¹

The Armenian question emerged after the Russo-Turkish War as a defining aspect of what came to popularly be known as the Eastern question. An old question rooted in Great Power politics dating back to turn of the previous century, it came to the fore in Britain during this period as a means of understanding the relationship between the British and Ottoman Empires. As previously discussed, this "question" had political, economic, imperial and religious dimensions that shaped Britain's relationship with eastern Orthodox Christians. The dramatic public response to the Bulgarian Atrocities raised the question of humanitarian intervention in the face of stalled Tanzimat reforms and the Crimean War settlement.⁴² The ineffectiveness of internal Ottoman reforms to protect minorities became evident when news of the Bulgarian crisis broke. The massacres, coupled with pledges to support

reform, now raised the specter of British culpability in the face of the unfolding crisis.⁴³

But Gladstone and his Liberal Party were out of power. Frustrated with what he considered an unacceptable delay on the part of the government in looking into the massacres, an investigation of the May massacres began in late July, he asked: "It is necessary to consider whether this government with its wretched organization was in real or only in official ignorance of the gravity of the case?" Information from a consular report from a British agent in the region, he further complained, was ignored by the government. After relating details from the suppressed report Gladstone concluded: "Such are some of the contents of the dispatch which, while England was kept in the dark on this vital matter, was calmly slumbering."⁴⁴ He decided to put pressure on the Conservatives and take his campaign to the public.

The Bulgarian Atrocities brought Gladstone out of retirement and put the Eastern question front and center. Gladstone by this time had established himself as a powerful leader and popular Prime Minister who had previously been trusted with the nation's finances as Chancellor of the Exchequer. When the Conservatives took power of parliament in the mid-1870s, Gladstone retired from politics to concentrate on his private affairs. The crisis brought him back into public life. "I acted under a strong sense of individual duty without a thought of leadership; nevertheless it made me again leader whether I would or no. The nation nobly responded to the call of justice, and recognized the brotherhood of man."⁴⁵ The Duke of Argyll agreed, commenting that the massacres in Bulgaria "have thrown us back on our rather forgotten humanity."⁴⁶

Gladstone quickly penned his "Bulgarian Horrors" pamphlet which "spread like fire," selling over 200,000 copies.⁴⁷ It not only chronicled the atrocities taking place against Bulgarians but made a convincing case for a foreign policy that acted to stop atrocity. Gladstone "entreat(ed) my countrymen" to pressure the government "to put a stop to the anarchical misrule" in Bulgaria. Though extremely popular, the inflammatory language opened him up to criticism by the press and other politicians (Figure 1.2). Conservative Prime Minister Disraeli denounced talk of massacres in Bulgaria as nothing more than "coffee house babble." The comment ultimately further fueled outrage and raised the profile of Gladstone's humanitarian mission.

Despite statements to the contrary by Gladstone and his supporters, it is hard to deny that this early iteration of the British Empire as a defender of human rights relied heavily on orientalist thinking. Muslims at times were portrayed as the enemy of liberalism during the campaign. As one critic charged, “no nationality is more hostile to Liberal ideas than the Turkish,” labeling Muslims “fanatical and intolerant.”⁴⁸ As Anthony Wohl has shown, anti-Semitism in the form of critiques of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli also simmered below the surface of the Bulgarian Atrocity agitation. Disraeli’s dismissal of the massacres as a matter of little importance opened him up to attacks that it was his identity as Jewish-born Briton – he was baptized into Christianity just before he turned 13 – that stood behind his defense of Ottoman aggression against Christian minorities. In Wohl’s assessment, the massacres unleashed “a militant, uncompromising liberalism” that undermined the humanitarian argument.⁴⁹

The universal posturing of paternalist protection, coupled with highly charged language that made enemies of those who did not support this positioning, is difficult to square with humanitarian idealism. Humanitarianism, as articulated in this period, was not a neutral or benign ideology of universalist altruism. Along with the impulse to defend the rights of others came the moralizing liberalism of the Victorian period that was influenced both by strident evangelicalism and orientalism.

The controversy over the massacres had an indelible effect on the debate over humanitarian intervention. The young Oscar Wilde was one of those influenced by the campaign. In May 1877, he sent Gladstone a sonnet he wrote entitled, “On the Recent Massacres of the Christians in Bulgaria.” “Sir,” Wilde wrote, “Your noble and impassioned protests, both written and spoken against the massacres of the Christians of Bulgaria has so roused my ear that I venture to send you a sonnet which I have written on the subject.” Calling himself “little more than a boy” without connections in London he asked if Gladstone could help him publish the sonnet in a prominent periodical. Whether sincere in his feeling of outrage or not, Wilde clearly sensed the opportunity that the Bulgarian Atrocities represented to an aspiring writer. “I feel sure that you can appreciate the very great longing that one has when young to have words of one’s own published for men to read.” Pledging his “deepest admiration,” Wilde echoed Gladstone’s own fervent tone in his sonnet:

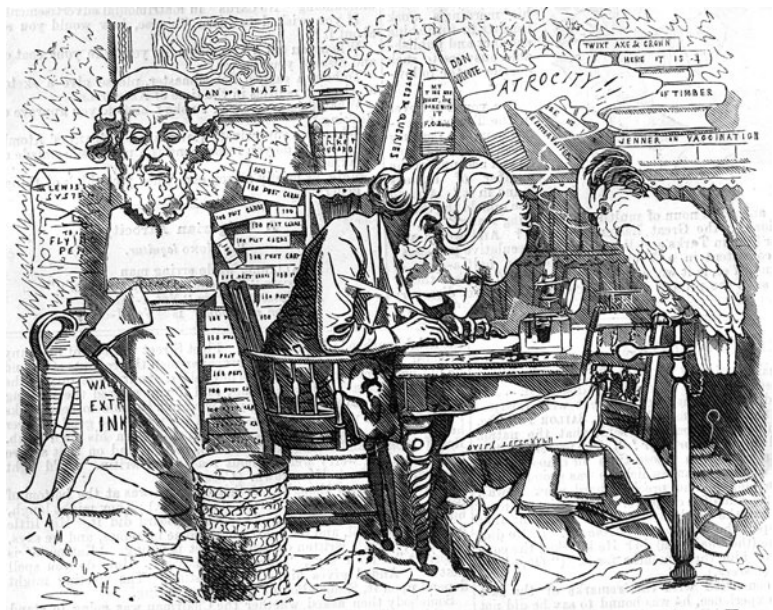


Figure 1.2 Parody of Gladstone's advocacy work on behalf of Bulgaria. *Punch*, February 24, 1877.

For here the air is horrid with men's groans,
 The priests who call upon thy name are slain,
 Dost thou not hear the bitter wail of pain
 From those whose children lie upon the stones?
 Come down, O Son of God! Incestuous gloom
 Curtains the land, and through the starless night
 Over thy Cross a Crescent moon I see!⁵⁰

Though it does not appear that Gladstone helped Wilde publish his sonnet, it eventually appeared in 1881 as part of Wilde's collection, *Poems*. A plea to help those who suffered due to religious persecution, the sonnet can be read as making the case for intervention, divine or otherwise.⁵¹

Then foreign secretary Lord Derby understood the stakes involved in resolving the Bulgarian issue; first in terms of British commitments in the Ottoman Empire, and also with managing public opinion. "The eternal Eastern question is before use again," he declared on the eve of

the crisis at a Conservative working men's organization in Edinburgh in December 1875, "and I for one have no idea that the year 1876 will see it finally settled."⁵² The Conservative government's purchase of Suez shares the previous month, coupled with word of a revolt by Bulgarian nationalists that precipitated the massacres, put the Conservatives in a tough spot.

A little more than six months after his Edinburgh speech, Derby received a series of deputations from concerned workers, city officials, and prominent citizens about Bulgaria. What, they asked, would the government do to stop the slaughter and protect British interests? Derby was called upon to sooth worries over Suez and moral consciences in light of Disraeli's derisive dismissal of the atrocities as little more than "babble." Derby told the crowd what it wanted hear: "Equal treatment to Mahommedan and Christian; better administration for both; security for life and property; effectual guarantees against a repetition of such outrages . . . these are practical objects and for these objects we shall labour." Britain, he repeated in response to the well over 400 petitions he received by December, would honor its historic pledges to protect Ottoman Christians.⁵³

Not surprisingly, Derby's promises did not convince Gladstone. But what did he want? Gladstone laid out his demands in a letter to the British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Austen Henry Layard:

My first desire is a liberation of the [distressed] provinces from a tyranny which I am convinced no self-reform will ever cure. My second to secure for these provinces themselves and not for Russia, not for Austria, whatever it may be requisite to take from the Turks. My third to retain if possible the territorial integrity of the Porte and to see it restored to the independence it has certainly lost, with direct rule in such provinces as it may be capable of governing in a tolerable manner. I have a very strong conviction that the people of England – not the classes least of all the upper class – wish for and mean to have this at least. I may be wrong; but my successes of judgment has not been inconsiderable.⁵⁴

While support for the "liberation" of the provinces in question could only go so far – Bulgaria only received nominal independence under the

Treaty of Berlin – Gladstone was right about one thing. His constituents wanted Britain to offer moral and diplomatic leadership on the issue.⁵⁵

Victorian liberals made the Bulgarian cause their own. The Eastern Question Association began as an advocacy organization. Formed in 1876 “for the purpose of watching events in the East, giving expression to public opinion and spreading useful information” the Association boasted a list of distinguished members, including as president the Duke of Westminster, and as vice president the Earl of Shaftesbury. It published a series of twelve pamphlets written by politicians, women’s rights activists and churchmen which appeared together in a lengthy volume in 1877.⁵⁶ This work intended to influence the outcome of the Treaty of Berlin negotiations and its provisions to protect minorities. Public meetings had a similar function. A meeting was held at St. James’ Hall in December 1876 to reinforce the mass appeal of the claim that the British Empire had an obligation to defend Ottoman Christians. The more than 1,000 delegates came from across the nation to discuss the “responsibilities of Europe and England . . . to the Eastern question.” Delegates included prominent liberal statesmen who vowed to uphold British interests by supporting a system that would insure the implementation of minority reform provisions in the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁷

The Bulgarian Atrocities agitation thus cast the Eastern question as a wider foreign policy and humanitarian concern. The Eastern Question Association did not dwell on the Bulgarian case and instead used its advocacy work to familiarize readers with the “races, religions and institutions” of the Ottoman Empire that Britain pledged to defend. The Association continued into the early twentieth century much along these same lines as a “non-partisan and non-governmental” organization. This did not stop the president in his annual address in 1910 from using highly charged language to explain the Association’s mission: to help the “various peoples of the East of Europe in resisting the oppression of a sanguinary tyrant.”⁵⁸ The Eastern question, and the Armenians in particular, remained on the minds of Victorians due largely to the efforts of Liberals, religious Nonconformists and liberal journalists who argued for a radical Christian version of humanitarian diplomacy.⁵⁹

The end of the Russo-Turkish War and the ensuing Congress of Berlin in 1878 offered an opportunity for Gladstone to further crystalize his moral foreign policy. Some in the press doubted that the conference, where Britain was represented by members of Disraeli’s ruling

Conservative Party, would yield positive results. Though the end of the war had cooled what one popular paper called “the martial ardour of Russia,” “every scheme for maintaining peace may be shattered against the pride and obstinacy of the Porte.”⁶⁰ With the weight of public opinion behind him Gladstone critiqued Britain’s role in the peace negotiations from the sidelines and questioned the judgement of the British delegation. He did this without making political speeches. Instead, he used the power of his pen and worked behind the scenes. As he wrote to Liberal politician Hugh Mason, “I have attended no purely political demonstrations: all of my steps have been taken in this line with reference to the Eastern question, and I am at this time not prepared to say that I ought to attempt any public address on that subject while for many reasons I cannot undertake any others.”⁶¹

Gladstone’s moral outrage continued to build. He remained dissatisfied with what he labeled a “mismanaged” settlement of the war on the part of the British delegation to Berlin and the European Powers.⁶² “The war in Turkey is entirely the work of the Six Powers,” he maintained. “They have sacrificed [honour], decency, humanity in order to pursue peace and they have caused war.”⁶³ Now it would be up to the Liberals to show another way forward.

Midlothian: On the Campaign Trail

Gladstone set out to craft his own humanitarian foreign policy. In the wake of the Bulgarian Atrocities agitation his popularity soared, confirming his reputation as the “people’s William.” Gladstone decided to run again for office. He would contest Midlothian, a region with a reliable Liberal Scottish electorate where Gladstone had strong support. The year before he launched his bid for Midlothian he stepped out of the limelight and made few political speeches. When he did comment on government affairs he focused on fiscal questions and waxed patriotic about British global power.⁶⁴ The campaign leading up to the 1880 election provided Gladstone the opportunity not just to return to power but to do so on a wave of popular sentiment against what he characterized as a dishonorable policy toward suffering Ottoman subjects.

As it turns out, he loved the campaign trail. Gladstone had never had a real contest, always occupying ‘safe’ seats where Liberals had little chance of losing an election. Strategic considerations informed his

decision to sit for Midlothian. He worried that the precarious state of the Liberal party might cost him his old seat at Greenwich. Midlothian, he was reassured, was still a solidly Liberal constituency which he could win cheaply. Gladstone wanted to be sure and took the unprecedented move of taking his campaign to the public in a series of high profile events where he made four long, substantive policy speeches. In the wake of his protests against the Russo-Turkish War and his agitation on behalf of the Bulgarians, Gladstone believed he could capitalize on the popular distrust of the Tories' handling of foreign policy. As one journalist understood Gladstone's objective in Midlothian: "The avowed object of this extraordinary crusade was to impeach the Ministry [Conservative party] before the Scotch nation."⁶⁵

Crowds welcomed him with what he called a "kind of idolizing sentiment among the people such as I have never before experienced."⁶⁶ He gave speeches at railway stations, in public meeting halls, mercantile exchanges and almost anywhere a platform presented itself. Greeted with "fireworks and torches" on his procession to Scotland he confessed in his diary that he had "never gone through a more extraordinary day."⁶⁷ His friend and supporter Lord Rosebery served as a sort of campaign manager who helped him craft his message to the Midlothian audiences on the bankruptcy of Conservative foreign policy in the East. Top on his list was a critique of the Anglo-Turkish Convention which gave Cyprus to Britain in June 1878 and the responsibility for reforms in Armenia and Asia Minor. In Scotland, according to one historians, he appeared "unmuzzled . . . once he began to speak it proved notoriously difficult for him to stop."⁶⁸

The Midlothian campaign has been called "the most famous political crusade of modern times."⁶⁹ It certainly made a difference in terms of reforming Britain's imperial mission and turning the tide of Conservative dominance in Parliament. Calling the Conservatives "imperialists" he praised the work of the British Empire in maintaining peace abroad and defending Christendom from its enemies. In essence, Gladstone felt free to "laud the empire whilst denouncing imperialism."⁷⁰ These campaigns, like the Bulgarian agitation, appealed to the masses and built a momentum that carried a once beleaguered Liberal Party to power in 1880 and reinstalled Gladstone as its leader.

Gladstone's campaign did more than win the Liberals an election. Midlothian, according to historians, created a "charismatic and rational"

political culture that promoted the concept of the “active citizen” especially when it came to foreign policy. Gladstone himself cast the campaign as a “battle of justice humanity freedom law, all in their first elements from the very root and all on a gigantic scale.”⁷¹ As Gladstone put it on the campaign trail in a speech at the Edinburgh Corn Exchange, “The country has a constitutional right to be consulted with all possible speed on its assent to, or dissent from, the measures which have removed it far from the position in which it stood when this Parliament was elected.” He argued for transparency and complained that the Conservatives failed to make timely disclosures to the people, offering information only when it proved a “Convenience to itself.”⁷²

Gladstone forcefully accused the government of hiding important truths about foreign policy from its constituents. He railed against the signing of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, which came out of the Russo-Turkish War peace negotiations, on account that it extended the British Empire’s reach in an unsustainable way. The taking over of Cyprus, for example, was communicated to the country only after it became “practically irreversible.” The British Empire, he claimed, should promote the ideals of self-determination. According to one journalist, “No more enthusiastic cheers saluted any of Mr Gladstone’s statements than his generous claim that, when the Ottoman Empire shall be finally dissolved, its ‘succession should pass, not to Russia, not to Austria, not to England, under the name of Anglo-Turkish Convention, or whatever else it may be called, but to the peoples of those countries.’” The Conservatives, according to Gladstone, proposed a more insidious vision of “Imperium et libertas” which he translated in a speech at West Calder as “Liberty for ourselves; empire over the rest of mankind.”⁷³ This Conservative vision, according to critics, “weakened the Empire” and Britain because it did not pursue “legislative activity and financial honesty” that would “consolidate the Empire exactly in the same proportion in which they secure the happiness and prosperity of the British nation.”⁷⁴

At the same time, Gladstone understood the role of empire as active, not passive. The British Empire, in the wake of Bulgaria, had a moral obligation to speak out against oppression. “Human strength and human thought,” he proclaimed in his first Midlothian speech delivered in the Music Hall in George Street, Edinburgh, “are not equal to the ordinary discharge of the calls and duties appertaining to the

Government in this great, wonderful, and world-wide Empire.”⁷⁵ Midlothian set out several key foreign policy principles. *Fraser’s Magazine* summed them up for its readers: “the strength of the British Empire should be fostered by just legislation, and by economy at home; that its aim should be to present the nations of the world the blessings of peace; that the concert of Europe should be cultivated, and the Powers of Europe kept together; that Great Britain should avoid needless and wrangling engagements; that the equal rights of all nations must be acknowledged, and that the foreign policy of Great Britain should always be inspired by the love of freedom.”⁷⁶

In this lofty vision Gladstone asked the British nation to honor its obligation to humanity. His vision necessarily was a capacious one. This new people’s foreign policy included women, who, though they did not have the right to vote, had a role to play in spreading British values abroad. His second Midlothian speech directly addressed the women in the audience. “I speak to you, ladies, as women; and I do think and feel that the present political crisis has to do not only with human interests at large, but especially with those interests which are most appropriate, and ought to be most dear, to you.” Gladstone asked his women listeners to help him promote the cause of “Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform” in helping resolve Britain’s foreign entanglements. Seeking women’s help in opposing what he called Turkish misrule in Europe and Asia, he took a traditional Victorian view of women’s role as keepers of the values of hearth and home. He spoke to the women in the audience as representatives of a special core of humanity who would morally sway the electorate and, more importantly promote “justice” and “mitigate the sorrows and misfortunes of mankind.”⁷⁷

But this sense of moral obligation to keep the peace and promote justice only went so far. “My view of the matter is, that the promotion of good government among and for a people is a great and noble, and arduous work, that taxes all their energies,” he proclaimed to his constituents at a railway station in Aberfeldy. Claiming that the British Empire “will never shrink from these duties,” he nevertheless warned his audience that, “we are in danger of falling into a condition in which we shall be conspicuous for the neglect of our own affairs, and in which all the reasonable wants and wishes we entertain for the improvement of our laws and institutions will remain entirely unfulfilled.” To serve humanity meant first attending to the domestic interests of the nation.

He promised that he would not make Britain “the teacher and the instructor of every nation and the world.”⁷⁸ To laughter and jeers, Gladstone asserted, upon departing from Perth, that the Treaty of Berlin would oblige Britain to police all of Asia Minor: “The whole of those vast countries are placed under our responsibility . . . You, at a distance of three thousand miles have undertaken to send your fleets and armies to that country to meet Russia on her own borders, and to repel her from the Turkish territory.” Britain could not sustain such commitments under the present system.

In the end, the Treaty of Berlin and the Anglo-Turkish Convention expressed laudable principles but risked getting Britain involved in unwanted wars. These agreements also had the potential to become bad business for the nation and the empire due to the unsustainable obligations placed on the British economy. Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty gave Britain responsibility for the well-being of the Ottoman Empire’s Christian minorities against Russia. Britain’s foreign policy dilemma hinged on what concrete action it would take to enforce these new obligations. Political observers agreed. The Treaty exacerbated the problem first raised during the Bulgarian Atrocities agitation. How do you defend principles of freedom, humanity and democracy without military force?:

The engagement comprises a pledge to defend Armenia against Russia. To discharge these pledges British troops have their choice of evils. They must march over hundreds of miles of land and a great mountain chain, or be transported thousands of miles by sea with the task of effecting a landing on hostile territory at the end. In Central Asia, England is committed to the coercion of millions of warlike barbarians in the country which the British mission ‘has broken into pieces, and added to the anarchies of the Western world.’⁷⁹

The Midlothian campaign opened a debate over where and how British resources should be used when it came to humanitarian intervention. In his speeches, Gladstone expertly enumerated “all the fresh burdens accumulated on the back of a pre-existing obligation to ‘settle the affairs of nearly a fourth of the entire human race scattered over the world.’” The effect was a clever and scathing critique of Conservative inaction

that in the end only raised further questions regarding, “how the added load is to be borne.”⁸⁰

For Gladstone, while Armenians needed Britain’s sympathy it was unsustainable to pledge “to defend the frontier of Armenia against the Russian arms.”⁸¹ At the same time, Britain had an obligation to do something to “inspire the love of freedom.” Promoting self-government while stopping short of sending in troops was one way forward. This, he believed, was happening in the Balkans after the Bulgarian crisis. Bulgarians were now “beginning to enjoy the commencement of liberty” in the semiautonomous regions set up for Ottoman minorities by the Treaty which included “Four or five million Roumanians (sic) Two million Servians (sic) . . . three hundred thousand . . . men of Montenegro and Bulgaria” which was granted “virtual independence.” This “progress” Gladstone attributed to a natural process where subject peoples would begin to demand freedom and then win it for themselves. Britain would promote this march toward freedom from the sidelines using moral pressure instead of military might.⁸² In short, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer understood prudence and economy as key in the affairs of empire. This was foreign policy on the cheap. The empire “inspired by the love of freedom” would serve domestic interests by motivating action without ever needing to fire a shot.

Conclusion

Gladstone’s belief that the British Empire had a role in promoting liberty on behalf of a larger humanity appears problematic from the perspective of the twentieth-first century, to say the least. Britain’s responsibility to spread freedom and self-determination in the Ottoman Empire did not necessarily extend to the subjects of its own empire. For indigenous peoples living under British rule in Queen Victoria’s ever-expanding empire, these were not values that British rule brought to territories in Asia, the South Pacific and Africa. Gladstone’s imperial liberal ideal shaped modern ways of thinking about a humanitarian foreign policy that mobilized public outrage in the name of stopping atrocity for particular populations.

But as this contradictory vision of an empire of liberty suggests, the advancement of peace in the name of humanity required more than soaring rhetoric and pledges to promote self-determination among

oppressed peoples. Advocating the ideals of freedom and liberty abroad remained deeply embedded in domestic economic and political agendas. Those inspired by this vision after Midlothian rose up in outrage over massacres in the Ottoman Empire. They asked the government to do something to aid the distant strangers whose plight had inspired the Bulgarian Atrocities campaign.

Today, historians see the demise of the Ottoman Empire from external and internal forces as one of the causes behind nineteenth-century massacres and eventually the Armenian Genocide.⁸³ In Britain, the view that a failed minority policy undermined the viability of the Ottoman Empire first took hold during the Bulgarian crisis. This view persisted. Writing in the 1930s, historian R.W. Seton-Watson credited Gladstone's moralizing foreign policy with putting added pressure on a declining empire: "While then Disraeli clung to the very last to his illusions on Turkey and identified British interests with the artificial maintenance of a decadent state, Gladstone saw that the future lay with the nations whom Ottoman tyranny had so long submerged."⁸⁴

Gladstone successfully marshaled public sentiment against Conservative policy by publicizing Ottoman war crimes and condemning what Seton-Watson called "Ottoman tyranny." The eventual demise of the Disraeli government in the wake of the controversy which helped usher in the Liberal landslide in the 1880 election challenged over a generation of pro-Ottoman policy.⁸⁵ Whether it did anything to help minorities is less clear. In the end, voting for the Liberal Party failed to give Gladstone's peoples' foreign policy stronger shape. As the next chapter shows, Conservatives, too, had developed their own vision of how to promote humanitarian values abroad.

CHAPTER 2

THE NEW DIPLOMACY

“Humanitarian politicians do not always look before they leap.”
– Benjamin Disraeli, 1876¹

Prime Minister Disraeli had little patience for Gladstone’s humanitarian foreign policy. Before his Conservative party was roundly defeated in the 1880 election, the Earl of Beaconsfield offered a pragmatic approach to preventing massacre. His government had signed the Treaty of Berlin which extended Britain’s responsibility for the protection of Christian minorities by promoting what the press reported as “the reform of the administration of Armenia.”² The “coffee house babble” of atrocity talk about Bulgaria, he held, would not promote administrative reform or improve Britain’s diplomatic standing in the Ottoman Empire. Disraeli believed that through exercising informal influence over the Sultan, positive changes to the treatment of minorities would follow. His administration sought first to improve diplomatic relations with the head of Ottoman government at the Sublime Porte. In 1877, he sent Austen Henry Layard (1817–94) to Constantinople with hopes that his reputed ties with Ottoman officials would quiet the controversy over the Bulgarian Atrocities through careful and prudent diplomacy.³

But Gladstone’s condemnation of the government’s bungling of the Bulgarian affair was still fresh on the mind of the public when Layard’s appointment came through. Part of the obligation of empire, Gladstone argued in his “Bulgarian Horrors” pamphlet, was to defend British interests by advocating on behalf of persecuted minorities in the Empire’s informal sphere of influence. The Midlothian

campaign later secured the idea for the Liberal electorate that foreign policy needed to take humanitarian issues into account. Conservatives, while believing that Britain had an important role to play in Ottoman internal affairs, disagreed with Gladstone's approach and instead pursued traditional diplomatic means. Out of this debate emerged a new brand of diplomacy around the Armenian question that tested the limits of humanitarian intervention.

The elevation of Layard, an adventurer turned politician, to top diplomat in Constantinople worried Gladstone who believed that old-style wait-and-see diplomacy would not advance British interests and stature abroad. Layard, he maintained, had little authority and even less ability to promote political and legal reform in the Ottoman Empire, a cause that Gladstone argued should be a centerpiece of diplomatic dealings. He registered his dismay in a letter submitted to the House of Commons upon hearing of Layard's appointment as Ambassador: "What is to be the consequence to civilization and humanity if British interests are to be the rule for British agents all over the world, and are to be for them the measure of right or wrong?"⁴ Nothing less than "civilization and humanity" hung in the balance now that Britain and its Empire had pledged to support the ambitions of Ottoman Christian minorities for equal treatment and even, possibly, autonomy. These duelling worldviews shaped the public and private response to massacre and atrocity in the Ottoman Empire from the 1870s up through World War I and the Armenian Genocide.

The integration of humanitarianism with foreign policy was entrusted to a new generation of Victorian diplomat. These men believed that representing British interests abroad required, in part, engaging the needs of the communities in which they lived. Gladstone immediately wrote to Layard after his position was confirmed about the duties of Britain's top diplomat, calling it a "matter of honour and duty" to seek the "liberation of the distressed provinces from tyranny" by making the Ottoman Empire reform how it ruled its non-Muslim subjects.⁵ Layard responded by trying to reassure Gladstone that, though they might differ on how to secure protection for Ottoman subjects, "our object is the same – to obtain for the Turkish Empire just and good government."⁶ What they disagreed on was the question of how such an intervention was to be achieved.

The steady expansion of Britain's imperial footprint in the Near East after the end of Crimean War in 1856 made it possible to test what exactly humanitarian diplomacy entailed. Fresh from a diplomatic victory over its Russian rival in Crimea, Britain dramatically expanded the civil service in the Ottoman Empire. In addition to the Ambassador's residence in Constantinople, a network of 62 consular outposts in the Ottoman Empire grew in the 1860s as part of a highly specialized and relatively well-trained Levant Consular Service. It employed around 350 consuls, vice consuls and Consul Generals, many of whom brought wives and children to join to them.⁷ Philanthropists and missionaries eager to assist with the humanitarian crisis also settled in the region during this period.⁸ Victorian diplomats, civil servants and aid workers resided for many years in the urban and rural centers of the Ottoman Empire, serving in both official and unofficial capacities that included writing, political advocacy and humanitarian activities.⁹ These new residents did not necessarily see themselves as agents of empire, supporting British imperial might abroad. Rather, they supported philanthropic initiatives and the spread of humanitarian values which evolved as a necessary, if not always official, part of their duties.

Ideals did not always match realities on the ground. Interference in Ottoman affairs emerged as an amalgam of makeshift initiatives that resulted in a relatively uncoordinated response to humanitarian crisis. The public, no longer ignorant of the crime of massacre due to well-publicized media campaigns and the work of investigative journalists, now implored their leaders to "do something." Many responded by offering aid to victims and setting up relief funds. The official government response, on the other hand, followed the conservative line and focused on behind the scenes diplomacy. In the end, the extended reach of Britain's imperial influence in the East, both formal and informal, created both new opportunities and greater obligations.

Layard and his circle of fellow diplomats, philanthropists and civil servants brought with them an elevated sense of Britain's mission to quietly and slowly reform politics and civic life in the region. Their presence and approach to how to respond to atrocity against Armenians and other minorities deeply affected many of the communities in which they lived. In the provinces and cities of the Ottoman Empire where the British presence expanded over the course of the late nineteenth century,

they exercised new found power as stewards of minority policy. Taken together, the experiences of those who represented Britain's interests in the Ottoman Empire after the Crimean War offer a from-the-ground view of the principles, practices and ideals that would determine the response to war and genocide in the early twentieth century.

Conservative Visions

The Bulgarian Atrocities controversy and the subsequent Russo-Turkish War put a spotlight on British power at the Sublime Porte. Britain's Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire found himself at the center of a humanitarian aid network that facilitated the distribution of hundreds of thousands of pounds donated for relief work by the public. Sir Henry Layard, as he came to be known, served as Ambassador from 1877 to 1881 and played a crucial role in mediating British diplomatic and humanitarian priorities in the region.

Layard's interest in the Ottoman Empire came not from an interest in Orthodox religion, as it had for Gladstone, but from reading *Arabian Nights* as a child. From a Huguenot family, he was educated in Florence, France and Geneva mainly due to his father's search for a cure for his asthma away from the damp English climate. He finished his formal education in England and entered his uncle's solicitor's office in London in 1834, a job he quickly came to loathe. Eager to escape the drudgery of work as a clerk, he took an overland journey to Ceylon (modern-day Sri Lanka) with an acquaintance to join an uncle who believed life as a barrister in the colonies might suit Layard better.

Traveling through the Ottoman Empire fed Layard's romantic understanding of the Near East as a land of adventure and opportunity. He was made keenly aware of the privileges afforded to men like him. "All European strangers are supposed to be consuls," he observed, and took immediate advantage of his newly elevated status.¹⁰ Twenty-two years old and eager to make a name for himself, Layard traversed the continent with relative ease, picking up Persian and Arabic language along the way. He quickly abandoned plans to work as a colonial barrister and decided to make the Near East his career instead. Facilitating a connection with the Royal Geographic Society he explored "a new route through Asia Minor" in order "to visit parts of it which had hitherto not been explored by previous travelers." Mapping

western lands of the Ottoman Empire became his new calling. He recorded his experiences, “carefully mapping” his route, which enabled him “to lay down a fairly trustworthy map of the country through which we journeyed and which I afterwards sent, with a memoir to the Royal Geographic Society.”¹¹ These efforts, along with his work “correcting” the map of Montenegro, earned him the gold medal from the society in 1849.

Layard believed the Ottoman Empire the ideal place to build his reputation as a gentleman adventurer and, later, politician and diplomat. In the mid-1840s, thanks to the patronage of then-British Ambassador Stratford Canning, he began excavation work near Mosul, where he laid claims on the Assyrian treasures that today reside in the British Museum. He waited for years in the hopes of obtaining a post with the help of Canning. However, success did not come easily for this ambitious, untitled opportunist who waited for years to secure an official post. The connection with Canning, coupled with the popular success of his series of books on Nineveh, ultimately resulted in his appointment by Lord Palmerston as a paid attaché in the late 1840s. Believing his reputation secure thanks to his burgeoning reputation as “discoverer” of Nineveh, he went back to England and entered Parliament as a Liberal for Aylesbury (1852–7) just as his book, *Nineveh and Babylon*, was due to be published. Celebrity was not enough to sustain his stature. Layard’s time as MP ended after he launched a campaign in Parliament against what he called the maladministration of the Crimean War.¹²

Eventually, Layard returned to Parliament in 1860 as representative for Southwark and later served as Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Personal financial ties opened him to criticism that he cast “scorn and contumely” on the plight of minorities while advocating a “profitable investment of capital” in a “mild and beneficent” Ottoman government.¹³ He left England to take up a post in Madrid in 1869 and in 1877 was selected as Disraeli’s Ambassador at Constantinople. Dubbed the “first Liberal Imperialist” by his biographer, he believed Britain should “maintain the Turkish Empire in its present state until the Christian population may be ready to succeed the Mussulman (sic).”¹⁴ “My conviction,” Layard declared, “is that it is possible to do so, and that this policy is the only hope of a favourable solution to the Eastern question.”¹⁵ As a Huguenot he was encouraged by the growth of Protestantism among peoples of Turkey, notably the Armenians and

Greeks, and hoped “that ere long this religious movement will bring about a political one and that we shall [see] the Protestant Christians of this country hold a very high and honourable position.”¹⁶

Intervening to destabilize the current Ottoman regime, Layard maintained, would only make things worse for minorities. The British instead should lead by example. After a tour of India in the wake of the 1857 Mutiny, Layard asserted: “Are we to hold the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other? If so what can we say to the Turks and other nations who would oppress Christians?”¹⁷ The answer was to bring “good government” to India by replacing the East India Company as a governing body with more direct British administration.¹⁸ In the case of the Ottoman Empire, Layard believed the popular agitation against the Bulgarian Atrocities, which he called one of England’s “periodic lunacies,” undermined imperial aims.¹⁹ After reading “The Bulgarian Horrors” he wrote to a friend, “you cannot drive three million Turks out of Europe into starvation and hopeless misery. The wild humanitarian cry about Turkey will lead to serious mischief. It is grievous to see a man like Gladstone turned into a mere vulgar pamphleteer.”²⁰ Layard, in a direct rebuke to the former Prime Minister, made public his disdain for Gladstone’s campaign in an article in *Quarterly Review* where he argued that the Ottoman Empire should collapse of its own accord rather than be driven to extinction by military might or condemned by public opinion.

Well before Layard took his post as Ambassador at Constantinople in March of 1877, he began efforts to exert British influence over the Ottoman Empire. In 1856, he helped establish the European-modelled Ottoman Bank in order to develop the “material resources” of the Ottoman Empire, and served as its first chairman.²¹ He also supported philanthropic projects: “I was anxious to promote the establishment of schools amongst the indigent Christian and Jewish populations of the Turkish capital – a matter with which Lady Canning took a very lively interest. We were able to open some schools in the poorest quarters of the city, and eventually one was founded for the education of children of the better classes without distinction of faith, it being meant for Christians and Mohammedans alike.” Such projects, he believed, would curry favour with the Sultan who later supported these schools as a patron.

Layard also backed institutions focused on educating Christian minorities such as the American missionary-run Robert College. In these

schools, students “acquired their knowledge of the institutions, laws, and customs of civilized countries and those principles of political freedom.” For Layard, the spread of liberal democratic institutions and values was in part responsible for helping forge an independent Bulgaria after the Russo-Turkish War and what he called “the independence of the Bulgarian race.”²² The continued exposure of liberal values to the top levels of government and Anglo-centric education, an idea that did not stray far from Gladstone’s Midlothian vision, would result in the inevitable transition of the Ottoman Empire from despotism to democracy.

Education, however, was not enough. Layard believed that “personal influence” would smooth the path to internal reform in Ottoman administration particularly when it came to the protection of minorities. In discussing his tenure at Constantinople in an interview in the *Contemporary Review*, Layard emphasized “how exceedingly important it is for the English representative at Constantinople to maintain a personal influence over the Sultan.”²³ Here he followed the example of Canning, who attempted to resolve the grievances of Christian and Muslim subjects alike by appealing to the Sultan. “So often can influence, well acquired and well directed, be exercised in the great cause of humanity, without distinction of persons or of creeds!” Layard declared. “This is but one of the many instances in which Sir Stratford Canning has added to the best renown of the British name.”²⁴

The Bulgarian Atrocities revealed the limits of Layard’s embrace of humanitarian diplomacy in practice. In a September 1876 letter to Lord Derby, he chronicled a long list of interventions by British officials on behalf of both Muslim and Christian subjects. In another to Canning, now Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, he called for punishment for those who perpetrated the atrocities, while at the same time urging that the government “approach the Turkish question in a wise, moderate and statesmanlike spirit and not with passion and exaggerated sentiment.” Nothing, however, was done to help mitigate the Bulgarian crisis and stop the ensuing Russo-Turkish War. He defended his refusal to take decisive action: “A false step on the part of England at the crisis might be irretrievable and might be even fateful to the future of this country.”²⁵ By that time, all Layard could do was watch as the drama of a war that some blamed him for doing little to help avoid unfolded.

Philanthropic Diplomacy

After the Russo-Turkish War ended, Britain made its presence at the Sublime Porte more strongly felt. But even before the signing of the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 codified British supervisory powers, the Ambassador had surrounded himself with those who believed that Britain had a legitimate role in Ottoman internal affairs, particularly when it came to the issue of protecting religious minorities.²⁶ One such person was Emily Anne Beaufort (1826–87). She had married Percy Ellen Algernon Frederick William Sydney Smythe, later the eighth Viscount Strangford (1825–69), after discovering their shared interest in Ottoman culture and politics.²⁷ Her husband's sudden death from a brain haemorrhage and the absence of an heir left her free to pursue philanthropic projects while giving her access to his income and control over her own sizable fortune²⁸ (Figure 2.1).

The Bulgarian Atrocities proved the perfect opportunity for Lady Strangford's ambition. Strangford enrolled in a four year nurses' training course in England, which led to a career as patron and humanitarian aid worker. In 1874, she published *Hospital Training for Ladies* and waited for a call to use her new-found skills and personal resources. She opened a relief fund to help destitute Bulgarians after a short stint with the St. John's Eastern War Sick and Wounded Fund. As atrocity reports began to filter back to England, she started the Bulgarian Peasants Relief fund, pledging to raise £10,000 to build houses for the homeless and provide emergency relief. Internecine conflicts complicated relief efforts, so Strangford decided to go to Bulgaria to administer the aid herself.

What is perhaps most remarkable about Lady Strangford is that she represented only one of many who responded to the humanitarian crisis with promises of aid. Almost a dozen large and small aid organizations raised over £250,000 by the end of the Russo-Turkish War.²⁹ These organizations necessarily relied on the help of civil servants, administrators and diplomats working in the region. Titled philanthropists like Lady Strangford had the advantage. Her connection with the official bureaucracy through her late husband, including the Ambassador's residence in Constantinople, meant that she had access to a network of goods and services that facilitated her projects and made them well-known at home. By the time her fund wound up in the late 1870s, she and her four English doctors and eight English nurses had established six village hospitals. In addition, a flour mill, five sawmills



VISCOUNTESS STRANGFORD
Die! March 24, 1887

Figure 2.1 Portrait of Lady Strangford. *The Graphic*, April 9, 1887.

and numerous local workers provided materials for a relief scheme that included food aid, housing and tens of thousands of items of clothing and blankets.³⁰ One former president of a bank closed by the government after the insurrection began a new career working as a tailor in a village several hours walk away where he and his 13 employees filled Lady Strangford's orders.³¹

The impression lent by Lady Strangford's diary that she kept during the year and a half she spent in Bulgaria is one of a self-appointed ambassador to aid the Ottoman Empire's deserving poor. Comparing a local village to a "Whitechapel Slum," the world that she mapped in her journal reflected a paternalist humanitarian vision which animated relief projects at home in Britain.³² In Bulgaria, her own religious and moral certitude bolstered her sense of duty as a member of the aristocracy. She claimed to have little in common with the Bulgarians themselves and worked hard to control the level of contact with the largely peasant population whom she served. "You can form no idea of how difficult it is to find anything to say," she confided in her diary after one particularly difficult interaction with Bulgarians seeking her assistance. "I sit in anguish of mind thinking what shall I say next?" She did not share Gladstone's admiration of Eastern Orthodox religion and upheld the distinctive superiority of Anglo-Protestant values. Bulgarians waiting for her to receive them at the home of a zealous American missionary, she believed, must have felt ill-at-ease passing for the first time under "the threshold of Protestantism."³³

Strangford represented herself in her writing as armed with little more than a guide book, Turkish dictionary and a will to see her projects through. In reality, she had a large entourage of local and English people that included doctors, nurses and servants who made her work possible. The amount of travel that she did was astounding, as evidenced by how well she was known throughout the district and the reverent treatment shown to her by Turkish dignitaries and the people in the villages she visited. She was also well known among Britons passing through the region, many of whom stayed with her and took advantage of her resources, political connections and hospitality.

Strangford placed herself at the center of international relief efforts as soon as she arrived in Philippopolis, Bulgaria. "Dear Lady Strangford," wrote American Consul Eugene Schuyler:

Can you not do something for the poor people at Perustitsa in the way of distributing clothing and blankets? I was there yesterday and found the misery of some of the people extreme. They were almost frozen ... It seems that Perustitsa is so near to Philippopolis that it has been neglected by all the committees of Relief. Our committee here has done something for the widows

and orphans which is all it undertakes to do. I shall bring the subject of Perustitsa before the Central committee as soon as I return to Constantinople. But meanwhile people are suffering.³⁴

Strangford's personal visits to these districts and offers of assistance from her fund made her an obvious choice for such appeals. She must have left an unforgettable impression on those who witnessed her frequent tours. Her large entourage included her "dragoman," or interpreter, "a carriage," "two good horses," "a good coachman" and "a native carriage" for her luggage and a small battalion of soldiers for protection. Such pomp, Strangford believed, was necessary for her work: "the Bulgarians like it, because it is to do honor to 'their lady' and friend and they feel it a protecting link between them and the government."³⁵ Indeed, on several of these tours the large crowds that came out just to have a "look at her" mistook her for the Queen Victoria, an impression she did not feel necessary entirely to dispel.³⁶

The amount of money and publicity associated with Strangford's project meant that conflicts inevitably arose. Upon her arrival, the *Daily News* correspondents responsible for breaking the Bulgarian Atrocities story paid her an unwelcome visit. She feared that they would criticize her for following Layard's lead and refusing to blame the Ottoman government for the massacres. Realizing the importance of good publicity for raising money for her fund, however, she attempted to win the journalists over by asking them to dinner. Conflicts with other aid workers were more difficult to overcome. Her at-times strained relationship with the American missionary Reverend J.F. Clarke most likely stemmed from a feeling of competition with his aid projects as well as his zealous brand of Protestantism, although the two did come eventually to rely on one another for help. After she witnessed Clarke preach, Strangford remarked, "I believe he is a Congregationalist whatever that is – he is very strict."³⁷ A meeting with the Greek Bishop revealed the tensions between the groups in the region when he criticised Strangford for not helping Greeks and accused her of failing in "cultivating diplomacy."³⁸

Strangford, like Layard, took a paternalist view to both aid work and politics. "The patients mostly say that I am both mother and father to them," she wrote to Layard as the Russo-Turkish War raged.³⁹ Her training and interest in nursing meant that she spent most of the time

planning and establishing new hospitals with other aid workers like Rev. Clarke and W.L. Stoney, an agent for the Central Relief Committee in Constantinople. Believing Bulgarian-run hospitals “dirty” and badly arranged, Strangford built her hospitals on the English model. The scheme for the founding of a hospital first involved the outright purchase of the land and the buildings so, as Strangford put it, they “will not be taken from me.” Bulgarian officials objected to this scheme, wanting instead to have these properties deeded to them.⁴⁰ Calling these men “selfish and shortsighted” Strangford defended her scheme by arguing that Bulgarians had yet no ability to manage their own affairs. Comparing them to ignorant children, she claimed to have no “illusions” about the Bulgarians. “They have all the faults of an undeveloped young people,” she reasoned, and thus needed to be given “fair play” in order to develop on their own.⁴¹ She summed up her feelings in a letter to Layard in May 1878: “I wish the English Government understood their position better and could befriend them in the only wise way – which is by *leading* them.”⁴²

Lady Strangford’s commitment to the notion of imperial stewardship shaped how humanitarian aid came to be understood. In 1877, she started a project to assist wounded Turkish soldiers. E.A. Freeman, an admirer of the late Lord Strangford and vocal advocate for the Bulgarian cause, criticised Lady Strangford’s relief work on behalf of those who were accused of perpetrating atrocities: “I cannot think that we are at all called upon to organise means of relief for a gang of brutal murderers, robbers and rashers or ostentatiously put them on a level with the heroes who are fighting and suffering in the noblest cause in which man ever drew the sword.”⁴³ Lady Strangford responded to such orientalist posturing by touting the importance of neutral aid. This claim, however, could not sustain her new enterprise in the wake of the massacres. Continued criticism of her work helping soldiers who were likely to have committed mass atrocities against the Bulgarians in the now-Russian occupied city of Sofia made hospital work more complicated and eventually led her to abandon the project.

Focus on Armenia

After the Bulgarian crisis, philanthropic organizations began to focus on providing aid to Ottoman Armenians. Lady Strangford placed herself in the vanguard of these efforts in the early 1880s. A fund set up for victims

of widespread famine in eastern Anatolia relied more than ever on the good will of officials who agreed to administer the monies raised for relief work in their districts. Ambassador Layard, along with British consuls, Captain William Everett, Major Emilius Clayton and Major Henry Trotter, all stationed in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, took an active role in administering the over £13,000 raised for famine victims that Strangford hoped would be administered without “any distinction or preference to creed or race.”⁴⁴ This new scheme was intended to win the hearts and minds of Armenians who lived along the border with Russia during a time of crisis. Layard put it this way to Consul Everett in Erzeroom when famine hit his district in 1880: “if assistance came in this district from the English people it would greatly raise our prestige here which is waning fast. It is not pleasant either to be appealed to save life and to be unable to do anything.”⁴⁵

British Consul William Everett (1844–1908) facilitated humanitarian relief work among Armenians in eastern Anatolia. Appointed Vice Consul at Erzeroom in 1878, Everett was in charge of a mountainous town of about 40,000 people with a large Armenian population on the Russo-Ottoman border. Here he lived with his wife, Maria Georgina Calogeras, formerly of British-administered Corfu, and two daughters until he resigned from the consular service in 1888. Like other agents in the civil and imperial service, he enjoyed a great deal of power in his post. When the famine hit, Everett recruited American missionaries to serve on the relief committee as Layard had assured him that “the Americans will help us” with the project. One American missionary, Rev. Chambers, soon complained that missionaries “had not been sufficiently recognized in the Blue books” and other official British records for their work. He questioned Everett’s leadership and accused him of misappropriating funds. Chambers reportedly called him a “conscienceless scoundrel,” which made Everett furious and cling more tightly to control over the project.⁴⁶

After the Bulgarian Atrocities, coordinated relief work among foreign and British aid workers became an accepted part of the unofficial duties of the British-appointed Consul. Mutual distrust and competition from Europeans and Americans eager to increase their own influence over the local population meant that consuls stationed in the provinces often took on direct responsibility for relief projects in times of distress. By 1881, famine relief consumed many of his official duties, with Everett

distributing aid himself. Everett's decision to throw himself into famine relief certainly had much to do with this semi-official policy that saw aid as the way to win over the local population. It also had a good deal to do with his own belief about aid work and Armenians whom he served and characterised, along the Gladstonian line, as having "a strong bearing to our church."

Everett, Strangford and Layard all became central to this humanitarian relief network, making British influence felt deep into the Anatolian interior. When Lady Strangford set up her appeal in 1881, she distributed funds directly to consuls, like Everett, living in affected areas. He investigated claims of starvation in his district in late January and received immediate approval to draw money from the fund administered by Layard for relief work. By early February, Everett started investigating the prices of goods himself after receiving letters from his district that "report a bad state of things." His diary from this period recorded his constant worry that local officials cheated him and insisted always on seeing the grain before purchasing it himself. He also kept a regular record of expenditures made in each district while listing the price of grain, livestock and household goods and the items he handed out. On March 9, 1882, as he recorded, he: "Gave distribution of flour to 4 poor families."⁴⁷

Layard used the Consul network to influence a host of private and public projects in the urban and provincial centers of the Ottoman Empire from the Ambassador's residence at Constantinople. The Stafford House Project, the National Aid Society, the Red Crescent Society, and the Turkish Compassionate Fund, along with a handful of American-run missionary projects, all relied on the support of the Ambassador at one point or another. Lady Strangford's projects held particular appeal. They worked together on relief efforts, with Layard using his position to provide material support for the work of Lord Strangford's widow. "I must say it is a great comfort in this terrible time to have you at Constantinople," wrote Lady Strangford to Layard in 1877, upon setting up her relief hospital in Adrianople.⁴⁸ Over the next three years she used Layard to secure funds from other aid organizations, ease her passage through hostile territory and intervene on behalf of those under her patronage. Layard also served as a go-between in the management of the large amounts of cash that her funds brought in, thanks to his connections with the Ottoman Bank and relationship with consuls operating in the region.

Competition between various relief funds ultimately bred confusion. Layard tried to maintain control, but questions raised by critics like E.A. Freeman regarding Lady Strangford's motivations and choice of relief projects eventually led to trouble. "You know that my subscriptions were going as well and steadily when they were suddenly suffocated and almost closed off," she wrote to Layard in October 1877, "in alarm, I asked the Red Crescent Society to front me five hundred pounds." When this money did not come she pleaded with Layard to ask the Sultan to intervene with the Red Crescent Society, the Ottoman branch of the Red Cross, on her behalf: "What can I do but apply to you? Will you help me? . . . *The Daily Telegraph* and *Sheffield* paper and some other quarters all promise me help but I want it now."⁴⁹ Layard's mediation with the Sultan and the Red Cross in England eventually secured the grant, but Lady Strangford needed more. "I always give my ambassador as little trouble as possible," she declared after numerous subsequent requests that included the purchase of supplies and an escort for her and her large party out of Sofia just before the Russo-Turkish War started. Layard's status also helped legitimate her work when others questioned the logic of her assisting both the victims and perpetrators. She even had Layard insert her projects into his official dispatches, asking at one point for him to send a message regarding "a lost refugee child" in Philippopolis whose parents "want(ed) it sent to them" in Scutari.⁵⁰

Layard similarly used Strangford to further his own influence. During the Russo-Turkish War he asked her to investigate alleged atrocities committed by Bulgarians on the Turkish population that he hoped to use to counter Gladstone's claims that violence was one sided in "The Bulgarian Horrors". In June and July of 1878, Strangford attempted to find evidence of atrocities committed by Bulgarians against "Moslems". "I have not a single word of any 'terrible crimes'; much less 'revolting cruelties' such as you allude to." At Layard's urging she sent out Dr Stephenson, the head of her hospitals, "to go up country for me" to "enquire into the reports of the Bulgarian Atrocities both towards Muselmans (sic) and Protestants." Frustrated with the results of her search, she requested that Layard give her "a few memoranda of the places where such things have happened as reported."⁵¹ Layard received no satisfaction from this investigation, which eventually strained relations between the two. A few months later, before closing her hospitals and leaving the country for good, she admonished Layard for

not taking a more active interest in her work as of late: "I am sorry you did not think it worthwhile to visit my hospital as it would have pleased the Turks very much."⁵²

Evidence suggests that, despite a sometimes difficult relationship, Layard understood his work with Lady Strangford's projects as important to bolstering his influence over Ottoman affairs. The cause of famine relief united Layard and Strangford. "I was very unwilling indeed to take up the miserable state of Kurdistan and Armenia and for a long time would not consent to work with it. But I found that no one else would work and that not a penny would be subscribed if I did not come forward," she wrote to Layard from her home in February 1880. Funds went through Layard's account at the Ottoman Bank that he then distributed to the consuls in the important Armenian regions of Van, Aleppo and Erzeroom. "You will not . . . raise the hopes among the consuls of any large fortune being at hand but yesterday I had the pleasure of telegraphing 400 pounds to you for the half of the northern districts and 300 pounds for the southern. The 400 was paid yesterday into the Imperial Ottoman Bank . . . the 300 pounds will be probably arranged today." Strangford gave Layard ultimate control over the funds.⁵³ As she wrote to Layard, "we thought we might send the money through your hands, partly as a convenience to ourselves partly in order to give it an official flavour in the eyes of the receivers."⁵⁴

By the early 1880s it had become clear that Layard's position as defender of both the Ottoman administration and its destitute minority Christian population was untenable. Even he began to doubt that personal influence and the example of "good governance" on the British imperial model he outlined in the wake of the Indian Mutiny would change the Sultan's mind about protecting religious minorities against abuse. The mood back in Britain, too, had changed and few had patience for the wait-and-see stance that characterized Disraeli's Ottoman policy. "Mr Gladstone is warm glowing cordial and appreciative to everybody" wrote Strangford to Layard about the 1880 election which brought Gladstone and the Liberals back to power.⁵⁵ Hoping that Gladstone would infuse new life into her relief projects, Strangford faced the reality that her own conservative credentials put her on uncertain ground with the incoming government: "I am in despair about our meeting on the 6th of May as Gladstone has given up coming though that sacred cause is nearest to his heart, so he writes to the committee."⁵⁶ Strangford clearly

understood that humanitarian intervention would always remain tied to the whims of partisan politics.

Layard fared much worse. Gladstone had not forgotten that Layard had publicly questioned his stance on the Bulgarian issue and summarily dismissed him from his post in Constantinople. "My case is one of extraordinary hardship and cruel injustice," he declared soon after his dismissal, believing that he had been fired for political reasons.⁵⁷ It would be the last official diplomatic position that Layard would ever hold.

Looking back on his career, Layard reflected: "Although it was not possible to obtain for the Armenians all that Lord Beaconsfield's Government desired to obtain for them, and which I was most anxious to secure, yet some progress was made towards granting to Armenia a better administration, in which the Armenians themselves might share."⁵⁸ Layard had tried during the Berlin negotiations to get a "Protestant Constitution" written into the Treaty. Such a document, pushed by Great Britain and Germany, Layard claimed, would grant this small religious minority, which included mostly Armenians converted by American Protestant missionaries, "those rights and privileges which were accorded to every other religious sect in his empire." Layard tried unsuccessfully over several months to use his personal influence to get the Sultan to agree to these terms along with appointing religious minorities to higher government positions.⁵⁹

Layard's machinations produced few results and satisfied no one. "The Constitution to be conceded to the Protestants of Turkey, promised to me over and over again by the Sultan and his Ministers, is still unsettled," Layard wrote to foreign secretary Lord Granville on the eve of the signing of the Berlin Treaty. "The conduct of the Porte in this matter has been without excuse . . . The question has been in discussion with the Porte during the three years that I have been here."⁶⁰ Layard had realised the limits of humanitarian diplomacy.

His tenure, however, did leave a lasting legacy. The founding of humanitarian aid institutions, raising money, and even securing these interests through a web of political, economic and culture networks increased Britain's stake in the Ottoman Empire, particularly among Armenians of eastern Anatolia. It also promoted the idea in the minds of various constituencies at home and in the Ottoman Empire that Britain had an obligation to intervene in Ottoman internal affairs, even if that involvement rarely produced the intended results.

Conclusion

By the end of the Victorian period, the question of whether or not to intervene into Armenian affairs emerged as a fixture of British imperial diplomacy. Layard created a patronage network of mainly British and American diplomats and aid workers who relied on the Ambassador's support to see through the myriad projects related to humanitarian relief and civil reform. The founding of humanitarian aid institutions, raising money, and securing these interests in the founding of financial institutions like the Ottoman Bank tightly wove British interests together with Ottoman internal affairs. These factors necessarily bolstered Britain's standing at the Sublime Porte, even in the face of promises to protect minorities.

British overall influence over the seat of Ottoman power, however, was hard to gage. It led, more often than not, to confusion and competition with other European Powers and US philanthropic organizations which had their own political agendas. Commitments to protect Christian minorities in the Berlin Treaty negotiated by Disraeli's government came in part out of fear that this population would appeal to orthodox Russia for protection. This added further complications to British attempts to enforce those provisions. The question of how best to influence a declining Ottoman Empire's highly scrutinized minority policy still waited for an answer.

In the end, the diplomatic approach to the minority question after the Berlin Treaty had done little for the British Empire and even less for Armenians.⁶¹ Bulgaria received nominal independence, guaranteed by the Great Powers in the Berlin Treaty as a means in part of addressing concerns over worries that without political autonomy more massacres would follow. This national solution, which meant separating Christian minority populations from the Ottoman Empire, was understood as a possible future model for the Armenians. Armenians, however, lived not on the western edge of the crumbling empire like the Bulgarians, but at the eastern crossroads of Ottoman influence in Asia, making it difficult to imagine how that separation might work. Settling for reforms seemed a good compromise that would serve British and Armenian interests.

The containment of Russian influence over fellow Orthodox Christians comprised the main reason behind including minority protections in the Berlin Treaty in the first place. Enforcing Berlin's provisions seemed less

urgent once the Bulgarian question was settled and Russian territorial ambition temporarily contained. The Treaty, considered a triumph of Disraeli's diplomatic program, also failed to settle the thorny issue of how, and on what grounds, to intervene in order to secure British influence in the region.

The pogroms against Armenians during the mid-1890s, in 1909 at Adana and later the Armenian Genocide of 1915, showed the limits of this new humanitarian diplomacy. The Ottoman Empire did not draw closer to the British sphere of influence and eventually joined World War I on the side of Germany. Though Britons like Layard and Strangford made their homes here and brought with them their institutions and ideals along with much needed aid, the influence of officials, civil servants, missionaries and philanthropists over Ottoman minority policy remained small. The string of massacres of Armenian civilians in the following decades would put the debate over humanitarian intervention as comprising a necessary part of foreign policy to its most difficult test to date.

CHAPTER 3

HAMIDIAN MASSACRES AND THE MEDIA

“The reports from our Constantinople agent confirm the allegations that the determination of the Ottoman government is to ‘remove’ the Armenians from the Sassoun region and the Committee desires to draw Lord Salisbury’s attention to the grave state of affairs caused by the action of the Turkish officials.”

– Edward Atkin, Armenian Relief Fund, August 31, 1895¹

“Who could have believed it possible that the people of Europe would look on with utter indifference while the Sultan slaughtered 50,000 Christians and reduced 400,000 to the alternative of starvation or Mohammedanism – that even England would do absolutely nothing to restrain him?”

– American Resident in Turkey, January 1896²

Reports of massacres in the village of Sassoun reached Britain in the winter of 1894. The Sassoun massacres marked the beginning of a multi-year campaign of government-sanctioned violence directed against Armenians living in eastern Anatolia and in Constantinople (Istanbul). Unfair taxes and security concerns prompted protests that called for the reform of a system that pitted Muslims and Christians against one another. Sultan Abdul Hamid II’s (1876–1909) policy of arming irregular regiments of Kurdish fighters to manage the situation had the effect of raising tensions that periodically had erupted into conflict

between the inhabitants of multi-ethnic and religious towns. No one anticipated the brutality and extent to which these clashes would culminate in the mid-1890s. By the time the massacres subsided in 1897, sectarian violence had claimed the lives of between 80,000–100,000 Armenians.

The British public and politicians followed the details of the killings in the media over the next four years with a mixture of horror and outrage. Treaty commitments and a growing humanitarian idealism implicated Britain and its Empire in the crimes committed against Armenians. The response to the so-called Hamidian Massacres came in grindingly slow fits and starts. In the end, humanitarian diplomacy faltered when it faced its first major test after the Bulgarian crisis.

Historians who study the causes of the massacres place the blame on a toxic mix of political and economic rivalries stoked by rumors and paranoia.³ The rise of political consciousness among the Armenian population of Ottoman Turkey, encouraged by a rhetoric of national self-determination and inspired by European nationalist ideals, fueled discontent. Raids on Armenian villages by Kurdish nomads, coupled with high taxes and mismanagement on the part of local government, made life difficult for peasants and merchants living in the six historic Armenian regions in eastern Anatolia (Figure 3.1). There was also the matter of the Sultan who, since coming to power after his brother was deposed by rivals in 1876, worried obsessively over any perceived threats to his authority. He tightened restrictions on Armenian schools and religious institutions while limiting involvement in civic life by closing employment opportunities to non-Muslims.⁴ His ultimate goal was to strengthen his rule by uniting the majority Muslim population under his leadership. This move alienated non-Muslim minorities, a mix of mostly Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Christian Arabs and Jews. The rise of the Armenian revolutionary political party, the *Hunchaks*, to protest these restrictions further fed in the Sultan's belief that the Armenian population in particular, mostly peasants, merchants and farmers, were part of an organized resistance movement on the verge of rebellion.

The Sultan fully embraced closer ties between Islam and the state. He took on the designation of "Caliph" to make his point, even though Sultans before him had long since ceased to use this title. This move clearly identified Turkey not as a multi-ethnic and religious empire, but as a Muslim power and leader of the Muslim world. The loss of territories in

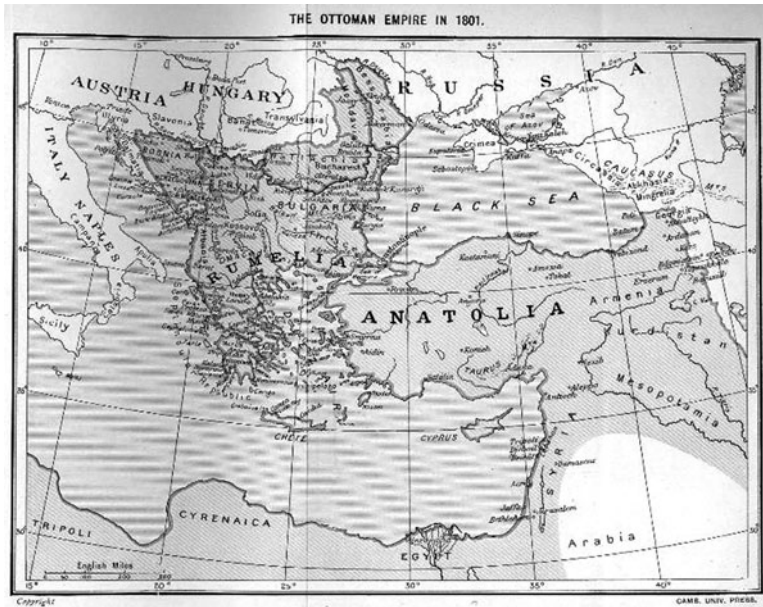


Figure 3.1 Historical map showing the diverse regions of the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century. Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin.

Europe along with their sizable, mainly Christian and Jewish populations after the Russo-Turkish War fueled this vision to unify the Ottoman Empire under the banner of Islam. Abdul Hamid's campaigns against Christian minorities stemmed, in part, from paranoia, but also from a fear of the further dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire in Anatolia, a region one official called the "crucible of Ottoman power."⁵

The press confirmed rumors of massacres happening in Sassoun and reported on subsequent attacks on the Armenian population in the region. Massacres soon spread to the six villayets under which the Ottoman government had organized the civic and religious life of the Armenians. Violence eventually reached Constantinople after a bold and ill-conceived attempt by Armenian revolutionaries to close down the Imperial Ottoman Bank to draw the attention of the West to the massacres in 1896.⁶ News of massacres, forced religious conversions, rape and the destruction of public and private property confronted readers of daily newspapers and political reviews. Blame was placed

squarely on the shoulders of the Sultan. As one journalist concluded: "I suppose that no man in England of ordinary intelligence any longer doubts the essential truth of the charges made against the Turkish Government in regard to the Sassoun massacres."⁷

Reports that large gangs of Kurds attacked and killed 200 Armenians in coordination with the government on the grounds that Armenians had not paid their taxes initially sounded the alarm in Britain in the summer of 1893. Rumors led to unsubstantiated claims that revolutionaries were behind the tax protest and justified the massacres.⁸ Subsequent reports from British consular officials and other eye-witnesses confirmed the extent of the violence and the identity of those who participated in killing tax protestors. "These atrocities were committed deliberately, in cold blood, after all resistance had ceased, by those who had done but little fighting," the press reported.⁹ "The victims were mostly women, children and unarmed men."¹⁰ Armenians were not the only targets. Though they reportedly "suffered more than the other Christians in the empire," news of the Sultan's crackdown on Christian religious minorities prompted concerns for Assyrians or Nestorians, Greeks and Arabs as well as mixed Catholic and Protestant populations.¹¹

Concerns raised over the massacre of Armenians translated into widening the sphere of British foreign policy obligations. Of the major European powers, Britain had the most dramatic initial response to the massacres. It issued official government reports in the form of Blue Books, reports carried out under the sanction of Parliament. Britain also pushed for investigations by the Sultan and even threatened a show of military force at one point. Press coverage of civilian massacres in the Ottoman Empire represented humanitarian intervention as a duty of the British Empire, a guidepost of the *pax Britannica*.

Humanitarian and political organizations supported the Armenian cause with fund-raising and journalists and politicians kept the issue in the news by publishing reports and sending correspondents to investigate the massacres. Journalists, in particular, played a central role in linking humanitarian agendas with an activist liberal foreign policy. Victorians who supported the cause of Ottoman minorities were inspired by press coverage of the massacres and what was being done to help. This turned the moral question of whether or not to intervene into a populist form of engagement with foreign and imperial affairs. In an era of mass media and growing liberal idealism, the Armenian massacres

prompted public debates over the role of Britain and its empire in the wider world.

Sultan Abdul Hamid II

Disparagingly known as “the Great Assassin” in Britain, Abdul Hamid II was the last Sultan of the Ottoman Empire’s old regime (Figure 3.2).¹² Fascination with the Sultan, his foreign policy and his own personal demons drove public interest in the man blamed for the massacres. He came to the throne in 1876 in the midst of the Bulgarian Atrocities controversy, replacing his brother, who reportedly had gone mad, and reigned until deposed by the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 (further discussed in Chapter 4). The course of his reign thus spanned a tumultuous period of reform and revolution that would culminate in the decline of Ottoman imperial legitimacy. His role as both alleged perpetrator and ultimate defender of the aims in the Armenian massacres sealed his reputation in the minds of Britons as an autocrat who had embarked on a program of extermination to rid himself of troublesome dissenters who challenged his policies.

Abdul Hamid immediately suspended the constitution upon coming to power in the hopes of consolidating his rule. Much to the chagrin of his European allies, he also tried to circumvent reforms to the treatment of Christian minorities dictated by the 1878 Treaty of Berlin. But Britain had helped Turkey thwart Russian ambitions in the region by softening peace terms and thought it could dictate the peace and the enforcement of the treaty. Some concessions already had been made. Protests from the Sultan and British worries over Russian influence in the region resulted in the rejection of the first attempt at peace in the Treaty of San Stefano, which would have granted limited autonomy for the Armenian provinces under Russian supervision. British foreign secretary Lord Salisbury responded by negotiating a watered down version in Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty which, as we have seen, put Britain in the driver’s seat in overseeing reforms that increased security in “the provinces inhabited by the Armenians.” Article 61 did not make any promises of autonomy for the Armenian villayets. Despite these changes, the Sultan showed little interest in enforcing the Berlin Treaty. Britain reminded the Sultan of its role in curbing the ambition of his Russian foe in the war first by letter and then, after no response, by

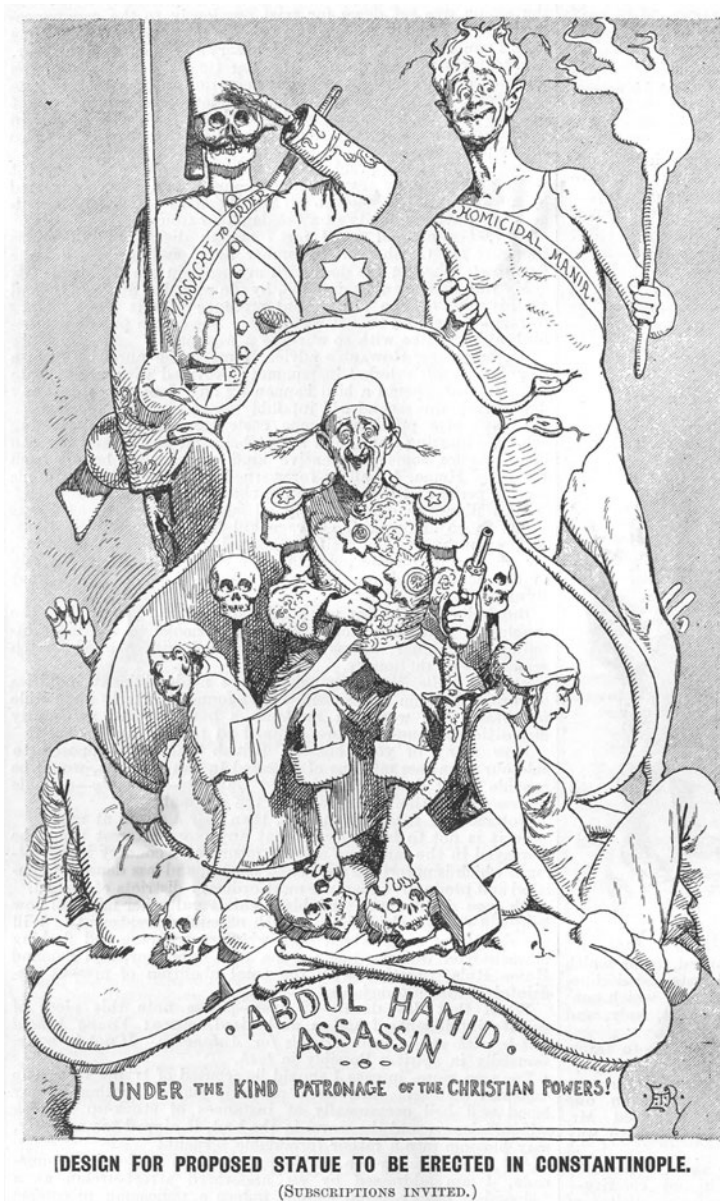


Figure 3.2 Caricature of Sultan Abdul Hamid II as the “Assassin.” *Punch*, September 26, 1896.

sending a British warship to his door.¹³ The Sultan reluctantly agreed to enforce the Treaty by overseeing reforms. However, when the threat passed and the British departed, these promises were easily forgotten.

In 1895, the government tried this tactic again in hopes of stopping the massacres, but to no real effect. Queen Victoria, in her diary, called “this Armenian business very difficult, as the Sultan behaves so ill about it.”¹⁴ Lord Salisbury, now the Prime Minister, responded to the massacres initially with strong rhetoric and promises to enforce the Berlin Treaty. He also threatened the Sultan with military action. Opposition in his cabinet and from the Admiralty put a stop to Salisbury’s plans to intervene. Russian concerns over Britain acting unilaterally on behalf of the Armenians also played a role in the decision not to use force. Instead, Salisbury negotiated with the Sultan to organize a commission led by Ottoman officials to investigate the killings.

In December, Queen Victoria recorded her feelings about the matter again, “The shameful, savage massacres of the unfortunate Armenians, men, women, and children, and the misrule in Constantinople is too dreadful. The Ambassadors are at their wit’s end.”¹⁵ A few days later, Salisbury came to dinner. The Queen recorded that the issue had started to “make him very anxious.” “The trouble with the Armenians continues in every direction, in spite of the Sultan’s promises of redress. The massacres continue, and thousands of unfortunate people have not only been killed but been rendered homeless and are threatened with famine. But what is to be done?”¹⁶

Considered a sham by critics, the commission found little wrongdoing by Turkish troops and armed Kurdish militias. Blame for the massacres was placed on Armenian revolutionaries who the report accused of inciting violence against the government. Reports from the consuls stationed in these regions contradicted these findings. Consular reports published and read back in Britain provided eyewitness accounts of massacres and, though they did not challenge the Sultan in any official capacity, offered confirmation of earlier accounts. Increased awareness of politically motivated massacres cast British foreign policy as intimately connected with the fate of the Armenians, who represented in the mind of the public and some politicians a just cause.

Media coverage raised questions about the extent to which Britain had an obligation to put pressure on the Sultan to stop the violence

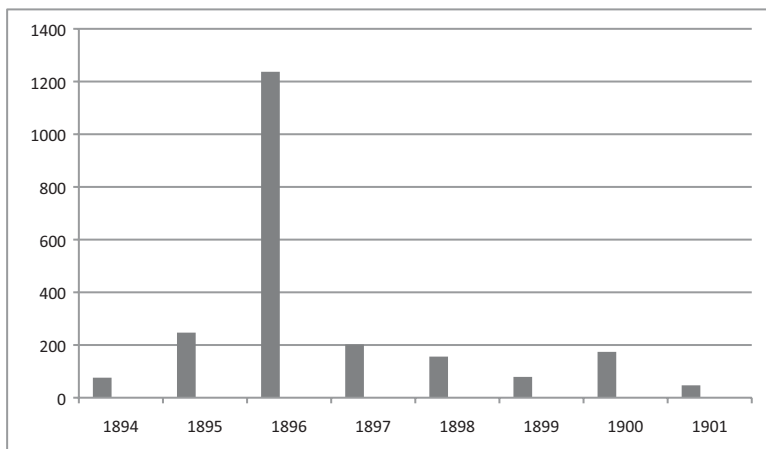


Chart 3.1 1890s media coverage of the Armenian massacres. Numbers of articles published in the provincial British press (England, Scotland and Wales) on the Armenian massacres, 1894–1901. Gale nineteenth-century British newspapers database. Accessed: November 9, 2014. Series 1–4.

(Chart 3.1: 1890s media coverage of massacres). Like coverage of atrocities committed around the world today, periodic reports of massacres offered little means of ascertaining when they would end. This uncertainty was expressed as anxiety in the press, which asserted that, in the wake of failed diplomacy, Britain needed to act. The still-unenforced Treaty of Berlin, according to critics, caused the “slavery and oppression” of “millions of miserable Christians to the most abominable tyranny that the world has ever seen.”¹⁷ The failure to stop the Armenian massacres made matters worse. The press laid the blame squarely at the feet of Abdul Hamid. As one source put it, “I would not go the length that some have gone in calling Sultan Abdul Hamid ‘an assassin’ or a ‘murderer’ – he may have been an innocent dupe – but certain it is that the system of personal rule, exercised through wicked agents, which was his creation, is responsible for the blood of the Armenians.”¹⁸

Such clamoring contributed to the Sultan’s growing paranoia. Fear that the same fate that met his brother and uncle would befall him – both rumored to have been murdered by the opposition – he walled himself up in his fortified palace, Yildiz Kiosk on the Straits of the Bosphorus in Constantinople. There he found himself subjected to

rumors of plots against him by his advisors who wanted to keep the Sultan under their influence and reportedly “rid themselves of the Armenian element.”¹⁹ With anger and dismay he had watched the slow dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, starting at the beginning of his reign with the loss of Bulgaria and parts of what was then the westernmost boundary of the empire after the Russo-Turkish War. Reforms to the administration of the Armenian provinces were seen as a further threat to the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Increasingly, the Sultan came to view the agitation over Armenian reforms as an attempt by the Great Powers, led by its erstwhile ally Britain, to completely destroy the Ottoman Empire.

Pressure from Britain and negative press coverage regarding the Armenian massacres only intensified these fears. But Britain had little interest in taking over the administration of Armenia from Abdul Hamid. The proposed reforms were relatively modest and difficult for a foreign power to enforce. His response to Article 61, according to one former Greek attaché in the Turkish foreign office, bordered on the fanatical. On the eve of the massacres he reported the Sultan as warning that if any foreign power threatened to enforce reforms in Armenia “the waters of the Bosphorus shall be dyed with the blood of all Armenians.”²⁰ The Sultan was represented as a leader who was out of touch with conditions on the ground and therefore could not be trusted in negotiations. “Abdul the Damned” was how the barrister, sometime journalist and longtime resident of Constantinople, Edwin Pears, characterized Abdul Hamid in his biography of the Sultan.

Though some called him a kind man who even was rumored himself to have Armenian ancestry, others considered “the infamous massacre of the Armenians” as “one of his most abominable crimes” which were attributable to a “condition of mad terror in which he was constantly kept by the false reports of spies.” The first Admiral of the Fleet, an admirer of the Sultan, used rumors of the Sultan’s supposed Armenian heritage to puzzle over the question of why he “massacred more Armenians than had ever been massacred before.”²¹ Gossip about the Sultan was in ready supply and continued until he was exiled in 1909. Diplomat and political observer Arminius Vambéry’s observations found their way into the press. A “very rich” man “with “expensive hobbies,” “he was extremely strict in enforcing obedience to the Koran” and “tyrannical in his dealings with his family and arbitrary in dismissing his ministers.”

Considered a “clever diplomatist,” Vambery also believed him to be a “fanatical hater of Great Britain and it was impossible to alter his views or mitigate his rancor.”²²

From this perspective, then, the Sultan’s handling of the Armenian massacres marked the low point of his reign and further weakened the Ottoman Empire. Pears, writing in 1917, called him simply “the greatest of the destroyers of the Turkish Empire.”²³ Upon news of Sultan’s demise he was called “the last of the autocratic Sultans of Turkey.”²⁴ Though some maintained the Sultan was “ignorant of these outrages” in the beginning, his refusal to speak out against the Armenian massacres once they started implicated him in the murders. Eventually he would turn on those Muslims who attempted to intervene on behalf of their Armenian neighbors. “Every European resident in Turkey heard stories of Moslems (sic) who had been persecuted because they had sheltered Armenians from the brutal cruelty of their Sovereign.”²⁵ It was his growing distrust of his subjects, erratic behavior, and lack of integrity that condemned the Sultan in the minds of his British critics. “The Sultan first denied the fact of the massacres, then decorated with exceptional *éclat* the Mufti of Moush” who had been responsible for the Moush village massacres. In turn, this observer continued, he dismissed one commander “who had protested against the massacres.”²⁶

This view of the Sultan and of the massacres committed in his name influenced public opinion not only in Britain but also in the United States, with its growing population of diaspora Armenians. Media coverage sparked a massive fundraising and public awareness campaign over the plight of the Armenians that gave added weight to the British campaign against the massacres.

“This deplorable Armenian business”

News of the killings brought W.E. Gladstone out of retirement again. This assured that the campaign against the Hamidian massacres would go global. His advocacy work on behalf of Armenians left an indelible mark on the response to the tragedy unfolding in the Ottoman Empire. An old man near the very end of his life, he understood this as his last campaign. “In this deplorable Armenian business (for so us all must call it),” he wrote to a colleague, “I have determined from the first to be

guided by official and responsible authority and not by any *ex parte* statement and on this rule I have acted.”

Gladstone kept a keen eye on the Armenian situation well before the Hamidian massacres began. The response he launched to the Bulgarian crisis offered a gateway to the impending Armenian crisis. He was already well-known as a friend to the Armenians, corresponding with Armenian leaders abroad, including Boghos Nubar Pasha in France and the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople, who in 1880 wrote him a seven-page letter discussing Britain’s treaty obligation, Christian populations in Turkey and the Armenian question. In 1891, the London editor of the Armenian paper *Haisdan* wrote to Gladstone and praised him for his support of the cause of “civilization and humanity” and the Armenian nation.²⁷ Within his own personal and political circles, Gladstone kept in contact with the head of the Anglo-Armenian Association and other known supporters of the Armenian cause, including James Bryce, who would play a key role in bringing the Armenian Genocide to world attention in 1915.²⁸ In 1889, he launched a campaign against Armenian atrocities in what the *Daily News* labeled “The Turkish Cruelties in Armenia.” Conservative Prime Minister Lord Salisbury responded to the killings as well and ordered a Blue Book published that included correspondence from consular officials and the ambassador about what was called the “condition of the populations in Asiatic Turkey.”²⁹

Gladstone’s long-standing disdain for the Sultan colored his view of the Armenian question. He took to calling Abdul Hamid “the Great Assassin,” and refused to mention him by name. On one occasion, he referred to him only as “the assassin who sits on the throne of Turkey.”³⁰ Gladstone’s inflammatory charges against the Sultan led to accusations that he was launching a crusade against Muslims. This, critics argued, would undermine the strength of the British Empire as an important Muslim power. Gladstone demurred, strongly asserting in *The Times* his as “no crusade against” Muslims.³¹ Wars, he maintained, should be fought for just cause, not religious prejudice. Gladstone had warned against going to war with Russia to maintain the status quo in the Ottoman Empire in an article published in the spring of 1878: “A war undertaken without cause is a war of shame, and not of honour.” Britain, in his view, should instead rely on diplomacy to promote moral and civic reforms which benefited all of the Sultan’s

subjects: "The security of life, liberty, conscience, and female honor, is the one indispensable condition of reform in all these provinces."³²

Critics charged that this policy substituted one brand of prejudice for another. In "What is the Eastern question", one commentator rallied against Gladstone's "hypocritical mask of humanity, liberty and religion," which threatened to expel Muslims from Europe.³³ Others worried alongside Disraeli that government by "sentiment" would make a mockery of British power and prestige. To this, liberals responded with appeals to British justice: "It is not a question, be it remembered as is often imagined, of Mohammedan as against Christian; it is a question of the ruling Turk as against all his subjects alike, whether Christian or Mohammedan."³⁴

If the politics of an unstable regime, rather than religion, had inspired the massacres, the argument went at the time, Britain needed to do what it could to promote the reform of the autocratic Ottoman system. This translated into the by-now familiar call that the love of freedom should inspire foreign policy. Britain's response to the massacres "must be on the side of humanity, freedom and progress, if it is to be in harmony with both her interests and her duty."³⁵ The political solution he sought was "self-government" not only for the Armenians but for the "Southern Slavs" still living under Ottoman rule.

In this way, the Armenian question was about a foreign policy that supported self-determination for the peoples of southern and Eastern Europe as well as the Near East. Europe had pushed this inevitable process forward with the Treaty of Berlin, which had remade the Balkans. "I am confident," Gladstone wrote in the summer of 1896, "that those who have been released from the yoke will give their full sympathy to those still under its pressure, and I trust we shall all beseech the Almighty to hasten the day when mankind at large shall no longer have to turn an afflicted eye upon a system in which baseness, barrenness, cruelty, and fraud are so marvelously united as we now see them in the present Sultan of Turkey and his government."³⁶ Reform would come of its own accord, helped along by Britain's support for the principle of self-determination. Eventually, the desire for independence by subject peoples would cascade across the entire Ottoman Empire.

Gladstone immediately deployed his old friends in the press to make his case. The *Daily News* carried news of the Bulgarian crisis in 1876 and again during the previous wave of Armenian massacres in 1889. This

time, radical journalist Henry William Massingham (1860–1924), who made his name at the liberal-leaning *Daily Chronicle*, carried Gladstone's campaign forward.³⁷ In a series of letters written to Massingham in the heat of the controversy, Gladstone made his position clear: "So far as my knowledge goes I concur emphatically . . . and most of all with the concentration of responsibility upon the Sultan." He concluded by asking him to keep a tight hand "upon the situation."³⁸ Massingham asked Gladstone to write an article on the topic but Gladstone turned him down, claiming to have "given up all idea of writing on public affairs in my retirement."³⁹ What he did do was encourage Massingham to use his influence to promote Gladstone's agenda: "this morning upon seeing your letter I began to think there was a glimmering of hope that the country might move on the Armenian question . . . I am ignorant what is the usage or etiquette as between journals, but if you are inclined to move steady and strongly against the Assassin, would it be possible to get such Unionist papers as the *Daily Telegraph*, *Birmingham Press* or *Scotsman* . . . to move."⁴⁰ He had lost faith in the Tories' ability to find a political solution but felt like he could pressure their leader, Lord Salisbury. As Gladstone wrote to Massingham, "I should like to see him encouraged in some way to make his position at the very least one of protest."⁴¹

But Gladstone was not long content to work behind the scenes for a political solution. He would speak to the public directly. Though at first he declined "playing Bulgaria over again" he admitted that he would not "refuse to attend" a meeting "if it sprang up there spontaneously."⁴² Indeed, he already was preparing a speech on the Armenian question. It would prove his last public appearance before his death. He earned the support of the Prime Minister but had trouble winning over the cabinet.⁴³ In mid-September, Canon Malcolm MacColl (1831–1907), an outspoken supporter of the Armenian cause, wrote to Gladstone's son, Herbert, that he was "overwhelmed with the correspondence on the Armenian question."⁴⁴ Later that month, W.E. Gladstone chose Liverpool as the site of protest where he believed his message would have the most impact among his liberal supporters. This speech defined his stance and influenced a generation of Britons when it came to the question of humanitarian intervention. Thousands of cheering supporters gathered in Hengler's Circus in the fall of 1896 to hear Gladstone condemn the previous two years of inaction on the Armenian

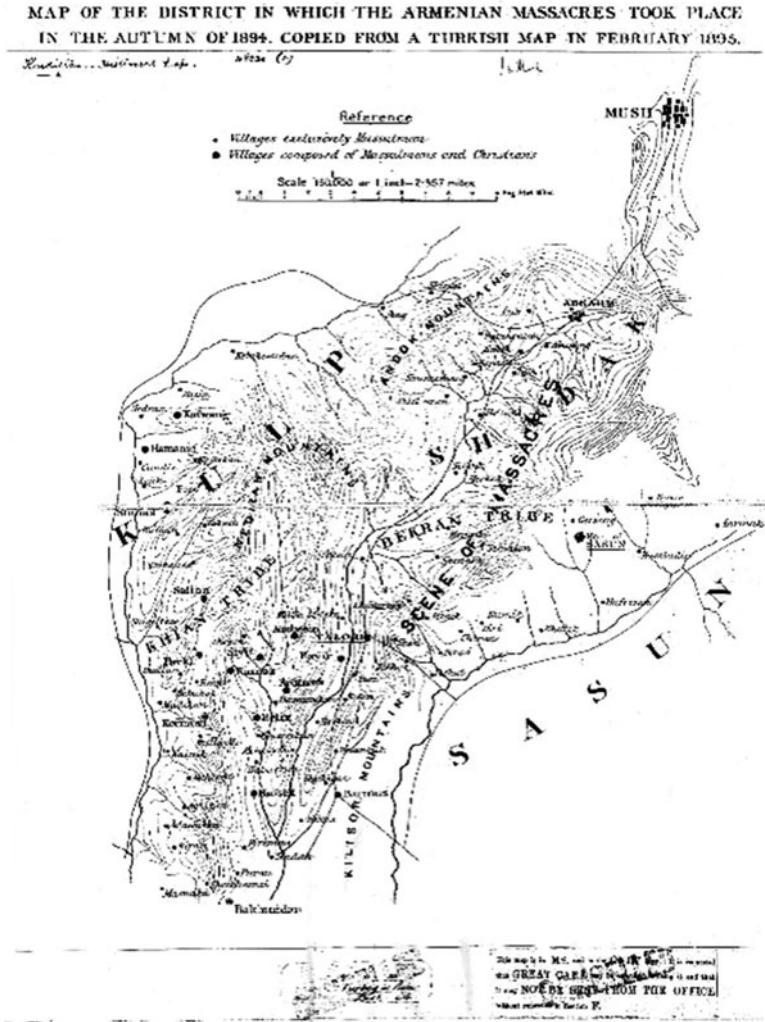


Figure 3.3 1895 map of the Armenian massacres. British Library Map Collection, 48320 (1).

question.⁴⁵ The Liverpool message spread. That month witnessed the beginning of a wave of protest meetings that sprung up around the country.

Gladstone never transcribed his speeches and usually worked only from notes. What we know about his speeches mostly comes from the

press, which made it a practice to report important political speeches as close to verbatim as possible. Gladstone's handwritten notes, now held in the British Library, from which he presumably delivered the Liverpool speech, reveal why he felt so strongly about this issue and why he traveled from his distant home at Hawarden in Wales to launch the campaign on behalf of Armenians in Liverpool.⁴⁶ For Gladstone, the section of the speech he labeled "Happy Day" in his notes read that he would "support any effort of HM Gov't to extricate us from our ambiguous position to renounce."⁴⁷ He concluded his notes for the speech with the hope that the government would express "our detestation of the most monstrous of all the outrages recorded in the dismal history of modern crime."⁴⁸ But the main issue on his mind came towards the beginning of the speech where he sketched the "practical consequences" of Britain's inaction. Below this point he simply underlined the word, "Extermination?"⁴⁹

The speech inspired Liberals to challenge the Conservative government to act. Lord Salisbury ordered an investigation and saw the publication of the Armenian Blue Books during his time in office. But the Liberals protested loudest and made the issue their own. In short, the Liberal party believed that it could win by backing the Armenian issue just as Gladstone had swept the 1880 election on a wave of moral indignation after Bulgaria. The success of the Midlothian campaigns remained a potent reminder of the power of taking the moral high ground when it came to foreign policy. In a direct attack on Conservative party leadership, Gladstone blatantly accused Salisbury of making a "deplorable error" when he "compromised every point" to the European Great Powers on the Armenian question.⁵⁰ Others were not as sure. As Queen Victoria recorded one government official saying in her diary, "all these meetings and speeches about Armenians . . . only makes it more difficult to settle."⁵¹

The response to the Armenian crisis was always also about domestic political rivalries and different visions of Britain and its empire's role in the world. "My dear Gladstone," wrote James Bryce in the wake of the Liverpool speech, "It was with great pleasure that I saw that you had been delivering yourself on the Armenian question and the deplorable inaction of our Government. What you said about that seemed to me perfectly true and very effectively put: and I wish there were more . . . Liberal leaders who would speak out in the same sense."⁵² Bryce was busy at this time compiling a "massacre map" that indicated the location and extent of the killings (Figure 3.3).

Malcolm MacColl kept a close watch on the campaign, complaining that some in the Liberal party did not support the cause. "It is bad for the Liberal leaders to condone this practical betrayal of Armenians," he told Herbert Gladstone, confiding that he hoped that W.E. Gladstone's work would help to "oust Rosebery" as leader of the Liberal Party, who had shown little leadership on the Armenian question.⁵³ "Why did he not insist as your father would have done?" he asked Herbert rhetorically.⁵⁴ The controversy would eventually cost Rosebery the Liberal Party leadership.

In the end, Gladstone's campaign did more to provoke outrage than create sound foreign policy. No political solution emerged to put an end to the massacres which continued long after Gladstone's speech in Liverpool. As the Grand Old Man admitted at the end of his life: "I am now a dead man as to general politics . . . I am waiting in desire rather than in hope of some mitigation in the Eastern question." Indeed, the Armenian question would not see resolution in his lifetime. Queen Victoria on her jubilee in 1897 recognized the envoy sent by the Sultan to congratulate her many years on the throne. As Gladstone wrote to Massingham: "the Gov't ought to have conferred to the Sultan their regret that they could not assign to his Envoy any place in the procession."⁵⁵ The humanitarian movement, rather than the political establishment, ultimately found inspiration in the campaign that Gladstone had risked the fortunes of the Liberal party in general and the political future of Lord Rosebery specifically. This episode had long-term implications for how Britain, and the international community, would respond to reports of massacre and, eventually, genocide.

The Press and the Armenian Cause

The media-saturated world of Victorian Britain meant that open debate and "free expression" thrived around the Armenian issue. In the midst of the Armenian controversy, the Foreign Office issued a statement from Lord Salisbury declaring that "his Lordship does not wish in any way to interfere with the free expression of public opinion on the [Armenian question]."⁵⁶ This openness allowed a culture of dissent and debate to thrive. With near universal literacy achieved and the end of the Stamp duties on newspapers in place by the turn of the century, information flowed more rapidly and more widely than ever

before. Cheaper raw materials and better printing technologies, coupled with improved communication with the rest of the world, paved the way for a mass circulating press whose reach spanned well beyond Britain's shores.

Journalism, too, was changing with the rise of the professional journalist who reported the news, offered opinions and looked for new ways to grab the attention of readers. Newspapers and other periodicals found their way into the hands of the middle-classes who read, wrote letters to the editor and discussed the latest news. The public, it turned out, had a lot to say about what the government should or should not do to help the Armenians. Around the issue of the Armenian massacres grew up a culture of humanitarian activism supported by the mainstream and advocacy press, pamphlets, parliamentary debates and public meetings.

Journalists who embraced the humanitarian ideal were responsible for putting the Armenian issue most compellingly before the public. Humanitarian journalism emerged as a genre of news reporting that supported particular causes in the press with the intention of influencing public opinion. This activist brand of journalism had its origins in the anti-slavery journals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By the Victorian period, journalists pursued this as a distinct genre and style of reporting the news. While some defended humanitarian journalism as vital to democracy and called it a voice of the people, others claimed that advocacy for particular causes had no place in serious journalism. One journalist blasted the "new humanitarianism," "Which peals periodically from a part of the London press" for promoting the hypocrisy of selectively defending fashionable humane causes.⁵⁷ Though partisan journalism long had characterized the Victorian press establishment, this activist brand of media was a relatively new phenomenon.

For critics, humanitarian journalism belonged more to the category of sensationalism embraced by New Journalism. New Journalism, as practiced by the mass circulating dailies of the time, looked for any opportunity to shock readers with dramatic stories in order to get them to buy newspapers. "It may be a noble rage," wrote the *National Observer* regarding the Armenian massacres, "but it goes beyond bound and runs into madness."⁵⁸ For those who championed humanitarian journalism, however, the press was the heart, soul and most importantly, conscience

of liberalism. Humanitarian journalists campaigned to end child labor, vivisection, animal abuse and domestic violence at home. Abroad, in addition to the suffering of minority Ottoman Christians, it was the horrors in the Belgian Congo under the reign of King Leopold II that put humanitarian journalists at the center of highly visible campaigns which they helped form and promote.

The most prominent humanitarian journalist of the Victorian period was muckraker W.T. Stead. Gladstone was drawn to Stead's passionate style and recruited him to promote his campaigns. Similarly, Stead used Gladstone's populist brand of politics around the Bulgarian Atrocities to promote his own career. Bulgaria, according to one source, provided the opportunity to bring "this question into life."⁵⁹ Stead, as he later did with campaigns such as child prostitution in England or "White Slavery" as he called it, took on the Armenian question as a mission, elevating the controversy to the level of a political movement.⁶⁰ As editor of the *Northern Echo* he built a career as a moralizing journalist. "I am a revivalist preacher and not a journalist by nature," he once claimed.⁶¹ The Bulgarian crisis provided this liberal dissenter with the opportunity to take his campaign against Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria from the pages of the *Northern Echo* to the public meeting hall. The agitation quickly took hold in the largely Nonconformist north of England where Stead counted 47 protest meetings during the summer of 1876.⁶² Gladstone so admired Stead's activism that he entrusted him with his papers in the hopes that he would one day write the history of the Bulgarian agitation.⁶³

Stead's populist style of journalism, putting sensational reporting in the service of humanitarianism, carried over to his later work as editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Review of Reviews*. There he published close to 100 articles on the Armenian question up until he went down with the Titanic in 1912. Stead reflected on the moral imperative that set him writing. Religious piety, combined with a higher sense of public duty, led to his vow "to stimulate all religious men and women, to inspire children and neighbours with a sense of supreme sovereignty of duty and right." England's leadership as an empire ("keep(ing) the peace of one-sixth the human race," as he put it) obliged it to take responsibility for righting wrongs in regions where the empire had made diplomatic commitments. In the Armenian case, this translated into upholding international treaty obligations in the Treaty of Berlin.

On the eve of the massacres, Stead approvingly reported that the “the wrongs of the Armenians” had been brought “before the House of Commons and of the British Public by representations in the press.” Stead claimed that the Berlin Treaty made Britain, “peculiarly responsible for the prevention of those atrocities” past and future. He advocated a diplomatic approach, arguing that short of “train(ing) guns on the Sultan’s Palace on the Bosphorus . . . it would be well if Lord Rosebery and the English Press would endeavor to put a little more pressure upon the Grand Turk.”⁶⁴ Stead took on the role of key informant as soon as the Armenian massacres began in fall 1894: “The news from Armenia is very horrible. The Turks and the Kurds have been at their bloody work again – and this time on a larger scale than usual . . . By orders from Constantinople Turkish regular troops aided by [Kurds] destroyed twenty-five Armenian villages, slaying from three thousand to four thousand men, women and children, subjecting them . . . to every extremity of outrage.” He concluded: “The facts seem to be beyond dispute.”⁶⁵

Gladstone’s campaign to bring the Armenian cause to the public relied on men like Stead. In the feature article, “The Storm Cloud in Armenia” Stead wrote, “The recent display of the Ottoman method of dealing with troublesome Christians has naturally aroused Mr Gladstone . . . It needed, however, the brutal massacre of Armenians at Sassoun to arouse the public to a sense of what Turkish rule actually means to the Christian province.” He gave the Armenian cause legitimacy by connecting it to earlier campaigns that had roused the public: “As in the old days of the Bulgarian horrors, Mr Gladstone took the field in person and launched on the eve of the New Year one of those sweeping anathemas which no one can pronounce with so much authority and vehemence as the great pontiff of political humanitarianism.”⁶⁶ In the wake of the Young Turk Revolution that brought on another wave of sectarian violence in 1908 (see [Chapter 4](#)), Stead published articles arguing that Britain put pressure on the new Ottoman government to reform its minority policy.

Journalist E.J. Dillion (1854–1933) took Stead’s brand of humanitarian journalism one step further. While Stead was busy distilling information found in reviews of the day for readers and offering his own editorial comments and directives, Dillion played the role of the investigative journalist. He traveled in disguise to Turkey to see for

himself the effects of the massacres and interview alleged perpetrators. A scholar of eastern languages, he clandestinely entered Turkey after the Sultan reportedly explicitly forbade his travel. This resulted in a series of articles on the massacres for the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Contemporary Review* which, according to a profile written by Stead about Dillon, “made an immense impression upon the public mind.” Dillon’s investigations represented “the most damning description of Turkish government in Armenia that has ever been printed in the English language.”⁶⁷ Gladstone used Dillon’s deposition of a Kurdish leader involved in the massacres to make his case for action in a speech at Chester where he “challenged the Ottoman Government to deny the statements there made.”⁶⁸ Dillon believed that “the responsibility for the ghastly massacres which have horrified the world in Armenia lie at the door of England,” an accusation Gladstone had once leveled at his own Liberal party.

Humanitarian journalism also took hold in periodicals that targeted women readers. Feminist perspectives on the Armenian question appeared in feature articles, book reviews and biographical sketches of women activists in all of the major women’s papers, including the *Woman’s Herald*, *Woman’s Signal*, *Women’s Penny Paper*, *Our Sisters* and *Shafts*.⁶⁹ Assuming the role of Britain’s moral conscience, liberal feminists found in the Armenians a just cause. In 1895, *Shafts* published a letter addressed to Lady Henry Somerset (1851–1912), a key voice in this campaign, from the Armenian women of Constantinople that described a series of massacres in that city. Somerset’s response to the letter, signed “Your Suffering Sisters,” concluded with a challenge to English women: “Will English women be deaf to the voices that call to them in the hour of their supreme agony? Will they not rise to demand that such steps be taken at all hazards as will secure the rescue of this tortured people?”⁷⁰

Others echoed Somerset’s belief that women should get involved in the Armenian campaign. “We should be callous indeed, if our sympathy remained unmoved by the fearful crimes in the Turkish dominions” wrote one correspondent in *Shafts*.⁷¹ *Our Sisters* published reports of the massacres in another Armenian town and described the mass murder of “the defenseless crowd of men, women and children” gathered in a church that was then set on fire.

Somerset’s own paper, the *Woman’s Signal*, paid particular attention to the Armenian question. Somerset was a liberal committed to the

Gladstonian line on the Armenian question. Gladstone's 85th birthday celebration provided Somerset with an opportunity to make the case for "A Call to Action" in the face of the government's inaction in her newspaper columns. In an address at the annual meeting of the British Women's Temperance Association, she argued: "The Turkish Empire has been kept alive by treaties which have been broken again and again . . . we as a country are powerless to move and are obliged to acknowledge that we are impotent to save the people we agreed to defend."⁷² British women, she maintained, should lead the charge and put pressure on Liberals to intervene to stop the massacres. Somerset published articles about "the persecuted Armenian" and appealed to readers to heed "the bitter cry of Armenia." News briefs reported details of "attacks on Armenians in the very heart of the Turkish government's rule."⁷³

The *Woman's Signal* also featured testimony from massacre victims themselves. Somerset retold the story of the killing of one Armenian woman's three-month-old baby and two relatives by Turkish soldiers. The young woman, who escaped to England, was saved by remarkable circumstance: "'Don't kill this woman,' said one of the brutal Turks. 'She is young and pretty; I will take her along with me.' But she struggled with her brutal captors with all her strength. 'If you are such a fool,' said the Turk, 'as not to go with me quietly, we shall kill you at once.' She still struggled. They tore her clothes off her back. Her fate was near, the worst of outrages and death at the hands of the men who had just killed her baby before her eyes."⁷⁴ When coins that her husband had fastened to her belt fell along the ground, she escaped to the woods while the soldiers picked up the gold and quarreled over the money.

Somerset's dramatic retelling of the story in the *Signal* echoed Stead in style and substance. Outrages of rape, violence and greed figured prominently in Somerset's version of one woman's ordeal. Taking on the voice of the victim, Somerset issued a call to action: "The Christian womanhood of England as presented by the *Woman's Signal* can be depended on to demand that the extermination of these people shall be stopped."⁷⁵ Moral responsibility for Armenia also meant speaking out against sexual violence and protecting womanly virtue. Somerset's moral outrage was strengthened by her status as a woman. She held a unique position of authority when she described the fate of the woman refugee and represented to her audience an authentic voice of feminine sympathy. This most certainly added moral weight to her campaign

while raising awareness of the Armenian crisis among her mostly women readers.⁷⁶

Humanitarian journalism necessarily facilitated aid work. In 1896, Somerset launched the Armenian Rescue Fund. Donations ranged from the large to the very small and drew in readers from all social classes. Prayer meetings, British Women's Temperance Union Branches, Congregational church members, individuals and anonymous donors including "An English Sister" contributed to the fund, whose purpose was "not only to cover and feed these suffering ones, but to see that they have homes and work." Donors were assured of the worthiness of the 600 refugees helped by the fund: "Let it be remembered that they do not drink, that they are devout and earnest, exceedingly docile and kind and remarkably quick-minded."⁷⁷

Despite such industrious credentials, Somerset assured readers that refugees would be resettled in Marseilles rather than London. The fund also served destitute Armenians still living in Turkey. Somerset reported that by the end of her campaign, the fund raised enough money to support a three-year program to educate and feed a significant number of Armenian orphans. To readers of the *Signal* she offered her thanks. The money collected from readers served as "eloquent proof of the worth of [the *Signal*] which has gathered round it the best hearts of the womanhood of England."⁷⁸

The media played an important role in disseminating information and raising money during the Armenian crisis. Journalists like Stead, Dillon and Somerset also used the press to advocate for a Gladstonian liberal foreign policy and promote humanitarian ideals. Mass literacy and the popularity of the news media as a source to convey information in a trusted, periodic format made journalists an important part of a culture of politics that defended the rights of others in the name of the *pax Britannica*. However, journalists like Stead had little difficulty turning the tables on the British Empire. His demands that Britain defend Ottoman minorities came not long before he critiqued British concentration camps for Boer women and children in the Boer War (1899–1902). For liberals like himself, there was a right and wrong way to maintain empire. In the end, humanitarian journalism helped make the Armenian campaigns into a movement that advocated a stronger and more prominent moral leadership role for the British Empire in the wider world.

Knowledge is Power?

Stories of the Armenian massacres bombarded Britons from every direction. The public had access to the information published not only in the press but also in public documents thanks in part to a pamphlet campaign by Armenian advocacy organizations. Through the press, pamphlets and parliament, a narrative of human suffering on a mass scale found its way into Victorian life. This “humanitarian narrative,” as Thomas Laqueur has called it, produced a private and public response to the Armenian massacres that asked Britons to act on behalf of distant strangers. For any humanitarian narrative to have power, according to Laqueur, it must link “sentiment, obligation and action.” “Sad and sentimental” stories about human suffering fall flat if they do not elicit an emotive response that invests the audience in the plight of the victim. Severing this link often results in what we today call humanitarian fatigue.

Stories about the Armenian massacres applied a human face to the unimaginable by logically ordering human suffering and making its immediacy felt. Meanwhile, the repetition of the information found in these reports about the massacres created a pattern of intent that implicated the Ottoman government in a policy that sought the elimination, or in the words of Gladstone, “extermination,” of the Armenian population. As Stead, Dillon and Somerset so well understood, stories of human suffering had their greatest effect when they came from the experiences of individual victims of systematic violence. Thus, collected personal stories from the site of the massacres took on added weight as the tragedy of an entire people. The mass of evidence collected and disseminated to the public during the course of the Hamidian massacres necessarily informed how Britons responded to the killings of distant Armenian strangers.

Between 1889 and 1896 there were ten different Blue Books published on the condition of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. These official volumes contained thousands of pages of information.⁷⁹ Presented first to parliament and then later disseminated to the public by the media, the reports chronicled evidence of massacres. Information largely came from the eyewitness reports of British consuls stationed in regions where the massacres took place and were accompanied by statements from the British Ambassador to Constantinople who reported meetings with the

Sultan and his functionaries to the Foreign Office. These reports also included statements by Ottoman officials that Armenian intrigue was to blame for the massacres. Regardless of how fully or adequately the Blue Books represented what happened, the media relied on information found in these reports in order to convey some sense of what was happening on the ground. Like reports today of atrocities happening in far off places, the public wanted to know something about high profile news items even if they could not know everything. The press along with the Blue Books provided an entry into the world of the massacres that then opened the question of how, or even if, Britain should intervene.

Many of the hundreds of articles published on the Armenian question in the 1890s relied on these official government documents to support particular claims. This included critiques of the diplomatic dealings with the Sultan reported in the Blue Books. "It is impossible for an Englishman to read these dispatches, and to note the offhand, fearless, nay reckless, way in which the Turkish bull was taken by the horns," commented E.J. Dillon in the *Fortnightly Review* upon reading about how the British Ambassador dealt with the massacres in a Blue Book in 1896.⁸⁰ Other journalists used the information from the Blue Books to convey the extent and progress of the massacres. "The reports which come from the interior show that the Government is now trying to restore order and put an end to the massacres. An outbreak at Adana ten days ago was put down with little loss of life, but it is much easier to destroy the peace of a community than to restore it," commented a writer in the *Speaker* in March, 1896.⁸¹ Still others claimed the Blue Books showed the willingness of the British to intervene and stop the massacres: "We know from the dispatches published in the official Blue-books that the Prime Minister of England was prepared after the first massacres of Armenians in Asia Minor to have put a stop, if necessary by force, to any recurrence of these horrors."⁸²

Such commentary did little to stop the bloodshed. However, as evidence mounted that the slaughter was planned and perpetrated by the Ottoman government, it drew the public further into the controversy. In the article, "The Red Book," one journalist commented about the recently published Blue Book, "If symbolism were observed at the Foreign Office, the latest of its official publications would be coloured, not Blue, but red. A more ghastly record than 'Turkey No. 2, 1896,' had never been compiled. It puts an end, once for all, to the

miserable pretext of the Sultan's organs in this country that the Armenian massacres were magnified into unnatural importance by the heated imagination of special correspondents." Investigative journalists also offered correctives to the Blue Books which some accused of stemming from sham investigations: "The able and competent men who have furnished the leading journals of the morning press with trustworthy narratives of crimes and horrors unsurpassed in history have turned out to be far better guides than a Commission hampered at every step of its proceedings by Turkish obstinacy and fraud."⁸³

Thus, information about what was happening in Turkey came to the British public in fits and starts and through an amalgam of sources, both official and unofficial. Others used the Blue Books to show that the massacres were the result of Armenian intrigue and not the Sultan's government. Quotations from Ottoman officials denying the massacres were privileged in these accounts over reports of atrocities committed against Armenian men, women and children. This inspired a back and forth in the media over what to believe in the Blue Books and often spawned heated exchanges. But news of massacres kept coming throughout 1894, 1895 and 1896. The multiple Blue Books published on the massacres ultimately kept the issue in the news while implicating Britain in the solution to the crisis.

A series of pamphlets published by the Information (Armenia) Bureau in London, and directed by Canon H. Scott Holland, did the work of excerpting the Blue Books and other eyewitness testimony for the public. One of the most effective ways of presenting the case for intervention was by using the words of British diplomats and officials on the ground to convey the extent of the horrors. "The plundering and massacre began on Saturday afternoon," began a report from the Acting-Consul at Angora, "I watched the progress of things from the roof of my house which is situated in the very heart of the city and I report nothing as fact which I do not know from actual observation ... Immense quantities of plunder were carried off by Turkish women as well as by the men and boys ... Women were most horribly mutilated. The universal procedure seems to have been to insist on their becoming Moslems (sic). If they refused, there were cut down mercilessly – fairly hacked to death with knives, sickles or anything which came handy."⁸⁴ This report was excerpted by the Information Bureau and sold as an inexpensive pamphlet.



Figure 3.4 “The Man for the Job.” *Punch*, September 12, 1896.

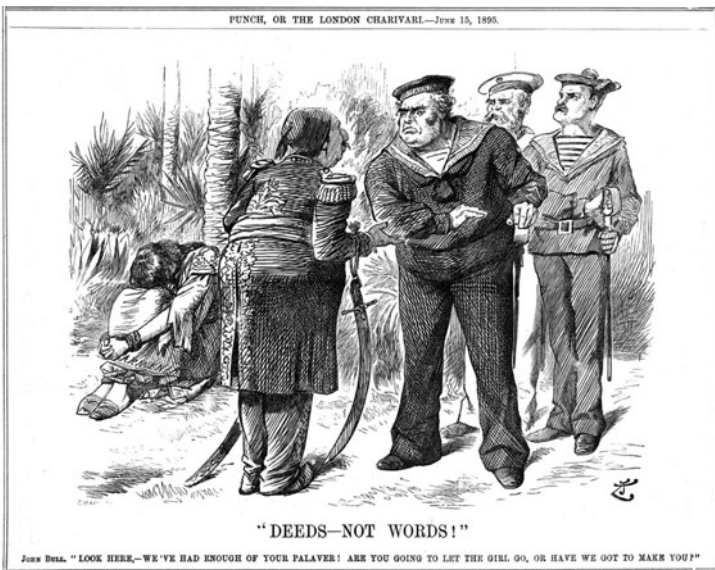


Figure 3.5 “Deeds not Words.” *Punch*, June 15, 1895.

Evidence suggests that reports of massacres weighed on the public conscience. Activists and humanitarian organizations began to demand a response, as evidenced in the steady stream of letters to the editor in the periodical press and the increasing number of public meetings held throughout the country. In one week at the end of September 1896, *The Times* reported on the outcome of 21 meetings held in major cities and provincial towns.⁸⁵ Journalists encouraged this sense of engagement. “The time has come for every reasoning inhabitant of these islands deliberately to accept or repudiate his share of the joint indirect responsibility of the British nation for the series of the hugest and foulest crimes that have ever stained the pages of human history,” E.J. Dillion chastened the public in the *Contemporary Review*.⁸⁶ Other commentators wrote of “broken promises” to the Armenians.⁸⁷

It was up to Britain, then, to find a solution. “The Year of Shame” made the argument for military intervention: “War is, indeed, a great and terrible evil; but it is not the greatest of all evils. Dishonour and infamy are worse than war. Yet there are some who, apparently, would rather take the devious paths of infamy and dishonour than incur even the shadow of a risk of war. It was not thus that the freedom and greatness of England were won in times past.” This dishonorable course, according to the writer, went against Britain’s interests: “It is not by putting our conscience into commission, it is not by playing second fiddle in an inharmonious and futile Concert that we shall uphold the national dignity, or safeguard the interests of our great Empire.”⁸⁸

Had the time come for Britain to take justice into its own hands? A pair of images in *Punch* magazine showed Britannia flexing its muscles in defense of Armenia. In one image, an English sailor is labeled “The Man for the Job.” With the Sultan in the background he confronts the Concert of Europe with the challenge, “You don’t care to tackle him! Well, Sirs, just leave him to me!” (Figure 3.4). In the other image, John Bull is dressed as a sailor who leads the heads of Europe in confronting the Sultan. He defends Armenia, pictured as an abject woman in the background, with the threat, “Are you going to let the girl go, or have we got to make you?” (Figure 3.5).

Diplomats and consuls began to feel the pressure. Ambassador Sir Philip Currie at first refused to make his diplomatic corps into aid workers. When asked to distribute £100 in donations from *Daily*

Telegraph subscribers in early June 1895, he balked: "I do not think it advisable that Consular Officer[s] should undertake distribution of relief . . . we have no one we could spare for the purpose." He suggested instead an American doctor.⁸⁹ Later that month, pressure from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs led him to consent to act as an agent for the distribution of £1,000 raised by "three leading British merchants" for Armenian Relief through British consuls in the devastated villages of Van and Moush.⁹⁰

By July, Currie had completely changed his tune. His office now administered money from the London-based Armenian Relief Fund "forwarded through the Foreign Office" by Lord Salisbury for the purchase of food and provisions for victims at Sassoun.⁹¹ This work earned him praise in the press: "Thanks to the active sympathy and support of Sir Philip Currie, the relief work is going on undisturbed."⁹² The presence of Currie and the other consuls facilitated aid distribution through missionary and humanitarian aid organizations in uncertain times. When the Sultan withheld permission for the American Red Cross to provide aid to villages in the interior, Currie and his agents were the only ones with access to needy populations. In this way, the British diplomatic corps continued the tradition started by Ambassador Layard and British consuls, Captain William Everett, Major Emilius Clayton and Major Henry Trotter in the wake of the Bulgarian crisis. It was through these outlets that aid money collected in Britain and the US traveled and was distributed. Humanitarian aid work thus relieved the public conscience while seeming to make good use of imperial officials abroad.

The response to the massacres, meanwhile, caused chaos in government at home. Activists launched an attack against the Liberal Rosebery and the successor Conservative Salisbury governments in an attempt to force them to act. Memories of the unwillingness of the British government to intervene in Bulgaria led critics to ask for concrete action. Citing the failure of minority protections provisions in the treaties of Paris and Berlin, one writer in the *Fortnightly Review* asserted that Britain was being misled again by the Sultan: "The whole of Europe has been outwitted, defied, humiliated, and held at bay by a Prince whose throne is tottering under him."⁹³

Under Gladstone's urging Rosebery came up with a sympathetic though largely ineffectual policy that did little to help either Armenians



Figure 3.6 “A Day Over the Armenian Covers.” *Punch*, October 10, 1896.

or Liberal fortunes in the next election. “In spite of the circumstance that the late Liberal Government was in possession of these and analogous facts,” argued one commentator regarding the massacres, the government “found it impossible to have them remedied and unadvisable to have them published.” Hope for resolution would rest with the newly returned Conservative government: “There is fortunately good reason to believe that Lord Salisbury . . . will find efficacious means of putting a sudden and a speedy end to the Armenian Pandemonium.”⁹⁴

But the official response remained ineffective. “Public opinion in England has spoken loudly and decisively on the Armenian question,” asserted H.F.B. Lynch in the concluding article of his series on Armenia in the *Contemporary Review*, “two ministries have taken energetic action, yet, for some reason which has not yet been sufficiently explained, their intervention remains without result.”⁹⁵ The spirit of reform that first animated debates about British responsibility after the Treaty of Berlin began to gain ground in both Conservative and Liberal Party circles. Salisbury, during his time as one of Disraeli’s ministers in 1878, had argued forcefully in favor of a

pro-Ottoman policy against Russia. But when Salisbury led the Conservative party to power in 1895, he openly backed a plan for self-government for Armenians that met with widespread public approval. As Lord Sanderson put it, in the wake of the Armenian massacres, "Lord Salisbury declined to pledge the British Government to any material action in support of the Sultan or of the Rule of the Straits, on the grounds of the alteration of circumstances and the change in British public opinion."⁹⁶ Salisbury's new-found support for the Armenian cause, designed in part to keep his critics on the defensive, did not amount to any more than the Liberal Rosebery's ineffectual pledges during his short-lived ministry.⁹⁷

The Armenian crisis proved a heavy burden. Rosebery had not wanted to take over the leadership from Gladstone of the Liberal Party when he finally retired for good in spring 1894. The Liberal ministry under his leadership would last only 15 months. In early October 1896, Rosebery resigned as leader due to "some conflict of opinion with Mr Gladstone" over the Eastern question.⁹⁸ The ministry was such a disaster that some suggested that in the wake of the Armenian agitation, Gladstone, by now an octogenarian, return to Parliament. Rosebery was satirized as a man hiding from his obligations over the Armenian question while an elevated bust of a disapproving Gladstone looked over his shoulder (Figure 3.6). Rosebery set up a "mock Commission" in the view of his critics that relied on the findings of a Turkish Commission appointed by the Sultan to investigate the massacres which gave "carte blanche to the Great Assassin."⁹⁹ The Armenian crisis left the Liberal party "cleft in twain."

Private Intervention, Public Cause

From a diplomatic and domestic politics standpoint, the response to massacre was a failure. But for some, moral outrage translated into action. Aid programs which targeted persecuted Christian minorities grew in the wake of the Bulgarian Atrocities agitation. Extended coverage of the Armenian massacres reenergized humanitarian relief work among this community. Quaker activist Ann Mary Burgess' Friend's Mission in Constantinople was characteristic of turn-of-the-century relief projects. Part of a larger movement by Quakers to spread their ideals to the far reaches of the globe, the Mission started in the late

1880s and played a key role ameliorating the condition of victims of the Hamidian massacres.

Friends in Britain funded “this body and soul saving work” which also enjoyed the widespread support of other religious and secular aid organizations.¹⁰⁰ The massacres started out targeting the male population, which led to the mission’s focus on widows and orphans. Burgess, along with two other English women, “stayed at the mission and undertook relief work among the suffering women and children, as bread-winners had become very scarce” after ethnic Armenian relief workers were forced to flee Constantinople.¹⁰¹ As one supporter observed, Burgess saw relief work as a way to “strengthen and revivify the spiritual life of the Armenian Church” not convert her subjects to the Quaker faith.¹⁰² To achieve this goal, her mission supported education projects and campaigns for political and administrative reform for minority communities.

Burgess cultivated ties with secular philanthropic organizations and government institutions. The London-based branch of the International Organization of the Friends of Armenia set up operations in eastern Anatolia in 1897. Started to assist massacre victims, it had its own network of patrons whom Burgess used to support her work in Constantinople. Women made up 12 of the 15 members of the Executive Committee; they also held the majority of the 45 positions on the General Committee. The organization was headed by Lady Frederick Cavendish, whose husband, Lord Frederick, was a Liberal MP and a close associate of W.E. Gladstone. Contributions and organizational support came from the Quaker Cadbury sisters, Lady Henry Somerset and a host of titled ladies. Twenty-seven branches of the British Women’s Temperance Association also donated to the general fund.¹⁰³

These women made humanitarian aid work their business. Burgess cooperated with other philanthropists and aid organizations to publicize and raise much needed capital for her projects for Armenian widows and orphans.¹⁰⁴ As conditions surrounding the massacres worsened for the Armenian community, relief work took on a more urgent role in and around Constantinople. Quaker W.C. Braithwaite described how Burgess’ Mission bridged the roles of political advocate and spiritual guide, helping “prisoners in obtaining their release, in visiting and caring for the sick, in clothing the naked and in feeding the starving ones around us.” As Braithwaite concluded, “It has been our blessed privilege, also as of old, to see that the poor have the gospel preached unto

them.”¹⁰⁵ Evangelicalism in this way served a larger humanitarian purpose. This also worked in the reverse. Secular organizations like the Friends of Armenia had little trouble supporting the attempt to revive the Eastern Orthodox Church as they recognized the important role that religious organizations, both Protestant and Orthodox, played in providing aid to massacre victims and maintaining community ties.¹⁰⁶ Rather than understand conversion itself as the goal, Burgess put evangelical activism in the service of humanitarian relief and political advocacy.

The Armenian massacres made Burgess anxious to find a way to protect and offer long-term financial support for the primarily women and children survivors. “In the first weeks that followed this political out-burst of hate and fury, we could do little else besides giving out bread to women and children and listening to tales of woe,” she recalled. She immediately began seeking a way to help women earn a living doing needlework, knitting and making “oriental embroidery” that Burgess sold on the local and European market.¹⁰⁷ This so-called “industrial work” generated funds through the production and sale of artisan crafts made by needy Armenians. Burgess also used her connections with the consular staff at Constantinople, attending embassy dinners in dresses made with material sent to her by supporters in England who recognized the value of cultivating political connections.¹⁰⁸ Burgess’ network of philanthropists, businessmen, government consuls, and workers created a thriving industry that supported over 700 women workers and generated sales between 8,000–10,000 pounds a year.¹⁰⁹ The British Consul in Constantinople helped defray start-up costs at the mission and supported it throughout its nearly three decades of existence.¹¹⁰

After the massacres, Burgess completely transformed the buildings of what had started as a medical mission into a multifunction campus. She had a meeting hall, schoolrooms and workrooms built alongside living quarters and offices.¹¹¹ In the midst of extreme uncertainty and social instability, Burgess’ workshops were a place where political rhetoric about the strategic importance of aid met humanitarian action.

Conclusion

The diplomatic and humanitarian response to the Hamidian massacres represented two sides of the same coin. A game of tug of war for the

sympathy of the public took place in the pages of the periodical press. Meanwhile, Gladstone's peoples' foreign policy remained stuck in limbo in parliament. The only tangible action that seemed possible and sustainable during the years leading up to and following the Hamidian massacres was charitable giving which sustained the work of philanthropists like Burgess. Her experiences in the wake of the massacres in Constantinople prepared the mission, in part, to deal with the eventual crisis of world war which brought new diplomatic questions and burdens for humanitarian aid workers like Burgess. A year and a half after the guns of August sounded in 1914, the Armenian Genocide brought home the realities of a conflict that made civilians into war's most vulnerable victims.

But all did not remain quiet during the period between the Hamidian massacres and World War I. In the spring of 1909, a new set of massacres, this time centered in and around the prosperous southeastern Anatolian town of Adana, shook the Ottoman Armenian community. How Britain responded to the Adana crisis in the context of previous massacres foreshadowed the role that it would play in mitigating the effects of genocide in the midst of world war.

CHAPTER 4

REVOLUTION, MASSACRE AND WAR IN THE BALKANS

“British statesmanship . . . has shown itself capable of shaking off the influence of Gladstonian ideals.”

– *Fortnightly Review*, signed “A. Diplomat,” October 1901

“What steps are being taken by the Turkish Government and the representatives of the Great Powers to relieve the distress resulting from the massacres of Armenians in Asia Minor and to prevent their recurrence?”

– House of Commons Debate, May 18, 1909

“Under the Young Turks the outlook is just as hopeless as under the Old Turks . . . Justice is not administered there; people hardly know what justice is.”

– E.J. Dillion, *English Review* February 1912

“Those who had not been massacred were blamed for surviving; those who had taken up arms to defend their homes and besieged villages were condemned to death or long periods of detention. The first gallows were erected, and innocent victims were strung up on the tree of infamy beside diabolical criminals.”

– Zabel Yessayan, *In the Ruins*, 1909

Revolution came to the Ottoman Empire on July 24, 1908. The Committee of Union and Progress, known as the “Young Turks,” overthrew Sultan Abdul Hamid II in a bloodless coup that moved people from Jerusalem to Constantinople to the villages of eastern Anatolia to rejoice in the streets. The scene of members of diverse ethnic and religious communities embracing one another throughout the empire captivated Britain, which celebrated the declaration of the Ottoman Constitution as a triumph over generations of sectarian strife:

The spirit of brotherhood and peace filled Jerusalem as never before for two thousand years. The townspeople, we are told, assembled in the great square within the military barracks adjoining David's Tower. Here the Governor announced that a Constitution had been granted. The playing of the National Anthem amid the wild cheering of the crowd was the prelude to scenes indescribable. The strange medley of sheikhs, priests, rabbis, delivered speeches denouncing the old regime. Moslems, Christians, Jews, Samaritans, Turks, and Armenians, all fraternized and then formed up in procession, preceded by banner with emblems of liberty.¹

Commentators read this event as a new beginning for Anglo-Ottoman relations as well as an opportunity to settle the Armenian question once and for all through constitutional reform rather than diplomatic or military means. “An enormous tyranny was swept away. The Hamidian despotism disappeared in a night,” the *Fortnightly Review* concluded. “In Constantinople, Turks have kissed the earth which covers the victims of the Armenian massacres, and the Armenians have suddenly acquired an interest second only to that of the Turks themselves in preserving the integrity of the Sultan's dominions.”² Cooperation between Armenians and the Young Turks offered hope that the years of ethnic and religious hatred would be replaced by a policy of integration and inclusion.

But this optimism represented what one commentator called “the mad summer after the May-day of hope” that preceded the dark days of French Revolution.³ This observation proved prescient. In the years that followed the jubilation of the declaration of the Constitution, a brief but violent counterrevolution destabilized the regime and resulted in the massacre of tens of thousands of Armenians in and around the city of Adana. Between 1912–13, the Balkan Wars of

independence challenged the integrity of the western most provinces of the empire. Minority communities, whether they had risen up in the Balkans or not, became marked as traitors. In the wake of these events, the dreams of the 1908 revolution that imagined a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional empire fell victim to an exclusionary nationalism that declared “Turkey for Turks.”⁴

This was not how it was supposed to be. The Constitution revived by the Young Turks promised representational government that would ultimately save the empire through integrating all of its subjects in a common cause. This, in part, explains the early embrace of the Revolution by the millions of minorities concentrated throughout the Ottoman Empire. For Armenians, the Constitution meant representation in parliament and a legal means of putting a stop to the internecine violence that plagued their communities, but also an opportunity to implement political reform.

Scholars still debate what went wrong in the heady days of the Young Turk Revolution.⁵ A massive, inefficient empire plagued by inequality and discontent between Muslims, Christians, Jews and Arabs, the Constitution promised much but delivered little. The Constitution itself was a reworking of the one suspended by Abdul Hamid II when he took the throne in 1876. A mixture of concessions to minorities demanded by Britain and the Great Powers after the Russo-Turkish War and western-style parliamentary democracy, the new Constitution pleased no one. It did little to curb the resentment among the various classes and subjects of the empire while creating new rivalries by replacing the multi-confessional administrative system with an ultimately unworkable system purportedly created to protect minorities from abuses. The Young Turks and their supporters believed that constitutionalism would reform the empire while uniting its critics and quelling discontent. In the end, Turkish nationalism centered on the embrace of Islamic religious identity and the attempt to “Ottomanize” the Empire’s minorities in hopes of making them more Turkish. This further fueled the nationalist claims of ethnic and religious minorities who found little that benefited their communities in the new arrangement.

Britons observed the smoldering discontent that threatened to consume the new regime from afar. After Gladstone’s death in December 1898, the Armenian issue all but disappeared from the public eye. Britain, it turned out, had its own imperial worries. The 1899 Boer War in

southern Africa ushered in the new century with concerns over the integrity of its own empire and inhumane tactics used to defeat the Dutch Boer settlers. The use of concentration camps for Boer women and children, accompanied by a scorched early policy that saw the destruction of Boer farms and villages, shocked the nation. W.T. Stead unequivocally condemned "savage" methods used in the war by the British and launched a campaign against the camps.⁶

After the Hamidian massacres, the humanitarian movement turned its attention from the Middle East to Africa, which provided a distraction to contemplating the crimes of its own empire. Activists assailed Belgian King Leopold II's brutal rule in the African Congo. Experience with the Armenian massacres provided a touchstone for dealing with King Leopold. Men like E.D. Morel and Arthur Conan Doyle asked why the British did not do more to stop atrocities in the Congo.⁷ Others compared King Leopold's treatment of the Congolese to the Sultan's treatment of Ottoman Armenians.⁸

The British Empire for some did not resemble the one Gladstone claimed promoted good government and justice abroad. Reactions of liberal critics like W.T. Stead and J.A. Hobson to the human and economic costs of the Boer War spoke to the disillusionment of the post-Midlothian moment. Conservatives worried about the empire for a different reason. For them, the formal expansion of the territory of empire was crucial to maintaining global power. Cecil Rhodes' vision of a British Empire that stretched from the Cape in southern Africa to Cairo, Egypt in the north looked closer to realization after victory in the Boer War. This increased Britain's imperial footprint across Africa and into the Middle East when compared to its largest rival in North Africa, France. At the turn of the century, maintaining and expanding the influence of the empire from India to the continent of Africa overshadowed Britain's dealings with the Ottoman Empire.

Gladstone's humanitarian foreign policy vision waned in the wake of these imperial preoccupations. In Europe, Britain worried about old rivalries with France and Russia and the increasing strength of a unified Germany which, by 1903, had plans underway to build a "Berlin to Baghdad" railway to connect the German Empire to the southeasterly reaches of the Ottoman Empire. Interest in forcing the hand of the Ottoman Empire to reform its treatment of minority subjects that Britain had pursued since the end of the Crimean War diminished,

replaced by attempts to forge new alliances that would strength its influence in both Europe and its growing empire. This diplomatic shift, however, did little to quell the humanitarian impulse. It continued to maintain a powerful hold over British understandings of empire and its role in the Near East well into the twentieth century as part of the legacy of Gladstonian idealism.

Young Turks, Old Rivals

A veneer of relative calm in British-Ottoman relations characterized the years leading up to the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. The Sultan's hold on power, thanks to an extensive spy network and limits placed on free expression, appeared stronger than ever. Sporadic massacres that broke out during these years along with Armenian and Turkish revolutionary activity ceased to grab headlines abroad after 1898.⁹ Some argued that Britain needed to take a more "practical view" of diplomacy regarding the Ottoman Empire in order to safeguard its own imperial ambitions in the region. Celebrations of the Sultan's 25 years on the throne with his jubilee in 1900 were marked in England with "official congratulations" from the Queen and her Ambassador at Constantinople.

Queen Victoria appeared to be repaying the favor as the Sultan similarly had honored her on the occasion of her own jubilee. Notices in the press included Stead's wry observation that the anniversary was "celebrated in Turkey by fresh massacres of Armenians in the province of Sassoun, and an order for eight new ironclads and two torpedo boats."¹⁰ Others took the opportunity to assert that the Sultan bore "direct responsibility" for the massacres of the mid-1890s, and that "Lord Salisbury's speeches on the Armenian question have not yet faded from public memory."¹¹ Many Britons, however, appeared relieved that Anglo-Ottoman relations had thawed. This created an opportunity for Britain to reassert itself in the Middle East against its old rival, Russia, and the rising power of Germany.

As early as 1901, the press declared that British policy had taken an "about face" when it came to the Ottoman Empire:

Never in the whole history of diplomacy has there been such a *volte-face* as that accomplished by the British Government at Constantinople in the space of two years. The audacious 'barbarian'

who had defied Great Britain, and on whom she had been emptying the vials of her scorn and vengeance; the offender against human and divine law . . . the ‘assassin’ whom Lord Salisbury had publically warned, threatened, pilloried – this man, in other words, Abdul Hamid, who, in 1898 was still the antichrist, is today in the year of grace 1901, the object of special attentions and favours on the part of his Lordship, acting in his own name and that of the British Empire.¹²

This went beyond mere placating an erstwhile rival. As one diplomat concluded, “A regular wooing of the Turkish ‘hyena’ by the British ‘lion’ has replaced the growls and blows with which the latter used to meet the former.” A concerted “attempt to win over Abd-ul-Hamid (sic),” this British statesman approvingly concluded, best served the empire’s interests.¹³

Rapprochement with the once vilified “bloody Sultan” promised to increase British influence in the Balkans. The British Empire looked “to restore an ancient alliance and a traditional influence” on the “distressed peninsula” bordering the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴ At the same time, Germany began to court the Sultan, which forced Britain to move closer to its old imperial rivals, Russia and France, out of fear of rising German influence in the East. While most of Europe shunned the Sultan during the Armenian massacres, the German Kaiser had not. He sent him a signed photograph of his family, which he hoped would secure personal ties between the two leaders.

German competition led to fears that Britain risked losing any influence it might have had over the Sultan. The moment when the British Empire could bully the Ottoman Empire to do its bidding through treaty dictates seemed to have passed. In 1912, the *Review of Reviews* went as far as to suggest an alliance among equals: “English aid will be freely granted without conditions, and the asking for it will in itself be proof of the independent strength of the New Turkey.”¹⁵ But by the time this was written, W.T. Stead was no longer an influence at the *Review*. He, along with his suspicions of the intentions of the Young Turks, had gone down with the Titanic, silencing one of the loudest advocates of humanitarian diplomacy.

Others, however, continued to support the cause. Journalist E.J. Dillion who had made his name investigating the Armenian

massacres in the mid-1890s continued to write about Armenian atrocities and to remind Britain of its earlier pledges. Colleagues called him the “last of the great foreign correspondence of a pre-War age” and “a definite force in European politics.”¹⁶ The humanitarian movement also kept the issue in the public eye. Liberal politicians continued to make the case for honoring Britain’s diplomatic commitments. MP Noel Buxton was one such individual. A frequent traveler to Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Anatolia, he cared deeply about what was happening in the Ottoman Empire. Writing in the *Westminster Review* in 1903, Buxton proposed that Britain “repudiate” its “quixotic” policy of proclaiming “ourselves the protectors of Turkey” and refusing “to admit the interference of others.” For Buxton, Britain either needed to lead or get out of the way. It could not have it both ways. He quoted Lord Salisbury, who recognized the dilemma as saying, “We put our money on the wrong horse; but we have not made the way clear, by a formal declaration, for other Powers to act.” For Buxton the lesson was clear: Britain had a moral responsibility. Repudiation of this responsibility would diminish what Buxton referred to as Gladstone’s “holy cause.”¹⁷

Holy causes aside, Buxton hit on a fundamental diplomatic problem facing Britain at the turn of the century. The British Empire wanted to maintain its influence in the Middle East in part by claiming to speak for oppressed Ottoman minorities. At the same time, pressing concerns over Africa and growing discontent at home over imperial and domestic crises fed anxiety over maintaining its status as the leading European and global imperial power. This was a world, after all, organized around empires and Britain wanted to maintain its influence among its European, Russian and Ottoman rivals through a projection of political stability at home and military and moral power abroad. The Armenian question in the face of the constitutional promise of the Young Turk Revolution proved the ideal testing ground for these claims.

Empires and Constitutions

Despite the outward appearance of stability and rising influence over the crown heads of Europe, all was not well with the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid. Threats from revolutionary groups based in the Ottoman provinces and in Europe simmered during the opening decade of the twentieth century. The rise of the Committee of Union and Progress

(CUP) in the late nineteenth century as an advocate of constitutionalism would prove the most powerful threat as it engineered the ultimate abdication of the Sultan in the wake of the 1908 revolution. But the Young Turks did not represent the only challenge to Ottoman absolutism. Instability in the Balkans started well before the Balkan Wars, with a revolt in Macedonia in 1903 and armed conflict in Albania.¹⁸

Repressive tactics on the part of the Ottoman government further antagonized the rivalries between religious and ethnic communities. They found solace in nationalist movements that challenged the Ottoman autocracy and did not eschew the use of terrorism and political violence. Two Armenian revolutionary parties, the *Hunchaks* and *Dashnaks*, emerged at the turn of the century to advocate for liberal reform and to defend Armenians against periodic massacres and attacks by Kurdish tribesmen.¹⁹ Though their goal was not separation from the Ottoman Empire in this period, eventually, Armenian revolutionary parties advocated for an independent Armenia and engaged the help of Europe in the attempt to realize this ambition after World War I.²⁰

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Armenian question, as Ronald Suny has argued, became hopelessly entangled with the increasingly inevitable breakup of the Ottoman Empire.²¹ The fallout from the 1912–13 Balkan Wars would represent the most dramatic geopolitical and psychological challenge to Ottoman power as it threatened to push the borders of the once great empire outside of Europe.²² Britain saw both opportunity and danger in this prospect. The Treaty of Berlin made it responsible to the international community to advocate for internal reforms to governing the Sultan's increasingly restless subjects.

At the same time, Britain understood that it had much to gain in pursuing a policy of watch-and-wait. Its army of consuls, vice-consuls and their staffs scattered throughout the disparate lands of the Ottoman Empire served as symbolic and actual reminders of its influence. The British Embassy at Constantinople hosted a long series of, if not always admired – as was the case with then-Ambassador Sir Philip Currie – then respected diplomats. This, alongside Britain's role in negotiating reforms in the Berlin Treaty, meant that the Armenian question simmered below the surface as a defining aspect of its relationship with the Ottoman Empire.

Engagement with the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire thus was tied intimately to the history of British power in the East.

The coming to power of the CUP with the Young Turk Revolution in the summer of 1908 forced a reimagining of this relationship. Suddenly, the “Red Sultan” emerged as constitutional monarch when he swore “on the Koran that he would respect the Constitution.”²³ Promises of equality among and between the Empire’s subjects seemed to give Britain exactly what it had sought. Parliamentary government with representation for the enormous diversity of peoples constituting the Muslims, Christians, Jews and Arabs of the empire would replace the one-man rule of Abdul Hamid, who had represented himself as both Sultan and Caliphate.

As political observer and long-time Constantinople resident Edwin Pears observed in the aftermath of the revolution: “It seemed that with one accord the whole country recognized that the reign of Abdul Hamid as an absolute sovereign was at an end . . . the revolution had triumphed and Constitutional Government had replaced absolutism.”²⁴ The revolution buoyed the aspirations of those who believed that constitutionalism would bring the Ottoman Empire closer to Britain. Cheers echoed from the crowd when they passed the British Embassy which, according to Pears, indicated their recognition of Britain as the “Mother of Free Parliaments.” It seemed that the CUP achieved in its dramatic and sudden sweeping away of the Sultan’s authority what the British had tried to enforce with innocuous and futile diplomacy since the Crimean War.

This did not stop observers like Pears from taking credit for the advent of constitutionalism in the Empire. For him, the revolution marked an important moment in which to acknowledge Britain’s longtime tutelage of the Ottoman government: “[The CUP] had been struggling for long years to remodel the Government on the Constitutional, that is, British, lines . . . Nearly all had risked their property and even their lives to realise a British ideal.” This sacrifice, to reinstate the Midhat Constitution of 1876 that Abdul Hamid had suspended, gave the revolutionaries “a right to expect, British sympathy.” The dethronement of the Sultan eight months later heightened this expectation. This revolution was “accomplished almost without bloodshed.” Despite “many blunders, due to lack of experience and a too great fervency of zeal,” Pears concluded, it “would have met with the approval of Canning, of Russell, of Palmerston, and of the liberal men of both political parties in England.”²⁵ This long-time apprenticeship of

sorts, Pears concluded, had the added benefit of increasing British prestige while diminishing the influence of Germany.

The press wrote approvingly of the revolution and the events in Macedonia which had precipitated the bloodless coup. An air of inevitability sounded in the accounts of critics of Abdul Hamid. "Any sensible person might have foretold the *coup d'etat* in Constantinople," opined the *Saturday Review*. "The fact that the Sultan's personal rule had ended and been nominally superseded by a popular Assembly was enough to enlist all Western Sympathies for the new authority . . . No method of government could be worse than his."²⁶ Others sounded a more condescending note,

Turkey now has her Ministry, brand new, complete. With every good wish for Turkish self-regeneration, we are by no means sure that the road lies by way of representative institutions. Meantime there is no evidence that the great body of the people, the Moslems living in country places, desire a Constitution on the approved Western lines.

As this commentator concluded, "The idea that the ordinary, or even the extraordinary Turk will ever regard a Christian fellow subject as his equal is ludicrous."²⁷

The possibility of equality between subject races, ethnicities and religions, however, continued to preoccupy British politicians and the public in the wake of the revolution. Sir Edward Grey was encouraged to take what the *Fortnightly Review* called "the opportunity of his life" to support the Constitution as "the most likely solution of the Eastern question" by putting an end to the aspirations of the Armenian, Albanian, Syrian, Bulgarian, Greek and other groups who sought independence due to the Sultan's misgovernment.²⁸ Mark Sykes, who would play a crucial role in dividing the Middle East for Britain in the secret Sykes-Picot agreement brokered with the French during World War I, believed that good administration would insure the safety and security of Ottoman minorities. Writing in the *Dublin Review* six months after the declaration of the constitutional monarchy, he expressed skepticism that the revolutionary committee that replaced the Sultan would reform the "traditions of corruption and espionage" and poorly run army. The absence of reforms to these institutions made it "exceedingly difficult" to manage

the disparate interests of the empire. Most worrying to Sykes, however, was the nagging problem of inequality. In his view, "The deeply ingrained and universal conviction of the Moslem that the Christian is not his political equal has to be dealt with and dispelled" in order for the constitutional experiment to succeed.²⁹

British consuls from around the Ottoman Empire offered perspectives on how these changes had been received on the ground. A massive volume presented to the House of Commons in March 1909 detailed the scope of the changes. The issues of governance, law and order topped concerns. So, too, did the level of political violence caused by the revolution. Consul General Harry H. Lamb reported from his vantage point in Salonica that "The total number of the victims of this revolution, so far as I have been able to ascertain, did not exceed 18 killed and 10 wounded."³⁰ Other consuls reported similarly low numbers of casualties and the lifting of "restrictions on travelling and commerce."³¹ Freedom of movement and goods, however appeared the result more of "the removal of abuses than of actual alterations of the law" particularly in Constantinople.

Most striking was the changed situation in the "vilayets inhabited by Armenians." Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey received a report of "a complete change in the state of affairs at the present moment" in Kharput, Diarbekir, Erzeroum and Bitlis.³² At the end of July the situation "seemed nothing less than hopeless" in Bitlis due to a "violent reaction" to the announcement of the revolution by "certain Moslem elements endeavoring to prove by very convincing tokens that a constitutional regime was unsuited to that part of the country." Worries over possible steps being taken "for bringing about a massacre" in Bitlis had abated by the end of September. Over the course of two months, "Mutual confidence between Moslem and Christian kept increasing, while unprecedented peace and security began to prevail throughout the vilayet." Armenian revolutionary parties openly supported the Constitution: "At Diarbekir the reactionary party seem to have disappeared; a meeting of all creeds was held in the Armenian church to celebrate the Constitution, and some emissaries of the Beys of Haini, who have of late been terrorizing the town, who had come in to ascertain whether orders had not arrived for a massacre, returned amazed to report the phenomenon to their masters."³³

As it turned out, no other group came to support the CUP agenda more enthusiastically than the Armenians. Armenian revolutionary

committees organized the celebrations that marked the announcement of the Turkish Constitution in the Armenian Apostolic Church in Cairo and invited key Christian and Muslim leaders to join in the festivities.³⁴ British consuls reported similar reactions throughout Anatolia where Armenians publicly declared their loyalty to the CUP and the program of constitutional reforms. But this unity faded as the implications of equality among the Empire's races and religions started to manifest themselves in the business of governance. Reserved seats in parliament set aside in the new Constitution, though in reality by no means adequately representative in terms of population, were perceived as favoring Christian minorities. Discontent and conditions for unrest began to spread to communities with large Christian populations.

As early as February 1909, British observers worried about the Revolution's effect on the Empire's minorities:

Newspaper reports, grossly exaggerating the demonstrations of affection alleged to have been lavished upon one another by various races and religions, no doubt were responsible in no small degree for the delusions of Western admirers. The revolution was made by the army in Macedonia, and when it was found that the forces in Constantinople and the neighborhood would not resist or that Abdul Hamid had not either the courage or the energy to rally his own forces the old regime collapsed ignominiously. It was assumed that the army, having made a revolution, would at once resign its power to a motley assembly of Turks, Arabs, Albanians, Greeks and Armenians . . . Severe disappointment was the unfortunate result for many well-meaning enthusiasts, but a revolution made by soldiers means a military dictatorship.³⁵

Two months later, in the midst of a short-lived counterrevolution, the revolution's most fierce defenders would bear the brunt of the fury of the conservative reactionary elements and the repressive policies of the restored revolutionary government.

Counterrevolution and Massacre

Violence began on the streets of Adana in March 1909, alarming residents of this prosperous commercial center in eastern Anatolia (Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1 Adana's ruined Armenian Quarter. From H. Charles Woods, *Danger Zone of Europe* (Boston, 1911).

The killing of two Muslims by an Armenian in a dispute escalated tensions over what the new constitution would mean for Ottoman minorities. When news arrived from Constantinople in April that a counterrevolution had taken place against the Young Turk regime, the city exploded in a wave of sectarian violence directed against the city's Armenian inhabitants on April 14th which continued for several days and left hundreds dead. On the fourth day, troops were sent in from a neighboring city to maintain order. Peace, if only temporarily, had been restored. Anxiety among Armenians increased in the days that followed as rumors spread in Adana's Muslim quarter that Armenian agitators were planning an attack.

No attack came, but the rumors were enough to ignite a second wave of violence that continued for three days between April 24 and April 27, when Armenian men were attacked, women raped and houses and businesses were burned to the ground. Only charred remains existed in the once-thriving Armenian quarter after the fires and looting ended (Figure 4.2). Turkish troops on site refused to maintain order and the violence spread to other Armenian communities throughout the region. By the time the second wave of violence subsided, between 20,000–30,000 Armenians were dead. Thousands more were left homeless and destitute; the fear of further violence prevented survivors from bringing in the crops ready for harvest in the surrounding fields that would have sustained the cities' growing refugee population.



Figure 4.2 The streets of Adana after the massacres as photographed and represented by contemporary observer H. Charles Woods. From Woods, *Danger Zone of Europe* (Boston, 1911).

Historians still puzzle over the exact causes of the massacres which effectively eliminated the Armenian population from the city and many of the surrounding villages. Bedross Der Matossian convincingly argues that the massacres were part of the larger drama of the counterrevolution unfolding in Constantinople in the spring of 1909. Age-old resentments and economic rivalries fueled already tense relations between Muslims, Christians and foreign residents in the city.³⁶ Although the causes remain difficult to pin down, the reaction to the massacres by foreign observers at the time offers a clear picture of what happened in the city in the dark days of April 1909 and its implication for the future. Instability in the Ottoman Empire, of which the Adana massacres were a symptom, would spread in the coming years to the Balkan territories, culminating in the tragedy of World War I. Britain's watch-and-wait attitude to the revolutionary changes in the Ottoman Empire continued during the Adana episode, while humanitarianism emerged as a viable if incomplete and temporary response to sectarian violence and political uncertainty. The inadequate diplomatic and military response, in the end, increased tensions on the ground, while calling into question the legitimacy of the Young Turk regime.

The terrible scene at Adana exposed the uneven ground on which the seeds of the revolution had been sown. The Young Turk Revolution, with its talk of equality and brotherhood among the Empire's different races, religions and creeds, meant nothing if the new regime failed to reign in reactionary elements. Armenian residents in the agricultural heartland of the empire had openly celebrated the declaration of the constitution on July 24, 1908. Maybe they celebrated the promise of equality with their Muslim neighbors too much and too loudly. Adana, with a population of just over 100,000 residents before the massacres, was a relatively wealthy town located in southeastern Anatolia, not far from the Mediterranean port of Alexandretta. The region, known as Cilicia to Armenians, represented a spiritual center and was home to around 30,000 Armenians, making them the largest ethnic minority, followed by Greeks, Chaldeans, Assyrians and Christian Arabs. Muslim inhabitants numbered over 60,000. The approximately 200 "foreign subjects" of Adana were a mixture of European diplomatic consuls, missionary and lay educators and managers employed in the loom industry, which relied on the raw materials produced in the district. There were also a large number of Muslim migrant workers who worked

the fields at harvest time each season. Adana Armenians were resented for their wealth and influence in the cotton trade, a feeling that grew as foreign influence and mechanization in the industry cost jobs and limited opportunity for Muslim laborers.³⁷

Discontent with the overthrow of the Sultan and his acquiescence to his new status as constitutional monarch was widespread in and around Adana. The villages and towns distanced by geography, economy and custom from cosmopolitan Constantinople particularly resented the limits put on the power of a man who once had declared himself caliph and leader of the Muslim world. Though the circumstances of the counterrevolution remain less than clear – the level of involvement of the Sultan himself and even the identity of many of those reactionary elements opposed to the constitution remain in question – the events of April 1909 shook the very foundation of the Young Turk regime, which still had not figured out how to unite a vast, diverse empire under a constitutional framework. Declarations of racial and religious equality were viewed with suspicion and skepticism in many villages and towns in the largely rural hinterlands of Anatolia.

British Vice-Consul in Adana, Major Charles Doughty-Wylie (1868–1915), understood the massacres as “encouraged by reactionary feeling, if not directly caused by it.” As he observed, “Many Christians were killed with these words: ‘That for your liberty!’ The arch outside the *konak* [official residence] put to commemorate the constitution was pulled down.” In short, the revolution challenged the existing order of privilege for the Muslim majority with the difficult to fulfill promise of equality. This dredged up a toxic mix of longing for the stability of the past and a reliance on violent solutions to settle old scores. “Cheers were given for Sultan Abdul Hamid,” Doughty-Wylie wryly remarked in his recollections of the events at Adana, “He had set the fashion of massacres.”³⁸ In the end, the counterrevolution proved short-lived. The CUP quickly restored order after effectively routing the reactionary elements and deposing the Sultan, insuring that any potential challenge to the new regime could not start from the Palace gates.

These events, though not widely reported in the British press, were narrated by eye-witnesses like Doughty-Wylie for officials back home. Doughty-Wylie was educated at Winchester and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst and took his job as diplomat seriously. His military background, as a member of the Royal Welch Fusiliers and a decorated

war hero who had served in South and East Africa, India and China, turned out to be excellent training for his post as consul in the Adana region in the town of Mersina. Foreign Secretary Edward Grey kept a close eye on the events at Adana and was asked to answer for the British response in the House of Commons. The relative silence with which the Adana massacres were greeted in Britain, when compared to the Armenian massacres of the mid-1890s, threw into sharp relief the important role played by individuals leaders like Gladstone in focusing public attention on the massacre. But although suffering in Adana solicited a more muted response, it echoed the lessons of the 1890s. British politicians and the humanitarian movement understood the response to Adana as part of the fabric of liberal idealism and practice in matters of foreign policy.

No one embodied this worldview more than the regional consuls. These men and their wives continued to represent the eyes and ears of the British Empire in Turkey. The Hamidian massacres further challenged the traditional notion that the sole task of the consul was to protect British interests and help British subjects living, working and traveling abroad. By June of 1896, the British had established new Vice Consulates in the “provinces where massacres have principally occurred and where the forced conversions of Armenian Christians to Islam has caused widespread dismay amongst all classes of the non-Mohammedan population.” These newly appointed consuls took their posts in Armenian villages and towns in Turkey’s eastern provinces: Van, Sivas, Kharput, Mush, Diarbekir and Adana. They served as middlemen of sorts, facilitating the link between the soaring rhetoric of protection and peace with Britain’s desire to maintain its tenuous influence over Ottoman internal affairs. Pledges to support the diplomatic promises of the post-Crimean settlement and the Treaty of Berlin, particularly in terms of the treatment of Ottoman minorities, increased the burden and influence of what essentially had been an unimportant bureaucratic post in the Levant Service. During the Adana crisis, consuls played the role of humanitarian aid worker, protector and mediator.

Doughty-Wylie experienced this responsibility firsthand in the spring of 1909. The British consul at Mersina, a coastal town of the Adana province, was part of a patchwork of missionary, diplomatic and commercial interests that shaped life in the city and ultimately influenced how the outside world responded to the massacres. Buildings

and whole campuses housing American, French, German and British residents occupied prominent spaces in the streets of Adana and the surrounding villages. Around these institutions grew up a culture of cooperation resulting from a necessary dependence on one another for public and private support of particular enterprises. Correspondence between Major Doughty-Wylie in Adana and his superiors in the Ambassador's residence in Constantinople and the Foreign Office back in London reveal the limited influence that foreigners ultimately had in stopping the massacres. What these letters did do was leave a record of what happened. They also documented the radicalization of resentment among and between Muslim and Christian subjects who viewed the Young Turk Revolution through very different eyes.

The collection and dissemination of information about the extent of atrocities made it impossible to deny knowledge of massacres by both the Ottoman government and the British. Like the massacres of the mid-1890s and the Bulgarian Atrocities before that, this documenting of lead up events, the massacres themselves and the aftermath implicated observers and perpetrators alike in the slaughter. These atrocity chronicles prefigured those that would document the genocides of the early and mid-twentieth century against the Armenians and later the Jews during the Holocaust, and in the 1990s, those in Rwanda and Bosnia. Ultimately, the response to what happened in Adana failed to produce a viable political solution to sectarian violence in the Ottoman Empire. Instead, it led to the mounting of another humanitarian campaign that helped, in a limited way, both the refugees and survivors.

Chronicling Atrocity

Doughty-Wylie's reports to his superiors recorded the massacres in excruciating detail. At times, these reports read more like despairing letters, moving from the mode of official report to exhausted eye-witness testimony. While understanding his role to protect British citizens and property, as the only European consul in Adana in late April, he and his wife, Lilian, who had been trained as a nurse, found themselves swept up in the horrors of wholesale massacre. On April 14 he received a notice from the British dragoman, or interpreter, at Adana of "a very dangerous feeling" taking over the town. He booked the next train to

Adana with his wife, unaware that “any massacre was imminent.” What he experienced on his journey shocked him:

From the train, about two stations from Adana we saw a dead body, and a little farther on several refugees running towards the train. All the people from the second class carriage got into the first saying that there were men in the train to kill them . . . I saw two armed Turks threatening the refugees running by the train. When they saw me they put away their pistols and were quiet. The nearer we got to Adana the more bodies there were.³⁹

He immediately escorted his wife to safety and “got into uniform” to take a tour of the town where he witnessed mass killing and looting while in the company of both missionaries and Turkish soldiers. There was, as he reported “firing in all directions” and he “had not force enough to do much to stop it.” Fighting took place in the Armenian quarter where he witnessed “murder and fires everywhere.”⁴⁰

The ability of Doughty-Wylie to move about the town freely in the midst of chaos and stem violence by his mere presence, if only temporarily, made him a central player in the drama of late April. Despite having been shot in the arm while on his way to Adana, he embraced the role of witness and mediator in the beginning days of the massacres. Pages and pages of descriptive testimony which included the names and locations of perpetrators filled his reports. He attempted to intervene with the district Vali to “stop the massacres” that had spread to the “outlying districts.” He received backup when the British warship *Swiftsure* arrived and had the “great effect” of “restoring confidence” among the Armenian population who gradually were persuaded to “return to their homes.” British and Turkish authorities would eventually officially recognize his efforts to restore order during the crisis.⁴¹

A report to the British Ambassador Sir G. Lowther from April 21, 1909 both described and attempted to explain the violence. It also indicated the ultimate form of the British response. After a lengthy description of the violence, the report shifted to a discussion of causes which he concluded were not “without some secret preparation on the Turkish side.” His assessment of the “Attitude of Turkish Authorities” included a description of an overwhelming anti-Armenian sentiment which operated, in his view, on unfounded fears of an uprising. He also

tried to sort out why the massacres happened and raised the specter of “imminent famine.” The loss of British property and any possibility for “English commercial enterprise” in the coming years also worried him. Importantly, Doughty-Wylie asserted that the British should help promote the conditions for reconciliation by supporting calls for justice for massacre victims. Though he expressed skepticism that it would happen, he believed meting out punishment for those responsible for the massacres that he estimated claimed the lives of 2,000 in Adana and 15,000–25,000 in the surrounding villages would restore the peace.⁴²

Conditions continued to worsen after the second wave of massacres commenced. “The country, generally, cannot be said to be safe or quiet. There are still murders and threatening of renewed massacres,” he reported on April 24, “The Christian population is altogether panic-stricken, both Armenian and Greek.”⁴³ Four days later, he observed that “there was still plundering and the fires were terrible,” concluding that it appeared that after it was over, “about one-half of Adana city will be burnt.” Doughty-Wylie expressed dismay over talk among Muslim leaders and in the Muslim quarter that blamed Armenians for the massacres. He believed that the press, led by the newspaper, *Itidal*, and its editor Ihsan Fikri, continued to incite violence by spreading rumors of an Armenian conspiracy. The editor later was exiled by Turkish authorities for his role in fanning sectarian flames. “Every Turk in the town is fully persuaded that the Armenians set light to their own houses,” Doughty-Wylie disparagingly noted, “with, I suppose, the idea of bringing about foreign interference.”⁴⁴

But “foreign interference” was the last thing on the mind of Britain and the other Europeans who had sent warships to the local harbor as observers. Conditions on the ground continued to deteriorate. *The Times* reported of the British warships dispatched to three ports in the region in late April that, “Their role will be passive unless necessity should arise for active interference, and the course adopted is of precautionary nature only. There will, it is understood, be no attempt to interfere in Turkish internal affairs.”⁴⁵

By the time the second wave of massacres ended, little was left of the multi-ethnic and religious community that had stood as a symbol of regional prosperity and culture. Discredited rumors that bred insecurity and fear fueled the destruction not only of Adana but of the historically diverse villages and towns throughout the region, reaching as far as the

prosperous port-city of Alexandretta. The British Vice-Consul there, Joseph Catoni, concluded in his report on the massacres that the “Turkish authorities are now endeavouring ‘as in 1895’ to hold the Armenians responsible for the disturbances.” Rev. S.H. Kennedy had another explanation. Reporting on the siege in one of the towns surrounding Adana, he observed: “it seems plain to me that all that happened during these terrible last days of April was part of a pre-concerted plan . . . Without a doubt the Government officials are responsible for all that happened.”⁴⁶

Conspiracy theories about an imminent Armenian revolt could not explain what happened for Doughty-Wylie either. As he asserted in his own report on the situation to the Ambassador three months after the massacres, “The theory of an armed revolution on the part of the Armenians is now generally discredited.”⁴⁷ The answer, for Catoni, was obvious: bring perpetrators to justice. “Unless [Government officials] are held responsible and punished there will be no security for Christians living in this part of Turkey.”⁴⁸

In the end, the Turkish government did agree to an investigation and then a court martial for those implicated in the massacres. Doughty-Wylie and Catoni both reported their findings to the respective Turkish leaders of their districts. These men had given them help in some cases to work to stop the violence in the early days of the crisis. Doughty-Wylie, for example, asked for and received armed escorts from the Vali at Adana to patrol the streets. These reports and interactions, though not always effective in the ways intended, built a case against perpetrators and found their way to high-ranking British and Turkish officials.

Correspondence between Ambassador Lowther and Sir Edward Grey in May of 1909 included reports of debates in the Turkish Parliament about the massacres. Reporting that blame for the massacres fell largely at the feet of the “old regime,” possibly the result of “direct Palace instigation,” the Ambassador lent the Foreign Secretary the impression that the episode was close to resolution. During the debate as reported by Lowther, Ottoman deputies traded shots at one another while critiquing the testimony of the Vali of Adana. “These regrettable events show that we have not acted up to our professions of brotherhood and equality,” declared Dr Arif Ismet Bey during the debate. “No attention should be paid to the explanations . . . The authors of this outrage must be severely punished.” In addition, deputies promised to send aid to rebuild the province and, in the words of Armenian Deputy Zohrab Effendi, as “help for the sufferers.”⁴⁹

Prosecutions under the court martial authority of the Turkish government resulted in the execution of 50 Muslims and six Armenians, with many others sentenced to hard labor. Doughty-Wylie cast doubt over the proceedings, calling many of the executions unjust and complaining that “while most of the condemned persons were men of no importance, most notorious criminals are still going free, and have not been arrested.”⁵⁰ Armenian aid worker and writer Zabel Yessayan agreed. She was referring to the prosecutions when she wrote after touring Adana that “those who had not been massacred were blamed for surviving.” Bitterness among the surviving Armenian population was only one result of the proceedings. Other officials thought that the hangings might incite further counterrevolutionary activity in the provinces. The Turkish government, they believed, never had any intention of getting to the bottom of the episode. In the end, the prosecutions failed to restore anybody’s confidence in the Young Turk revolution.

Winning the support of the Ottoman Empire’s Muslim population became a priority for the government in the wake of the massacres. Catoni put it this way: “The deposition of Sultan Abdul Hamid and the accession to the throne of Mohamed V has not produced a good impression amongst the civil authorities and the Mussulman population of this consular district, who seem to be in the majority reactionaries.”⁵¹ When it came time for sentencing those convicted by the government court martial, the punishment was light. Editor Ihsan Fikri, as a member of the CUP and respected member of the Adana community, though sentenced to two years exile for his role in provoking the massacres, was allowed to choose his place of residence.⁵² This lenient treatment of perpetrators and, in the assessment of historians and eyewitnesses, the prosecution of many innocent bystanders did little to resolve the resentments that exploded in Adana in April.

The British, while aware of the tainted nature of the proceedings, nevertheless keenly supported the idea of a court martial, if not the final form that the proceedings actually took. Catoni collected detailed lists of alleged perpetrators, broken down by region and crime, that he sent to his superiors. Doughty-Wylie also kept a list of those implicated in the massacres. It appears that none of this information found its way into the hands of Turkish prosecutors. The Armenian Patriarch of the Orthodox Church resigned over the proceedings, claiming that he sought to have the “real instigators” punished. In Britain, on the other hand, some

expressed approval that the Turkish government showed a “notable readiness to conciliate Armenian public opinion” by agreeing to investigate the massacres at all.⁵³

Debates in the House of Commons confirmed this line, maintaining that the Turkish government bore the responsibility to see the proceedings through to their conclusion. The role of the Consul, some continued to maintain, was to protect “neutral persons,” “foreign embassies” and “British subjects,” not mete out justice. The dispatch of 50 sailors to Alexandretta under the authority of Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey was made with this mission in mind.⁵⁴ When pressed regarding what was being done “to relieve the distress resulting from the massacres of Armenians in Asia Minor and to prevent their recurrence” in another debate in the House of Commons over Adana, the Foreign Secretary protested. Britain *had* done something to help victims when it sent battleships from the Mediterranean Fleet “to relieve distress by landing stores and by lending medical assistance.” Any other action would be left to the Turkish authorities, who were responsible for preventing further disorder and investigating “the origin of the disturbances and to punish the instigators.”⁵⁵ Britain would stick to offering neutral humanitarian aid.

Humanitarian Response

What explains the different faces of the British response to the Adana massacres? On the one hand, the British showed a keen interest in supporting the actions of the Turkish authorities as long as British interests remained secure. On the other, men like Doughty-Wylie, Catoni and Lowther maintained that Britain had a responsibility to document the massacres and collect information on perpetrators for use in the prosecutions. Finally, the Foreign Secretary supported the principle of humanitarian aid by sending warships on a mission of mercy.

These disparate aims found resolution in an anomalous policy that positioned the British as protector of Ottoman Armenians. Such a strategy employed the most elastic of interpretations of the obligations outlined in the Berlin Treaty. Britain, it seemed, could protect minorities through facilitating humanitarian assistance without getting its hands dirty by participating in the messy game of Ottoman internal politics.

None of the British, US, Italian, French, Austrian and German warships stationed in the Adana region did anything to stop the massacres as they happened. As neutral observers, their orders were to intervene only when threats to their own nationals seemed imminent. Fully armed and readied battleships watched the carnage from offshore and waited for instructions. Orders to intervene were given only after the massacres ended. After the “burning and devastation of the town” at the end of April, four marines “arrived from *Swiftsure* to assist with the sick and wounded.”⁵⁶ Similar orders were given to the officers and crew of German and Italian dreadnoughts. By early May, help arrived from the Italians and the German warship the *Hamburg* was getting ready to depart after spending 15 days assisting 4,000 refugees.⁵⁷

Civilian foreign nationals and Armenians helped as well. The American missionary school in the neighboring town of Taurus housed 5,000 refugees during the worst of the massacre, and the German cotton factory run by Mr Stockel temporarily housed those fleeing the massacres and later fed them with the help of the German military. The *Yeni Maballa* refugee camp overseen by Doughty-Wylie had fed over 14,000 people daily by May 1909.⁵⁸ The Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople also sent help. A five-member delegation of Armenian men and women arrived in Adana after the massacres to survey conditions and administer aid and offer assistance to Armenian orphans and refugees.⁵⁹

Although these actions provided only temporary solutions, humanitarian aid prevented the wholesale annihilation of Armenians at Adana. There appears never to have been a question that Britain or any of the other powers would intervene in any other way. Doughty-Wylie, when asking for help, did not request or make the case for military intervention to restore order. As the first European consul on the scene in Adana, he represented a trusted, and the official, voice. He used this authority to coordinate relief efforts. In this work, his wife and prominent foreign nationals focused on feeding and providing medical aid for refugees. Fund-raising drives in Britain and the US went to supporting the building and maintaining of hospitals as well as the buying and distribution of food rations. Donations that came in from the Red Cross, private individuals and organized relief funds ended up in the hands of the handful of foreign nationals who stayed on during the massacres. Key in coordinating these campaigns was Doughty-Wylie,

who served as president of a "Committee of Relief" started at the end of April.

Relief work commenced almost as soon as the massacres began. This followed the Victorian philanthropic tradition that understood charity as a moral obligation. Lady Strangford's hospitals in the Balkans during the Russo-Turkish War and Ann Mary Burgess' mission in Constantinople were a product of this thinking, understanding both the slums of London and more distant outposts as worthy sites of aid. The British Empire's vast network of consulates and diplomatic stations facilitated getting aid to needy subjects. This was particularly important during the Adana massacres and would become even more so during the Armenian Genocide.⁶⁰ While American philanthropic organizations raised far more money than the British through organizations like Near East Relief during the genocide, British networks often helped coordinate the distribution of this aid. The presence of missionary societies and schools all over the Ottoman Empire representing different nationalities and creeds also played a role in aid work.

All of these interests operated in Adana and the surrounding regions. French Catholics and American and English Protestants joined educators from US colleges and the manager of a German factory in the effort to provide aid on the ground in the wake of the massacres. Organizations including the Friends of Armenia and one started by the Bishops of London helped raise money back in Britain to fund these efforts. Together, these aid workers and donors made up the patchwork of relief efforts that represented the face of humanitarian disaster relief work.

Neutral aid failed to provide an easy solution to the crisis in Adana. It remained difficult to draw the line, as the British attempted to do, between politics and humanitarian relief work. Although the Turkish Government gave funds to rebuild the city after the massacres and the Sultan was listed as a subscriber to a British-led relief fund, it is unclear what those funds were used for or if the promises of further aid were ever realized. Part of the problem was coordinating what grew into a massive need. Even before the second wave of massacres began, Doughty-Wylie estimated that 15,000 people needed help. A meeting between "Turkish members of the Relief Committee" and himself yielded few results because, as a result of fresh massacres, "the old lists of refugees are now useless and we shall have to begin again."⁶¹ As he lamented, the "second massacre disorganized everything . . . The lists are all burned." To meet

the growing need, the Armenian population was placed “in refuge in our camp at *Yeni Mahalla* and in Mr Stockel’s factory.”

This move changed the mission of providing rations and temporary aid to a much larger program of refugee relief. “The relief work now is to feed the people in the camp and factory, a special camp and the five hospitals,” reported Doughty-Wylie, “This we continue to do.” Credit to fund relief operations came from the Ottoman Bank and his own pocket. He and his wife donated £150 and made a loan of additional £500 to buy grain and other necessities from the city of Smyrna.⁶² Persistent rumors surrounding Armenian disloyalty and foreign intrigue created difficulties for foreign workers. “All these things, distorted and exaggerated, produce a strong anti-foreign feeling,” Doughty-Wylie lamented. It was too late for military intervention. “If it became necessary to land troops at Mersina, it might be the signal for a fresh massacre here.”⁶³

The presence of the warships, while providing a temporary comfort to Armenians, thus also complicated relief work. On the one hand, they provided essential supplies and expertise in a difficult time. The *Hamburg*, for example, brought food and made available its ship doctor during the approximately two weeks it spent in the region. British sailors also acted as relief workers, assisting the Doughty-Wylie’s with aid distribution and in the hospital. But the presence of warships that did not make war made others nervous. As Doughty-Wylie worried, the landing of a British warship might only serve to inflame hostilities. The arrival of British ships in the harbor, Catoni countered, would interrupt plans for “annihilation” that he believed were already underway.

In the end, warships inevitably played only a temporary ameliorative role, as the mission could change at any moment based on orders given by far off military commanders. This happened in the case of the *Hamburg* when it received abrupt orders to depart, leaving the 5,000 refugees dependent on it for food without any other option. This provided the German factory manager with the opportunity to remove the refugees from the premises, stating concerns that they were damaging the looms. Conditions deteriorated. “The difficulty of feeding all these thousands of people in the factories is extreme,” Doughty-Wylie reported, “They have been hungry for days. In the German factory some children have even died of hunger.”⁶⁴

One project everyone could agree on was the founding of what became known as the “International hospital.” Lilian Doughty-Wylie immediately went to work when the massacres began, eventually providing medical aid to around 200 refugees daily.⁶⁵ Described by Yessayan during a visit to the hospital as a “paragon of selflessness,” the “thin, small-framed woman” explained her work among the mainly women and children who had survived the massacres. “Most of the wounded children had suffered gunshot wounds. Only a handful had thrown themselves from the rooftops or fallen from them in trying to escape,” Lilian Doughty-Wylie recalled. These survivors were brought to the hospital “blood-soaked and nearly in shreds. Some had been shot in seven or eight different places; others had burns over half their bodies . . . it was horrible.” Though this was not her first time in a crisis zone – she had served in India during the famine and claimed to have “seen whole populations mowed down at a stroke” – this experience had left an indelible mark on her memory. “Human beings,” she said, “had turned into veritable devils.”⁶⁶

A similar role was taken up by other women. In Tarsus, at the American school, Helen Davenport Gibbons offered medical aid on the crowded campus to those taking shelter there after massacres spread to the town. “Sky red with fire. Half the horizon in flames, the whole Armenian quarter is burning,” she wrote in a letter to her mother in the middle of April, 1909. Very pregnant, with her husband away, she nevertheless took on the task of organizing and facilitating aid to the injured men, women and children in the compound. She even distributed and made baby clothes that she had intended for her own child to the refugee mothers.⁶⁷ Money, though it never seemed to be enough, eventually came in from abroad to fund the hospitals and relief efforts. In England, Friends of Armenia collected funds to send to Doughty-Wylie. Regular notices in *The Times* about fund-raising efforts appealed to donors and gave the address of charity shops which sold goods on behalf of the refugees and the names of places to send donations.

The appeal of supporting a hospital spearheaded by the wife of the British Consul fueled fund-raising efforts for Adana. The hospital provided an answer to that crucial question asked during any humanitarian crisis: What can be done? Funding an international hospital became a way to do something. It also stood as a symbol of the

persistence of the humanitarian ideal. As *The Times* quoted Doughty-Wylie regarding the hospital:

nothing which in the way of charitable effort has been done in this country is more worthy of general support; that nothing is more acceptable to all races and creeds; that nothing will do more of simple obvious kindness to the massacre survivors. There are not others to take the place of this International Hospital. It is really wanted. In my humble opinion foreigners and Christians can best help now by combining to support it. It is the real Massacre Memorial.⁶⁸

The answer to calming sectarian violence, in the view of this consul-turned-aid worker was to create an ecumenical space of healing. The hospital treated 300 in-patients and over 7,000 clinical patients in the year following the massacres from six different races and 50 different regions in the country. It was, in short, a place for all: "Islam and Christian alike are welcome. Turk and Armenian, Arab and Greek, Koord (sic) and Syrian, Asiatic and European alike find place and equal treatment."⁶⁹

Despite this unshakable sense of mission, relief work could only go so far in mitigating the suffering in and around Adana. "We are again working to prepare lists from the various communities of those in absolute want," reported Doughty-Wylie at the beginning of May to his superiors. He then added, as almost an exhausted afterthought, the destruction of one more town and its inhabitants: "I think I forgot to report the destruction of Missis. When Lufti Bey, who in the beginning preserved it, left for Hadjin, it is said that all the Christians were killed and their houses burnt."⁷⁰ With no political solution in sight and the possibility of military intervention remote, the massacres continued and the need grew. In this way, the political crisis of the counterrevolution rendered its unrelenting human cost in the killing fields of eastern Anatolia.

This would not be Major Doughty-Wylie's last mission. Called up to fight against Turkey in the Great War, he was awarded the Victoria Cross and would lose his life fighting at Gallipoli in 1915. He was buried where he was shot, in a cemetery on the summit of a hill containing only his grave that remains there today.⁷¹

Balkans Wars and the British Armenia Committee

Two wars in the Balkans further tested treaty obligations and humanitarian commitments after the massacres ceased at Adana. Between 1912 and 1913 the Balkans exploded in rebellion. Once the fulcrum of Ottoman power in Europe, the region fell under the influence of determined and ardent nationalist politics that sought the breakup of the Balkans into independent nation states along ethno-religious lines. The difficulty, of course, was figuring out where one homeland began and another ended. The peoples of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, similar to those living in the neighboring Austro-Hungarian Empire, did not live in homogenous, clearly defined national units. The multi-ethnic composition of the westernmost region of the Ottoman Empire posed particular problems for the minority populations who had lived for centuries alongside their more powerful masters.

The minority question fused with the national question during the Balkan crisis. It was a problem that plagued Europe through the period of World War I and beyond. For Britain, eager to stay out of continental entanglements under the leadership of Sir Edward Grey, the wars in the Balkans posed a particular dilemma. The minority question complicated the strategy of containing Russia by maintaining the Ottoman Empire. Expanding the number and role of consulates in eastern Anatolia had been one way of keeping an eye on Russia while attempting to honor commitments made in the Treaty of Berlin. The growth of nationalist movements and the ensuing wars in the Balkans made this approach to containment less viable. Sir Edward Grey equivocated during the crisis but in the end did what he knew best. He kept Britain out of the military conflict, while hoping for power to shift in the Balkans towards the minority communities whom he believed would buffer the ambitions of both the Russian and Ottoman Empires.

In 1912, on the eve of the first Balkan War, few would have guessed that the conflicts of empire and nationalism in the region would spread to the rest of Europe. As Christopher Clark has shown, the Balkans provide the key to understanding how Europe went to war in 1914.⁷² The pre-war instability of this region also explains how Britain came to understand its evolving role and responsibilities in the East before World War I. Ethno-religious rivalries stoked by nationalism and Ottoman imperial policies had long concerned Liberal politicians.

As Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, raised in the Whig Liberal tradition, attempted to balance British commitments and ideals with strategic concerns in the Balkans. What made the British Empire different, liberals believed, was that with its increasing strength and growing footprint came a responsibility to lead. The Liberal leadership, however, expressed little agreement on what that responsibility entailed.

For some, steeped in the old Gladstonian tradition, this meant defending the rights of others on the international stage, regardless of the contradictions that it might suggest in terms of humanitarian and foreign policy commitments. By the early twentieth century, the changing international and domestic climate placed this view under increased scrutiny. Few Liberals understood the British Empire in the same category of other overseas and land-based empires in Europe that they viewed as gross examples of maladministration. But events like the Boer War had tempered liberal imperial idealism. Focus would turn to the crimes of other imperial powers.

Two of the worst long-term offenders, in the view of Britain, were the Ottoman Empire and the Belgian Empire in Africa. Attacks on King Leopold II's misrule in the Congo, a reign which some have estimated cost over ten million Congolese lives, gave British liberals a noble cause to embrace. Eventually, due to pressure from the international community, spearheaded by the humanitarian movement in Britain, Leopold's rule over the Congo ended in 1908. This movement was closely associated with the campaign against Sultan Abdul Hamid II's rule in the 1890s. A widely circulated political cartoon pictured the Sultan with King Leopold in order to compare the weight of their crimes (Figure 4.3). The humanitarian movement made explicit connections between the Ottoman and Belgian empires during the time of the Adana massacres. As the Bishop of London reportedly asked at a fundraising meeting to aid victims at Adana, "who would have to give the greatest account to High Heaven, the late Sultan of Turkey or King Leopold of the Belgians?"⁷³

Domestic unrest also tested imperial foreign policy. The debate over Home Rule in Ireland that began again in earnest in this period split the Liberal party. Not since the Home Rule Bills of the late nineteenth century had Liberals had to face the reality of what the continued repression of Ireland would mean to the British Empire. The heating up of the suffrage campaign for women also created hard choices. Continued

violence by suffragettes, the radical wing of the pro-suffrage campaign, shocked the nation and put the Liberal party in a vulnerable position when it came to supporting or rejecting votes for women. Liberal candidates were targeted by suffrage activists and criticized for their denial of a key right of citizenship to half the British population.⁷⁴ Labour, too, had come into its own as a critical voice. Liberals, the self-proclaimed representatives of the working-class were now challenged by a rising Labour Party led by Kier Hardie, a Scottish miner who had little patience for Liberal Party ideals that led more often than not to a policy of inaction when it came to working-class interests.

The crisis in the Balkans posed an opportunity for liberals to respond to brewing trouble with more than the timeworn tools of weak diplomacy and pledges of humanitarian support. In 1903, a group of Liberal MPs formed the Balkan Committee. Out of this organization evolved the British Armenia Committee, which advocated on behalf of Armenian claims in Parliament from its founding in 1912 up through



Figure 4.3 King Leopold II and Sultan Abdul Hamid II. *Punch*, May 31, 1905.

the 1920s. The first Balkan war started that year and threatened to further erode Ottoman influence in Europe. By the time the second war ended, the Ottoman Empire had lost almost the entirety of its European territory with the new border just beyond the city of Adrianople pushing against Bulgaria's southern border. Tensions began when Italy successfully invaded the remaining Ottoman territories in Libya in 1911. Buoyed by Italy's victory in the Italo-Turkish War, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece formed a coalition to force the Ottoman Empire out of the Balkans. Between October 1912 and May 1913, Balkan armies drove the imperial army out of Albania, Macedonia and Thrace in the eastern Mediterranean. Fresh from victory, coalition forces pressed on and launched another war. This second Balkan war only lasted for two months in the summer of 1913 and saw the Bulgarian army defeated by its erstwhile allies to claim territories taken from the Ottoman Empire in the first Balkan war.

Britain took no active part in the Balkan Wars but keenly followed events as they unfolded. The Balkan Committee, which had lobbied on behalf of Ottoman minorities since its inception, fully supported the reforms of the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. This earned the Committee much criticism in the wake of the Adana massacres.⁷⁵ It now watched approvingly as the mostly Christian Balkan armies drove out Ottoman forces. The Committee took a keen interest in the peace process. Buoyed by success in negotiating settlements in favor of Balkan Christians after the two wars, members turned their attention to Armenia. The Chairman of the newly formed British Armenia Committee, Aneurin Williams, gathered around him MPs, opinion makers and Armenian representatives to pressure the British government to enforce the Treaty of Berlin. Williams, a Liberal MP, reportedly dedicated a "devoted, almost impassioned service" to the Committee during his over ten years as its leader.⁷⁶

The committee was part of a larger movement connected with anti-slavery campaigns. It created a set of guidelines based on the 1899 Hague Convention governing the "Treatment of Subject Races" and sought to extend to them "the humane treatment now accorded to the population of belligerent states."⁷⁷ Political advocacy on behalf of the Christian "subject races" of the Ottoman Empire defined the British Armenia Committee's purpose. In April 1913, members used the opportunity of an international conference on the Balkan Wars held at the House of Commons to argue that the settlement include reforms for

Armenia. The Committee subsequently met once a week until disbanding in 1924 to discuss effective strategies to influence future policy on Armenia.

For members of the British Armenia Committee, the end of the Balkan Wars represented an opportunity to see the “question of Armenia settled” “permanently on a secure basis.”⁷⁸ Diplomat Mark Sykes had suggested in the opening months of the first Balkan War that he believed that the “internal administration of the Ottoman Empire in Asia” would eventually be “entrusted to a body of British officials with executive rank and power.”⁷⁹ When the war ended, the status of the Balkans was discussed in London at a conference which put the proposal of reforms for Armenia before the Great Powers again. Initially proposed by Russia but needing British and French approval, these reforms called for cultural, civic and administrative reforms that would provide security for the Ottoman Armenian population. These included: unifying the Armenian-dominated provinces under a “Christian governor”; creating a mixed Muslim/Christian administrative council; legalizing the official use of the Armenian language; and establishing community-run schools and land reform.⁸⁰

Conclusion

For liberals, upholding the future integrity of the Ottoman Empire was contingent on making good on old promises to Armenians for reform. Armenian negotiators lobbied the British Armenia Committee to support reforms rather than independence, pledging loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. Sending multiple delegations under the leadership of Boghos Nubar Pasha to Foreign Secretary Grey, Armenians found in London a sympathetic ear from several Liberal MPs. As Liberal MP Annan Bryce, brother of the head of the Anglo-Armenian committee, James Bryce, put it in a discussion of the Balkan settlement, “Since the opportunity of the Berlin Treaty was missed in 1878, there has never been so good an opportunity of settling the Armenian question once and for all as the present moment presents.” He maintained that supporting these “moderate” reforms based on the ones first proposed in 1895 after the Armenian massacres would work to keep the Ottoman Empire together rather than break it apart. This negated the potential threat of a Russian invasion with the intent of capturing these provinces during a time when the Ottoman Empire appeared most vulnerable.

Settling the Armenian question would also secure British investment in the region and, equally as important, prevent Germany from having a bigger say in Ottoman affairs. The debate over a proposed Armenian Reform Bill in the House of Commons in 1913 revealed the stakes. Britain needed to act, according to Annan Bryce, because “we have a very large and heavy responsibility to the world . . . to maintain the integrity of the Turkish dominions in Asia.”⁸¹ Liverpool Liberal MP T.P. O'Connor took the debate into the evening, arguing that these reforms “will be as beneficial to Turks as to the Armenians” because they would help keep the empire together by neutralizing discontent.⁸² The debate concluded with characteristic British prevarication: while supporting reforms, MPs eschewed the idea of taking “isolated and individual action.”⁸³ Ultimately, the Great Powers consented to the proposed reforms. On February 8, 1914, under British and European pressure, the Sublime Porte signed the agreement.

The Balkan settlement and the signing of the Armenian Reform agreement, however, did not mark the final settlement of the Armenian question. The loss of Balkan territories fueled resentment towards remaining Christian minorities still living in Turkey who had not rebelled. Armenians, however, saw this as an opportunity to prove their allegiance to the Ottoman Empire. Allowed to serve in the armed forces after the 1908 constitution, many joined the Ottoman army in “defense of the fatherland.”⁸⁴

Despite their loyalty to the empire during the Balkan Wars, Armenians remained under suspicion for their role in supporting the Armenian Reforms as part of the peace settlement. The large concentration of Armenians living on the border with Russia in eastern Anatolia were labeled as disloyal by the leadership of a crumbling empire. Again, the Armenian population in this region found itself subjected to widespread harassment by the government.⁸⁵ When World War I broke out, the Ottoman Empire joined Germany against the Allies. Those populations living in the Anatolian borderlands became the first targets of a policy of mass extermination. For supporting reform and turning to Britain and Europe for help, the Armenians would pay the ultimate price.

CHAPTER 5

GENOCIDE AND THE GREAT WAR

“They are exterminating our nations.”

– Armenian refugee testimony, August 1915¹

Genocide almost always happens under the cover of war. World War I was no exception. The human cost of the war included over 20 million military casualties. Though harder to determine, civilian casualties increased that number to almost 30 million total by the war's end.² The Ottoman Empire suffered an estimated 5 million casualties, many of them civilians.³ State-sanctioned violence against civilians in the face of such enormous bloodshed offers a stark example of the human costs of total war where little distinction is made between civilians and military combatants. The Ottoman government used the opportunity of the war to solve its minority problem by instituting a systematic policy of mass extermination that killed an estimated 1.5 million Armenians, along with tens of thousands of minority Greek and Assyrian Ottoman civilians.⁴ Hundreds of thousands more were made into refugees.

With so much trauma experienced by military and civilian non-combatants throughout Europe, Africa and Asia, the Ottoman Empire's use of genocide against its own subjects shocked those who learned about the killings from abroad. Periodic massacres of the previous generation had taken a menacing turn towards total annihilation. The Armenian Genocide effectively destroyed the Ottoman Armenian community in Anatolia, with survivors scattered to Europe, the US and the Middle East. By the war's end, a small population was allowed to remain in Constantinople as a

result of postwar peace negotiations.⁵ World War I taught the lesson that modern war necessarily included military and civilian costs. Part of that cost included the advent of the modern crime of genocide.

World War I started in the Balkans. It was the result of instability caused by Austro-Hungarian aggression and two Balkan Wars that irreparably weakened the Ottoman Empire. The assassination of the Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in the summer of 1914 by Serbian nationalist, Gavrilo Princip, led to war. No one anticipated that the murder of a minor Austrian imperial figure would have such far reaching consequences for Europe and the world. Fought between 1914–18, the war pitted the Central Powers, led by Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria, against the Entente, led by Britain, France, and Russia. The US and Japan eventually joined the Entente, contributing to the ultimately successful, but tremendously costly, defeat of the Central powers.

The sheer scope and scale of the war was new and it centered on a protracted and seemingly unwinnable trench war fought in Europe. In the East, a more traditional land war was fought and included naval battles in and around the Mediterranean. Significant fighting took place in the Caucasus, the Far East and Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East. This war of attrition brought an end to Great Power diplomacy that had guided Europe since the Congress of Vienna in 1815. It further challenged European global dominance with the destruction of three great land empires: the Ottoman, Austria-Hungary and the Russian. Eventually, these changes would shift power toward the US while forever changing the map of Europe and the Middle East.

Although it started in Europe, World War I had far reaching effects for military combatants and civilians living in empires and independent nation states. The Ottoman Empire believed it had much to gain in this global war sparked by nationalist discontent. It had lost almost its entire empire in Europe in the last Balkan War that ended in 1913. To secure what remained of its empire, it turned to Germany, which promised to protect Turkey from further territorial losses.⁶ The Young Turk regime turned to an exclusionary ethno-religious nationalism that made the call of “Turkey for the Turks” more strident after war was declared against the Entente. Fear of Armenian nationalism also drove this call for ethno-religious unity. Despite having pledged their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire when war was declared, the Ottoman government continued to view Armenians, and

especially those living along the Russian border, with suspicion.⁷ The war government would label this population the enemy from within.

In Britain, nationalism held sway as a different sort of battle cry. An Entente victory, one argument for war asserted, would free minority populations to shape their own destinies. It was a sentiment shared by an increasing number of Britons looking to understand why after decades of peace the Great Powers would so quickly turn against one another in war. As J. Ellis Barker put it in the *Fortnightly Review*, "The present war is a war against German militarism and a war of liberation. If it should end in a victory of the Allied Powers it should not merely lead to the freeing of the subjected and oppressed . . . in Europe, but also to the freeing of the nationalities who live under Turkish tyranny in Asia."⁸

The old nineteenth-century system of alliances among and between European states that was supposed to prevent war had ended. Stopping German aggression in Europe and the freeing of subject peoples from the control of its Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and German enemies proved a rallying point for those on the side of the Entente. In short, it helped give a war which started over a minor conflict regarding Austrian ambition in the Balkans a just cause in the minds of a public that wanted to know what they were fighting for.

War and Genocide

War and genocide converged at the end of April 1915. The British Empire led the Allied invasion of the Ottoman Empire with the landing at Gallipoli on April 25, 1915. Advanced rumors of the invasion provided the opportunity for the Ottoman government to arrest 250 Armenian intellectuals and religious leaders in Constantinople on unnamed charges. Most of these men and the one woman, former aid worker Zabel Yessayan, targeted for arrest on the night of April 24th were either summarily executed or jailed indefinitely.

These two events marked the beginning of a series of military and humanitarian disasters that unfolded in Gallipoli, Constantinople and the villages of eastern Anatolia. For Britain, the Gallipoli invasion provided a crucial opportunity to advance its war aims. Like the German plan to swiftly knock out France with the invasion of Belgium in 1914, the plan had an irresistible but ultimately irrational boldness and bore the stamp of its main architect. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill,

believed that commanding the Straits that stood as the Mediterranean gateway to Europe by taking Gallipoli was worth the risk as it would irreparably weaken German influence in the East (see [Chapter 8](#)). The endless back and forth of trench warfare on the Western Front had not gone well for Britain and its French and Russia Allies since the declarations of August 1914 effectively put the entire continent at war.

At first, Britons had wanted no part of a war that pitted the great continental powers against one another for Balkan territory of little use to the British Empire. Germany's violation of Belgian neutrality and news of the slaughter of innocent civilians created a needed justification for war. The so-called "Rape of Belgium," committed by the invading Germany army against unarmed Belgian men, women and children, unified Britons against what they labeled as the "German menace" in August 1914. Outrage over this act ultimately contributed to Britain's war declaration against Germany. The Central Powers, led by Germany and its ally Austria-Hungary, brought the Ottoman Empire in on their side the next year.

When war came to the Eastern Front in the spring of 1915, news of the beginning of the massacre of the Ottoman Armenian population soon followed.⁹ The fate of the Armenians was represented as analogous to Belgium. Advocates enlisted Liberal party supporters to cast Armenians as another group, like the Belgians and bound by treaty obligations, in need of British protection. Fighting the Ottoman Empire meant, in part, taking responsibility for the fate of Christian minorities caught in the middle of heightening sectarian tension. By November 1915, widespread reporting of massacres led one commentator to conclude: "Avowedly one of the chief objects of the present war is to advantage small nationalities. In this war Armenians are playing no unimportant part."¹⁰

Historians have painstakingly calculated the civilian and military costs of the war on the Western Front but written little on Allied justifications and perceptions of the war in the East.¹¹ Until relatively recently, the Eastern Front, when discussed at all, referred primarily to fighting along the Russian borderlands.¹² As Eugene Rogan has importantly shown, the Ottoman entry into the war made the war a truly "international" war, with major battles fought throughout the Middle East during the four years of the conflict. This Eastern Front relied heavily on men and supplies from throughout the British Empire. 1.4 million

soldiers and auxiliary staff came from India alone, with 80 per cent of those serving in the Middle East theater.¹³ The significance of this contribution cannot be underestimated. The British army had not been ready for the size and scale of the conflict, having maintained a relatively small, professional fighting force that mainly dealt with smaller scale Victorian colonial wars.¹⁴ Without the support of Indian and Anzac troops from Australia and New Zealand, Britain would not have been able to maintain the presence that it did in the Middle East.

Britain's strained military position, coupled with how it understood its role in the fight against the Ottoman Empire, helps explain why the wartime response to the Armenian Genocide took the form that it did. Major campaigns in the Caucasus, the Dardanelles, Mesopotamia and Palestine used resources and drew the attention of war planners as well as the public. The combination of these factors set the stage for conflicts about how to fight on multiple fronts and contributed to lengthening the war by widening the geographical reach of the conflict. The idea that Britain pledged to defend "small nationalities" animated early discussions of the war in the East at home, which seemed likely to overextend an already stretched force that relied on imperial troops, some of whom had plenty of reason to resent rather than support the war effort.¹⁵ Indian support for the aims of the British Empire would emerge as an important factor in the Armenian question at the war's end.

Despite these complications, helping the Armenians proved a powerful and persuasive argument for war against the Ottoman Empire. Britain justified its war aims in the East using the 1878 Treaty of Berlin as a touchstone. Winning the war would require engaging the nineteenth-century trope that Britain had an obligation to defend Armenia, especially when it came to swaying the US to enter the war in 1917.¹⁶ Great Power politics also played a role. Britain deployed the language of humanity and civilization and touted its status as an imperial power that ruled over diverse races and creeds to justify its leadership in the Mediterranean campaigns. The reality of mass civilian displacements, massacres and deportations, while leaving many disillusioned, made others believe it was possible to do something to stop the suffering.

Clashes between the realities of making war and humanitarian ideals thus influenced British actions. In 1915, Britain had the resources and will to lead the investigations into news of massacres happening across Anatolia. Historians largely have assigned this role to the US, which also

collected information and launched a massive humanitarian response. What Britain did in the terrible days of April and May 1915, when reports started to get back to Europe and the US, was begin to build the case against the Ottoman Empire for what the Allies would label “crimes against humanity.” The British Empire remained positioned to determine the direction that the response to the killings took during the war. This included lobbying the United States to enter the war on the side of the Allies to fight against German and Ottoman “tyranny.” The US brought to the crisis in 1917 an increased ability to raise awareness and monetary aid in the English-speaking world.

Together, Britain and the US made it impossible to ignore the Armenian massacres in the face of growing war-related casualties. This deployment of the Armenian issue as a human tragedy of the war had long-term implications for how crimes against humanity and the emerging doctrine of humanitarian intervention came to be treated in the international arena.

“Extremely urgent” need

Armenian advocacy organizations responded with letters, investigations and promises of aid as soon as news of the massacres reached Britain. The secular philanthropic organization the Friends of Armenia paired with the London-based Armenian Information Bureau to publish a series of pamphlets that declared Armenia as “England’s Responsibility” when it came to mitigating the crisis unfolding in the Ottoman Empire. The British Armenia Committee (BAC), formed during the Balkan Wars to support the issue of Armenian reforms in the Ottoman Empire, continued behind-the-scenes advocacy of Armenian issues in Parliament.

Before war broke out, three members of the BAC represented Britain at the Paris Conference on Armenian reforms.¹⁷ The British held a debate in Parliament on the enactment of the Reforms one month before World War I broke out. Aneurin Williams argued for enforcing the Reform agreement, claiming it was “no mere question of humanitarian concern for a few million people in one particular part of a distant country.” Anticipating arguments that would be made during the war, he declared that defending the rights of others “is a matter upon which the peace of the great nations of Europe in the early future may depend.” Lord Grey informed Williams that the two inspectors already selected

for the task had arrived in Turkey. He added that he had every reason to expect that the Turkish government planned to act in good faith and enact the Armenian reforms.¹⁸

The war declarations rendered all previously binding agreements between the Ottoman Empire and its Entente enemies null and void. When sectarian violence broke out in the Armenian provinces in the spring of 1915, Armenian delegations began meeting with British government officials about the killings. Nubar Pasha (1851–1930), the Armenian envoy now living in Paris, traveled regularly to London to meet with the Foreign Secretary, parliamentary and community leaders and journalists to discuss potential European intervention.¹⁹ The Armenian diaspora in London also mobilized. In October 1915, a representative from the Armenian United Association of London traveled to the site of the massacres and sent reports back to political and humanitarian aid organizations based in Britain.²⁰ Unenforceable treaties and reform schemes that had up to this point characterized the British response to the Ottoman Empire's minority problem could not mitigate the impending crisis. Another solution would have to be found.

One of the central figures to emerge during the wartime Armenian crisis in Britain was a Scotsman, James Bryce (1838–1922) (Figure 5.1). Lawyer, historian and politician by training, he was born in Belfast, raised and educated in Glasgow and later attended Trinity College, Oxford. In 1867, he was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn and began a career as a lawyer based in London. Bryce supported the idea that Britain had a role to play as a leader in establishing and enforcing the principles of international law through treaty agreements.²¹ A loyal Liberal, Gladstone appointed Bryce as the Regius Chair of Civil Law at Oxford University in 1870, a position he held for over 20 years. This later led to appointments on the European International Court and helped him to gain important connections with the legal community in the United States. Eventually, he was selected to hold a prominent position on the International Court of the Hague and was elevated as Viscount Bryce in 1914.

Bryce first took an interest in the Ottoman Empire during Gladstone's campaigns against the Bulgarian Atrocities. In 1876, he traveled to the region to perform a broad investigation of the effects of Turkish rule on minority subjects. A skilled mountaineer, he took what turned out to be a life changing trek up Mount Ararat in Armenia, where he reached the lower Massis summit. This experience provided the basis for his book

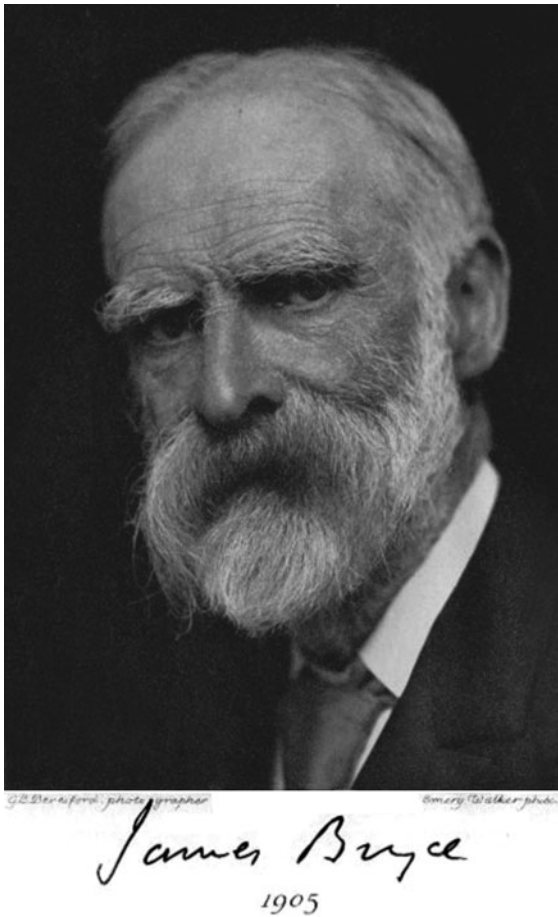


Figure 5.1 Portrait of James Bryce. From H.A.L. Fisher, *James Bryce*, vol. 1 (New York, 1927).

Transcaucasia and Ararat and a set of lectures on Armenia that marked the beginning of a lifelong career as advocate for Armenian causes.²² Bryce maintained a deep scholarly and personal understanding of Armenia. Though not a member of the BAC, he shared Williams' concern that the 1914 Armenian Reforms, though signed by all parties, were never enacted.

The trip to Armenia marked an important moment in Bryce's political career. In December 1876, he organized a national conference on the

situation in the Ottoman Empire and formed the Eastern Question Association along with William Morris, George Young and J.R. Green. The Association, made up primarily of public intellectuals and members of the clergy, organized over 500 public meetings which sustained interest in the Bulgarian Atrocities in the summer and fall of 1876.²³ His election to Parliament as a Liberal candidate for Tower Hamlets (1880–5) and, later, South Aberdeen (1885–1906) brought his work on behalf of Christian minorities to the political stage in the wake of W.E. Gladstone's successful Midlothian campaigns that ushered the Liberals back to power.²⁴ In 1890, he founded the Anglo-Armenian Association to advocate for enacting civil and political reforms for Armenians written into the Treaty of Berlin. During the agitation against the Hamidian massacres, he forged a close relationship with Gladstone's son, Lord Gladstone, and together rallied against what Bryce called "the deplorable inaction of our Government."²⁵ Bryce came to so closely associate himself with these causes that the Sultan reportedly complained to the Ambassador at Constantinople of his appointment to the Prime Minister's Cabinet after the 1906 Liberal landslide victory. Bryce, the Sultan worried, was too partisan when it came to Armenian affairs.²⁶

The leadership of Bryce in the wartime campaign against the Armenian massacres did make a difference. A respected former Ambassador to the United States and a Viscount with a seat in the House of Lords he argued alongside the former Prime Minister for intervention in the Hamidian massacres and went as far as to draw up an atrocity map of where killings occurred (see [Chapter 3](#)). He also reportedly counseled Gladstone on how to approach the American people, who shared a mutual "sympathy with the suffering Eastern Christians."²⁷ He believed firmly in Britain's power to guide the American and European response to the Armenian issue. "The proposals we have presented to the Porte fall short of what we desire and think needed," he wrote in confidence to an acquaintance in the US. "But they go as far as we can induce the other Powers to go with us and the importance of securing the cooperation of the Powers is very great."²⁸ He went on to write an article for publication in the US "on the attitude of the English public opinion towards the [Armenian] question and towards the American people" which he wanted printed "quickly."²⁹ He also forged a connection with Fridtjof Nansen, who took an active interest in humanitarian relief among Armenians when he served as League of Nations Refugee Commissioner after the war.³⁰

Bryce claimed to have fallen in a state of despair after hearing about the war declaration against Germany. As he wrote to an American colleague in September 1915, "This is indeed a hideous calamity for the world, a calamity unprecedented in history." He concluded: "We would have succeeded in keeping England out of this war but for the German invasion of Belgium. That turned public sentiment here at once and the feeling has of course been intensified by the harshness which the German armies have shown in Belgium."³¹ Bryce himself led the campaign against German atrocities in Belgium and succeeded in bringing the issue fully before the public. His report on German soldiers' treatment of Belgian civilians was translated into 27 languages. Bryce's Blue Book on Belgium gave Britain cause to enter the war to protect Belgian neutrality.³² Here he cast German atrocity as an indefensible crime against civilians during war in the context of the 1899 Hague Convention and represented the British Empire as defender of defenseless.³³ He worked hard to get his friends in the US Senate to see things the same way: "We are glad to learn that US opinion is so generally with us. Do you think that any statements of the British case are needed to influence it further?"³⁴ This campaign on behalf of Belgian civilians in the name of international law gave Bryce a strong platform to argue for the defense of the rights of noncombatants in times of war.

It also allowed him to make the case that Britain should fully enforce the Treaty of Berlin and take up the "mantle" of Gladstone's mission to defend Armenians.³⁵ As a former student remembered Bryce he "was never clear about a political question until he had somehow formed it into a moral issue, a question of right and wrong . . . He became gradually recognized by oppressed or suffering people all over the world . . . all, so to speak stood in his ante-room or covered his desk with their letters."³⁶ The Armenian question stayed with Bryce throughout his lifetime. In his late seventies, he continued to sound the alarm over massacres that continued against Armenians after the war. Bryce came from an earlier time which understood the Armenian issue in the context of Victorian diplomatic and humanitarian commitments. This sensibility coupled with his stature in both the US and Britain made him take up the task of documenting the Armenian case. The project had a dual purpose for Bryce: helping Britain win the war and resolving the Armenian question once and for all.

In 1916, he authored with the help of young Oxford historian, Arnold Toynbee, one of the most important and comprehensive documents on the Armenian massacres. *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* was published as a Blue Book six months after news of the massacres first reached Britain. It received notice in the provincial and urban press in England and in the US. “Armenian Nation, says Lord Bryce, Has Been Practically Wiped Out” read one headline in the Dundee *Courier*.³⁷ Called the “most appalling of all the documents of the world war” by the *New York Times*, this “record of Turkey’s wholesale massacre of the Christian men, women and children of Armenia” relied on testimony furthered by “American and other neutral workers in Armenia.” This information, furnished by US aid workers, compiled and sanctioned by representatives of the British government and made public by English and American media outlets openly and loudly accused the Turkish government of crimes against humanity: “All the evidence goes to show the deliberate purpose of the Turkish authorities to exterminate the Armenian Nation, the most colossal crime, says Bryce, in the history of the world.”³⁸

The world had heard about the growing death toll on the battlefields of Belgium and France. Now it would know about the extent of the killings in the villages and cities of the Ottoman Empire.

Making the Case for Genocide

The Ottoman Government did its utmost to prevent the news of what it was doing to the Armenians from leaking through to the outer world. A stringent censorship was established at all the frontiers, private communication was severed between Constantinople and the provinces and the provinces themselves were isolated from one another. Nearly all our information has been obtained from witnesses who succeeded in making their way out of Turkey after the massacres and deportations had occurred and who wrote down their experiences after reaching America or Europe.³⁹

No other document made a clearer case for genocide against the Armenians than *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*. Presented to Parliament in October 1916, the 733-page volume

contained compelling letters, reports and individual accounts from over 100 sources that chronicled Turkish atrocities. Today, the Blue Book remains an important source for scholars interested in understanding the historical context of the Armenian issue and why it remains so difficult to identify, prosecute and obtain justice for victims of genocide. The Blue Book provided detailed, verifiably sourced descriptions of massacres throughout Anatolia from multiple eye-witness and second-hand accounts in the face of Ottoman censorship. It also made the case for what later would be labeled as the crime of “genocide” by defining the massacres as systematic acts of state terror. In the absence of the existence of an international criminal court, the Blue Book tried the case against Ottoman Turkey’s “crimes against humanity” in the court of public opinion, which bolstered humanitarian relief work but did little to resolve charges against the Ottoman government.

The concept of “crimes against humanity” proved an antecedent to understandings of “genocide.” A joint European declaration issued on May 24, 1915 accused Turkey of crimes “against humanity and civilization,” marking the first use of the phrase in relation to war crimes.⁴⁰ Inserted by Russian foreign minister Sergei Sazonov, the declaration raised the stakes for Britain. Anxious to secure the loyalty of Ottoman Christians while asserting its leadership role on the Armenian question,⁴¹ officials and activists used the Blue Book to establish culpability and make the case that the massacres of Armenian civilians constituted a crime against humanity. According to the Blue Book, “the Young Turkish Ministers and their associates at Constantinople are directly and personally responsible, from beginning to end, for the gigantic crime that devastated the Near East in 1915.”⁴²

It is hardly surprising that Raphael Lemkin (1900–59) used Bryce’s Blue Book as a source when he set out to define what he first identified as genocide or “race murder” in the context of World War II. He had watched with dismay Britain’s failure to prosecute those responsible for the Armenian massacres during World War I.⁴³ The meticulously detailed massacres chronicled in the Blue Book illustrated a frightening parallel to what the Nazis later did in Germany. Lemkin, a Jewish refugee from Poland who eventually settled in the US after Hitler came to power, trained as a lawyer and coined the term genocide in response to the Holocaust. Charting the annihilation of the Armenians as intentional, systematic and total, Bryce proposed the methodological foundation for

recognizing what Lemkin would call “genocide” and define it as a new concept for describing “the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group” in his massive study, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, published in 1944.⁴⁴ According to the Blue Book, “the unity of design” and “fundamental uniformity of procedure” of the “Central Government’s general plan” made what happened in 1915 a crime against humanity.⁴⁵ It would not be until the Nuremberg Trials after World War II that this standard of holding perpetrators responsible for premeditated acts of murder against entire national or ethnic groups would be tested and enforced in the prosecution of Germany by the Allies for the Holocaust.

But the “Armenian prelude,” as one historian called it, proved more than a prequel to the Holocaust.⁴⁶ It defined through documents like the Blue Book the evidentiary legal mechanism by which the West, led by Great Britain and the US, came to understand premeditated massacre as a crime against humanity and, eventually, genocide. Others also witnessed and wrote about the killings firsthand, including US Ambassador Henry Morgenthau. Morgenthau’s account, in particular, had a wide audience at the time and has been used by historians as a key source on the genocide.⁴⁷ Yet Bryce’s less studied government report stood apart as the first official record of this event “corroborated by reports received from Americans, Danes, Swiss, Germans, Italians and other foreigners” and emerged at the time of publication as a standard of fair-minded assessment of the situation in Anatolia.⁴⁸ Bryce’s casting of the genocide as motivated by politics rather than religious hatred mitigated worries expressed by Foreign Office officials that taking on the Armenian cause would alienate Muslims in the British Empire. As Bryce put it in the Blue Book’s preface, “In such an enquiry, no racial or religious sympathies, no prejudices, not even the natural horror raised by crimes, ought to distract the mind of the enquirer from the duty of trying to ascertain the real facts.”

The Blue Book, commissioned and presented as an official document to Parliament, thus was intended to represent a body of material on Armenian atrocities and build a case against Ottoman officials for mass murder. Testimonies and historical evidence provided early proof for the joint European declaration of May 24, 1915 that accused the Ottoman government of committing crimes “against humanity and civilization.”⁴⁹ Bryce and Toynbee gathered the majority of the documents and secured the assistance of lawyers and historians to review the material one year after the declaration.

In addition to working with Bryce on the Blue Book, Toynbee wrote two pamphlets intended to grab the attention of the public: *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation* (1915) and *The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks* (1917). *Armenian Atrocities* made the explicit case for genocide. In it Toynbee argued that the “exceedingly systematic” nature of the massacres set them apart from nineteenth-century antecedents. Citing data taken from 50 different places Toynbee established a pattern of premeditated mass violence in a chapter entitled, “The Plan of the Massacres”. Other chapters chronicled deportations and the death toll. The final chapter, “The Attitude of Germany” implicated Germany as an accomplice to the massacres, a role that historians have closely interrogated in recent years.⁵⁰ “This shameful and terrible page of modern history which is unfolding in distant Armenia,” Toynbee concluded, “is nothing but an echo and an extension of the main story, the central narrative which must describe the German incursion into Belgium fourteen months ago . . . What she has done is to bring us all back in the Twentieth Century to the condition of the dark ages.”⁵¹

Officials planned the publication of the Blue Book and its presentation in Parliament in the fall of 1916 as a public event. A speech given by Lord Bryce in the House of Lords on October 6th 1915, later reprinted in *Armenian Atrocities*, paved the way for the official presentation of the Blue Book and summed up his understandings of the motivations behind the killings and deportations. The massacres of 1915, Bryce argued, had political rather than religious origins: “There was no Moslem passion against the Armenian Christians. All was done by the will of the Government and done not from any religious fanaticism, but simply because they wished for reasons purely political to get rid of a non-Moslem element which impaired the homogeneity of the Empire, and constituted an element that might not always submit to oppression.”⁵²

The Blue Book documented concurrent massacres throughout Anatolia and charted the planning and execution of the deportations and killings. It also included a map of “affected districts.” Imperial, diplomatic and military resources made it possible to assemble a detailed atrocity map that charted even the smallest villages around the main sites of the massacres. Readers could locate sites described in the documents and trace the route of the Anatolian Railway, along which

tens of thousands were deported by train and on foot through the desert (Figure 5.2).

The first section of the main text gave general descriptions of “events occurring throughout the Ottoman Empire” which was followed by geographically organized sections: Van and the northeastern Armenian provinces; Bitlis; the “Persian provinces”; “Russian Trans-Caucasia;” Erzeroom; Mamouret-ul-Aziz; Trebizond, Sivas, Kaisaria, “town of X”; Angora; Constantinople; regions along the “Baghdad Railway” including Cilicia and the adjoining towns; Ourfa; Mesopotamia; Aleppo; Damascus and Der-el-Zor, along with additional documents received while the book was in press. Each of the 20 sections contained multiple eyewitness and secondhand reports, dispatches, news articles and letters. The book concluded with a detailed index of places mentioned in the documents, and appendices which marshaled historical facts to refute the charges of the Ottoman government against the Armenians that disloyalty to the Empire justified the massacre of civilians on defensive grounds.

Establishing a clear, consistent pattern of atrocity has become essential in making the case for genocide today. The repetition of information in the 149 documents and 15 appendices made the case for the organized nature of the massacres. A preface and a detailed “Summary of Armenian History up to and including the year 1915” provided a historical framework in which to place the documents. Over 50 pages were dedicated to the “European War and Armenia” “Armenian History,” “Dispersion and Distribution of the Armenian Nation,” “The Armenian People and the Ottoman Government” and the “Antecedents” and “Procedures” of “The Deportations of 1915.” Bryce’s training as a lawyer and Toynbee’s training as an historian led to this particular organization of the Blue Book. The deliberate ordering of the sections, maps, historical background and the size of the volume were intended to make the case in the international arena against Turkey for committing crimes against humanity and violating the laws of war.

The Blue Book’s other main purpose was to chronicle atrocity. Detailed descriptions of deportation, massacre and forced conversion accompany statistics on the dead, dying and kidnapped inhabitants of the Armenian villages. The steady repetition of detail from different eyewitnesses led Toynbee to complain that the Blue Book made rather “dull reading.” But this was the point. To distinguish what happened in

1915–16 from the massacres at Adana in 1909 and the Hamidian massacres, these documents needed to show a steady pattern of massacre which demonstrated the intent to eliminate Armenians from Anatolia. Unedited descriptions of towns cleared of all Armenians, corpses lining the roads, jails filled and then cleared of Armenian women and children, orphaned Armenian children, dead unarmed Armenian men and mutilated bodies in the Euphrates River bombarded the reader on every page. There were also accounts of the searches made of the homes of those Armenians accused of disloyalty and the baseless grounds for arrest and eventual execution of male heads of household. The few editorial comments included in these descriptions are set off by italics. “*This testimony is especially significant,*” one preface to a document of censored German reports read.⁵³ Finally, there were the appeals for humanitarian assistance from outside world. “Perhaps this will be the last cry from Armenia that you will hear,” one eyewitness lamented before appealing to Europe and the US for help.

That the Blue Book’s main purpose was a documentary one is made clear by its huge size. The decision not to edit documents down in order to make the book shorter and more readable came due to concerns that any altering of the material would have the potential to call into question its authenticity. As Toynbee wrote to Bryce, “cutting down of documents might give the wrong impression; it might suggest that we had omitted or suppressed material in other places, not merely to save space but to modify the effect of the evidence.”⁵⁴ This decidedly was not what the Blue Book was intended to do. To make the massive volume more accessible to the general public, Bryce consented to have a “Reader’s Guide” inserted at the beginning. This guide summed up about one in three documents using one-line descriptive statements at the beginning of the volume. The first item cited, Document 9, simply read, “Letter conveyed out of Turkey in the sole of a refugee’s shoe.”

The Blue Book thus can be read as an attempt to shape public opinion regarding the extent to which the massacres constituted a “systematic extermination” of a race. A clear case was made for both political and humanitarian action as well. As Bryce concluded his preface to the volume:

It is evidently desirable not only that ascertained facts should be put on record for the sake of future historians, while the events are

still fresh in living memory, but also that the public opinion of the belligerent nations – and, I may add of neutral peoples also – should be enabled by a knowledge of what has happened in Asia Minor and Armenia to exercise its judgment on the course proper to be followed when, at the end of the present war, a political resettlement of the Nearer East has to be undertaken.⁵⁵

Collecting and disseminating evidence of genocide thus had political implications beyond the immediate attempt to hold Turkey accountable. Genocide was a crime that needed a political as well as a legal solution. In addition to prosecutions, the Blue Book made the case for some sort of compensation for Armenians after the war ended. “Political resettlement” implied something very specific in the mind of Bryce and his supporters. Politicians had touted the idea of a national solution as a panacea for the Near East as early as the Berlin settlement, when the map of Balkans was redrawn as a series of ethnically and religiously constituted states. The massacres lent a new urgency to extending this process of recreating an Armenian homeland in Eastern Turkey and Cilicia in the south.

In terms of the war itself, the Blue Book served a very specific purpose. As historians have argued, the British government saw an opportunity in using the massacres to influence public opinion in the United States and neutral countries like Bulgaria as early as the fall of 1915.⁵⁶ The Blue Book, Prime Ministers H.H. Asquith and Stanley Baldwin declared in a joint memorandum published after the war, was “widely used for Allied propaganda in 1916–17 and had an important influence upon American opinion and upon the ultimate decision of President Wilson to enter the war.”⁵⁷ Bryce’s research, when placed in the hands of the government, could easily transform from a piece of documentary evidence into a propaganda tool. Bryce and Toynbee came to see the benefits and potential drawbacks of publishing the book as a parliamentary document.

Thus, the crisis of the war rendered problematic how to read this first documentary history of the Armenian Genocide. Charles Masterman, a politician and journalist in charge of the War Propaganda Bureau, which had published Bryce’s “Report on Alleged German Outrages,” had a special interest in the propaganda potential of the Blue Book. As he wrote to Bryce in June 1916:

I have read through the whole of the proposed blue book on Armenia. It is certainly an amazing work, telling one of the most appalling stories I should think since the beginning of civilization. I am very anxious that it should be published as soon as possible for general reasons connected with the influencing of public opinion, especially in regard to any ultimate settlement in the near East [sic], and am continually urging Toynbee to fresh efforts to get the book through the press.

Masterman informed Bryce that the Foreign Office agreed to publish it as an official Blue Book, after which "We shall then try and get it the widest possible circulation."⁵⁸ The staging of the presentation was important for Masterman, who suggested that the Foreign Office review the documents and that Aneurin Williams ask "a question . . . in the House and the book be laid before the House in answer."⁵⁹

Officials wanted the book out fast. Bryce, however, continued the painstaking process of corroborating reports in the face of time pressure. "As to submitting the documents to historians and Oriental Scholars, I have been talking to Toynbee about it. If you can suggest any names, we will send proofs at once to them. I should only be anxious, however, that the publication of the work should not be delayed by such examination." Even the month of release was carefully considered. Masterman, "in agreement with the Foreign Office" thought that they should wait until the fall months when public attention turned more towards political matters. He worried that the books' effect on public opinion might be lost if published during the summer when news reporting turned to less serious subjects.⁶⁰ Together they agreed to publish the work concurrently in the US and Britain in the fall of 1916. Parts of the report were subsequently reprinted in magazines and newspapers.⁶¹

Toynbee and Bryce took the time to authenticate their documents during the intervening months. Bryce insisted on having the contents reviewed "by persons of experience" before publication and confirming the original sources.⁶² "I have been going through all the documents," Toynbee wrote to Bryce in June. He set about confirming and verifying sources: "I am going to make a great effort to obtain in confidence as many of these names as possible."⁶³ Toynbee persisted in authenticating the documents and sent the collection to scholars in the US, France and England for review.⁶⁴ He continued to look for ways to corroborate

information found in the Blue Book after publication. As late as 1920, he asked the British Armenian Committee to undertake translating and publishing a German book that had recently come to his attention that “remarkably” confirmed the findings of the Blue Book.⁶⁵ Bryce, however, would look not to Europe but to the US for help in resolving the Armenian crisis.

An Anglo-American Alliance

Bryce understood the importance of enlisting the United States in his campaign from the beginning. While the Great Powers had traditionally brokered the Armenian question by using ineffectual pledges and treaties, Bryce believed that the vocal Armenian diaspora population in the US would encourage some positive effect on the current crisis. Bryce served as Ambassador to the US from 1907–13 and had taken over half a dozen trips to North America before his appointment. His massive three-volume study of American institutions and legal practices, *The American Commonwealth*, was published in 1888 in London and attracted a significant audience on both sides of the Atlantic. It was particularly popular in the US as it clearly expressed his admiration and respect for the American political system. While in the US, Bryce continued his advocacy of Armenian causes. During his travels and his Ambassadorship he forged connections with religious and secular advocacy organizations and with the idealistic President Wilson who came to embrace the Armenian cause over the course of his presidency.

There were other reasons that Bryce believed that the US, together with Britain should lead on the Armenian question during the war. The US already had a sizable footprint in the Ottoman Empire in the form of well-funded missionary and secular educational institutions that operated across eastern Anatolia, where the worst of the massacres had occurred. This, coupled with a relatively large diaspora community of Armenian–Americans who supported these efforts, kept the Armenian issue front and center in the US during the war. But perhaps the most important reason for US involvement was that America had not yet entered the war when news of the massacres broke. As head of the “biggest neutral state,” the US, according to Bryce, was best poised to “issue an effective warning to the Turkish government.” “The United States has a special reason to warn [Turkey] because their missionaries are

scattered all over Asiatic Turkey where they have established magnificent institutions and have always stayed away from any political agenda," he wrote to Nubar Pasha in early May 1915. "I am afraid that our government and the French likewise," Bryce concluded, "will be incapable of doing anything, because we are already involved in the war."⁶⁶ Back in London, Bryce promised to make this case to the American ambassador to Britain.

Bryce immediately wrote to his American acquaintances from London when the war broke out. His letters to diplomat Henry White during the war revealed his unshakable belief in the convergence of Anglo-American interests and the need to maintain close ties. "Since this letter was begun, what events, sudden, awful, like a vast black thundercloud suddenly darkening the vault of heaven," he wrote to White on August 12, 1914. "We are now awaiting, with held breath, the thunder clap from Belgium . . . I shall be most curious to know what you think of Germany's part." Bryce corresponded regularly with White throughout the war who served as regional director of the American Red Cross, and later as a delegate to the Peace Conference in Paris. White had served in various other diplomatic capacities, which included several stints in London where he had gotten to know Bryce. Bryce came to support the war wholeheartedly, though he found it hard to understand "on what reason Germany was acting" in the conflict. Though he hoped for a quick resolution to the conflict, Bryce believed that German actions in Belgium prevented "any chance of concluding peace at present."⁶⁷

The likelihood of a protracted war with Germany and the Central powers led Bryce to portray the conflict as a worthy cause to his American colleagues. "I am glad to gather from what you say that the general sentiment of the United States is still strongly with us," he wrote to White in October 1915. "I should hope it would become even more so after the frightful massacres which have been committed upon the innocent Armenian population in Asiatic Turkey in which some half a million persons have perished." Defending innocent Armenians, he argued, made this a just war against a formidable and untrustworthy foe. Though the German people possessed "fine qualities," their government could not be trusted because it defended the crimes of its Ottoman ally. Bryce blasted the attempt by the German Ambassador to the US to explain away the massacres: "There is no foundation whatever for the defense or denial, whichever one is to call it, that [Ambassador]

Bernstorff seems to have attempted of these atrocities.” According to Bryce, “The Turks were in every case the aggressors, while as to the massacres themselves, the details which have reached me from day to day, are if possible worse than the things which have appeared in the newspaper.”⁶⁸ Germany’s behavior against Belgian civilians and now in defense of its Ottoman ally’s treatment of the Armenians legitimated Britain’s “determination to prosecute the war until success is obtained.” The “sacrifices” that Britons were making had resulted in heavy personal losses. “There have been many terrible gaps in the families you used to know here. Every house is in mourning – yet it is not depressed or gloomy mourning.”⁶⁹ Bryce believed that the British people knew what they were fighting for and for that “there must be something permanent to show for them.”⁷⁰

The Armenian Blue Book, like the Belgian one before it, supported such claims. Both reports circulated widely in the US and Britain. Bryce understood the important role of public opinion in bringing the US to Britain’s side. The timing of the Armenian Blue Book was important. Although the Armenian issue did not ultimately bring the US into the war in the winter of 1917, it provided one answer to the difficult question of why fight. Lord Curzon referenced this as a reason for supporting the Allied war effort after losing patience with the US policy of wait-and-see in the summer of 1916. He, too, wrote to White, but not in the calm, reassuring tones of solidarity employed by Bryce. Claiming that America had failed to fulfill her responsibility to humanity, Curzon fumed: “None of us expected America to fight but at least we expected support against the outrageous [crimes] that have been committed by our enemies to all laws and restrictions, human and divine.” Curzon ended his missive with a grim prediction: “The day will come when America will rue her attitude of the past two years.”⁷¹

The Blue Book explicitly named these crimes when it appeared three months later. Full publicity accompanied its release. *Manchester Guardian* editor, C.P. Scott, helped Bryce promote the Blue Book by publishing historical accounts of the Armenian situation and tributes to Gladstone’s campaigns on the Armenian question in the months following its initial publication in 1916. In a letter thanking Scott for his support, Bryce asked him to continue to remind readers of what the Armenians have “suffered” because of lack of Allied support during the war. It was a sentiment Bryce believed America shared with Britain and

France. With the notable exception of the Foreign Office where “traces” of “turkophile sentiment” remained, Bryce believed that the feeling of the people toward Armenia in America and Britain “is extremely strong.”⁷² The coverage of the Blue Book in the *New York Times*, which excerpted lengthy passages of the work in its monthly magazine, supported Bryce’s contention. Bryce himself wrote articles for the British and American press about the Blue Book which kept it in the news. In 1917, he directed Scott to send the money he earned from writing for the *Guardian* to the Lord Mayor’s Fund for Armenian Relief.⁷³

Armenians were represented as more than victims who needed rescuing. They were called potential allies in the fight against the Central Powers. Bryce supported the cause of raising Armenian volunteers to fight with the Allies on the Russian-Ottoman border. His efforts in coordination with diaspora Armenians living in Europe did not succeed in raising a significant number of troops, as most Armenians continued to pledge allegiance to the Ottoman Empire during the war. The small number who did join this force were useful regardless as they helped Bryce make the case that the Armenians had contributed to the war effort and thus deserved Allied support. Britain made promises to representatives of the Armenian volunteers who came largely from Europe and America that, in exchange for fighting with the Allies, it would broker a protectorate over lands inhabited by Ottoman Armenians after the war. These promises were made during a meeting in the fall of 1916 between European Armenian representatives and Mark Sykes and François Picot, who had just finished crafting the notorious secret agreement to divide the Ottoman Empire amongst the British and French at the end of the war.⁷⁴ By casting Armenians as allies who would fight for the reward of limited autonomy after the war, Britain and France believed them useful pawns in the game to divide the Middle East. These plans came to naught as most Armenians continued to remain loyal to their respective governments. As Winston Churchill put it, the majority of both Ottoman Armenians and Russian Armenians had pledged to “do their duty” rather than “stake their existence upon the victory of either side.”⁷⁵

Bryce continued as a central player regarding the Armenian question on both sides of the Atlantic at the war’s end. In Britain, he brokered meetings between Armenian envoys and the government, led protest meetings and raised money for Armenian relief. In the US, Bryce was consulted on the numerous reports that President Wilson requested on

Armenia. Wilson's adviser Stephen Bonsal remembered Bryce as a regular fixture in his office, where he earned a reputation as a somewhat tiresome advocate of the Armenian issue. As Bonsal recalled, "The President has ordered a report on Armenia – another! . . . He asks that Lord Bryce be consulted (that indeed will be easy, as this interesting old Scot practically 'parks' in our office)." ⁷⁶ A year later when the war was over and the Peace Conference was underway, he tempered his assessment of Bryce regarding what Bonsal called the "Armenian Disaster": "Lord Bryce is working for them day and night. My sympathy has been with them from the beginning . . . I do not have to read the atrocity stories which Lord Bryce has filed with us because with my own eyes during my days in Turkey I saw things that were even more blood-curdling." ⁷⁷

Bryce's advocacy work had had an effect, at least on those involved in trying to sort out the Armenian question after the war. As Bonsal concluded of postwar peacemaking: "There are some who take comfort in the thought that another little war was avoided by the complete abandonment of the fragment of the Armenian people who still survived. This is perhaps true, but what a price has been paid! In the future who will place any reliance on the given word of the civilized nations or in their solemn covenant to save the weak from the criminal aggressor." ⁷⁸

Despite, or possibly because of, these efforts, no direct intervention took place on behalf of Armenians by either the US or Britain during or after the war. As Aneurin Williams wrote to Nubar Pasha after sending his reports of the massacres to the *Daily News*: "I see that this paper and others have published a long letter on the same subject by Mr Charles Woods, an American correspondent. It is really quite painful, and yet, there is so little to be done." ⁷⁹ In the end, Bryce had little to show for his cross-Atlantic diplomacy on behalf of Armenians. It was a cause, however, that he refused to let fade. In addition to arguing the Armenian case at the Peace Conference, he continued to raise awareness and funds back home in Britain. In December 1921, Bryce delivered an "Appeal on behalf of the Armenians" at Mansion House. It was an eerie echo of what his hero, friend and fellow Liberal W.E. Gladstone had done over 20 years previous. This, too, would be Bryce's last great public speech before his death. That next year, Columbia University in New York City established a professorship in legal studies in Bryce's name to honor his commitment to transatlantic partnership and diplomacy.

Conclusion

The Blue Book ultimately contributed to Allied war aims and added momentum to the humanitarian movement. It did not serve the intent of its authors which was to provide evidence of systematic massacres that could be used to prosecute Ottoman officials for crimes against humanity. This was due in part to the absence of international institutions with the authority to try the evidence found in the Blue Book. Bryce and others looked to the British Empire, arguably the most powerful global institution at the time, to make good on promises to prosecute Ottoman officials for wartime massacres.⁸⁰ But in the absence of an international criminal court which would later come into being with the League of Nations, albeit in a weak, and ineffectual form, there were few avenues available to bring perpetrators of genocide to justice. As Bryce recognized, the “responsibility” for crimes committed against Armenians would ultimately be “referred to the local civil administrators, or to the Central Government” in Turkey.⁸¹ The accusation contained in the May 1915 declaration was painstakingly documented by the Blue Book and alleged perpetrators were taken into custody in British jails on the island of Malta. As discussed in detail in Chapter 7, the decision to let Turkey set up its own courts to try war criminals meant that the evidence in the Blue Book had little chance of having an open and fair hearing in a court of law.

In the end, the Blue Book had more of an effect on public opinion and the humanitarian movement than it did on international justice. Advocacy organizations evoked the Blue Book in meetings on both sides of the Atlantic that helped fund relief work. Bryce cabled the *New York Times* immediately after it published lengthy excerpts from his report: “All civilized nations able to assist the Armenians today should know that the need is still extremely urgent . . . this requires worldwide assistance for feeding, clothing, housing and repatriation.”⁸² The Armenian Orphans Fund in England used the Blue Book to legitimate its claims of obligation and friendship: “It is our patriotic duty to do whatever is possible because they have suffered not as Armenians but as friends of the Allied cause . . . the Turks proceeded to wreak on the whole community the vengeance described in the British Blue Book, an authority which does not admit impeachment.”⁸³ Armenians understandably took particular notice of the Blue Book. A.S. Safrastian, later

leader of the Armenian Bureau, wrote to Bryce from his office at the London School of Economics in March of 1917, "My countrymen in the Caucasus are highly elated over the Armenian Blue Book. The press is full of it."⁸⁴

In the court of public opinion, then, the Blue Book had made its case. The publicity surrounding the Blue Book served as a rallying point around civilian victims of the war on the Allied military and home fronts. The Ottoman government also targeted the minority Greek and Assyrian populations. The Archbishop of Canterbury drew attention to the massacre and deportation of thousands of Assyrians along the Persian border, leading the Anglican Church to widen the scope of its advocacy efforts.⁸⁵ The Archbishop of York wrote in a letter from October 1915 that, after speaking with Bryce and reading the news accounts of the massacres, he found the whole thing "appalling": "There is, I believe to be a Mansion House Meeting on the subject quite soon and I have authorized Bryce to add my name to those promoting it. Very likely that would be the best time for us to give a little money if we could, and at least we can express our horror at what is going on."⁸⁶

The most successful Armenian-focused humanitarian organization in the US, Near East Relief, raised the equivalent of a billion dollars for relief work.⁸⁷ In Britain, a month and a half after the publication of Toynbee's "Murder of a Nation," the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to the Archbishop of York of "being bombarded about the Armenians and indeed the horrors are beyond words." When Harold Buxton, Secretary for the Armenian Refugee Fund approached him to hold a special collection "for the Armenians throughout all the churches," he at first equivocated: "With the Armenians are associated the Assyrians for whom I have some special responsibility and who are in terrible need. The Fund helps both. I have this morning a telegram from Buxton stating that [the Cardinal] is going to order Collection in all the Roman Churches on Feb. 6th and urging that we do the same. My own feeling is that we cannot multiply these special Sundays."⁸⁸ A year later, after reports of continued massacres appeared in the Blue Book and the press, the Archbishop authorized the inaugural "Armenia Sunday" "for the expression of our common sympathy and earnest prayer on behalf of our Armenians and Syro-Chaldean [Assyrian] brethren." A second Armenia Sunday was held on February 2, 1917 and adopted throughout the "Free Churches of Britain" where a two-page brochure on the plight of

Assyrians and Armenians was distributed.⁸⁹ 1918 and 1919 witnessed the repetition of the event with all money collected going towards refugee relief in the Near East.

Bryce and Toynbee succeeded in making the details of the massacres known. That the Blue Book only partially delivered on its other promises weighed on Bryce. His Mansion House speech implored his audience to speak out against the continued massacres and depredations suffered by Ottoman Armenians in 1921. Toynbee, too, later reflected on the limits of the Blue Book:

Lord Bryce's concern, and mine, was to establish the facts and to make them public, in the hope that eventually some action might be taken in the light of them. The dead – and the deportees had been dying in their thousands – could not be brought back to life, but we hoped (vain hope) that at least something might be done to ensure, for the survivors, that there should never be a repetition of the barbarities that had been the death of so many of their kinsmen.⁹⁰

Though largely forgotten today, the Blue Book set the tone and established the terms by which the international community in general, and the humanitarian movement in particular, understood the Armenian Genocide at the time. Part history, part documentary, the Blue Book recorded concurrent massacres throughout Anatolia, a pattern Bryce blamed on a premeditated government policy of eliminating Armenians and other Christian minorities from the Ottoman Empire. Eventually, the postwar fallout from the failed prosecutions of Turkish war criminals, coupled with the unsuccessful Allied campaigns in Gallipoli and Mesopotamia and the Treaty of Lausanne settlement exacerbated rather than ameliorated the ensuing refugee crisis. The aftermath of war left little room to remember details of genocide. During the war, however, the Blue Book made unlikely bedfellows of the humanitarian movement and the Allied war machine. Britons could not ignore what was happening on the Eastern Front.

CHAPTER 6

SAVING “THE REMNANT”

“This question of Armenian relief is one which excites a great deal of feeling.”

– Lord Robert Cecil, Eastern Committee Meeting, British Foreign Office, December 9, 1918

Promises by those who signed war declarations in August, 1914 that the conflict would be over by Christmas proved impossible to keep. By spring 1915 when the Armenian massacres broke out, the war already had the makings of a protracted struggle that relentlessly drew in military personnel and civilian populations across Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Britons were told to prepare themselves for the sacrifices that went with fighting a world war. The disastrous invasion of Gallipoli yielded thousands of military casualties, making the Eastern Front and the Middle East an important focus of the war and a symbol of the struggle that lay ahead.

At the same time, news of civilian massacres shocked but also offered a reason to continue to fight Germany and its ally, the Ottoman Empire. Information on what was happening in Turkey reached Britain through reports, images and, of course, Bryce’s Blue Book. Advocacy organizations held public meetings and a host of publications responded to the killings with both outrage and offers of support. Religious and secular organizations, once inspired by Gladstone’s untiring advocacy on behalf of Armenian causes in Britain, now sought broader international appeal. New organizations cultivated trans-Atlantic and European-wide connections to provide

aid and advocate on behalf of a project Lord Bryce called “saving the remnant” of the Armenian people.

Britons might not be able to do anything about the bloodletting on the fields of Belgium and France, but some believed that they could help to mitigate the worst of the war’s effects on innocent civilians. This chapter traces the public and private humanitarian response to the Armenian Genocide which focused on doing just that.

The New Philosophy of Aid Work

Historians have argued that the war indelibly changed humanitarianism by making it a global movement focused on saving a fragile and vulnerable humanity.¹ In practical terms, massive human suffering on the battlefield and on the civilian front required a new kind of response in terms of philosophy, scope and scale. The question of what could be done for victims was understood to be part of a larger political and humanitarian problem that had no easy solution. While politicians at Whitehall equivocated in their dealings with the unprecedented scale of civilian casualties of war, activists launched a campaign to intervene in the immediate crisis on the ground. The “first international human rights movement,” in the words of Peter Balakian, found its clearest expression in the humanitarian response to genocide.

Peace arrived in Europe with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The final settlement with Turkey came four long years later in 1923. After the signing of the Armistice at Mudros in 1918, fighting on the Eastern Front was supposed to have stopped. The first attempt at negotiating peace between Turkey and the Allies in 1920 with the Treaty of Sèvres was an abysmal failure and fighting in the East continued. The final settlement would not come until the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne three years later. In this no man’s land between war and peace, humanitarian relief agencies attempted to fulfill public and private commitments made to Armenians and other Ottoman minorities during the war.

The founding of the League of Nations after the signing of the Versailles treaty internationalized the problem of the stateless refugee. When the war ended, the largest refugee emergency to date followed in its wake. This was the most dramatic immediate aftereffect of genocide. The urgent task of getting aid to those who needed it guided the form that the

response ultimately took. Humanitarian organizations, previously focused on feeding and protecting survivors of the massacres, turned to the task of supporting resettlement efforts on behalf of the millions of refugees forced to leave the former Ottoman Empire, which collapsed after the war. They left to settle primarily in Russian lands and the newly mandated territories of the Middle East created from former Ottoman lands that resulted from territorial adjustments made after the war.

The immensity of the crisis, coupled with war weariness at home, meant that relief efforts often faltered along with the failed effort to find political solutions to the Armenian crisis. "Ever since the deportation of the Armenian people in 1915," affirmed the Armenian Fund which the government charged with overseeing refugee resettlement, "the problem of refugees has been upon the conscience of the Allies . . . our responsibility cannot be forgotten." In the postwar moment, "Relieving the desperate plight of the scattered remnants of the Turkish Armenians" emerged as a key motivation for humanitarian efforts.² This focus on relief work as the primary way to resolve what observers called "the tragedy of the Near East" would have important implications for how humanitarian intervention came to be defined as a policy of neutral aid.

Humanitarian Relief in a Warzone

English people have always taken an interest in the Armenian nation and the sums of money that have been raised . . . show that the people of this country however great the present needs may be in other directions have not lost sight of such a worthy cause in the face of new needs.³

Old advocacy organizations found new energy and a sense purpose in the continuing war crisis. The British Armenia Committee used their "first-hand knowledge of Armenia and the East" to step up advocacy efforts in Parliament.⁴ Bryce's Anglo-Armenian Association made the case for helping Armenians because they were loyal allies. Religious and secular advocacy organizations such as the Eastern Question Association, the Friends of Armenia and the Anglo-Armenian Association considered work on behalf of Armenians as part of a larger humanitarian calling that went beyond upholding treaty obligations. New organizations emerged to deal with and, in some cases, coordinate relief efforts.

Thus, aid work during the war became the outward expression of the difficult to sustain ideal that the British Empire had an obligation to support a common humanity. This notion took particular hold in Britain and in the United States and inspired new relief organizations that had as an express purpose the amelioration of human suffering through charity work. Promises to keep aid neutral would, some believed, overcome political obstacles that necessarily went along with providing humanitarian assistance in the midst of a combat zone.

War made relief work on enemy territory appeared impractical but not impossible. British consulates had an established track record performing aid work in Adana and in the Russian-Ottoman borderlands. This consul network along with mainly American missionary schools meant aid workers could draw on a sizable Anglo-American presence to realize their projects. In Britain, the Lord Mayor's Fund coordinated efforts among the dozens of aid organizations set up to help Ottoman Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks during the war. It was organized in September 1915, after a meeting in the House of Commons was called in response to a "wave of indignation and horror" sweeping across Britain about the massacres "to establish a special relief fund, on a wide national basis, to supplement the existing pro-Armenian Committees."

That following month the Lord Mayor held a public meeting at Mansion House, London to establish the fund. Those present at the meeting included a "distinguished company" of politicians and private citizens. The list of attendees included many long-committed advocates for the Armenian cause. Lord Bryce, Prof. Rendell Harris, Anuerin Williams, T.P. O'Conner, Lord Cecil, Lord Gladstone and Rev. Harold Buxton (nominated as Secretary) together inaugurated the humanitarian relief fund, with the Lord Mayor of London serving as president.⁵ Registered under the War Charities Act of 1916 with offices in Victoria Street, London it was known by its official and rather clumsy name, the Armenian (Lord Mayor's) Fund. It raised over £50,000 for relief work in its first six months of operation.⁶

In the US, the Armenian and Syrian Relief Committee, later known as Near East Relief, formed the same month as the Lord Mayor's Fund in Britain.⁷ "Extraordinarily harrowing" reports had started reaching the US from Turkey that August: "The stream of refugees still flows," read a cable sent in late August, "There is a shortage of bread . . . The majority

of the refugees are ill.”⁸ US Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau, upon hearing these reports, began “urging the formation of a committee to raise funds and provide ways and means for saving the Armenians.” As he told his State Department colleagues, “The destruction of the Armenian race in Turkey is rapidly progressing.” Morgenthau’s message made its way to James Barton, Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Boston who subsequently organized a committee to raise funds to send to the Ambassador “for relief purposes.”

The organization quickly raised \$100,000 in its first month of operation and offered a way for Americans to support the war from a safe distance.⁹ US neutrality in the war made humanitarian relief the only tangible way to show what amounted to growing American sympathy for war victims and Allied efforts against the Central Powers. In Britain, fighting a war that resulted in both huge military and civilian casualties spread resources for humanitarian aid thin. These factors were coupled with the US’ large population, which included a relatively small but active Armenian–American diaspora. By the early 1920s, almost 100,000 Armenians had settled in the United States.¹⁰ Public and private philanthropic organizations together raised hundreds of millions of dollars for relief work immediately after the war, making the extraordinary success of US fundraising efforts possible.

These funds focused on emergency aid and supported projects that brought relief to those displaced by the fighting. The wartime emergency necessitated this approach of providing ameliorative neutral aid particularly for the US, which would not enter the war until late 1917. Humanitarian work had to be apolitical and getting things done was often a matter of making accommodations to make sure that aid reached the needy. The Armenian Fund and Near East Relief emerged as the umbrella agencies for relief work in Britain and the US respectively. The “Armenian Fund,” as the Lord Mayor’s Fund came to be known, gathered together relief monies, issued reports and distributed aid to other relief agencies in the Near East during and after the war. Near East Relief was incorporated by the US Congress in 1919 and did the same for US relief efforts during the war. Older funds on both sides of the Atlantic willingly worked in cooperation with the new fund. The London-based branch of the International Organization of the Friends of Armenia had set up operations in eastern Anatolia in 1897. It was the

successor to the Westminster Fund run by the cohort of British consuls sent to Turkey in response to the Hamidian massacres.¹¹

The war necessitated that humanitarian relief work broaden its focus on ameliorating the effects of the Armenian massacres in a more sustainable way. This meant mobilizing the media and stepping up advocacy efforts. For the Friends of Armenia, which previously operated as a philanthropic aid society run by a small aristocratic coterie, this represented an important shift. Since its founding in the late nineteenth century, the Friends of Armenia had relied on a network of patrons made up mostly of prominent British ladies. By the time of the Armenian crisis, its female patrons had transformed the organization into a full-fledged humanitarian relief society. It had its own newspaper, published pamphlets in coordination with the Armenian Information Bureau and raised its visibility in the communities most directly affected by the massacres in eastern Anatolia. Near East Relief later effectively deployed these same tactics with the publication of its own journal, *The New Near East*, and produced highly successful film and media campaigns that helped raise awareness and funds.

Friends of Armenia could operate primarily as an emergency aid organization during the war, thanks in part to improved fund-raising and the coordinated efforts of organizations like the Armenian Fund. Support from prominent British officials also mattered. But the war put pressure on the mission as well as the approach to humanitarian relief. Originally founded to influence “public opinion” on the Armenian question, Friends of Armenia had a practical mission “to support as many as possible of the children left orphans through the massacres” of the mid-1890s. This relief work took the form of “industrial centres” where women “who had lost their bread-winners might be able to support themselves.” The idea, popularized by Burgess (see [Chapter 3](#)), was to have the needy work in factories making goods for sale on the European and American market. The money would go back to supporting the workers and fund the business centers.

The war made it difficult, if not impossible, in many places to continue this work. Friends of Armenia nevertheless maintained a presence in these districts by cooperating with the Armenian Fund and other international philanthropic agencies. Clinging tightly to Victorian notions that aid should not be given but earned, they used money raised to keep their model of industrial relief work afloat. In 1917, the Friends

of Armenia convinced the Armenian Fund that providing employment to women was the most "useful form" that humanitarian aid could take. As the report concluded, "Industrial relief has the great advantage over other methods that it does not tend to demoralize the recipients and make them dependent on charity, an effect which the giving of money inevitable produces."¹²

Though the idea of running a factory in a warzone so as not to make massacre victims "dependent on charity" sounds strange and even cold-hearted, it continued as one of the preferred means of distributing aid during the war. This business model of charity work kept money coming in and sustained a number of projects in a time and place where humanitarian aid work was looked on with suspicion and, in some cases, hostility, by the Ottoman authorities. NER also used this strategy. By March of 1917, NER reported employing 2,500 women spinning cotton and wool. They knitted 25,000 pairs of stockings for distribution and made 6,000 quilts "for the utterly destitute" refugees in the cities of Yerevan and Alexandropol, located in the Caucasus. According to NER, "For two years all the clothing and bedding which were given in large quantities to the refugees were made by other refugee women in the industrial workshops." The organization gave seed and draft animals to refugees in more stable rural regions to help them become "self-supporting."¹³

Relief work also continued in the cities. "Constantinople itself was full of refugees and destitute people of all nationalities," remembered NER head James Barton. By 1917, it maintained three orphanages, a hospital and eleven soup kitchens and distributed over 1.4 million food rations. Work camps also were established. When the British expeditionary force moved across Persia from Baghdad toward the Caspian Sea in 1918, they found themselves involved with the approximately 50,000 refugees who had marched from far-away Urmia, organized into "partially self-supporting" "industrial camps." 3,000 workers, mostly women, "employed washing, carding, spinning, weaving and making garments" worked under the supervision of American aid workers and the temporary protection of the British military.¹⁴

The Friends Mission in Constantinople, run by the British Quakers, long understood the importance of cooperation and accommodation when it came to helping Armenians in Turkey. Director Ann Mary Burgess used her connections with the British consular staff at

Constantinople, including Andrew Ryan and Robert Graves, to keep her Constantinople factory going during the war. Walking a fine line between aid worker and foreign missionary, she was able to stay on in Constantinople during the war, despite the fact that Britain had declared war on the Ottoman Empire and attempted an invasion in 1915.

Mission work made Burgess potentially a controversial figure.¹⁵ She managed successfully to cooperate with the authorities during the war because of her status as a business woman and trusted member of the community. On the occasion of her “semi-jubilee” at the Mission on the eve of World War I, a celebration was held and attended by business, political, and religious leaders of the Armenian and Constantinople British community. Sir Louis Mallet, the British Ambassador, heartily expressed his congratulations and good wishes. A long list of Armenian community leaders further praised what they called Burgess’ important work on behalf of Armenians.¹⁶

The Friends Mission’s political and cultural ties allowed relief work to continue among refugees during the worst of the massacres. By the time the war started, Burgess’ charity business had been operating for almost 20 years. Her influence in British government circles led to a reversal of an Ottoman governmental order that demanded she cease relief work activities and leave the country. Turkish authorities in the end commandeered the school for army barracks and the hospital. Only the orphanage remained unoccupied.¹⁷ Burgess, having survived the experience of the Hamidian massacres and sectarian violence after the Young Turk Revolution treaded carefully and worked with non-partisan aid groups such as the Red Cross to sustain the day-to-day activities of the mission.

The mission responded immediately to wartime massacres. Burgess put her factories to work to ameliorate what she called the “sorrow surging round” claiming that, “In this time of sorrow and poverty, our work has been a great boon. Of course the women can only have enough work given them to cover the cost of their bread, seeing the numbers are so high.”¹⁸ Even as the massacres spread, the Friends Mission continued its work until after the war. Burgess and her 400 Armenian factory workers maintained a busy production schedule despite wartime shortages that made it hard to get materials. Silk and wool rugs and embroidery work still found its way to customers in England and America thanks to sympathetic agents who served as brokers.¹⁹

Coordinating humanitarian work in a warzone on a large-scale, nevertheless, posed profound challenges. When local officials banned relief work in parts of Syria, aid workers had to find new ways to engage in "inconspicuous relief activities" in villages plagued by typhus and cholera. Aid workers allegedly asked mothers "to select from their children those who are to be granted the opportunity to live" which "inevitably condemned to death" the rest of the family.²⁰ As conditions continued to deteriorate, Ottoman officials tacitly agreed to look the other way if local committees distributed the aid in the place of American aid workers. Instability in the Caucasus region made relief work unbearably difficult throughout the war and after.

Here coordination between American and British efforts was most evident. While the US had a large number of missionary outposts scattered throughout the Ottoman Empire which provided education and community services dating back to the late nineteenth century, it did not have a significant diplomatic, commercial or missionary presence in the Caucasus. This borderland region between Russia and Turkey which provided an important corridor between the Caspian and Black Sea saw terrible fighting in the first part of the war. This created a mass exodus of refugees, mainly women and children: "The Turkish frontier . . . is chocked with groups of sick and destitute refugees . . . The whole country is overflowing . . . There seems no end to these solid columns moving forward in a cloud of dust. The majority are women and children, barefoot, exhausted and starving."²¹ (Figure 6.1) Together, British Quakers and the Lord Mayor's Fund "joined forces with the Americans in a common program" to provide humanitarian relief starting in October 1916 until May 1918.²²

Ultimately, the success of the business of wartime relief work hinged on the ability to raise funds and maintain transatlantic networks while operating under the radar of Ottoman officials. Humanitarian aid organizations brought together a community of unlikely allies that included aid workers, missionaries, businessmen, diplomats, orphans, widows and commercial and philanthropic patrons who operated in an enemy warzone during one of the worst civilian crisis of the war. "The sad thing is Armenians in Asia Minor are still suffering worse things than death," lamented Burgess when the massacres started. "We have a room full of widows and orphans who make dolls, donkeys, elephants, rabbits, etc. all day long." Despite extraordinary challenges she resolved to



Figure 6.1 Refugees as depicted by Near East Relief. James Barton, *Story of Near East Relief* (New York, 1930).

complete her work: "we are not likely to rest and I do not think we shall wear out for some time yet if when we do I trust the work will go on."²³ The Armenian community mobilized during the crisis as well. In Jerusalem, orphans who arrived in 1922 were taken to the Armenian quarter and then adopted by members of the community. Many left evidence of their arrival etched in the stone buildings surrounding the church (Figure 6.3).

That same year in the midst of the postwar crisis, Burgess reluctantly moved her operations to Greece with the help of a £500 check from the Friends of Armenia. Taking her factory furniture and industrial goods, along with 130 workers, Burgess set up shop on the island of Corfu in "an old Fortress built by the British."²⁴ The Friends Mission in Constantinople transformed into a refugee camp in Greece where the art of rug making served a new refugee community after the war.

Red Crosses, Military Missions

The ideal of neutral aid did not neatly square with the realities of Total War. Humanitarian relief work necessarily found itself entwined with Britain's wartime mission. The Armenian Red Cross was founded by prominent Liberals and patrons of the Armenian cause in Kensington in December 1914. Viscountess Bryce, the wife of Lord Bryce, served as President of this genteel organization.²⁵ When word of the massacres reached Britain that next spring, the Armenian Red Cross began to focus in earnest on refugee relief and aid to the small army of Armenian volunteers helping the Allied cause. In the coming months, the Armenian Red Cross united the humanitarian and military causes in a single purpose. As one appeal for funds put it, the Armenian Red Cross and Refugee Fund had as its purpose to stem "the torrent of misery caused by the war among the Armenian population of Turkey and Persia . . . and to provide medical necessities for the Armenian volunteers fighting on behalf of Russia."²⁶

The 1915 massacres rekindled what the organization understood as a sacred obligation of Britain to the Armenians as a leader of the Great Powers whose "jealousies and intrigues" indirectly brought about the current crisis. "The very least Great Britain can do," read another appeal by the Red Cross Committee, "is to try and make amends to the innocent survivors, who after enduring persecution from their birth, have, from no fault of their own, lost their homes, together with all that made life worth

living.”²⁷ The Armenian Red Cross used newspaper advertisements, sermons and public lectures to launch its relief campaign. Over 1,800 subscribers raised thousands of pounds for relief work in the first year.

One way of getting aid to needy people was by using Britain’s allies. Because of the Russian alliance it made sense for the organization to send funds to the British Consul General in Moscow. He then forwarded aid to the spiritual leader and patriarch of the Armenian Orthodox Church, the Catholicos at Etchmiadzin, and the Mayor of the Armenian-dominated city of Tiflis for dispersal by local relief committees.²⁸ Photos of refugees “being fed by members of the Moscow committee” appealed “to British hearts and consciences more than any words can do.”²⁹ Supplies reached affected areas via allied transport ships located on the Russo-Turkish border where most of the refugees had settled. Items included drugs, bandages and surgical dressings sent via neutral Sweden; warm garments were carried free of charge on Russian steamships.

Donations came from as far away as New Zealand and Japan. British schools, colleges and labour organizations also got involved. Children wrote to the Red Cross to say that they “forego coveted treats or prizes that they might send the equivalent for feeding refugees.” One donor wanted to adopt a baby from the Caucasus while another requested that the organization send a worthy Armenian to serve as a companion for a devoted Armenian nurse.³⁰ Armenian refugees also came to the organization seeking work. Others wrote asking if the organization could help them find lost relatives.

Emily Robinson, a woman raised in the Gladstonian liberal tradition, guided the work of the Armenian Red Cross. Her father ran the *Daily News* during the mid-1890s and had sent out correspondents to cover the Hamidian massacres.³¹ Robinson published a series of pamphlets where she referred to Armenia as “the last rampart of Christendom in the East” and argued that Britain and her allies were fighting the war to secure a “lasting peace” guaranteed “not by a Treaty of Paris, London, Vienna or Berlin but by a consensus of opinion in civilized Europe and the United States.” Supporting the Armenian cause was analogous to defending Belgium after the German invasion in 1914.³² “Armenians are our allies as much as the Belgians,” one early fundraising campaign stated. “The only difference being that whereas Belgium has suffered for seven months, Armenia has suffered for five centuries.”

Parallels to news of the rape, murder and kidnapping of Armenian girls were made to the "Rape of Belgium" that helped rally the British to war in the first place.³³ News of thousands of girls kidnapped during and after 1915 linked the brutal tactics of Germany in Belgium with its Turkish ally.³⁴ Humanitarian work on behalf of these women and girls led to a special commission set up after the war by the League of Nations to reunite families torn apart by the mass deportations.³⁵ Robinson wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury of her work on behalf of "the Christian women and children forcibly detained since 1915 in Turkish harems." "White slave traffic is a crime here and is punished as such in European countries," she continued much as W.T. Stead might have done. "It seems it has only to be conducted on a wholesale scale and by Turks to be quite permissible."³⁶

The Armenian Red Cross raised tens of thousands of pounds for relief work. It did this by casting Armenia as both victim and hero. Red Cross appeals referred to Armenians as allies who bravely fought alongside Britain and Russia along the Eastern Front. This had little foundation in fact. Both spiritual and secular leaders at the beginning of the war issued a statement upon receiving an Allied request for help declaring that Armenians as loyal Ottoman subjects would not rise up against the Empire. Though effective symbols, these heroes of the Red Cross narrative were little more than an ill-equipped and poorly organized band of international volunteers who largely came from diaspora communities in Europe.³⁷

The ARC used any and all efforts of this small group of mainly Russian national volunteers to make the claim that Armenians both deserved and had earned British support. Assist "us in helping a nation which has done so much to help itself," one report entreated.³⁸ The Red Cross pointed to heroic deeds of the volunteers as evidence: "After the disruption and collapse of the Russian-Caucasian Army, Armenian volunteers rushed to Transcaucasia to the rescue from all parts of the world and manfully stopped the breach at fearful sacrifice to themselves thus effectively protecting the flank of the British Mesopotamian army from attack by the Turks." According to the Armenian Red Cross, "This important service of theirs deserves the highest reward the Allies can give."

The volunteers provided propaganda for the humanitarian cause. Though the assistance of Russian Armenians in the Allied war effort made sense since Russia had sided with Britain, the existence of this relatively

insignificant force used by the ARC to further its own aims has been used by some historians as proof that Armenians rose up in rebellion against the Ottoman Empire and thus deserved their fate.³⁹ Views of observers at the time paint a different picture. Armenians were willing to face “fratricidal strife,” according to Churchill, in order to honor their commitments to their respective Ottoman or Russian governments.⁴⁰

Unofficially encouraged by high ranking officials at the Foreign Office, the Armenian Russian volunteers were largely supported by privately raised money. The Allies felt nervous about arming an untested and badly organized force of volunteers north of the Russo-Turkish border whose loyalty to the Entente some questioned. The Foreign Office refused an offer of help from diaspora Armenian volunteers mainly from Europe and the US during the campaign to open up the Dardanelles in the spring of 1915 organized in France by Nubar Pasha. When the Gallipoli invasion seemed doomed to failure by late summer 1915, it tacitly consented to allow these volunteers to help the Russian campaigns in the Caucasus.⁴¹ This untenable situation rendered this international brigade of men of Armenian ethnicity largely ineffective. As the Armenian Red Cross characterized the status of the approximately 8,000 volunteers: “They have been equipped and are maintained by Armenians all over the world at a cost of 6,000 pounds per day. At the present they have no doctor and there are only five untrained Armenian ladies assisting as nurses.”⁴² The ARC declared that it would split all money raised between four columns of volunteers and over 100,000 destitute refugees living just over the Russo-Turkish border.⁴³

Aid organizations tied Britain’s wartime interests with humanitarian aid both to raise funds and support the war effort. Historian J.A.R. Marriott argued that to understand the Armenian crisis required “not merely sympathy but knowledge; a real study of foreign affairs.”⁴⁴ Providing aid for Armenians meant seeking a clear understanding of what the massacres meant in the larger context of the war. In 1916, the Lord Mayor’s Fund launched a British Relief Expedition to the Caucasus “to supervise and coordinate the medical and relief work” amongst Armenian refugees led by a prominent committee member, Noel Buxton. The LMF maintained that the defense of Armenians would effectively counter the Turkish attempts “to exterminate them,” which, he maintained, resulted from ethnic hatred, imperial politics and German intrigue.

The Armenians, it was argued, stood "as the direct obstacle" to the implementation of the exclusionary nationalism "encouraged by Germany" that had led to the war and massacre.⁴⁵ Thus, supporting orphanages, setting up industrial work centers to employ refugees and starting hospitals and schools was an important way to stand up to Germany. These arguments helped the Armenian Fund to collect tens of thousands of pounds during its first year of operation from donors from all over Britain. Only £1,000 went to displaced Muslim refugees, which was supposed to show that the fund, set up primarily to help Armenian refugees, "drew no distinction of race and religion." The reality was that most aid dollars went directly to displaced Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians.

By the end of the war, Anglo-American humanitarian organizations raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for relief work and thousands more for political advocacy and education programs. British advocacy groups active during World War I included: The Friends of Armenia, with branches in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England; the Armenian Bureau of Information, the Lord Mayor's Fund of Manchester; Armenian Orphans Fund (Manchester); The Religious Society of Friends, Armenian Mission; The Armenian Refugees Relief Fund run by the Armenian United Association of London; and the Armenian Ladies Guild of London.⁴⁶ These organizations raised awareness and kept the Eastern Front on the minds of Britons and Americans during some of the worst years of the war.⁴⁷ This work continued after the war when longer-term relief campaigns replaced short-term emergency aid as the primary motivating force behind humanitarian activism.

Refugees and Relief

The refugee crisis dominated the business of relief work after the war. "The Armenian nation has lost during the war as many lives as the great British Nation," the Lord Mayor's Fund asserted in 1919.⁴⁸ "What ought we do?" The answer on the surface seemed straightforward: "make facts known," support Government-supported relief measures, make personal sacrifices and abstain from "luxury" and "give generously" to humanitarian relief agencies.⁴⁹ But, as relief agencies and donors discovered, the massive postwar refugee crisis could not be solved through lofty self-sacrifice or promises of neutral aid.

At the end of the war, “Christian Minorities,” one observer wryly noted, “became synonymous with the word refugees.” Most of these refugees were on their way to the Middle East which came to occupy the southern lands of the former Ottoman Empire. The Armistice between Britain and Turkey signed at the Port of Mudros in the Aegean Sea in October 1918 opened up Mesopotamia and Persia, later to become Allied-controlled mandated territories, to more permanent settlement efforts for this population.⁵⁰ The mission shift from emergency relief to resettlement happened almost immediately after the Ottoman defeat in the war resulted in the empire’s complete collapse.

Near East Relief led the extension of the humanitarian footprint throughout Anatolia and the Middle East during the 1920s.⁵¹ It was a crisis of epic proportions. Over one million Greek, Armenian and Assyrian refugees flooded Greece from the Ottoman Empire immediately after the war. Many more would follow after 1923 when the Treaty of Lausanne officially ended the war in the East and dictated the “exchange” of Muslim and Christian populations between Greece and the Ottoman Empire. Greece willingly took in all refugees expelled from the Ottoman Empire as a condition of the Lausanne negotiations. By the mid-1920s, 20 per cent of Greece’s population held refugee status.⁵²

More refugees flooded the Middle East, now organized as a collection of weak client states ostensibly under international supervision. Here, refugees attempted to rebuild their lives in regions once part of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Versailles designated the southern lands of the empire as “mandates” in the possession of Britain and France and supervised by the League of Nations. The carving up of these territories between Britain and France began with the secret Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916. Under the Versailles Treaty agreement which officially created a system of mandates that closely followed Sykes-Picot, Britain and France controlled the Middle East. This meant that, in addition to vast oil reserves, these powers took custody of a weary and dispossessed humanity.

British ports welcomed relatively few refugees to settle in Britain and funded only a handful of resettlement projects in the Middle East. The British tightened immigration policy before the war and again after the war and essentially closed its doors to immigrants living in its new

mandates.⁵³ France took in the highest numbers of postwar refugees, the result, in part, of an acute domestic labor shortage.⁵⁴ With limited effect, it supported making the Syrian mandate which it controlled into a homeland for displaced Ottoman Christian refugees. France hoped that this move would win it a demographic advantage over long-standing Arab communities in the region.

Greece, as a state with a majority Orthodox Christian population and geographically at the heart of the crisis, let Armenian, Assyrian and of course Greek refugees stay. It looked for help from Britain, France and the United States, countries with strong historic and cultural ties to these new stateless peoples and was eventually granted a relatively small loan to fund internal relief projects. But this was not enough to fund the estimated £12.3 million needed to mitigate the effects of the refugee crisis.⁵⁵ Private aid projects attempted to fill the hole in Greece's refugee budget during this time.

Providing humanitarian relief in former Ottoman lands proved more difficult. The lack of stable central governments in the newly designated Syrian, Palestinian and Mesopotamian mandates, coupled with the uncertainty of the postwar settlement with the Ottoman Empire, stood in the way of effective distribution of aid and resettlement projects. Unlike in the case with Greece, the Allies could not pretend to make the refugee crisis go away by loaning money to the barely functioning governments of new Middle East mandates flooded with people who had no place left to go.

Private charities based in the West adjusted to these new postwar realities and began to focus on getting aid money to individual needy communities the Middle East. New organizations like Save the Children were founded while older established organizations led by Near East Relief, the Lord Mayor's Fund and Friends Relief rushed to fund projects that helped in the long, slow project of refugee resettlement. Alongside Near East Relief, the Society of Friends and Save the Children were the largest British-based relief organizations working in the region at the time. Founded in 1919, Save the Children took an early interest in the refugee crisis and the Near East and would eventually absorb other British aid organizations including the Armenian Refugees Lord Mayor's Fund.⁵⁶

These organizations often worked together, raising money and administering funds throughout the Middle East and Europe during this

period.⁵⁷ Aid poured into Damascus, Aleppo, Constantinople and other cities and towns which experienced an acute refugee crisis. These organizations ran orphanages, distributed food aid, building and farming materials and provided western expertise.⁵⁸ NER launched a campaign during this time to raise \$30 million “to meet the rehabilitation refugee and child needs in the Near East” of the estimated half million refugees who arrived in the region right after the war.⁵⁹

US-based aid agencies could not shoulder the burden of refugee relief without the help of Britain. NER sent a commission to London for a ten-day conference to see how to proceed after the signing of the armistice since “most of the territory in which the Committee was operating was at that time under the military control of England, France and Italy.” Lord Bryce “opened his London house” and helped the commission form contacts with the Foreign Office, the Admiralty and the Army to facilitate relief efforts. A similar envoy went to France, which also supported public and private relief efforts in the region. British help was understood as particularly important to the Americans since Britain controlled the Allied Mediterranean fleet and most of the communication, commercial and political apparatus of this territory at the time. The mission was a success from the perspective of aid agencies. The American delegates reached an agreement with British authorities granting relief organizations “the free use of the warehouses, docks, wharves and railways under British control in the Near East. The Foreign Office also gave its assurance that officers and men in all areas would cooperate with the relief forces.”⁶⁰

Private aid organizations like NER necessarily relied on British political, commercial and economic networks after the war. British consuls, previously employed as temporary aid workers, if they were willing, still had a role to play. But now they were joined by organizations that professionalized aid while attempting to work with local officials and international aid organizations. *Manchester Guardian* war correspondent Philips Price saw this firsthand on a visit to Persia after the war. This led to his suggestion when he got back home that relief funds raised by the Archbishop of Canterbury “be sent to the British consul at Tabriz for use of the British and American committees in cooperative relief service.”⁶¹

But the British government itself, while allowing the use of its commercial, military and political networks, provided little by way of

monetary aid. In the Caucasus, the US government appropriated relief funds for Armenia. NER acknowledged that the British army "generously distributed relief supplies from their army stores, and also assisted in the matter of transportation and relief supplies." Officers gifted \$300,000 in supplies to assist the work of NER among refugees. Aid organizations also depended on the British military for protection whenever possible. British Indian troops occupied Baku and Tiflis in 1918–19 and were reported by NER to have had "a salutary influence and tended to stabilize the political, if not the economic situation."⁶²

British officials liked the idea of watching over American aid distribution in the Middle East and the Caucasus. For them, it allowed an element of control over an unsettled region in an uncertain time. No one knew for sure, even after the signing of the armistice with Turkey in October 1918, when the final peace would come or the form it would take. In the four-year interim before the signing of the Lausanne Treaty, the "Eastern Committee" set up by the War Cabinet in March 1918 took responsibility for the Armenian question. Committee members included Lord Curzon and Lord Cecil, who made no secret of their sympathy for the plight of Armenians. As Curzon put it to the House of Lords in 1922, "At every stage, at every meeting that I have attended, the battle of the Armenians has been fought with strenuous and loyal activity by the representatives of Great Britain, and I am divulging no secret, and making for myself no unreasonable claims, when I say that no more active defender of their interests on those occasions has been found than myself."⁶³

The agenda turned to negotiating a settlement with Turkey by the end of the year. Curzon opened the December meeting citing Britain's obligation to Christian minorities in the Treaty of Berlin and presented a plan to create an Armenian homeland in the south-eastern region of Cilicia, the heart of historic Armenian cultural life. Other Committee members wanted an even bigger Armenia, which they believed would serve as a buffer between Turkey and Russia.⁶⁴

While the committee was busy discussing plans to carve up the Ottoman Empire – the plans for an Armenian state in eastern Turkey never materialized – Lord Cecil raised the issue of American humanitarian aid. The Committee agreed that support for relief work had the potential to get public opinion on the side of the peace settlement. It was at this

meeting that he noted “the great deal of feeling” that Armenian relief inspired among the public.⁶⁵ Lord Cecil wanted support from the committee for an American offer to distribute aid to refugees in British mandated territories. The committee rejected this proposal, believing that the Americans would take advantage of the situation and ultimately challenge British influence in the region. After some debate, it eventually was agreed that the US supply the money through relief organizations. Britain, however, maintained as much control as it could over the infrastructure and ground support necessary for the distribution of the millions of American dollars flowing into the Caucasus and Middle East.

Refugees on the Move

Things only got worse for refugees after the signing of the peace treaty between Turkey and the Allies in 1923. The settlement officially destroyed the Ottoman Empire, leaving those displaced by massacre and deportation as stateless refugees who could make no claim of belonging to any empire or nation. Turkey emerged from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire as a powerful adversary of the Allies under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, who embraced an exclusionary nationalism that left little room for non-Muslim minority communities in the new Turkey. After the Mudros armistice ostensibly ended the fighting, the Treaty of Sèvres was signed by Ottoman officials at Constantinople in 1920 and included clauses that explicitly protected the rights of Ottoman minorities.

In the end, fighting between Kemalist troops and the Allies continued and rendered the Sèvres Treaty a paper tiger. Greece and Turkey came to blows after Greece invaded the western coast of Anatolia with the help of British naval support in the Mediterranean. In 1922, Mustafa Kemal successfully pushed Greece out of Anatolia by burning the city of Smyrna and defeating the Greek army during the Greco-Turkish war (1919–22). This allowed Turkey, though technically defeated in World War I as part of the Central Powers, to come to the peace conference in Lausanne, Switzerland from a position of strength. The purpose would be to revise Sèvres and the minority protection provisions that the Kemalists refused to accept. President of the Lausanne conference, Lord Curzon, announced that one of the most important issues of the conference would be overseeing “unmixing populations.”⁶⁶ What to do with the millions of

refugees made homeless by the war in the East haunted men like Curzon, who had used the liberation and protection of the Armenians and other vulnerable populations as a justification for war and the continued British presence in the Middle East.

The refugee question became increasingly entangled with the affairs of the British Empire. The eastern settlement was arguably Curzon's most important and controversial legacy as Foreign Secretary. By the time he left the Foreign Office in 1924 he clearly left his mark on almost every aspect of early twentieth-century British imperial and foreign policy. He seemed to have his fingers in everything and succeeded in seamlessly tying together foreign and domestic concerns in the minds of the British public. For Curzon, what was good for the colonies and now the mandates was good for the metropole. He served as Viceroy of India from 1899–1905 and later as a member of Lloyd George's tightly controlled and highly centralized War Cabinet. Between 1919 and 1924, Curzon ran the Foreign Office. In each of these roles he argued for the importance of the Middle East in maintaining British imperial power as a gateway to India. Proudly aristocratic in sensibility and outlook, he did not always see eye to eye with the Liberal Prime Minister. Lloyd George, however, largely gave Curzon free reign in matters related to eastern policy during and after the war.

Curzon believed in the "Great Game," which held that the main thrust of British foreign policy should be defending India from the intrigues of the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. When it came time to decide if Britain should fight Turkey to defend Greek claims in Anatolia after the war, Curzon came to blows with Lloyd George's pro-Greek policy, which held that Britain had an obligation to support Greek claims to lands in Turkey predominately settled by Christian minorities. Though Curzon sympathized with plight of Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians, his focus never strayed from supporting a policy that bolstered British power in the East. He eventually won the battle with Lloyd George over going to war with Turkey on the side of Greece which he opposed. It was a position he would maintain when negotiating the final peace settlement in Lausanne.

But still there loomed the problem of the refugees. Public opinion would not let Curzon and the British government forget what one historian has called the "problem of colossal dimensions" that took root in the Near and Middle East after the war.⁶⁷ While the refugee crisis

affected all of Europe, Armenians and Assyrians were a particularly difficult case. As former subjects of the now-extinct Ottoman Empire, they belonged to no recognizable nation state immediately after the war. Nor could they go back to their ancestral homes located in some of the now most troubled regions of the Middle East.⁶⁸ The first attempt at peace had failed in 1920 with the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres, which provided some provision for stateless refugees. When Turkey came to the table again in 1923, Curzon believed that negotiators would not agree to anything that supported the interests of this population.⁶⁹

Curzon was right, but it was not only Turkey that wanted Christian minorities out of Anatolia. The infamous population exchange provision written into the peace agreement was ultimately negotiated by League of Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees, Dr Fridtjof Nansen. The bizarre decision to "trade" Muslims in Greece with the remaining Christians in Turkey allowed for the continued presence of only a small community of Christian minorities in Constantinople.⁷⁰ The ethno-religious diversity destroyed by war and genocide gave way to internationally sanctioned divisions based on sectarian lines. At the time, this idea fit well with Curzon's belief that one of the tasks of making peace was "unmixing" national and ethnic groups.

But the virtual elimination of the entire Christian population in Anatolia put pressure on the surrounding regions which were not prepared to host the massive number of refugees.⁷¹ In addition to Greece, Armenians and Assyrians eventually settled in British mandated territories in Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq), settlements in Yerevan, the core of the future Russian territory of Armenia, and French mandated territories in Syria. The question of taking refugees in Europe largely was sidestepped by the Treaty of Lausanne. Resettlement would happen in Greece and the former lands of the Ottoman Empire, not Europe.

Britain made it clear that it did not want to take responsibility for the masses of people made stateless by the war. Curzon now faced accusations by critics that he failed to make good on promises to protect Armenians massacred at Cilicia. This was the region he earlier proposed as home of the Armenian state. When the French withdrew their efforts to secure the region for Armenians by force in 1921, it fell to the hands of Kemalist forces. "What would you have us do?" he angrily replied in a heated exchange with Aneurin Williams. "It is a practical impossibility to accommodate them in Cyprus, Egypt, Mesopotamia or Palestine."

He made it clear to Williams, who had come to him to ask for aid where he stood: "there is no money to defray accommodation were it available."⁷² Curzon began facilitating plans to transfer Armenian refugees to other places.

The Foreign Office got to work trying to convince New Zealand, Australia and Canada to take refugees no one seemed to want. Hardworking refugees would settle the land, the argument went, and expand the empire: "Many of these Christian refugees are industrious people accustomed to pastoral and agricultural pursuits and constitute desirable immigrants."⁷³ Australia would have none of it. The Australian government, not the British Empire, would determine its own immigration policy. It turned Foreign Office overtures down flat: "the migration policy of the Commonwealth is confined to British people under the Empire Settlement Act." Australia would not consider taking Armenian refugees. In New Zealand, they relented "to consider individual applications" but balked at the suggestion by Curzon's Foreign Office to take significant populations of Greek, Armenian or Assyrian refugees.⁷⁴ Canada eventually took a group of orphan children but chose not to participate in any mass resettlement scheme.⁷⁵

International Solutions?

This left the League of Nations, still in its infancy, and private charity to deal with the refugee crisis in the Near East. In 1922, Nansen, the world's first High Commissioner for Refugees and architect of the population exchange plan, won the Noble Peace Prize for his efforts on behalf of displaced peoples. Hundreds of thousands of Ottoman Muslims displaced by the war and the Treaty of Lausanne's population exchange received assistance. The genocide raised the stakes for dealing in particular with the "living remnant" of Armenian survivors.⁷⁶ Greek Muslims forced to move, it rightly was believed, would be welcomed in Kemalist Turkey. It was regarding the displaced Armenian and Assyrian population that postwar schemes for resettlement in the Near East took their most urgent form.

Promises of one million pounds granted by the British Government to solve "the Armenian problem" never materialized. That job was left to the Lord Mayor's Fund, which began taking what it called "the first steps toward the liquidation of Allied obligations to the Armenian People."⁷⁷

Save the Children launched one of its very first global relief campaigns on behalf of Armenian children in 1919. The British Armenian Committee lobbied the public, Parliament and government officials to support the work of Armenian aid organizations. Specific campaigns to rescue children kidnapped during the genocide made prominent by the Lord Mayor's Fund found the support of high profile figures including the Bishop of London.⁷⁸ Still, in 1928, Friends of Armenia continued to implore the British public and politicians in their aid campaigns to answer the question, "What are you doing for Armenia?"⁷⁹

How did this system of private relief, which relied on cooperation from government and international institutions, actually work? Media played an important part in postwar resettlement and aid campaigns. Advertising in newspapers and magazines, publishing pamphlets and speaking tours all contributed to raising awareness about the plight of refugees. Appeals became more sophisticated and broad-based. Both the Society of Friends and Save the Children embraced film, a technology and media form still in its infancy, as an important tool in representing their anti-hunger and anti-poverty campaigns to the public. The Quakers and Save the Children made films to raise funds to ameliorate immediate want and hunger through establishing humanitarian aid efforts on behalf of refugees willing to help themselves.⁸⁰ The Society of Friends was satisfied to "leave the work in the hands of the many societies giving active help" in the Near East but extended their own "All British Appeal" for the Near East to raise funds for Save the Children to administer.⁸¹ These funds "promoted the self-help principle" whenever they could, setting up workshops to employ refugees in the business of knitting, making carpets and weaving fabrics that were later sold to support relief efforts.⁸² Some advocates, including Emily Robinson of the Armenian Red Cross, continued to argue that the British government bore responsibility for refugee resettlement, calling Armenians "our smallest ally." "Armenians," she concluded need "*justice not charity*."⁸³

During the early 1920s, the Lord Mayor's Fund supported a wide range of relief programs among Armenians under the approval and sometimes watchful eye of the British government.⁸⁴ The British Relief Mission, created in 1922, coordinated private and public relief throughout the Middle East.⁸⁵ Refugee policy took shape in fits and starts after the war. The refugee camp emerged as an important, if not always effective, tool in the attempt at resettlement. In December 1918, the British established a

refugee camp 30 miles north-east of Baghdad at Bakuba.⁸⁶ Lieutenant Dudley Stafford Northcote, a Cambridge graduate from a prominent aristocratic family, ran the camp during its three years in existence.⁸⁷ Northcote, along with five British soldiers, was responsible for the feeding, supervision and security of 1,300 Armenian and Assyrian refugees who had fled the killing fields of eastern Anatolia.

Northcote had no previous experience with relief work when he took up his post at Bakuba. As he told his mother in a letter, looking after refugees was "quite a change from soldiering."⁸⁸ By spring 1919, the camp housed 45,000 refugees. Northcote took his job seriously, learning Armenian and participating in the daily life and rituals of the refugees, which included an Armenian wedding.⁸⁹ But he always knew that ultimately his job would be to "repatriate" refugees. The only question was where. Britain and France still wrangled over the details of administering Syria, Mesopotamia, Lebanon and Palestine as "mandates."⁹⁰

In August 1920, Northcote got an order to start the repatriation project in the British mandate of Mesopotamia, part of modern day Iraq. He moved refugees to a transitional camp outside of Basra called Nahr Umar. The local population, it turned out, did not like the idea of thousands of refugees making claims to their land. This put the refugee camp in a desperate situation. With nowhere to settle permanently, the refugees stayed on in the camp. The LMF stepped in with £6,000, which bought three more months for the refugees. When money finally ran out, it left the camp's inhabitants in terrible straits. In the end, the British and Iraqi governments and philanthropic organizations together contributed £300,000 to resettle Assyrian refugees permanently in a region people at home now referred to as Britain's "Mespot."

Then there was the problem of the promised Armenian homeland. League of Nations' Refugee commissioner Nansen and US President Woodrow Wilson designated Yerevan in the Caucasus as a national homeland for Armenians in 1920. It was proposed that the nation would start as a mandate under European, or possibly American, control. Curzon pressed for establishing an Armenian state on a small 11,500 square mile piece of land in December 1920. Proposals for an Allied mandate for the region were initially put forth at the San Remo conference in April 1920 that served as a precursor to the Sèvres Treaty. The mandate never happened and the state of Armenia that eventually

emerged was doomed to failure. After two short-lived years of independence it became the Soviet Republic of Armenia in 1922. Today, the region is part of the country of Armenia which won independence after the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s.⁹¹ Transporting thousands of Armenian refugees from the camp in Basra to Yerevan where no infrastructure or basic provisions existed to support such a large influx of people with few resources of their own proved near impossible.

The situation was made even more difficult when the British government suddenly cut off funds to support resettlement. In 1921, the government announced that the camp would close due to expense. Refugees willing to leave the Basra camp voluntarily were promised a small food ration. Northcote was appalled and publicly refused to send “women and children out of their tents” into the desert. The BAC successfully lobbied the Colonial Office for more time and launched a public campaign on behalf of the refugees.⁹² The LMF hired Northcote and took charge with the consent of British officials and escorted the refugees to Yerevan in the company of LMF secretary, Rev. Harold Buxton.

Famine conditions in Yerevan, coupled with the overwhelming flow of refugees, coming in at over 1,000 persons per day, made it a harrowing experience for the new settlers, who had little comfort or support after the aid workers left.⁹³ After another £45,000 of donations came in from public and private agencies including Save the Children, the British government and the LMF, Nahr Umar was closed for good.

Northcote never really got over the experience and could not stop thinking about the refugees he left behind. When he came back home he sold lace work made by refugees in Britain and sent the money back to Yerevan.⁹⁴ Though aid workers understood that “relief must sooner or later come to an end,” the continuing crisis was not easy to forget. Relief organizations throughout the 1920s appealed “to the philanthropy of the people of our Empire to help.” The need ultimately overwhelmed anything private philanthropy could support. Something more was needed, but the British government did not step up relief efforts. Instead it began disengaging from its already small role in helping stem the postwar emergency in the East. The work of private relief societies ultimately earned Britain high praise from League of Nations’ refugee relief agencies. But private aid, in the assessment of the British-based Royal Institute of International Affairs, could not compensate for ineffective government

policy. Britain, in short, had not done its bit for refugees when compared to other countries: "It is doubtful, however, if this international work, largely personal and periodic is a sufficient contribution when measured by the stand of those made by other countries."⁹⁵

Lord Curzon took these charges personally, becoming cross with those who disagreed with his handling of the Armenian crisis. "You cannot expect this country . . . to concentrate within a ring of British bayonets a large number of destitute refugees and so to organise an Armenian national existence at immense expense to the British taxpayer," Curzon wrote derisively to BAC member Aneurin Williams, who again had lobbied the British government on behalf of the Armenians. "You really must trust the government who are just as humane as you are, to do their best."⁹⁶ In the wake of the Nahr Umar debacle, no one could blame Williams for his skepticism or his lack of trust in Curzon and the Foreign Office.

It was during this time that Quaker Marshall Nathaniel Fox began working through the Nansen office and the Society of Friends to resettle refugees. Though Fox and the Friends Armenian Committee realized that they could not solve the crisis, they continued to work on behalf of the refugees and cooperate with international and government led schemes. They enlisted the help of other religious organizations, including Anglican Bishop Charles Gore who visited the Armenian camps in Beirut and Aleppo in 1925 and played a central role in establishing the United British Committee that joined the efforts of Armenian aid organizations. This work drew on the Friends' long history of performing humanitarian aid work in collaboration with other relief organizations in the Near East. Gore himself was closely associated with Gladstone and claimed an "intimate friendship" with Lord Bryce, who belonged to his college at Oxford. As Bishop Gore wrote after visiting the Quaker camps in Aleppo, "we have the remnant of the Armenians to work for, to pray for and to hope for."⁹⁷

British Quakers founded a number of region-specific aid committees during the war, including the Armenian Committee, which worked tirelessly during the war to raise hundreds of thousands of pounds for relief work through the Friends Emergency & War Victims Relief Committee.⁹⁸ This organization, according to one historian, distinguished itself from earlier, more "severely practical" relief efforts and "had a strong Utopian strain which grew stronger as the war went on."



Figure 6.2 Orphans who arrived in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem carved their names and the date of their arrival in the stone of the seminary walls. Some of the names can still be partially deciphered: “Mesrob” “Hovsep” “Parsegh” “Har”. Image and translations courtesy of Adom H. Boudjikianian.

Aid would help victims while ushering in a period of profound “social change.”⁹⁹ In the Middle East after the war this translated into an ambitious resettlement program that attempted to create self-sustaining communities of Christian minorities alongside already existing Muslim-majority settlements and towns.

Fox, who headed the Friends refugee program, maintained the air of a missionary and deeply believed in this utopian vision. Before taking on the role of aid worker, he had served as the head of the Brummana High School in Lebanon. In his unpublished “Account of the Work with Armenian Refugees” he described conditions while making the case for supporting resettlement schemes. The organization advocated “the planning of land colonies near the sea in Syria to draw off the refugee populations of the Armenian camps.” This new development would take pressure off the “scheme of sending further refugees to Russian Armenia,” a region now plagued by famine and an appalling

lack of resources.¹⁰⁰ Friends appealed to the League of Nation Mandate Commission and received the support of prominent British politicians, including Lord Cecil. Photographs of the houses built under the ambitious resettlement schemes in Lebanon and Syria held at Friends House archives in London reveal the scope and scale of this vision. Rows and rows of relatively well-built homes housed families displaced by war and massacre. Meanwhile, Near East Relief continued to aid refugees through its own projects (Figure 6.3).

New settlements were located in regions where settlers could farm and make a living, if not by practicing their trade, then by producing artisan goods for the local and European market with the assistance of industrial workshops run by aid organizations. Schools, community centers and churches, too, were part of these resettlement areas. Fox felt cautiously or, perhaps, naively optimistic as the resettlement plan took shape. In 1927, he wrote to a supporter back home from Lebanon of his concerns over finding "none who could or would teach Mathematics."¹⁰¹ Getting Armenian refugees to learn Arabic in order to assimilate in their new communities ultimately would prove a much more urgent concern. But for Fox, the integration of Armenians hinged on creating infrastructure to create educated and economically viable communities. Assimilation would come as a matter of course.

The scheme to resettle the over 100,000 "homeless Armenians" already living in Syria in 1926 relied on international cooperation. The British Friends developed a program to "create agricultural colonies and to construct urban quarters." Nansen's office in Geneva oversaw the work and the French, as the mandatory power in charge of administering Syria, provided permission and funds for the settlement. Of the over £96,000 spent on this project, nearly half came from France with the remaining money from American, British and League of Nations funds which donors expected eventually would be paid back by the refugees themselves. Work focused on Aleppo, Beirut, Damascus, and Alexandretta where large concentrations of refugees already were located.

In Beirut, the Central Relief Committee purchased a 50,000 square meter piece of land along the banks of the Beirut River. Though by no means luxurious, the building of 20 "pavilions" with private funds provided shelter to 160 families. This collection of whitewashed two-story buildings were surrounded by private gardens and, "constructed entirely of reinforced concrete, comprised eight apartments of two rooms



Above: The first housing of children in the Caucasus—double deckers, two to a deck. *Below:* As each child when first admitted was a hospital case, the wards were so crowded that three and four to a bed was the usual thing.

Figure 6.3 Caring for refugees. From Barton's book about NER with accompanying caption intended to describe the extent and scope of need. James Barton, *Story of Near East Relief* (New York, 1930).

each, with independent kitchens and water-closets." More houses took shape. The quality of these dwelling improved as "the cost of building material diminished." Some new homes were made of sturdy "cement and stone." The idea was to create a self-sustaining settlement made up of "strongly built, respectable dwellings" for Armenians currently housed in the refugee camps.¹⁰²

By the early 1930s, Fox and his colleagues began to worry that they would not be allowed to complete their mission. In a report to the Nansen Office in Geneva, he expressed concerns that the deadline set to evacuate the camps "before the end of 1933" would leave 15,000 Armenian refugees without anywhere to go. Donors began asking for "the return of the portion of their funds" once they heard that the League planned to withdraw its support.¹⁰³ William Jessop, the head of the Near East Relief foundation, wrote in a confidential report in November 1931 that his "visit to Syria in October showed again very forcibly the lamentably inadequate provision that has so far been made to tackle the Armenian Refugee situation in that country." While expressing hope that the settlement in Beirut would find success, he warned against what he called the "welter of conflicting interests" in Syria where rumors that the French planned to abandon the mandate recently began to circulate. French withdrawal, Armenian leaders suggested, would "make it impossible for many to remain in Syria," especially along the Turkish border.¹⁰⁴

News of the Turkish government's expulsion of over 30,000 Armenians the previous year justified these concerns. These new refugees after having their property seized found their way to Syria with passports stamped "not allowed to return."¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

With more desperate refugees streaming into the Middle East every day, no one knew what to expect when in the early 1930s the mandates seemed certain to expire. Some refused to believe that Britain and France would ever leave. But the uncertainty took its toll on the newly settled refugees left in limbo by Europe's two remaining great empires. Relief projects slowly came to a halt after the 1930s and the internationalism promoted by the League of Nations and private aid organizations could not fill the void. Neutral aid work played an important role in

promoting the spirit of international cooperation around helping refugees, but it did not solve the problem.

The British remained at the center of these networks because of the important role that they continued to play in the Middle East after the war. Controlling the region alongside France through the mandate system reinforced the sense of responsibility that long characterized British dealings with the Armenians specifically and Christian minorities in general. This Victorian sensibility that evoked obligations to the Treaty of Berlin influenced and helped structure the humanitarian project during and after the war. The universalist claims that the Allies should embrace a suffering humanity in the wake of a disastrous world war, so clearly embraced by the US, led by the idealistic President Wilson in his “Fourteen Points” and manifest in the activities of Near East Relief, did little to help those trying to make a home for themselves in the newly formed Middle East.

Assessing the failure of the application of humanitarian claims and interventions on behalf of those caught in the cross-fire of imperial rivalries and world war requires looking closely at the rhetoric of international cooperation that attempted to promote a coherent and lasting humanitarian legacy for civilian victims. Organizations like Near East Relief, Save the Children, Friends Relief, Friends of Armenia and others raised money and cooperated with another under the banner of “no politics” in the hopes that aid would go directly to refugees and avoid getting tied up with postwar boundary making and geopolitics.

But the larger costs of such apolitical positioning soon became clear as government support for projects disappeared. Donors and those receiving aid had little recourse to make claims on international and national institutions for help. Humanitarianism with the politics left out in the case of the Armenian refugees obscured the causes of what created the humanitarian crisis in the first place. As Lilie Chouliaraki argues, this kind of narrowly focused humanitarianism can sometimes do more harm than good, isolating the giver of aid in what she calls a “happy bubble” where subscribing to a cause replaces real action on behalf of victims of sexual violence, torture and even ultimately genocide.¹⁰⁶

The war brutally exposed the ambiguities of the nineteenth-century humanitarian ideal. To serve Armenia was about serving civilization, to paraphrase the old Gladstonian dictate, but it had necessarily if not

always obviously been a political act. Aid workers, individual donors and relief organizations looked for ways to square the circle of disaster relief and find a solution that would end the suffering of the communities they deemed worthy of support. Although the Victorian frame of mind was slowly fading, it continued to influence how the British Empire understood the politics of intervention. It would result in producing the most political of acts: the world's first war crimes tribunals to try Turkish officials for "crimes against humanity."

CHAPTER 7

“CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY”

“British Statesman ... promised the civilized world that those responsible for the [Armenian] massacres should be held personally responsible ... it was the firm intention of His Majesty’s Government to fulfill that promise.”

– Report of a conversation between a British official and the Ottoman Grand Vizier, Constantinople, January 28, 1919

After the war came the reckoning. The Allied victors demanded compensation, concessions and admissions of guilt from the losers. The Central Powers conceded defeat in the fall of 1918. The following year, the world watched as the final peace settlement marking the end to the war in Europe was signed in France at the palace at Versailles. The story of the Treaty of Versailles’ harsh demands on Germany as a condition of the peace is well known. Historians blame this ill-conceived treaty for spawning Germany’s economic collapse which led to the rise of Adolf Hitler and, ultimately, World War II. The end of the war in the East had equally dramatic consequences. The four years it took to broker peace with the Ottoman Empire after the signing of the armistice in 1918 created the conditions for ethnic, religious and political instability in the modern Middle East. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) finished the job of ridding Anatolia of its Christian minorities, forging modern Turkey out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire as a secular but ethnically and religiously homogenous nation state.

The Armenians were just one of the groups caught in the middle of the remaking of the Middle East in the shadow of Mustafa Kemal’s

exclusionary nationalist politics, which later inspired Hitler.¹ Their case, however, remains emblematic of the larger crisis of the postwar settlement that witnessed the dividing up of the land and peoples of the former Ottoman Empire. As victims of systematic massacre and mass displacement, Armenians came to symbolize the plight of those ethnic minorities who looked to the Allies for aid and protection after they declared victory in 1918. The question of how the Allies, led by Britain, would use victory over the Ottoman Empire to punish perpetrators of genocide weighed heavily on those charged with making the peace. It also had important implications for future debates over intervention into the internal affairs of other nations, humanitarian or otherwise.

Britain played the central role in negotiating the armistice with Turkey at Mudros in October 1918. In that document, Admiral Somerset Gough-Calthorpe laid out the conditions for a favorable settlement for Britain and her Allies. Each of the victorious powers had something they wanted, but as the war resisted easy resolution those ambitions became harder and harder to realize. In short, the armistice refused to yield a blueprint for a sustainable peace. One of the things Britain wanted in the initial settlement was justice for victims of war crimes. The War Cabinet reported that plans were in place for "the formation of a tribunal" to try war crimes on the eve of the signing of the armistice and already had contacted the attorney general and key jurors.² Prosecuting Germany and the Ottoman Empire for crimes against humanity and crimes committed against British prisoners of war thus became part of the initial postwar settlement. Facilitating the Ottoman war crimes tribunals after the armistice agreement with Turkey, however, proved difficult as an act of peace making.

In the end, war crimes trials in the case of both Germany and the Ottoman Empire worked no better than any other aspect of the peace. The trials, now long forgotten, were short-lived and did not ultimately punish those accused of the gravest crimes against civilian and military personnel. But these trials created a precedent, later put into practice after the Holocaust, that perpetrators of crimes against civilian populations during war would be held accountable. Britain's role in establishing war crimes tribunals to try those accused of massacring Armenians introduced "crimes against humanity" into the lexicon of

human rights. The failure of the tribunals to effectively bring perpetrators to justice exposed the weakness of both the international ideal and the postwar imperial order responsible for its birth.

Punitive justice, poorly planned and half-heartedly pursued in the Ottoman case, proved dangerously ineffective for the British and the Armenians whom they claimed to defend. The failure of the Ottoman war crime trials further emboldened Turkish nationalists and contributed to weakening Britain's position in the Middle East. For the Armenian, Greek and Assyrian victims in whose name the trials were established, it opened the door to further persecution and massacres in the years that followed. Genocide continued its work after the war, proving a highly effective means of purging Turkey of its Christian minority populations which, despite their near elimination from Anatolia, continued to be labeled as a disloyal and dangerous element. This is the reason why Armenian communities have disappeared from eastern Anatolia. Those who remain today in Istanbul, a group that owes its existence to a condition of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, live under a self-imposed silence about what happened in 1915. The story of the failure to prosecute Ottoman officials for crimes against humanity thus must be understood in the context of both what it represented at the time for those pursuing justice and those who found themselves caught in the crosshairs of a seemingly unending war.

Peace and War Crimes

The British Empire took the lead in war crimes prosecutions after the war.³ No other country or institution was in a position to pursue this course. The US stood aside, deciding to take an arms-length approach to engaging the Ottoman Empire. Britain took the opportunity to marginalize France, its ally in the Mediterranean, and set the terms of the postwar settlement. "Practically the whole of the forces employed against Turkey were British forces," the Prime Minister told his cabinet the week before negotiations began at Mudros. Lloyd George claimed to have dedicated half a million troops towards directly supporting the effort and felt justified in determining the Allied course of action with Turkey.⁴

Britain immediately made it known that it would hold the Ottoman Empire responsible for crimes committed against minorities during

wartime. With the League of Nations still in its infancy, Britain positioned itself as an arbiter of international justice in its dealings with the question of war crimes.⁵ Britain's moral and practical claim as protector of Ottoman Armenians over Russia, now plunged into a bloody civil war after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, as well as other European powers, was strengthened by the account of the massacres found in Bryce's Blue Book and supported by the Anglo-American humanitarian movement.⁶

Britain, some believed, shared responsibility for what happened in 1915. The failed invasion of Gallipoli implicated the Allies alongside the Ottoman government in the killings that happened immediately in its wake. "The Armenian race in Asia Minor has been virtually destroyed," charged one critic who blamed the massacres in part on "the ill-success of the Dardanelles expedition."⁷ Others continued to invoke Article 61. "One of the objects which the Allies set before themselves when they were in the War was the liberation of the Christian minorities in Asia Minor," Lord Curzon declared in Parliament in December 1922, an unfulfilled "pledge" which dated from the Berlin Treaty.⁸ This understanding of British responsibility, coupled with the over one million troops still stationed in the Ottoman Empire at the war's end, poised the government to take the lead in Allied peace efforts on the Eastern Front that included the arbitration of the Armenian case.⁹

Wartime Prime Minister David Lloyd George embraced World War I as a fight for international justice led by the British Empire. At the war's end he intended to make good on this promise by pursuing the prosecution of the German Kaiser and those responsible for the Armenian massacres for war crimes. The Prime Minister called upon the British Empire to support the cause of freedom and humanity in a series of wartime speech published as *The Great Crusade*, much as his Liberal predecessor W.E. Gladstone might have done.¹⁰ "With all its faults," he declared, "the British Empire, here and across the seas, stands for freer, better, ampler, nobler conditions of life for man."¹¹ In a later speech he spoke of the importance of imperial unity and singled out India's contribution of over one million men to the war effort.¹² To explain this show of support he praised the "beneficence of the British Empire" calling it "the most potent factor today in the struggle for human liberty."¹³

The Prime Minister, in anticipation of an Allied victory, attached this claim to the pursuit of justice after the war. "There must be reparations done for violations of international law," which would honor those who have suffered for the "common cause of freedom."¹⁴ In a response to the Ottoman delegation at the Peace Conference, Lloyd George made clear the kinds of "violations" he had in mind. The case against the Ottoman Empire regarding the treatment of civilian populations during wartime centered on that government's own failure to defend minorities: "There is a great deal of proof that it took upon itself to organize and lead attacks of the most savage kind on a population that it ought to have protected."¹⁵

The decision to pursue the prosecution of war criminals tested the limits of Lloyd George's crusade. He worried that Britain would be able to indefinitely support the 1,084,000 men he cited as occupying the Ottoman Empire after the war and was warned by Winston Churchill that he needed to reach a settlement quickly, while he had the military backing on the ground.¹⁶ The Allies developed the war crimes tribunal as a new tool to hold accountable the Ottomans and Germans, which initially included plans to try the German Kaiser himself.¹⁷ The Leipzig Trials were the result and, in the end, amounted to a short-lived set of legal proceedings that yielded the prosecution of several minor German officials in a German court. Convictions ultimately meant short prison sentences for perpetrators of war crimes.¹⁸ The decision to try Ottoman officials for a new category of crime, "crimes against humanity," committed during wartime against the empire's own subjects, fared little better.

The framing of the armistice document offered the first opportunity to put into practice the May 1915 Joint Declaration, in which the Allies had accused Turkey of committing crimes against humanity and civilization. The document also posited a responsibility to protect human rights which the Bryce Report had positioned Britain to defend. Admiral Somerset Gough-Calthorpe was the man charged with making the peace. Serving as both the Commander in Chief of British Mediterranean Naval Forces and the High Commissioner at Constantinople, he had strict instructions from the Foreign Office that this should be a wholly British affair.¹⁹ Britain rebuffed French demands to have a hand in negotiations, claiming that such action amounted to little more than "butting in," in the words of one observer.²⁰

The Armenian issue found its way into several sections of the Armistice that Calthorpe singularly negotiated with Ottoman officials in October 1918 aboard a ship docked in the Turkish port of Mudros. The most significant of these agreements was the sanctioning of Allied involvement in the subsequent pursuit of war criminals. Others included amnesty for Armenian prisoners, giving Britain charge of Turkish prisoners of war and securing the right to occupy Armenian villages to prevent further massacres. The French and other Allies accepted Calthorpe's document, agreeing to substitute the word "Allied" for "British" in the final document.²¹

After the signing of the Armistice, *The Times* confidently declared that the prosecution of "those responsible for the massacres would come as a matter of course" because the Ottomans feared harsher measures "imposed by the Allies."²² In the following months, news of continued massacres and pressure from humanitarian organizations put the plans for the tribunals into motion.²³ The Ottoman War Crimes Trials, a series of courts-martial set up to prosecute Turkish officials for the Armenian massacres, tried the accused as a condition of the peace.²⁴ By the spring of 1919, the Ottoman government, under British pressure, arrested over 100 high profile suspects including government ministers, governors and military officers.²⁵ The trials took place between 1919 and 1922 and resulted in the execution of three minor officials for what Calthorpe labeled "crimes against humanity."²⁶

One of the most surprising things about the war crimes tribunals, in light of the persistent denial of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey today, was the open cooperation of the Ottoman government in the proceedings. Even before the Armistice was signed, Grand Vizier Ahmet Izzet indicated his support for investigating the massacres. His successor, Grand Vizier Ahmet Tevfik, launched an actual investigation on November 11, the eve of Calthorpe's leading of the Allied fleet through the Dardanelles to occupy Constantinople. The Allies stated intention to try "all members of the Ottoman government and those of their agents" implicated in Armenian massacres had forced this course of action.²⁷ Two weeks later, Sultan Mehmet VI publicly declared, in an emotionally rendered statement, that the trials would go forward, claiming that "Such misdeeds . . . have broken my heart. I ordered an inquiry as I came to the throne . . . Justice will soon be done."²⁸

The Ottoman Chamber of Deputies, which included Armenian and Greek representatives, a legacy of the 1908 Young Turk revolutionary reforms, debated the topic of the massacres throughout the month of November. The chamber openly addressed the question of culpability. The continued attention to the Armenian issue led some members to express frustration with the debates and demand that the matter be laid to rest as quickly as possible. "Let us bring out the truth of the matter and then let us be done with it," a Turkish deputy from Trabzon declared. Another deputy concurred, soliciting cheers of "yes, yes" from the chamber when he remarked: "With a resolve never to return to it for discussion again, we should close this chapter for good, while maintaining our other resolve to inflict punishment on the guilty ones with the severity of a thunderbolt."²⁹ The result was the formation of the Mazhar Inquiry Commission set up to investigate the massacres. Though plagued by a lack of cooperation by local officials who themselves feared prosecution, by January 1919 the Commission began conducting investigations of mass killings in 28 Turkish provinces.

Talk in the Chamber of establishing a High Court to try Ottoman Cabinet Ministers in early November did not win support. The investigating Commission instead established what came to be labeled "The Extraordinary Court-Martial."³⁰ Investigations by the Ottoman government of the Adana massacres in 1909 yielded no tangible results. There seemed little reason to believe that the consideration of wartime atrocities would be any different. The conditions of the armistice and the shaky status of the Ottoman government after the war, however, put pressure on the leadership to act. On December 14, 1918, the Sultan issued an edict that set the trials in motion. The courts-martial were open proceedings which allowed both media and public access and were directed at high-ranking members of the CUP in power during the war. They received the support of the Ottoman leadership. When Grand Vizier Damat Ferit took over for Grand Vizier Tevfik in March of 1919, he told his cabinet that he sought to speed up the prosecutions of those "whose crimes drew the revulsion of the entire human kind."³¹

Historians have noted the unprecedented nature of these proceedings: "a postwar Turkish government not only officially acknowledged it, but more important . . . ventured to investigate and punish the crime and its perpetrators."³² Though instability in the Ottoman government and pressure from Allied forces hindered the process and rendered the court

martials ineffective, the proceedings brought accusations against the Ottoman government made during the war to light. Ultimately, the rise of Mustafa Kemal in the early 1920s would put an end to the tribunals. Even Mustafa Kemal reportedly called what happened to the Armenians a “shameful act” and allegedly told a Swiss newspaper reporter that he supported the hanging of those “rascals” who perpetrated the massacres.³³

Mustafa Kemal's priorities, however, lay elsewhere. The future leader of Turkey had yet to consolidate his power when arrangements for the trial of Ottoman war criminals began to take shape in Constantinople. He would eventually restart the cycle of violence with new massacres of Armenian, Greek and Assyrian minorities committed by his army in eastern Anatolia after the French occupation and in the western city of Smyrna in 1922. It was an act, among others, that, according to Stefan Ihrig, later captured the imagination of the Nazi leadership who understood the new Turkey as “a standard bearer for the modern nationalist and totalitarian politics that they wished to bring to Germany.”³⁴ But this would come later. Between December 1918 and April 1919, with pressure from the British and the cooperation of the Ottoman leadership, it looked like the trials might have a chance.

Calthorpe's Peace

Sir Somerset Arthur Gough-Calthorpe (1864–1937) was no crusader for human rights. Admiral Calthorpe, a title he earned during the war, was born in London to a titled family with strong military ties in 1864. After entering the navy in 1878 and attending the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, he started his steady rise from Lieutenant to Captain and eventually maneuvered up through the ranks of the Admiralty. Serving in Africa and later as a naval attaché to Russia, Norway and Sweden, he had what his biographer described as “a worthy but certainly not spectacular career.”³⁵ His work on the investigation into the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 earned him some public notoriety. In 1913, he was recommended and then passed over to serve as naval attaché to Germany by First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill, who nevertheless noted his “high professional and social standing” as a man of “private means and much experience.” These qualities would eventually earn him

Churchill's respect and confidence on the eve of the Gallipoli campaign, when he promoted Calthorpe to acting Vice Admiral and Senior Cruiser Admiral.³⁶ In August 1917, he achieved the rank of commander-in-chief of British forces in the Mediterranean. When the war ended, Calthorpe emerged both as the key Allied figure in facilitating the peace and as the one with responsibility to enforce the agreement to try and prosecute Ottoman war crimes.

The British initially had not anticipated the Mediterranean's central importance to defeating the Central Powers. It focused instead on the Western Front. During this period, the Admiralty remained content to leave it to Calthorpe to sort things out with the French, who held command of the region at the beginning of the war. Calthorpe had lived in France as a boy and spoke fluent French, which helped him to navigate dealings with his French superior. Described as "conscientious and hardworking" but a little unsure of himself, he took his job coordinating anti-submarine warfare from his shore-based post in Malta seriously. Eventually, Calthorpe established a solid authority over his command and found himself somewhat unexpectedly at the center of peace negotiations when the war ended. The British, now recognizing the significance of the region to future dealings in the Middle East, wrested control from the French in the Mediterranean when the collapse of the Ottoman Empire seemed eminent.

Calthorpe took personal charge of the Mediterranean command in the fall of 1918, a post he held until his resignation in July 1919. His naval and diplomatic service up to that point left him ill-prepared for the task that lay ahead. Although the disaster at Gallipoli ended Churchill's reign as head of the Admiralty, Calthorpe maintained his position. He failed to make an opportunity of the reprieve. The Admiral proposed an ultimately badly conceived plan early in 1917 to weaken the convoy system in order to make more ships available for military engagement, which would have crippled the Allied position in the Mediterranean. Before any damage was done, the Admiralty overruled his decision. Britain's poor track record in the Mediterranean, attributed largely to leadership mistakes, understandably weakened the reputation of commanders including Calthorpe. The decision to put him in charge of the peace negotiations with the Ottoman Empire as head of Allied Mediterranean forces thus produced obvious surprise in some quarters, as did his subsequent appointment as High Commissioner at Constantinople.

Remembered as an “organizer and diplomatist,” Calthorpe’s most notable achievement was most certainly negotiating the armistice with the Ottoman Empire.³⁷ News of the fall of Bulgaria in early October 1918 drew the Admiral’s fleet to the Turkish port of Mudros, where they waited for a signal. One of the men in Calthorpe’s convoy recorded in his diary “feeling that something new was in the air, an end to the long stalemate” when he heard reports that a British ship spied a boat “bearing a flag of truce” near the coast.³⁸ After some back and forth, Calthorpe ordered a ship to bring the remaining plenipotentiaries from shore to begin deliberations. In the midst of a surprise storm, negotiations began on Calthorpe’s ship with navy minister Huseyin Rauf Bey on October 26, the Admiral was the sole Allied representative.³⁹ As a sort of omen of what was to come regarding the future peace, powerful winds, rain and high waves prevented the immediate conveyance of news that the war was over with Turkey. Signed on October 30, the sailor charged with getting the message to the Eastern Telegraph Company office on shore remembered braving “torrents of rain” and rough roads to get his message out. “It is good news,” the courier reported to the men in the military telegraph post, “an armistice with Turkey.”⁴⁰

The War Office responded enthusiastically to the news when they met the next day. Lord Curzon concluded that “Vice-Admiral Calthorpe had made better terms even than those expected.” Curzon admitted to believing agreement would only come on four clauses. The Ottoman government had agreed to over six times that number. The Allies secured the “right to occupy any strategical points in the event of any situation arising which threatens the security of the Allies” which in essence issued a blank check to control Ottoman internal affairs. Another clause clearly spelled out what occupation meant for Armenia: “In case of disorder in the six Armenian villayets the Allies reserve to themselves the right to occupy any part of them.” The agreement vaguely excluded Greek man-of-wars from participating in the occupation due to continued animosity between Greece and Turkey which would soon erupt into armed conflict.

The agreement also included a secret clause. Clause 24 established a British mission “to Armenia to investigate the conditions there.” Fear of encouraging “Armenian revolutionaries” left this clause unpublished in the final agreement released to the public. The discussion of the terms of

the armistice in the House of Commons caused some concern when it came to the Armenian question. Sir George Cave, who announced the agreement soon after news of the armistice reached Britain, asked if he was authorized to respond to questions regarding the protection of Armenians. After some deliberation the War Cabinet concluded that “if the question of the protection to be given under the Armistice to Armenians was raised, he should be authorized to satisfy the House of Commons on that point.”⁴¹

With over 1,000 Allied ships under his command, Calthorpe set about the work of enforcing the agreement. Minesweeping commenced immediately to pave the way for the 6,000 troops scheduled to land on November 6 to occupy Ottoman soil. Calthorpe did not anticipate needing the help of French or Italian ships, only the British Aegean squadron.⁴² Officially appointed British High Commissioner on November 9, 1918, Foreign Secretary A.J. Balfour informed Calthorpe that “he would be the official channel of communication with the Turkish Government in regard to the protection of British interests and the execution of the terms of the armistice.” Balfour made Calthorpe’s charge in relation to Armenian, Greek and Assyrian minorities clear: “Turkish domination over subject races should be ended irrevocably.”⁴³

Calthorpe kept detailed records of his dealings in Constantinople and regularly reported his findings in secret dispatches to the War Cabinet. Eliminating the influence of the Committee of Union and Progress which was blamed for waging the war against Britain topped concerns. By the end of November, the ushering in of a new but notably weak government made up of “respectable elderly men without pronounced political antecedents,” and led by Tevfik Pasha (1845–1936), the last Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, worried Calthorpe.⁴⁴ Old political rivalries had the opportunity to delegitimize the peace process and benefit the CUP. Resentment of the Allied occupation of Constantinople and reported “indiscriminate flag-wagging in the Christian quarters, especially by the Greeks,” did not help matters.⁴⁵

Calthorpe received reassurances from the Turkish foreign minister that “the Government was doing its utmost to maintain order and to loyally carry out the terms of the armistice.” Political intrigue engaged in by well-funded and highly visible members of the former government promised to derail these plans, according to this source, who for dramatic emphasis placed blame on the CUP for “plung(ing) Turkey

into war with its best friend.” The Armenian issue weighed heavily on the minds of Calthorpe and his staff that November. Making little headway with the new government, they at first focused on humanitarian relief. Assistant High Commissioner Richard Webb (1870–1950) entered into discussion with American relief workers to see what could be done for displaced Armenians. Allowed to return to their homes, they remained “without clothing or food.” Their homes in ruins or occupied by “Moslem emigrants from the Balkans and Syria” left little real possibility for repatriation. More than likely, such a program would lead to Armenians being further “persecuted.” The answer: feed and clothe refugees in temporary accommodation through the winter. Webb concluded by raising the issue of establishing an Armenian state in eastern Anatolia where the “previous Christian inhabitants had been extirpated” to provide a place for these homeless refugees to resettle.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, conditions deteriorated in the countryside, while the Ottoman government faced its own challenges. Despite good harvests, prices had risen 4,000 per cent, according to the “Eastern Reports” issued by the British government. This affected refugees made homeless by the massacres still in the country as well as millions of others living in towns and cities across the Ottoman Empire. People began to starve in places where food should have been available due to speculation, corruption and the rising cost of transportation. Distrust of the paper currency caused inflation, further contributing to widespread discontent across the country. In Adana, one of the richest food-producing regions of the country, wartime massacres contributed to conditions that produced starvation on a mass scale that continued after the war. These conditions came to affect the entire community, placing further pressure on the internal refugee crisis. Allied occupation, some believed, would stabilize the economy by propping up the Turkish currency and keeping the peace in places like Adana where food shortages threatened to ignite further violence against displaced minorities.

The Ottoman government had political as well as economic reasons for not resisting the occupation. Those in power immediately after the war pledged to uphold the rule of the Sultan and keep the CUP out of government, a position ultimately supported by Britain. The government, however, struggled to maintain its hold over the country in the face of mounting postwar pressures. Ottoman leaders pursued a policy that placated the British in order to reconsolidate power against

the CUP, while attempting to regain the confidence of the people who increasingly came to resent the occupation. The government also hoped its cooperation with the Allies would limit territorial losses in the final peace agreement. This proved a difficult balance. In late January, Calthorpe reported that the cabinet had undergone yet another reshuffling, making it “slightly more homogeneous than the old one, but almost as weak.”⁴⁷

The question of legitimacy hung over the occupation. As internal War Cabinet reports make clear, Britain steadily consolidated its position in Constantinople. This meant that decisions made regarding day-to-day governance of Ottoman internal affairs, enforcing the armistice and overseeing the capture and prosecution of those accused of war crimes, fell largely to Calthorpe, Webb and the military officers under his command.⁴⁸ Although the French complained of British overreach, Calthorpe broadly interpreted his task to assume charge over Ottoman affairs as ranging from policing to public health. He headed at one point a commission to clean up Turkish prisons in Constantinople, which he argued should fall under the category of “sanitary” reform. Control of the banking system also fell into the hands of the High Commissioner, who managed the array of foreign interests of those investors still operating in the capital.

Effectively marginalizing the French in the Mediterranean put Britain at the top of the Allied chain of command. This, coupled with a weak and ineffectual Ottoman government, allowed Calthorpe latitude in interpreting how to enforce the terms of the armistice. When news of the location of key figures wanted in connection with the Armenian massacres surfaced in January 1919, Calthorpe telegraphed London “asking for authority, without the consent of the Turkish Government to arrest Enver, Talaat and their leading confederates if he could do so.”⁴⁹ He used this power to influence the investigations into both those accused of the Armenian massacres and the “ill-treatment of prisoners of war.” Both the Grand Vizier and the Ottoman minister of foreign affairs expressed “their readiness to inflict suitable punishment” on the perpetrators in conversations with Calthorpe. Soon after, Calthorpe received a list from the government of 60 men implicated in the massacres who the minister of the interior wanted to arrest “at one coup.”⁵⁰

The weakness of the Ottoman government, while granting Calthorpe a great deal of latitude in his role as High Commissioner, hindered the

war crimes investigations from the beginning. Calthorpe blamed the "timidity of the Sultan" for slowing down the process, along with his overestimation of the numbers of men arrested, which at one point he claimed totalled 200. Despite these challenges, the process continued. Damat Ferit Pasha (1853–1923),⁵¹ the brother-in-law of the Sultan and former Grand Vizier, reported that the Sultan had informed him of his intention to "punish those who were responsible for this crime" but was prevented from doing so by his cabinet, who lacked the energy and will to see it through.⁵² The cabinet, made up of men who pledged themselves to carrying out the conditions of the armistice and remained opposed to the CUP, had little power. It was also highly unstable. Ministries fell and were again reconstituted, often with many of the same men in different positions. This situation persisted throughout almost the entirety of 1919 when the main drama of the war crimes investigations played out. Mustafa Kemal's nationalist campaign successfully delegitimized the administration of the so-called Ottoman Entente Liberal by the end of that year. This effectively rendered subsequent proceedings futile, despite the persistence of the tribunals until 1922.

Trying War Crimes

In the midst of this uncertainty, the British persisted. Calthorpe's dealings in Constantinople positioned the British Empire to prompt an international showdown on war crimes. Matters came to a head in February 1919, after four months of back and forth between Calthorpe, the Ottoman government and the War Cabinet. The Paris Peace Conference decided to take up the issue. British Solicitor General Sir Ernest Pollock turned his attention to the question of how to prosecute Turkey for "crimes against humanity." "I think that a British Empire war tribunal should do it," he argued to fellow Allied jurists.⁵³ Although the practice of international justice was not new, initiating war crimes tribunals for perpetrators of wartime civilian massacres as a prosecutable offense was.⁵⁴ The consideration of the Ottoman war crimes tribunals in Paris would up the stakes for the British, who had taken charge of Allied dealings in the Mediterranean and the Armenian issue.

The idea of a "High Court" to prosecute war crimes was first discussed as part of the Allied peace process in February 1919 at the Preliminary Peace Conference, where jurists met as part of the Committee on the

Responsibility of Authors of the War to discuss violations of “human rights.”⁵⁵ It was while serving on this committee that Sir Ernest Pollock wrote to Lloyd George of his frustration with what he saw as the inevitable “delay” in setting up such an “International Commission.”⁵⁶ Pollock expressed further skepticism that such an international body would work due to the complexity of the cases and the variation in the juridical standards and procedures across Allied countries. This concern had led Pollock to suggest that the British Empire take this role, citing its global stature and the superiority of English law and its “single-judge system.”⁵⁷ Confident that “The British Empire is far in advance of other nations who sit at the Commission in their proposals as to (a) how the Tribunal should be constituted, and (b) the evidence in cases to be brought before it,” he raised the possibility in a letter to then Foreign Secretary Balfour of setting up the British Empire Tribunal, which he believed had “support from the Naval and Military representatives” on the Committee.⁵⁸

Though the Allies ultimately rejected the proposed British Empire Tribunal over the question of jurisdiction, Britain continued its pursuit of war criminals. The Foreign Office collected dozens of dossiers on suspects.⁵⁹ The decision to go it alone had to do with a combination of factors that included the diminished position of Russia as a defender of Christian Orthodoxy at the proceedings and France’s weakened role in the Mediterranean after the war. The United States’ active disinterest in the creation of an international body to try war crimes contributed as well.⁶⁰ Finally, Britain on some level believed that it should take the responsibility to oversee the proceedings. When Allied leaders met in April to discuss the findings of the Committee on Responsibility, Lloyd George echoed Pollock’s concern over a proposal that the newly formed League of Nations set up its own court of justice. While supporting the idea that such a court should be “created by the League of Nations,” Lloyd George wanted to be sure it demonstrated “that it is capable of punishing crimes” that included “criminal acts” and “general orders in violation of human rights.”⁶¹

To the question of which body would control the trials was added the difficulty of defining a war crime. The prosecution of Ottoman leaders for the Armenian massacres overlapped with the issue of the mistreatment of prisoners of war from Britain and its empire.⁶² Ultimately, the category of “war crimes” in the Ottoman case included

crimes against both British military and Armenian civilian populations, which further complicated the already complex proceedings.⁶³ One of the questions raised at the time by legal experts was whether or not “war crimes” applied to acts committed against a country’s own subjects. In the case of the Armenians, this proved a particularly important distinction. Whereas the German case revolved around the issue of culpability for the violation of “laws and customs of war affecting members of the British armed forces or other British subjects,” as stipulated by the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, the case against the Ottoman Empire ventured into less certain territory.⁶⁴

The issue of whether or not Ottoman officials could be tried for crimes against their own subjects during wartime opened up important questions regarding the application of nascent human rights standards in a military conflict. British officials asked, “whether the term ‘acts committed in the violation of the laws and customs of war’” covered “offences committed by . . . Turkish Authorities against Turkish subjects of the Armenian race.”⁶⁵

In the end, the War Crimes Tribunal did not fall under the jurisdiction of the British Empire or the League of Nations. The Ottoman government investigated and prosecuted those suspected of war crimes. Damat Ferit Pasha assured Britain that his government was not, “inclined to diminish the guilt of the authors of this great tragedy.”⁶⁶ Britain approved of the regional tribunals, which paralleled the agreement made to try German war criminals in a German court at Leipzig.⁶⁷

Following through with the maze of prosecutions of those accused of massacring civilians and mistreating prisoners of war in the Ottoman Empire proved more complex than in the German case. The May 1915 Declaration raised the stakes by introducing the issue of crimes against humanity as a potentially prosecutable offense. These trials thus represented an attempt to balance a commitment to human rights with concerns over what the British Empire believed it was possible to do in the early days of an unstable peace.

These challenges left Calthorpe in a bind. In January, Calthorpe issued the statement which opens this chapter to the Grand Vizier, through his representative Andrew Ryan. He warned of the grave obligation that British statesmen had made when they “promised the civilized world that the British would fully prosecute those responsible for the massacres.”⁶⁸ In an interview with an Ottoman official earlier that month, the High

Commissioner addressed “the question of the Armenian massacres and the treatment of British Prisoners,” conveying the “inflexible resolve” that “the authors of both would have to be punished with all rigour.” Another official responded with assurances that the Ottoman government planned to punish those responsible and that “he would resign from the cabinet if this were not done.” Calthorpe expressed skepticism: “what we looked for was more than good will; it was for actual results.”⁶⁹

Calthorpe had little to show for claims that the British Empire intended to lead the “civilized world” in the cause of human rights justice. By the end of January, frustrated that the government had not yet arrested 60 men on the Minister of Interior’s list of war criminals, he sent an urgent telegram to the Foreign Office: “It is of course high time that action should be taken; there has already been too much delay.”⁷⁰ Four days later, news of the escape of a key suspect, Reshid Bay, reached Calthorpe. He sent Ryan to visit the Grand Vizier and inform him that Calthorpe “took gravest possible view of incident” which was a direct challenge “not only to his government but to Entente Powers.” Ryan reported that both the Vizier and Minister of Interior understood the gravity of the matter and would try to recapture the prisoner. Still, Ryan let Calthorpe know that he believed after his interview that the “present unsatisfactory situation cannot be allowed to continue.”⁷¹

As the possibility of an international body created to try suspects was raised and then faded, responsibility increasingly fell to Calthorpe and his men to see through the proceedings. The escape of Reshid Bay at the end of January, someone he considered “deeply implicated in the Armenian massacres,” furthered Calthorpe’s personal involvement in the war crimes investigations. Previously applied pressure had not yielded effective results with individual members of the Ottoman Cabinet. “I warned him again that the question of the prisoners of war and of the Armenians were most important and that he would do well to devote to them his utmost attention,” he informed the British Foreign Office in early January after speaking with a top Ottoman official.⁷² Calthorpe began to keep track of the names of arrested suspects for his superiors in London and recorded any hesitancy on the part of Ottoman officials to carry out arrests. As he concluded his report, “If the government could give no better earnest of a serious intention to punish the guilty other means would have to be found for the attainment of that object.”

That order came on February 5, when the Foreign Office instructed Calthorpe to "demand the immediate surrender" of "Turkish officers and officials" guilty of serious crimes. "Outrages to Armenians or other subject races in Turkey or Transcaucasia" topped the list followed by the "ill-treatment of prisoners." Other violations included failure to comply with the armistice, looting, breeches in the laws and customs of war and insolence to British officers. The Foreign Office indicated that military tribunals were in the process of being formed to try individuals for these crimes.⁷³ Calthorpe soon received a list of suspects. A few days later, General Edmund Allenby, the chief commanding military officer during the Middle East campaigns, officially entered Constantinople to bolster British authority and support Calthorpe's new directive.

The final demand summed up the thrust of Allenby's visit and explains, in part, his nickname as 'the Bull': "It must be understood that I have the power to occupy any place I wish." Allowing "no argument or discussion of these conditions" with Calthorpe close at his side, he issued his demands to the ministers of foreign affairs and war under the threat of force. Allenby claimed authority to disarm military and civilian personnel, remove Turkish officers, control communications, and repatriate troops. Most importantly for Calthorpe's purposes, Allenby assumed the power to "arrest any persons charged with crimes" and take charge of the repatriation of Armenians and the immediate restoration of their land and property.⁷⁴

This show of resolve had immediate, if only temporary, effect. Two days after Allenby's official visit, Reshid Bey was recaptured and subsequently committed suicide. In early March 1919, Calthorpe reported that he had the full cooperation of the newly formed government organized under Damat Ferit as Grand Vizier. Webb paid a visit to the Grand Vizier, where he reportedly declared that "he was prepared to arrest anyone we demanded" if Britain would provide financial help "to enable him to carry on." In issuing this promise and request he assured Webb that "his only hope was in God and Great Britain."⁷⁵ Fear of the CUP played a clear role in this positioning. In short, he would give Britain what it wanted by capturing suspects accused of war crimes in exchange for protection from his internal enemies. In a grand dramatic gesture most likely intended for the benefit of British officials, the Grand Vizier issued a dictate to his new

cabinet that, “all manner of oppression, tyranny, persecution, massacres, deportation, has been banished.”⁷⁶

But the command failed to resonate beyond the walls of government. More massacres followed. British authorities restored order and put a stop to a new wave of violence against Armenians in Cilicia and Syria after reports of the CUP arming Turks in the city of Diarbekir against the remaining Armenian population surfaced. Meanwhile, the repatriation of Armenians forcibly taken away from their families during the war with their communities risked turning into a humanitarian disaster. The government ordered large numbers of captured Armenian women and orphan children to be turned out of doors immediately. This left foreign relief committees to deal with the problem of quickly resituating these populations. Webb reported that such an occurrence was tantamount to “massacre” since it would result in the deaths of those suddenly abandoned without any resources.⁷⁷

Calthorpe and his staff believed that the British could take command of the situation and see through their mission to enforce the conditions of the armistice. Eventually, the French put deep-seeded rivalries aside and supported the British position. At the end of March, General d’Espérey issued a warning that “the Turkish government would be held absolutely responsible for any disorders or massacres” currently underway. The Grand Vizier cried foul, blaming the Greeks for provoking the recent violence.⁷⁸ Tensions had increased between Turks and Greeks and Turks and Armenians during April, in part due to the aggressive line taken by the Allies. Reports indicated that many people in the interior of the country had no idea that the Entente had won the war, which undermined the legitimacy of Allied actions against CUP officials accused of war crimes.

The Ottoman government maintained that under the circumstances it “was doing everything in its power to prevent disorder” and went as far as to suggest that the British government should help by intervening and stopping future disturbances. At this point, the British narrowed the scope of its investigations only to those accused of perpetrating civilian massacres and mistreating soldiers. By early April, Reuters reported the arrest of several key suspects, included Alif Bey, known as the “assassin of Angora.” Meanwhile, Greek and Turkish brigands allegedly operated with impunity in the countryside, reportedly committing murder and atrocities along sectarian lines.

Backlash

April 1919 marked an important turning point in the story of the war crimes tribunals. That month witnessed the handing down and commuting of the first death sentence. Fear swept through the Ottoman cabinet that the decision would incite mass violence, further threatening its ever weakening authority. The Grand Vizier asked for help from Webb. He proposed the appointment of British officers to a committee which would oversee two commissions "vested with executive powers and presided over by a prince of the blood" to quell potential violence in the interior. Webb objected, claiming that the Turkish government needed to take full responsibility for the execution of a man tried and convicted by the tribunal of war crimes. Though it looked like the Grand Vizier was again playing politics, Webb believed that his intentions and that of the Sultan represented a "genuine" effort "to deal with a situation which was rapidly becoming one of the utmost gravity and anxiety." General Milne, who was in charge of operations in the main areas of unrest, consented to help in the end by making British military and intelligence resources available to the commission.⁷⁹

This mattered little after the public learned of the conviction of Mehmet Kemal for the deportation and massacres of Armenians in the Yozghat district.⁸⁰ His public hanging in the presence of high-ranking government officials in Constantinople unleashed a wave of violence and realized the worst fears of the Ottoman government. Anti-Armenian protests broke out across the country. In Egypt, the CUP reportedly organized new massacres.⁸¹ Calthorpe informed officials back in London that, within days after the hanging, Mehmet Kemal, the Yozghat Deputy Governor, had become known "as the first martyr to a good cause," which he took to indicate the still-powerful influence of the CUP over the hearts and minds of the Turkish people.⁸²

The British faced a difficult choice at this moment. They could fight the rising tide against the sitting Ottoman government and continue to pursue war criminals or retreat from previous pledges to enforce international commitments to try those accused of wartime atrocities against Armenians. Calthorpe started to express doubts. The determination to pursue justice in accordance with the Ottoman-Allied effort faded after witnessing the martyrdom of Mehmet Kemal.

Concerned about waning Allied authority over the proceedings, he wondered if the Ottoman government “would have the courage to take drastic action on any large-scale especially when the criminals were highly placed” when it came to the Armenian massacres.

Both sides in the unfolding drama of the war crimes tribunals, however, still needed something from the other. The Ottoman government wanted someone to blame for the arrests and, now, the execution of a convicted war criminal. The British Empire, on the other hand, sought legitimacy as the leader of Allied operations in the Middle East over the French, who were gaining a foothold in Cilicia and Syria. For these reasons, the arrests and the trials continued through to the fall. The purposefulness and belief in the principles espoused in the early days of the armistice, though, had fallen away. More shuffling of the Ottoman cabinet took place in the coming months and the government grew steadily weaker as its authority over internal affairs declined. Popular protests in the Anatolian countryside against Allied actions cast a long shadow over the tribunals. The question of what to do with the remaining prisoners awaiting trial created further uncertainty.

By late spring, the case against a number of the defendants began to fall apart. Webb reported, somewhat incredulously, that the Grand Vizier had complained that he could not “frame proper charges” against those in prison. Charges against Enver Pasha, one of the key architects of the genocide, he noted “had been whittled down to one of cutting down trees.” The subsequent release of high profile prisoners by the Ottoman government in May forced a British response. Worries that the Ottoman government would release those awaiting trial for the massacres led General Milne to agree to take responsibility for supervising the prisoners.⁸³

On May 28, 1919, the British took custody of all the prisoners awaiting trial at Constantinople. The transfer of accused war criminals to jails in the British colony of Malta, unsurprisingly, failed to move the prosecutions forward. A “timorous” Sultan, as Calthrope once referred to him, who previously pledged to support prosecution efforts, worried now about a looming nationalist backlash mobilized behind the rising power of Mustafa Kemal. This, coupled with the threat that Turkish nationalists posed to the British Empire’s supremacy in the region, made extensive trials of the hundreds of accused waiting in Malta unlikely. The invasion of Smyrna by Greek forces in mid-May 1919 was accomplished

with the assistance of a convoy sanctioned by Lloyd George's government, and resulted in Greek massacres of Muslim civilians in western Anatolia. All of these factors together galvanized anger against the Allies, further limiting the possibility of Ottoman cooperation.⁸⁴

The confusion and embarrassment caused by what critics called Prime Minister Lloyd George's "Greek disaster" challenged British imperial claims that it stood willing and able to enforce human rights justice.⁸⁵ Diplomats and officials half-heartedly pressed on in the midst of the crisis, citing honor and prestige as a motivating factor.⁸⁶ Lloyd George's support for the Greek invasion and its war with Turkey would eventually force him from office and cause a deep rift within the Liberal Party. The controversy unfolding over the firing on unarmed civilians by British troops in the Indian city of Amritsar in April 1919 created more uncertainty. Instability in India, the "jewel in the crown" of the British Empire, drew attention away from the attempt to enforce the armistice in Turkey. Some worried that the trial of Turkish officers would inflame tensions between Indian Muslims and the British Empire, already outraged by the massacre at Amritsar. This coupled with British equivocation about what to do to punish perpetrators, loomed like a cloud over the war crimes trials. Continued deployment of Indian troops in the Middle East did not help matters.

In Turkey, Calthorpe reported that discontent spread throughout the interior after the Greek landing on the western coast of Anatolia. He received a protest against the occupation at the end of May from Turkish civic and governmental organizations. The Allies were blamed for the "maltreat[ment]" of Turkish villagers, civilian casualties and mass looting that took place in its wake. The Ottoman cabinet immediately resigned in protest. Though the Cabinet reformed with largely the same men put in different positions, Webb expressed concerns about the long-term stability of the constant reshuffling of an ineffectual government.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, the British continued to encourage the Greek mission to take the western coast of Anatolia. They also commenced trying and executing those Greeks who had committed "excesses" which included the massacre of Turkish civilians. Regardless of British efforts to keep order and try Greek perpetrators, the very presence of Greeks on the south-western coast of Turkey violated terms of the armistice, fueling resentment and giving further cause to resist Allied dictates.

Calthorpe received a warning in the form of a letter from one of the affected Muslim communities: if the Greeks did not withdraw of their own accord, they would be driven out.⁸⁸

By June, Britain's position in Turkey was clearly in trouble. France began to make overtures to the Ottoman government to help "Turkey in the time of her greatest misfortune," a pledge Calthorpe interpreted as hostile to Allied policy. Later, French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau admitted that such a statement "was improper."⁸⁹ But the damage was done and distrust between the Allies further weakened their hand. Meanwhile, reports of Kurdish attempts to establish a majority in lands set aside for Armenian repatriation in Turkey undermined initial Allied plans to create an Armenian homeland. Lord Curzon asked Calthorpe to take "any steps to prevent the movement [of Kurdish settlers] he might consider practical."⁹⁰ Tensions continued and fighting broke out between the French and Kemalist nationalist forces in early 1920. Eventually, the French would sign a separate peace with Turkey after failing to meet their objectives in Cilicia which outraged the British.⁹¹

The Allied situation also continued to deteriorate around Smyrna. Reports of massacres of Muslim civilians by occupying troops made their way to Calthorpe, who attempted an investigation. He concluded that atrocities in one region were equally divided between Turks and Greeks, but expressed concerns that, in the wake of the invasion, widespread fear had overwhelmed the Turkish population. He decided that keeping the Greeks at Smyrna would eventually restore order even as he continued to receive reports of pillaging and killing to the west and south of the region.⁹² By the end of July, Calthorpe realized the impossibility of this course of action. The Italians had begun their own campaigns in Anatolia, further destabilizing an already fragile situation. Calthorpe, in one of his final reports, observed that these campaigns, instead of securing the Allied position, had created a dangerous nationalist backlash.⁹³

Calthorpe relinquished his command in the Mediterranean within days after making these claims. He was replaced by Admiral John de Robeck who had served with Calthorpe during the Gallipoli campaign. Though he expressed concern about "the question of retribution for the deportations and massacres" if the prosecutions did not yield just results, de Robeck showed little active interest in continuing Calthorpe's course

of actively pursuing war criminals.⁹⁴ The remaining trials went on with little direct British involvement. With the accused still held on the British-run island of Malta, de Robeck's lack of resolve created further problems. Moving the accused to the sites of the trials from the Mediterranean island to Turkey proved difficult at best in the face of a reluctant cabinet and continued instability in the interior of the country.

Conditions at the jail in Malta came to resemble detention in name only. "The Prison Had Become a CUP Club" one news headline read, with the 112 prisoners at Malta given the freedom to communicate with one another and their sympathizers, have access to visitors at all hours, and to receive uninspected packages and communications.⁹⁵ The remaining trials conducted over the next two years yielded no substantial results, with 15 of the 18 men condemned to death for the Armenian massacres convicted in absentia. As Webb wryly observed, "the sentences have been apportioned among the absent and present so as to effect a minimum of real bloodshed."⁹⁶

The winding down of the trials did little to shield the Ottoman government from reprisals from its nationalist political rivals for its role in cooperating with the Allies. *The Times* reported a noticeable rise in CUP activity in Anatolia in July, 1919. By October of that year, the government, made up of those opposed to the nationalist resurgence, received its strongest challenge to date by Mustafa Kemal. Widespread support for his leadership in the major cities, towns and villages of Anatolia as he marched toward Constantinople resulted in the Grand Vizier's resignation. This led *The Times* to speculate that once Mustafa Kemal reached the capital he would "demand further ministerial changes," signaling the return to power of the CUP. That month brought a new wave of massacres in Cilicia which *The Times* estimated claimed the lives of 16,000 of the 20,000 remaining Armenian residents.⁹⁷

Suffering from a nervous breakdown in the wake of attempts to negotiate with Mustafa Kemal, Damat Ferit, the European-educated commoner who had married Sultan Abdul Hamid's daughter, would be remembered as the man who had help bring about the fall of the Ottoman Empire. His attempt to placate the demands of the Allies while serving both as Grand Vizier and a plenipotentiary at Versailles did little to preserve the old regime. The government's futile attempt to argue for the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire by agreeing to try CUP officials as war criminals ultimately contributed to his downfall.

In February 1920, a parliamentary commission made up of nationalists and former CUP members discussed the impeachment of Damat Ferit Pasha on account of his inability to prevent the Greek landing at Smyrna and the ordering of “a large number of illegal arrests.” Though he continued in politics until 1921, he remained little more than a symbol of a doomed government. He died at Cap d’Ail on the southern coast of France in October 1923.⁹⁸

The end of British involvement with the war crimes trials did not mark the final Allied involvement with the aftereffects of the genocide. In July 1919, the supreme Allied council at Paris granted American Colonel William Haskell charge of Armenian relief organizations. This appointment acknowledged the predominant role the Americans were playing in relief work in the Near East. Colonel Haskell, a member of the US army, was given the title of High Commissioner for Relief Work on behalf of the governments of the US, France, Italy and Britain.⁹⁹ Fundraising continued to reach record heights during the 1920s under American leadership and the concerted efforts of Near East Relief. While refugees found help mitigating the traumas of the wartime massacres and postwar displacement thanks to humanitarian organizations operating in and around Turkey, the issue of war crimes was put aside. No other attempt to try anyone for crimes against humanity in the Armenian case would be made again. Angered by the failure to hold those responsible for the massacres accountable, Armenian revolutionaries took matters into their own hands. Talaat Pasha, who had been sentenced to death in absentia by the war crimes tribunals, escaped to Germany. On March 14, 1921, he was assassinated in a Berlin street by a member of “Operation Nemesis,” which vowed to finish what the British had started.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

In light of modern day Turkey’s continued denial of the Armenian Genocide, agreeing to try Ottoman officials for war crimes, even if it was done for political reasons, nevertheless seems hard to believe. Such a move clearly implicated the wartime government as a perpetrator of atrocities against its own people; a crime that just had begun to come into consideration under international law. This willingness to accept culpability for the killings did not last long and today cannot be found in any official history of the war in Turkey. Why did the Ottoman

government willingly agree to pursue the war crimes trials as part of the peace?

As a defeated power, the Ottoman Entente Liberal had little choice but to attempt to enforce the armistice, or at least make gestures towards compliance. Revenge against the CUP, blamed for perpetrating the massacres and threatening the old regime, also played a role. Eventually, fear of internal political rivals replaced the desire for revenge as nationalist sentiment grew throughout the countryside and threatened the legitimacy of the Sultanate and the Ottoman government after the war. The belief, by the postwar government, that cooperation with the Allies would protect it against the nationalists also contributed to the willingness to cooperate with the British in the task of war crimes prosecutions.

Finally, it is worth considering taking the statements of Ottoman leaders seriously when calling the massacres a "shameful act." Making amends, whether as a show for the Allies or to assuage guilty consciences, proved more difficult than putting those deemed responsible on trial. What started out as strange mix of victor's justice and interparty political revenge regarding the massacres exposed the culpability of officials at all levels of the past and present government.¹⁰¹ Punishing a few ruthless men ultimately meant indicting a program of violence that resulted in the systematic massacre of the Armenians during the war. In short, the investigations revealed that culpability ran all the way up the chain of command.

This positioning became increasingly complicated when it came time to prosecute the Ottoman wartime government for crimes against humanity in a period of rising nationalism in Turkey and growing unrest in the British Empire. Distancing the new nationalist government from crimes committed under the cover of war helped legitimate and forge the foundation of modern Turkey under Mustafa Kemal. Allowing the British to lead the Allied powers to confront the ruling elite with accusations of war crimes, even if these crimes purportedly were executed by the previous regime, would do little to serve the foundations of the new Turkish Republic. Even today, "insulting Turkishness" by considering what happened to the Armenians as genocide is a punishable crime, as modern Turkish writers, including Nobel Prize-winner Orhan Pamuk, who raised the Armenian question in recent years, have discovered.

The failure to fully prosecute key figures responsible for genocide came also from the problem of executing human rights justice under the banner of the British Empire in the wake of world war. After the signing of the Armistice, the British Empire alone had the authority, military infrastructure and political will to launch an inquiry into the massacres. At the same time, Britain looked to manage growing discontent among Indian nationalists after Amritsar that challenged the British Empire's positioning of itself as a Christian power that fairly ruled diverse religions and peoples.

In the end, attempts to bring Turkish war criminals to justice for the Armenian Genocide were tangled up both in imperial politics and a long standing tradition of humanitarian activism. Postwar reactions to, and the subsequent politicization of, the Armenian question were part of an imperial framework that eventually undermined attempts to prosecute perpetrators of genocide. As the next chapter shows, the script that still shapes contemporary understanding of the event relied on Britain's positioning of itself as a global empire and arbiter of international justice.

CHAPTER 8

WINSTON CHURCHILL'S *REALPOLITIK*

“British interest in the fate of the Armenians now passes from mere sentimental and humanitarian feeling to a matter of grave material concern.”

– British Cabinet Eastern Report, October 4, 1917

The failure of the war crimes tribunals in 1919 revealed the limits of asserting global power in the name of defending the rights of others. Idealism gave way to *realpolitik* in the prosecution and eventual settlement of the claims of “small nationalities.” This unraveling of the ideals of an earlier age in the name of more pragmatic concerns began during the war. When the British Cabinet took up the issue of Armenia in 1917, the mood was somber. The Bolshevik revolution that year wreaked chaos on Allied plans for advance along the Eastern Front and resulted in the eventual exit of Russia from World War I. The effects of the US entry into the war on the side of the Allies that spring had yet to be felt. War aims in the East, still in flux after the utter and complete failure of Gallipoli to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war in 1915, again faced reevaluation. Some in the Cabinet believed that intervening on behalf of Armenians would potentially counter Turkish power in the Mediterranean. Promises of aid, war crimes trials and, eventually, an Armenian homeland emerged as enticements and a partial solution to the Allies’, uncertain position in the East. The “great deal of feeling” inspired by the Armenian question noted by wartime cabinet ministers also turned

on issues of “grave material concern” that had an important bearing on how the war in the East, and later the peace, unfolded.

This dueling mix of humanitarian ideals and political realities found expression in the policies and writings of Winston Churchill. His indomitable presence in the debates and ultimate execution of Allied policy in the Mediterranean had a lasting effect on the way Britain engaged the question of humanitarian intervention and human rights justice. This chapter traces Churchill’s influence over understandings of the Armenian Genocide and its aftermath, in his capacity as First Lord of the Admiralty during the war, through to his time in Lloyd George’s War Cabinet, and finally as Colonial Secretary. The focus on winning the war meant sacrificing Victorian moral idealism to the pragmatism of empire. In place of the Gladstonian principle of imperial responsibility came a dedication to the preservation and strengthening of the British Empire at all costs.

The advent of the League of Nations after the war gave license to a new order of international affairs that offered Britain the opportunity to maintain its influence over the postwar world order while expanding its imperial mandate. But, as Churchill and others soon came to realize during attempts to prosecute Turkey for war crimes, the British Empire had little power to legitimate and enforce international law after the war. In the end, Churchill reimagined the leadership role that Gladstone had laid out for Britain and its empire. The question now shifted to one of how the Armenian crisis would practically serve British interests in the Mediterranean.

Scholars are just beginning to examine Churchill’s place in the history of the Great War, particularly in relation to the Eastern Front where he left an important legacy. As Warren Dockter has shown, Churchill’s wartime experience played a crucial role in shaping how Britain would come to understand the Islamic world.¹ Churchill’s guiding hand over Britain’s eastern policy during the war necessarily brought him into close contact with the Armenian question as well. This story of Churchill’s war experience offers an important vantage point to understand the directions both taken and not taken in Mideast diplomacy. Of particular importance is how he understood the relationship between the British Empire and rising US power when it came to taking responsibility for settling the claims of Armenia as one of the small nationalities upon whose behalf the war ostensibly had been

fought. His decision after the war to write the history of World War I in five massive volumes also made him an important figure in determining how the story of the Armenian Genocide would be told. With the ink barely dry on the Treaty of Lausanne that would end the war between the Allies and Turkey, he sat down to write the history of the war. Between 1923 and 1931 he recorded what happened and explained why from the self-conscious perspective of “personal narrative”; as a man who experienced and shaped the events he retold.² This position of authority over the events that transpired during the war inevitably made Britain’s dealings with Armenians and Armenia part of his own story of tragedy and triumph.

Disaster at Gallipoli

Gallipoli was not Churchill’s finest hour. When World War I came to the East with the Allied landing at Gallipoli on April 25, 1915, Churchill was at the helm of the British navy. For the First Lord of the Admiralty, a well-placed victory in the heart of the Ottoman Empire would effectively check German power. He believed that a substantial offensive against the Ottoman Empire in the Dardanelles offered the best hope to summarily defeat the Central Powers. A swift blow against the enemy in the waterway that led to Constantinople and connected Turkey with Europe would bring an end to the war in the East and cripple Germany by cutting off its main artery in the Mediterranean. It was a dramatic and daring, but ultimately ill-conceived, plan that unfortunately won the support of Churchill’s superiors. Few provisions were made for sweeping the mines that lined the Dardanelles and the British failed to send enough men, equipment and reinforcements to launch a successful invasion.³ By the time the Allies landed on the shores of Gallipoli, they were outnumbered and out-maneuvered.

John S. Churchill tried to put a good face on it in his report of the first day of the Gallipoli landing: “Things are going very well, and I hope ships will be in the Sea of Marmora in a fortnight.” But Winston’s brother also noted very difficult conditions: “The wire on shore is terrible stuff – very thick and closely barbed.” More alarming, Ottoman forces had gotten word of the invasion and were ready. He ended his report with a striking discovery: “A letter found on a Turk shows that

the Austrians told the Turks to expect our attack on the 21st. It is the very day which was originally fixed!"⁴

That this was not a surprise attack did more than thwart British plans. The landing also marked the beginning of the Armenian Genocide. As Churchill would later conclude about the massacres, "The Gallipoli campaign precipitated and intensified the tragedy."⁵ Support for Gallipoli came not only from warrior statesmen like Churchill but also from those who believed that Britain entered the war in part to free subject minorities from Turkish rule.⁶ Military commanders involved in the postwar negotiations regarding Ottoman Armenians cut their teeth at Gallipoli. Admiral de Robeck, who would take over the Mediterranean command, for example, helped plan and execute the attack under Churchill's leadership. Placed in charge of an ultimately ineffective minesweeping operation, de Robeck was involved with plans for the attack on the Narrows.⁷

Churchill had an uncanny way of snatching victory out of the jaws of defeat in his retelling of the story of the war in his memoirs. Calling the landing "wonderful" despite the loss of 20,000 men, he declared the presence of 30,000 British, Australian, New Zealander and French troops a defining moment in giving the British an "absolute" command of the seas. The German head of operations in Gallipoli, Liman von Sanders, led the fight against the Allies alongside Mustafa Kemal. Churchill credited the strength of the Allied attack with forcing the German commander to leave key areas unguarded. But the "ding-dong battle on the Gallipoli Peninsula," as Churchill called it, did not have an easy resolution, and the peninsula was eventually evacuated by the Allies after heavy losses and few territorial gains.⁸ By the end of the campaign, 46,000 lives had been lost. The operation was such a disaster that the government set up the Dardanelles Commission to investigate what went wrong. Ultimately, the commission exonerated the actions of those responsible for planning and executing Gallipoli.

The episode left its mark as both a personal trauma and career setback for those involved. Churchill held fast that Gallipoli "will come out all right" in a letter to Lord Kitchener, who had undergone attacks in the press for his own wartime blunders. He also noted, somewhat plaintively, that his predecessor and mentor, whom he continued to work with at the Admiralty during the war, Lord Fisher, "went mad."⁹ Churchill was relinquished of his command on May 24, 1915 and received appointment

as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, a title without influence. Devastated, his wife Clementine believed he would “die of grief.”¹⁰ Redemption came soon after, when he signed up to command a battalion in France and later maneuvered his way into Lloyd George’s War Cabinet.

Admiral de Robeck, overwhelmed by the strain of the failed invasion, went home on leave suffering from severe insomnia and neuralgia.¹¹ He would return to a command post eventually, replacing Admiral Calthorpe in 1919. Calthorpe, who served in the Mediterranean during this time and watched the disaster at Gallipoli unfold from his command post in Malta, later made an almost fatal error in judgement based on his misunderstanding of the convoy system instituted to protect Allied naval action in the straits. As we have seen, he, too, had another chance to reclaim his stature in the Mediterranean by negotiating the favorable terms of the Mudros Armistice and later as High Commissioner.

Though he refused to concede defeat at Gallipoli, Churchill voiced his keen awareness of the costs of the campaign. This included the Armenians. He noted with both surprise and not a little approval that despite a past pattern of brutal massacres, the Armenians chose to “do their duty to their respective Governments”: Ottoman Armenians fought for the Central Powers and Russian Armenians fought for the Entente, each side pledging to support the war aims of their respective empires. Setbacks to Ottoman war plans put especially those Armenians who lived along the border between Russian and Ottoman territory in a difficult position. The Turkish defeat in the Caucasus, according to Churchill, made the Armenians scapegoats, which “provoked a vengeance which was also in accord with deliberate policy.”

This policy came to a head in 1915, when “the Turkish Government began, and ruthlessly carried out, the infamous general massacres and deportation of Armenians.” He referred to this act as an attempt to produce a “clearance of the race from Asia Minor.” As Churchill concluded, “There is no reasonable doubt that this crime was planned and executed for political reasons.” Gallipoli, though not the direct cause of the genocide, provided “the opportunity” for the Turkish government to execute its plans to eliminate the Armenian population from Anatolia, according to Churchill. “If Constantinople were to fall and Turkey lost the war,” Churchill opined, “the clearance would have been effected and a permanent advantage for the future of the Turkish race would be gained.”¹²

Just weeks after Gallipoli, the Allies issued the declaration that accused Turkey of “crimes against humanity” and civilization. Churchill’s assent suggested that the British bore some responsibility for the massacres by failing to fully achieve their war aims. This pragmatic assessment of the why and how of genocide influenced the British reaction to the massacres after the war. For Churchill, a bigger push at Gallipoli, with an emphasis on mine sweeping and air power, might have spelled a different fate for the Armenians. He also raised the issue of Ottoman culpability for these crimes, which later extended to German guilt for aiding and abetting its ally.

The responsibility for holding perpetrators of war crimes against British soldiers and Ottoman minorities accountable weighed heavily on the commanders on the ground. These men faced the realities of a failed invasion and the aftermath which resulted in over a million civilian victims. Investigations after the war implicated Liman von Sanders, who helped repel the British at Gallipoli, in the massacres. Calthorpe argued early in 1919 regarding deliberations about war crimes in a telegram, “If the Allies decide to bring to trial those guilty of crimes against humanity during late war I desire to point out that the name of Liman von Sanders should be borne in mind.” Reportedly, von Sanders, when asked to do something to prevent the expulsion of Greeks from the town of Aivali on the Aegean coast, replied: “No, you must all be driven out. You are faithless.” Consequently, 25,000 Greeks were “expelled under horrible conditions.”¹³

Calthorpe, in making the case for trying von Sanders as a war criminal, reported that he “held practically autocratic power as Military Dictator” when 300,000 Greek Ottomans were subjected to deportation and massacre, and that he oversaw the expulsion of 1.5 million Armenians from their homes and 450,000 Greeks in 1915. Von Sanders’ crimes extended to the maltreatment of British soldiers and the desecration of war graves which occurred when he “deliberately” cut a trench through British cemeteries.¹⁴

Imperial Responsibility Reimagined

Assigning or denying blame proved much easier than taking responsibility for what happened on both the civilian and military front around Gallipoli. Churchill’s influence as a member of Lloyd

George's War Cabinet added further definition to the Armenian issue in the international arena during and after the war. In July 1917, the Prime Minister appointed him Minister of Munitions and soon brought him into a much closer advisory role that lasted beyond the signing of the armistice. During this time, Churchill balanced the business of prosecuting the war effort with his own understanding of British aims. His perception of public opinion played a role in this work. Though he never truly embraced Lloyd George's "great crusade," Churchill recognized the importance of laying claim to the Victorian idealized rhetoric about the British Empire's obligation to subject peoples.

Armenians served as potent symbols in this regard. He drew attention in his writing about the war to the "earlier miseries and massacres of the Armenians... made familiar to the British people ... by the fame and eloquence of Mr Gladstone." Churchill noted that in "contrast to the general indifference with which the fortunes of Eastern and Middle-Eastern peoples were followed by the Western democracies" that "atrocities perpetrated upon Armenians stirred the ire of simple and chivalrous men and women spread widely about the English-speaking world."¹⁵ In short, Churchill understood concern for the fate of Armenians as an inevitable, and possibly useful, reality of fighting the war in the East.

For Churchill, none of this mattered if the war caused the British Empire to falter. How to preserve India while extending British influence in the Middle East topped his concerns. The threat of Bolshevism after 1917 also drove concerns regarding British imperial power in the East. Russia, as the only land-based empire destroyed by World War I to rise again in the aftermath of war as the Soviet Union, proved a formidable and not always reliable friend with its own ambitions in the Black Sea and Mediterranean. Maintaining the Ottoman Empire as a gateway to India proved a key motivating factor in Churchill's understanding of how to wage war in the East.

In the wake of the 1915 massacres, the possibility of casting the Armenians as allies against at first the Ottoman and later the Bolshevik threat made sense regardless of previous pledges made by these populations to uphold the Russian and Ottoman empires to which they swore allegiance. Diaspora Armenians living in Europe and the United States encouraged this line of thinking in the hopes that the Allies might make provisions for minority rights, and possibly an Armenian

homeland, if they won the war. His Excellency Boghos Nubar Pasha, as he was referred to in official documents, acted as a spokesman for this group. Called “reasonable, moderate and statesmanlike,” his appeals to the Allies on behalf of Ottoman Armenians made their way into the official wartime Eastern Reports. “The Armenians are prepared to look facts in the face and trust European tutelage and assistance,” one source interpreted as the meaning of Boghos Pasha’s appeal. “The Armenians are the only possible barrier between the Turks and the great Central Asian objective and no efforts will be spared to remove the obstacle” read another report which concluded that Armenians had “sufficient racial vitality to repel the [Turkish] policy.”¹⁶

Considerations of racial vitality aside, Churchill began to worry that advocating on behalf of Armenians would undermine British status as “the greatest Mohammedan power in the world.” This somewhat strange formulation of the British Empire as first the conqueror and now defender of Islam most likely came to Churchill during a conversation with Young Turk leaders whom he visited in the immediate aftermath of the 1908 revolution.¹⁷ At the time, he thought it possible to cultivate an alliance between Britain and the revolutionary CUP. He obviously changed his mind after Turkey sided with Germany in the war a few years later, but this hope for an eventual alliance between Muslims in Turkey and the British Empire stayed with Churchill.

He was drawing on an older imperial trope. Britain wanted to see itself as the defender of Islam, particularly in relation to its Muslim subjects in India. This idea dated back to the nineteenth century and had new life breathed into it during the war. In 1896, W.E. Gladstone had made the case for maintaining a close connection with Islam while pledging the British Empire’s support for persecuted Armenian Christians. His widely publicized Liverpool speech maintained that the British Empire had an obligation to respond to the Hamidian massacres. At the same time, Gladstone made it clear that the British Empire had a duty to its Muslim subjects. While calling Armenians “our fellow Christians,” he declared that his support of Armenia did not represent any “altered policy of sentiment as regards our . . . fellow” Muslim “subjects in India.”¹⁸

The war, coupled with increased nationalist agitation for independence in India, put pressure on this worldview. Increasingly, imperial responsibility was understood as an obligation to win the hearts

and minds of the British Empire's Muslim subjects, a group that Churchill and others had long considered allies against the Hindu-dominated nationalist campaigns of Mohandas Gandhi. Admiral de Robeck was one of those who came to support this line of thinking, arguing that maintaining the Sultan at Constantinople after the war would best serve to placate Muslim interests as a counterweight to discontent with British imperial rule.¹⁹

When it came time to negotiate a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire, some in the War Cabinet supported the idea of backing the push to establish a Caliphate. The British had tightened their control of Constantinople in March 1920 as a response to challenges from Kemal's nationalist movement, which threatened to undermine Allied plans to divide the Ottoman Empire into European controlled zones under the mandate system while making provisions for the establishment of an Armenian state in eastern Anatolia. The Treaty of Sèvres marked the first attempt to make peace with the Ottoman Empire and was signed by Ottoman representatives of the Allied-backed government in Constantinople in August 1920. Its provisions to divide Turkey and carve out an Armenian state never materialized when Sèvres was replaced three years later with the Lausanne Treaty in 1923. Lausanne did not include provisions that favored Ottoman minorities or the founding of an Armenian state. Though never enforced, Sèvres' plans for Turkey provided fuel for the nationalist resurgence that continued to grow under the guidance of the rival government set up by Mustafa Kemal in Angora.

The British remained keenly aware of the growing unpopularity of the Ottoman government in Constantinople as it considered the provisions of the Treaty of Sèvres. Support for maintaining the Sultan at Constantinople and elevating him as Caliphate for all Muslims, some in the British cabinet argued, would make Sèvres' provisions more palatable and suggested that the Allied occupation of Turkey would be temporary. In Downing Street, the opinion was mixed. Agreement came easily on four key principles that guided this first attempt at peace with the Ottoman Empire: ending "Turkish militarism"; internationalization of the Dardanelles straits connecting the Black Sea and Mediterranean; freeing the Armenians "from Turkish domination"; and not returning Arab and Syrian populations to "the domination of the Turk." What the British could not agree on was how these provisions would affect the governance of its own empire.

Debates surrounding what form a treaty with Turkey should take reveal how much concerns over Muslim opinion in India shaped early thinking about making peace in the East.²⁰ The Prime Minister, members of the War Cabinet, and military officers put “great stress . . . upon the effect which the expulsion of the Turk would have in India.” According to “secret information,” dismantling the Ottoman Empire and removing the Sultan from Constantinople threatened a full nationalist assault on British rule. “From the moment this Treaty was signed” this source warned, “we should have for the first time a movement, comparable to the Sinn Fein movement, breaking out in India, in favour of complete separation from England.”²¹

A number of British Indian officials and experts claimed that a “boycott of British goods and a general refusal of all Government measures” would begin if Britain signed the treaty. As critics concluded, “From the point of view of India and of the position of the British Empire as a great Mohammodan power the present proposals were the worst that had yet been suggested.” Britain had relied disproportionately on Indian troops to fight in the Mediterranean theater. The risk of alienating Indian Muslims, in particular, who loyally fought for the British Empire had the potential of igniting nationalist protest and compromising the peace. In addition, removing the Sultan from Constantinople would “add one more spark to the spreading conflagration” on account of growing Bolshevik threats to Indian security in relation to Afghanistan.

On the other side of the debate were those who believed that the war had been fought to put an end to “Turkish militarism” and protect minorities which included the Armenians, Arab Christians and Assyrians.²² Lord Curzon and Admiral Calthorpe most clearly represented this view. After the debates over the Sèvres treaty concluded, Curzon put on record his dissent from the majority view that the Sultan should stay in Constantinople. Calling the claim that such a move would “avoid trouble in India” and “render our task in Egypt less difficult,” “largely manufactured” and “ephemeral,” he argued that such a policy would fly in the face of Allied war aims in the East.²³ Others joined Curzon, calling concerns over a rebellion in India and Egypt an illusion: The real threat was not placating Muslim opinion in India but eliminating the military threat of Mustafa Kemal’s nationalist army still at war with the Allies and the current sitting Ottoman government in Constantinople.

At home in Britain, the public continued to hear stories about new Armenian massacres and what transpired in Turkey during the war. The controversy over the showing of the world's first atrocity film, *Auction of Souls*, in the spring of 1919 illustrates how much tensions in India and placating Muslim public opinion mattered to those who took Churchill's point of view. *Auction of Souls* was based on the memoirs of an Armenian woman, Aurora Mardiganian, who had survived the 1915 massacres. Her true-life story of rape, deportation and exile was depicted in a Hollywood-made film, called *Ravished Armenia* in the US. The film shocked and disturbed audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. In Britain, the decision to show it in the wake of the Amritsar Massacre in April 1919 caused controversy as well.²⁴ During the massacre, which occurred in the Punjab region of India, British troops fired on a large unarmed crowd, killing several hundred Indian civilians and wounding hundreds of others.

Some believed a film depicting violence by Muslims against Christians shown at this moment threatened to further inflame anti-British sentiment in India. The delayed trial of Brigadier General Reginald Dyer for these crimes kept the controversy in the news and challenged liberal notions of a religiously inclusive and tolerant empire not ruled by "fear and force."²⁵ One concerned Briton declared the controversy "an affair of Empire," claiming that the showing of the film would help Britain's enemies by angering its Muslim subjects.²⁶ The Islamic Information Bureau lobbied the Home Office to stop the film's general release, protesting it as "a work of fiction acted by Americans," while one well-respected Muslim religious leader informed the Foreign Office that he would lobby fellow Indian Muslim leaders to get *Auction of Souls* banned.²⁷ The film, another source protested, would needlessly inflame tensions between Christians and Muslims in this "crucial hour."²⁸

The Foreign Office immediately attempted to prevent "the indiscriminate public exhibition of the film." Lord Curzon, who less than a year later would argue so vehemently against using Muslim public opinion as an excuse to thwart the Sèvres Treaty, cited imperial concerns as a reason for not showing the film. Foreign Office viewers sent to assess the film's content deemed it "neither vulgar, nor in the strict sense, immoral but of necessity it abounds in horrors and as it stands is calculated to offend the religious feelings of any Moslem." Amritsar clearly informed this line of thinking. As the Foreign Office concluded: "Our Indian and Egyptian dominions contain many Moslem subjects

(at present far from contented) and it is here that the religious danger, if any, lurks."²⁹

Officials had an easy answer: remove all religious references in the subtitles. This, they argued, would give the film a "political rather than a religious aspect."³⁰ Curzon agreed. He expressed regret that the "press dwells unduly on the religious aspect of the Armenian massacres and is calculated to give offence in India." The Foreign Office threatened the distributors of the film with censorship if they did not make "alterations in the film itself."³¹ This ensured that the film was shown for only a limited run without scenes that would potentially offend Muslim viewers.

In the end, Mustafa Kemal's nationalist army proved more of a threat to the British Empire after the war than unrest in India. No one in the cabinet had enough information to know what Muslim public opinion in the empire really thought or wanted. This projection of assumed Muslim interests proved damaging to British geopolitical aims and the Armenians and did nothing to bring justice to Indian victims of imperial violence. Churchill believed that it was his duty to hold the empire together by showing loyalty to the British Empire's Muslim subjects. This proved increasingly difficult in the wake of Amritsar. Though Churchill condemned General Dyer's actions in Punjab as violating the principles of British justice, others in the British cabinet defended the commander's actions.

This positioning of Indian and Armenian interests against one another created a false choice. A decision to support Christians or Muslims came with little regard for the exigencies of each particular case. By the fall of 1919, the question of culpability for the Armenian massacres was subsumed by the sectarian issue which stifled attempts to unravel what really happened to religious minorities in the Ottoman Empire during the war. More than a matter of mere political expediency, Churchill's *realpolitik* pitted the perceived immediate interests of empire against the slow-evolving principles of international justice regarding Amritsar and the Armenian massacres.

"The Greek Tragedy"

1919 brought more bad news for the British Empire, the war settlement and, consequently, the millions of refugees caught in the middle. Conflicts between Turkish nationalists and Greece reached their

devastating conclusion after Mudros. Churchill spent a good deal of time working through what went wrong with Greece in his memoirs about the war. He structured the narrative as a "Greek tragedy" in order to explain the failure of Lloyd George's policy which allowed Greece full reign in Thrace and Smyrna and his own attempt to stop it. In May, 1919 the Allies sanctioned the Greek invasion of the western coast of Turkey. Under the protection of a British convoy led by Admiral Calthorpe, but no promise of ground troops, the Greeks began their assault.

Churchill wrote to the Prime Minister "distressed" and "deeply grieved" over the decision to support the invasion. He rejected Lloyd George's assessment that "the Greeks are the people of the future in the Eastern Mediterranean" as impractical. The Prime Minister's claim that "A greater Greece will be an invaluable advantage to the British Empire" had little credence if the British did not supply troops to support Greece's territorial claims along the Pontic coast in western Anatolia. Churchill also remained skeptical that the large number of Christian minorities living here would be better served by Greek rule. Without Allied ground support, the Greek offensive had little chance of success, a view that French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau also shared. In Churchill's view, the poorly planned and badly executed Greek landing in 1919 was responsible for the consolidation of the power of Mustafa Kemal, "the man who had frustrated both Gallipoli landings [and] became the national champion."³²

This modern-day Greek tragedy took place "Far away in Anatolia," where Kemal raised his force of "hard, patriotic fighting men costing nothing. Meanwhile the Allies had disbanded their armies, and the Big Five pushed their authority month by month upon an ever ebbing tide of physical force." The Greek army without British support, according to Churchill, "were left worn out in the heart of Asia minor without even tea or tobacco, in a miserable plight. Mustafa Kemal grew stronger and stronger and finally shattered their Army, pursued it, destroyed it, took Smyrna, burned it to ashes, and advanced triumphantly with 100,000 resolute and ragged scalawag patriots upon Constantinople."³³

The humanitarian crisis worsened after the invasion with violent reprisals on both sides. The Greek army committed atrocities against Muslim villagers during their march from the Aegean coast to the interior. Kemal's forces continued to devastate and destroy what was left

of the Armenian, Greek and Assyrian villages in eastern Anatolia. Strained relations with the French, still angry over the British usurpation of the Mediterranean command, further exacerbated the situation. Richard Webb reported that the confusion over jurisdiction hampered both military and humanitarian work in the midst of the crisis.³⁴ “Strained” relations gave way to a request by the French in the months before the Greek invasion to “invite British military authorities to abstain for the moment from any initiative . . . pending arrangement between our two Governments.” Webb reported with much dismay that such an action hampered “assistance to American relief expeditions” and “all measures for repatriation of Greeks and Armenians which with approach of spring becomes more urgent every day.” These things he reported “working hard at present” to realize.³⁵

Webb understood the limits of what he could accomplish under these circumstances as well as anyone on the ground. He believed that humanitarian relief was a matter “of British prestige rather than of British material interest and entail(ed) fulfilment of a moral rather than any contractual obligation.” This led to a somber conclusion: “it is evident that unless we are going to carry on the work through to the end it would be better not to embark on it at all.”³⁶ Despite the challenges and Webb’s dark assessment of the situation, the Allies continued to support repatriation in the midst of continuing conflict. The French took on the task of trying to reestablish Armenian communities devastated by the 1915 massacres in Anatolia. Eventually, the Kemalist army would force the French to withdraw from Cilicia, which brought an end to any hopes at repatriation in southeastern Anatolia.

Diplomacy did little to ease tensions. The lead up to the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres on August 10, 1920 was overshadowed by continued battles between Allied forces and Mustafa Kemal’s nationalist army. The Greek army would never make it to Angora (modern day Ankara) or Constantinople (modern day Istanbul). While the French faced defeat in the southeast, the British had their own difficulties attempting to secure a foothold in the Caucasus. The Italians also looked destined to fail to make any inroads against the Kemalists. Months before the signing of Sèvres, Churchill received a letter outlining what it would take to enforce the treaty. Even with new-found French support for Greek claims in Thrace and Smyrna, the terms of the treaty required the back up of a strong force of arms. The War Office, in consultation with the Allies,

estimated that 27 divisions would be needed to support Greek forces, which represented "a formidable stumbling block," standing in the way of "the question of the protection of minorities" and the "definition of frontiers" for the Armenian and Greek population.³⁷

Anuerin Williams visited the War Office about this time to find out what Churchill and his staff were prepared to do to protect minorities from the still looming threat massacre. Williams began a campaign advocating to the War Cabinet that the British occupy the city of Trebizond for this purpose. He received a cold reception and was told in no uncertain terms that it was "hardly possible to dump 2–3 battalions in Trebizond and leave them there all alone to face any troops that Mustapha Kemal might detach to attack them."³⁸ The previous summer, the British had reduced its force in the region from one million to 320,000.³⁹

News of continued massacres began to appear daily in the press. The issue that brought Williams to the War Office now had a broader hearing among the British public. As Williams warned, more atrocities were coming. Massacres committed in the Caucasus in the winter of 1920 by Kemalist troops killed an estimated 50,000 Armenians; the autumn of the following year news arrived of large numbers of Greeks deported from the region.⁴⁰ It was now clear to those in Downing Street and the public at large that the strength of Kemalist forces continued to grow as the Greek and Allied position weakened. Plans for more deportations continued. On September 9, 1922 Kemalists' forces entered Smyrna, chasing a retreating Greek army. Defeated by the nationalist army without the possibility of Allied reinforcement, the Greek army in the interior headed toward the coast. The next day, British High Commissioner Sir H. Rumbold reported from Constantinople that the Italian Consul General informed a British official that "that evening an important decision concerning deportation of Armenians was to be arrived at Konak."⁴¹

Around 50,000 refugees had arrived with the retreating Greek army and faced the surrender of Smyrna to the nationalist forces. "The following day was [the] first of Armenian massacre," reported an official to Rumbold. He described a horrific scene: "Certain Armenians had furnished a pretext for adoption of vigorous measures by having bombs in their possession and a systematic hunt now took place. Men were killed in large numbers and parties were formed and driven off.

Sir H. [Lamb] succeeded in partially penetrating into Armenian quarter and counted twenty bodies in fifty yards." When fires broke out in the Armenian quarter, they were attributed to the nationalists who wanted to take revenge on those who had supported the Greeks.

Rumbold received a telegraphic-like eyewitness account of the fires which made it into the final report. What this eyewitness saw makes clear who officials believed started the fires and why:

On Sept. 12, fires broke out at several points in Armenian quarter. Turks asserted that Armenians burnt down their houses to discredit them in the eyes of Europe. It may, however, be remarked that first houses fired were all to windward of district and that in the evening when some of the first had died down a new one was started half a mile to windward again. Whole quarter had been surrounded by a Turkish cordon since the previous day. Natural spread of fire was accelerated by new fires started in European quarter: this was particularly noticeable following morning when wind blowing now from European quarter half a dozen houses burst severally into flames half a mile to windward. Mr Hole has no doubt that both massacre and fire including destruction of European quarter were deliberate work of Turks carried out by order of responsible authorities, object of former being vengeance against Armenians who had sided with Greeks and of latter to root out Christian and foreign influence generally. Flight of refugees is pitiable; there were herded together on narrow quay with such few possessions as they had been able to save with very little possibility of obtaining water or food and none of shelter ... shot if they attempted to escape.⁴²

The carnage left in the wake of Smyrna, and the battles that preceded it, destroyed the last remaining Armenian and Greek settlements outside of Istanbul in what is modern-day Turkey.

To Churchill, the burning of Smyrna marked the "final act" in the tragedy of the war in the East. The British were driven back from a last foothold in Chanak not long after Smyrna burned in September 1922. Kemalists now held full control over what was left of the former Ottoman Empire. This show of military might undid the Treaty of Sèvres along with the career of Lloyd George, brought down by his

so-called Greek disaster. Churchill had no love of the defunct Sèvres Treaty. He had spoken out against it believing that its implementation risked alienating Muslims with its punitive treatment of the Turkish leadership and provisions for minority protection. The Treaty of Lausanne signed in 1923 he helped ensure would contain no such dictates. For the Armenians, the Greek tragedy turned out to be their tragedy as well.

Prisoner Exchange

What Calthorpe once characterized as the British Empire's "inflexible resolve" to achieve justice for victims of massacres had broken. Churchill's vision of the peace did not include the enforcement of the promise to prosecute Turkey for "crimes against humanity." For him, the presence of Turkish prisoners at Malta made the problem of an unstable peace with Turkey worse.

In the months preceding the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres, Churchill who still served as War Secretary received a request from a diplomat asking for leniency for a reputedly pro-British Turkish prisoner held at Malta.⁴³ After inquiring into the case of Rahmy Bey in spring 1920, the investigation concluded that "behind the friendly exterior," this man was most likely guilty of grave crimes against civilians during the war. The decision to deny his release was given as his being arrested "on the orders of the Turkish government."⁴⁴ But there was another reason to keep Rahmy Bey and others at Malta that had little to do with war crimes or questions of jurisdiction. In addition to worrying about the precedent such an action would set, one Foreign Office official maintained, "There may come a time when it might be a good thing to release several Turks."⁴⁵ For Churchill and others at the Foreign Office, the prisoners at Malta represented useful bargaining chips for the Allied peace efforts still underway.

Churchill's shrewd calculation rendered mute the reasons behind why the British took charge of the incarceration of Turkish prisoners in the first place. The transfer of Turkish suspects to Malta, according to Calthorpe, would keep the trials on track and prevent the escape of those accused of war crimes. In addition to producing detailed dossiers on those arrested for war crimes, Britain spent a great deal of time and resources first transferring suspects and then maintaining prisoners at Malta. After the initial transfer in May 1919, prisoners continued to

arrive until the end of 1920. The British by this time had incarcerated around 120 accused Turkish war criminals at Malta.⁴⁶

Who were these men? Calthorpe sought those wanted for war crimes from a broad field of CUP officials and functionaries. The Malta jail housed the eight suspects accused of masterminding the massacres, those arrested by the British or placed in British hands and those arrested by Turkish authorities and transferred to British custody. Calthorpe also pursued suspects still at large. Dossiers included the prisoner number, the date interned, position of the accused at the time of the alleged activities; arrest orders; petitions made on behalf of the prisoner and the accusations made against the suspect. Accusations ran into multiple pages for prisoners accused of the most heinous crimes, including “torture and murder” of individuals, prisoners and entire families. Signed statements of the accusers and the specifics of how the information was gathered from either eyewitnesses or second-hand reports appeared with the list of crimes. Accompanying appendices detailed the effects of the crimes on the communities and often listed personal details of the victim and his or her family.⁴⁷ Unlike during the war, information in the dossiers did not make it into an official Blue Book and exist in scattered Foreign Office records.

No one wanted the unpopular task of appearing to absolve those blamed of committing crimes against civilians and soldiers before holding a fair trial. Churchill took on the responsibility as a means of countering Lloyd George’s policy of support for Allied justice for accused Ottoman war criminals. Churchill came to see this task as connected to Lloyd George’s pro-Greek policy. An ideological commitment to take the lead on war crimes’ prosecution championed by Liberals like Lloyd George met Churchill’s pragmatism as the Treaty of Sèvres began to come undone. Signed by the steadily weakening Ottoman government at Constantinople in August of 1920, Mustafa Kemal’s nationalists, now firmly in charge of a rival government at Angora, rejected the treaty outright. Churchill, though no supporter of Kemalist’s methods or his unofficial government, wanted Sèvres revised to reflect the weakening Allied position. A new treaty would have to reckon with the reality of rising Kemalist power and the failed Greek mission in Anatolia.

Churchill grew increasingly skeptical of the dozens of the commissions created at Versailles to settle the war during this time. He held particular disdain for the one focused on the punishment of “War Criminals”, which

he criticized as facilitating little more than victors' justice when it came to both Germany and Turkey. "Horrible things had been done in the war," Churchill admitted, but justice had little chance of prevailing even in the case of what he called the Armenian "holocaust." Such was the case with the war prisoners and Armenians. "As for the Turkish atrocities: marching till they dropped dead the greater part of the [British] garrison at Kut; massacring uncounted thousands of helpless Armenians, men, women, and children together, whole districts blotted out in one administrative holocaust – those were beyond human redress."⁴⁸ Throughout his public and private writings about the war, Churchill again and again declared sympathy with the Armenian victims of massacre. At the same time, he revealed his growing belief that reconciling what had happened to this population during the war ran counter to British postwar interests and was not Britain's responsibility to "redress."

Casting moral outrage aside, Churchill went after a new peace deal to replace Sèvres. He proposed a prisoner exchange to keep the process on track. Although a number of protests were heard from within the government, most came around to the idea that the British Empire would exchange all but the worst offenders held at Malta for a group of 29 British and Punjabi Muslim soldiers captured by the Turkish Nationalist Army which continued to gain strength in Anatolia.⁴⁹ A debate erupted in the Foreign Office about whether or not the British should keep some of the prisoners and put them on immediate trial in Malta for war crimes. It soon came to light that of the "four gravely implicated in the massacre of Christians" three had escaped. The eight prisoners "charged with cruelty to British prisoners of war" remained in custody but the Army Council concluded "that no military object would be gained by pursuing further the charges against them." Though "the Council fully admit that these individuals deserve punishment, and that such punishment might act as a deterrent to others, if similar circumstance should arise in future" the "collection of witnesses may prove no easy matter, owing to the lapse of time since the offences were committed."⁵⁰

More worrying was the possibility that a conviction would not be guaranteed in every case, further undermining the Allied authority in Turkey. Concerns with the health of British prisoners of war captured in Anatolia after the signing of the Armistice were also cited. An "all for all" prisoner exchange with the nationalist government at Angora

eventually took place. The Foreign Office justified this about-face, maintaining the importance of saving “the lives of these British subjects” rather “than to bind ourselves by the strict letter of the law as regards the Turkish prisoners at Malta.”⁵¹ British officials agreed that no trial of the remaining prisoners at Malta would take place. What the British got in the bargain was a far cry from what they had been promised by the nationalists. The great majority of the prisoners on the list for exchange already either perished in the fighting or died from exposure and maltreatment in the hands of their jailors.

News of the prisoner exchange between Kemal’s government at Angora and Britain incited public outrage. *The Times* asked why the “eight war criminals accused of the gravest offenses” were not tried when the evidence was fresh in 1919 and argued that it is not too late to gather evidence, as had happened in the case of German war criminals.⁵² A letter to the editor by an ex-prisoner of war argued against a prisoner exchange because of the terrible crimes of the accused.⁵³ At the root of this criticism lay the issue of British prestige. Some believed that an unconditional release of men accused of war crimes threatened Britain’s moral legitimacy and right to rule: “Our dawdling, hesitating, ambiguous Near Eastern policy has involved us in no greater humiliation than this,” an article in *The Times* about the exchange read. “Our prestige is evaporating in the futility of our councils. Throughout the East our assertion of right and not mere force of arms has been our strength. If by such a pitiful surrender we abandon this weapon how shall we cope with the growing dangers?”⁵⁴

The growing list of escaped prisoners at Malta and unsettled conditions on the ground indeed already threatened to undermine British authority. In the fall of 1919, the High Commissioner received a list of 15 missing Turkish prisoners at Malta who had “broken their parole.” On the other side, Britain had little power to control the treatment of those captured as a result of secret military maneuvers of the so-called “Hush-hush Army” that battled the Kemalists after the signing of the Armistice in Anatolia and the Caucasus. British prisoners of war rarely received rations and were expected to pay for their own maintenance. The army found it difficult but not impossible to provide money and supplies for captured fighters which included shirts, combs, trousers and even a pair of suspenders. These supplies were intended for “badly treated” British officers who reportedly had

had their clothing and shoes stolen and possessed only rags in which to clothe themselves.⁵⁵

The high profile campaign for the release of Colonel Alfred Rawlinson, an officer who participated in secret military campaigns in Anatolia before and again after the 1918 Armistice, gave a face to the prisoner exchange. He, along with three of his men and one other soldier, comprised the handful of soldiers exchanged with the Turks in 1921. Rawlinson, the younger brother of the commander of the British forces in India, was captured in Anatolia shortly after the war. While a prisoner in the region around Trebizond, he witnessed the horrific treatment of both civilians and prisoners of war.⁵⁶ "There are about 3,000 Armenian prisoners . . . in terrible case and *starving*," he wrote to his commanding officer after his capture.⁵⁷ He himself suffered at the hands of his captors; claiming to have received no rations and been held in dirty, miserable conditions.

In 1923, he published a popular memoir, *Adventures in the Near East*. In it he offered a nihilistic view of Britain's handling of the Armenian question:

There is nothing new to be found in the bad treatment of their prisoners by the Turks, or in their traditional persecution of the Christian minorities who have so long and with such difficulty contrived to exist in many of the districts under Turkish rule; and that *unless* we were in a position to back up any agitation with respect to these matters by not only a display, but by an application, of *force*, which would be capable of being followed up, if necessary by serious and active military operations, it would be to the last degree unwise to bring such question forward at all.⁵⁸

This statement echoed the sentiments expressed by Assistant High Commissioner Webb regarding humanitarian aid work. Half-hearted support of relief or military efforts threatened to have disastrous effects on the men who engaged in the campaigns and would fail to adequately help the Armenian, Greek and Assyrian populations. Britain had done nothing to effectively stop the "traditional persecution of Christian minorities" through military force. Intervention, in this view, had to be undertaken with a commitment to follow through with military force which would demand high costs.

The prisoner exchange, while freeing Rawlinson and his men, eliminated the possibility of legal redress for civilian and military victims. In his memoir and unpublished diary about his experience he voiced concern over the use of Armenian and Greek prisoners housed in the adjacent jail as laborers, a condition he likened to that of “slaves” (Figure 8.1). One elderly Armenian officer whom he watched from under his window had no shirt. Rawlinson reported giving him one of the three he still had in his possession. He worried at one point that he and his men were being kept with the Armenians so that an “accident” might befall them as he “could see their number daily diminishing.” The only available rations were a small amount of “boiled wheat” and a “small roll of black bread of very inferior quality.” Nine months into his capture, he recorded in his diary that Greeks had replaced the Armenians, “who have all died of starvation” on the “work gangs.”⁵⁹ Despite his own experiences as a prisoner of war and the disturbing scenes he witnessed during his imprisonment, Rawlinson argued, in the end, that Britain should now work to forge good relations with Turkey. He worried that evidence of his ill treatment would help fuel the humanitarian argument in favor of continued intervention that he felt at this point had little to offer anybody.

Planned for the fall of 1921, the exchange that freed Rawlinson and his men was mired in confusion. Over 80 Turkish prisoners from Malta were to be released in exchange for Rawlinson and his three men, another officer, Captain Campbell and “two civilians who claimed to be British subjects, though they were quite certainly not of British nationality.” When Rawlinson saw the list of 140 British and Indian prisoners he confirmed that only one name on the entire list was still alive, “the rest had certainly been dead for at least a year.”⁶⁰ He wondered why no one had verified the list before agreeing to the exchange. The British gave up the opportunity to try those accused of war crimes at Malta for soldiers no longer alive.

The prisoner exchange proved bittersweet for Rawlinson and his three comrades (Figure 8.2). He recalled witnessing the transfer of the dozens of Turkish prisoners to their boats “knowing that there were amongst them scoundrels of the deepest dye, whose crimes, committed against British prisoners in their hands, had been of indescribable barbarity.”⁶¹ His arrival back home only increased his disillusionment. Rawlinson, while



Figure 8.1 Col. Rawlinson's Ezeroom Prison from his book with accompanying captions. A. Rawlinson, *Adventures in the Near East* (New York, 1924).



Left to right—Back row: Pte. Leadbeater, Turkish Warrant Officer of Police (in charge of men), Pte. Carter
Sitting: Sub-Lt. Naffi, Turkish Navy (in charge of Col. R.), Col. R.,
Corpl. Ankers In front: "George"

Figure 8.2 Rawlinson and his men before the exchange. A. Rawlinson, *Adventures in the Near East* (New York, 1924).

feted and honored upon his arrival, came to believe that his experiences during the war added up to not very much in the final assessment.

Invited to lunch with Churchill upon his arrival in London in November 1921, he had to decline due to his weak condition and the state of nerves which required "absolute quiet." Rawlinson instead forward him a copy of his report and diary about his imprisonment. He ended his letter declining Churchill's invitation with a strange appeal, wondering if he knew of the "*horrors that are happening to the Pontic Greeks who are dying by hundreds daily???*"⁶² Rawlinson faced further personal challenges after his release. About to have his meager government pension cut off, Rawlinson's published memoir opened with an appeal to the public by Admiral Sir Percy Scott for adequate compensation to men "who have readily given all they had to give for the service of their country."

Rawlinson was not the only one distressed by what had happened. Admiral Godfrey, who served with Calthorpe, summed up what he thought had been achieved in the East after the war in two words: "Mighty little."⁶³ De Robeck analyzed the dilemma facing the British in an essay called "Conflicting Aims in the Near East." He opened his assessment with the claim that "The principle aim of the British is the altruistic one of securing the peace." Other more pragmatic concerns, he believed, had compromised the realization of this important endgame of the war. He cited the attempt to secure the Straits for British military and commercial use, "the allayment of excitement in India and amongst Moslems generally," finding Greeks "a way out" of Anatolia and finally maintaining British "power with authority" in the Near East."⁶⁴ The only possibility of realizing these multiple aims was conceding a sort of defeat in victory regarding Turkey.

Engaging the moral sympathies of Britons concerned with the fate of small nationalities in general and the victims of civilian massacre in particular had run its course. The failure to fully prosecute Ottoman war crimes after the war made visible the tension between old nineteenth-century notions of imperial responsibility championed by Gladstone and his supporters and postwar attempts to create a mechanism for the enforcement of human rights justice. In the end, the war exposed a moralizing British Empire as a less than legitimate voice of international justice, mired in its own imperial struggles.

US Intervention

The United States poised itself to take over the Armenian question after the war from Britain. With its vocal diaspora population of Armenian–Americans, and President Wilson’s well-known support for an Armenian homeland in Eastern Turkey, it seemed fitting that the US in the postwar moment should oversee the transition from war to peace in the region. Inspired by Gladstonian idealism, Wilson understood the Armenian issue as a moral obligation on the part of the US to support self-determination for Armenia. He reportedly penned the “14 Points,” which included the possibility of an independent Armenia, while a portrait of Gladstone stared up at him from his desk.⁶⁵ Wilson explicitly took up the cause of autonomy for Ottoman minorities in point 12, which stated that “nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.”

The huge role played by the US in humanitarian relief was also a factor. While the British military engaged the Ottoman Empire on the battlefield, the US led the charge when it came to humanitarian aid work in the East. This activity increased dramatically after the war with the success of Near East Relief which operated as a US-based international aid organization focused on Armenian relief throughout the 1920s. In Britain, activists from religious and secular relief organizations worked with Near East Relief and continued to lobby the government and provide aid to civilian victims after the war including the Lord Mayor’s Fund, the Friends of Armenia and the British Armenian Committee. These organizations used reports from representatives whom they sent to the Caucasus to bolster support for relief work.

Many believed that talk of an American mandate for Armenia would come to pass, absolving Britain of any formalized commitments in the Caucasus and making the administration of aid a responsibility of the US government. The British Armenian Committee put pressure on the British government to encourage the American mandate while organizing efforts to increase pledges of aid for refugees. At the same time pro-Ottoman organizations like the Near and Middle East Association mobilized on behalf of cultivating stronger commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire by supporting what it defined as Muslim concerns in the settlement.⁶⁶

These conflicting interests made the British officials wary of ceding too much control to the US regarding Armenian affairs. At the same time, those who supported the Armenian cause were especially anxious to find a way out of the quagmire of the ongoing humanitarian crisis. The Eastern Committee took up the question of how to honor Allied pledges to Armenians not long after the signing of the armistice. Lord Curzon who still had faith in the old treaty agreements opened up the discussion by reminding his fellow committee members of Article 61 in the Treaty of Berlin that outlined "our special interest in Armenia." The failure of the pledge to provide security for Ottoman Armenians led to the promise during the war that "the liberation of Armenians from the Turkish yoke was one of the objects which we set before ourselves in this war . . . we should not be willing to conclude peace" until "satisfied."⁶⁷

Curzon expressed dismay that these aims had failed and most Armenians remained "fugitives on the face of the earth" thanks in part to unfulfilled Allied promises. The brutal wave of violence in Cilicia after the unsuccessful French offensive against Kemalist forces in 1921, which they had laid claim to under the secret Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916, brought home the reality that the Allied minority policy had done more harm than good. Curzon believed that American relief proposals represented a possible first step in relinquishing British financial obligations while maintaining its political influence. Britain, according to Curzon, also had a number of reasons to want an independent Armenia. First, it would provide a national homeland "for the scattered peoples of the Armenian race." Second, it would reduce the size and influence of Turkey in the Middle East. Finally, an independent state of Armenia under obligation to its Allied liberators would create a barrier to threats from other eastern powers. If the US took over relief work, it might be persuaded to take over the task of political governance of a new Armenian state.

Lord Robert Cecil, a longtime supporter of Armenian causes, agreed with Curzon that with the needs so great, the offer of aid could not possibly be refused. He worried, however, that the US would begin to engage in commercial enterprises and eventually rival Britain's position in the region. Although Britain had its own Armenian Relief Fund, no mechanism existed to send aid directly and on a large-scale as the Americans could do. The government required aid to go through a

third party. Cecil wanted to keep this arrangement as a charitable effort rather than a possible gateway into a US political enterprise in the region. He suggested telling the Americans, "You wish to feed the Armenians as they are starving; very well, go and feed them." Sir John Beale proposed that such a move would "be a good opportunity" to help Armenians "without exciting feeling" among the British public.⁶⁸

The consensus settled on the solution of supporting a mandated territory of Armenia administered by the US. Like other mandates in the Middle East, including Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, it was assumed that an Allied power would provide security guarantees and a temporary government. Eventually, the region would gain independence as a homeland for Armenians and, presumably, become a grateful ally of Britain, Europe and the US.

Britain laid the failure of the Armenian mandate at the feet of the US, which ultimately refused to take control of the territory. Churchill claimed he always doubted that America would follow through with its pledges regarding Armenia after the war in his memoirs. "It seemed inconceivable that the five great Allies would not be able to make their will effective," Churchill observed, but, in the end, "no power would take a mandate for Armenia." The French could not help the remaining Armenians carve out a small autonomous region in Cilicia and conceded final defeat to the Kemalists in 1921.⁶⁹

But America, according to Churchill, deserved much of the blame for the failed mandate by supporting the creation of an Armenian state that could in reality exist on "paper only."⁷⁰ For Churchill, in the world after the war, the mantle of imperial responsibility necessarily extended beyond Britain's shores to America which he believed needed to take a more pragmatic approach to Middle Eastern affairs.

Conclusion

The legacy of British wartime power cast a long shadow over the politics of humanitarianism as well as the principles and practice of international justice. In February 1949, after another even greater war, Churchill was recognized for his "outstanding work for peace." A United Nations affiliated association based in the Netherlands presented him with the Grotius Medal in a highly publicized ceremony at Guildhall in London, where he delivered an address on the importance of leadership in matters

of international law and human rights. Praising Hugo Grotius as the “father of international law” he noted that this seventeenth-century philosopher once proposed a “Council of Christian Powers” to maintain the peace.⁷¹

Taking inspiration from Grotius, Churchill spoke of founding a European Supreme Court to try those who violated the recently adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights “so magnificently proclaimed at Geneva and Powers great and small.” The court’s explicit purpose would be to defend human rights. These shared aspirations of “millions of men in Europe,” according to Churchill, relied necessarily “on the actions of Governments” and “educated public opinion.”⁷² The British Empire’s humanitarian mission had come full circle and would leave an important legacy in a seemingly newly reconfigured world of international institutions and ideals.

CONCLUSION

FORGETTING GENOCIDE

“Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”

– Adolf Hitler, 1943¹

The stalled response to the Armenian Genocide still haunts attempts by the international community to intervene in humanitarian crises and prosecute human rights violations. Understanding why and how the attempt at prosecution failed allows for, perhaps, a final reckoning of the event which has the dubious distinction of being both the first large-scale genocide of the twentieth century to have solicited an international response and the forgotten genocide.

A moral responsibility to respond to atrocity came from a Gladstonian worldview that justified intervention in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire on behalf of persecuted minorities. Out of a British imperial mandate emerged a new way of representing the premeditated killing of minority civilians during wartime as genocide to the international community. The global reach of an empire that had the resources and power to stand up to perpetrators made this response possible. Ultimately, the British Empire could not fulfill broad universal claims of the protection of vulnerable minorities in the wake of a brutal and devastating world war. This weakened the commitment to prosecute those responsible for the Armenian massacres when the empire found itself caught between humanitarian ideals, on the one hand, and the *realpolitik* considerations that Britain believed necessary to maintain its hegemony. From these humanitarian imaginings and

imperial realities emerged the beginnings of the modern story of human rights justice.

When the US took the reins at Nuremburg for the Allies after World War II, the world witnessed the first successful prosecution of Germany for genocide during the Holocaust. The United States during the proceedings embraced the British idea that humanitarianism and human rights considerations should inform international affairs. Fear of uncertainty and postwar entanglements, as happened with the British decades earlier, shadowed the US' role in the Nuremburg proceedings.² As a result, a wide range of accepted responses now guide independent states in matters of recognizing, intervening in and prosecuting genocidal acts. The lack of a unified approach is a problem which plagues modern-day international institutions charged with this task, including the United Nations and internationally sanctioned criminal courts. Despite the successful prosecution of the Nazis at Nuremburg, the international community today faces an uphill battle when it comes to uniting nations around stopping massacre and prosecuting perpetrators of crimes against humanity and genocide. The near-universal acceptance of the 1948 Genocide Convention has not made the task any easier. This is most dramatically illustrated by the decades-long campaign in the US to implement the Genocide Convention, which only made genocide a punishable crime under US law in 1988.

Though now it is largely national rather than imperial priorities that shape the way international institutions respond to genocide, the broad outlines remain the same. Lessons from the Armenian case continue to guide understandings of genocide and how and when to intervene. During World War I, Britain, along with the US, harbored fears over intervention as a solution to helping minority victims of state-sponsored violence. Worries over potentially inflaming Muslim/Christian intolerance at home and abroad long shadowed discussions of the Armenian case and, more recently, war crimes committed during the Balkan Wars. Finally, distrust of international institutions charged with enforcing human rights norms dating back to Lloyd George's skepticism about a League of Nation's sponsored human rights court and the US' refusal to join the League speak to concerns over ceding US sovereignty and decision making powers.

But despite the countless reasons for looking the other way, states continue to get involved in human rights crises and humanitarian

interventions across the globe. UN Ambassador, Samantha Power, has written critically about US inaction on genocide.³ Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her successor John Kerry have said again and again that the US will stand up against injustice on humanitarian grounds. Though little has been done to back up these claims, the existence of a rhetoric against genocide in international law speaks to the prospect that action against acts of mass murder by states and institutions can follow. This possibility makes knowing the history of the origins of the humanitarian response to genocide that much more urgent.

An important way to understand the West's evolving response to humanitarian crises and genocide is to begin with the story of the British Empire and the Armenian Genocide. The focus today on the role of the US in leading the international community in humanitarian intervention has distorted the historical record on the origins of human rights justice regarding crimes against humanity. It is important to remember that the beginning of US military, political, and financial clout dated to the end of World War I, after it helped Allied forces, spearheaded by Britain, France and Russia, defeat Germany and Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria.

With the great land-based empires of Russia, the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary obliterated from the map after the war, a new world order with Britain and the US at the helm emerged from the ashes of World War I. Fresh from victory, a growing economy, and a perception of its elevated rank in the postwar order, the US lent money and offered advice to devastated countries across Europe. This reality created an opportunity for America to challenge Britain as the new global hegemon.

The US clearly did not completely throw off the British mantle. Instead, leaders including President Wilson remained influenced by the aims that guided the British Empire during the height of its dominance in the nineteenth century. Part of that inheritance was the insistence that intervening in the internal affairs of other nations and empires was a legitimate part of geopolitics. World War I represented the initial test for the international community, led by Britain and the US to act abroad in the name of humanitarian ideals. The response to the Armenian Genocide was crucial in defining what this new interventionism would look like.

Remembering Genocide

How should the international community view past acts of genocide and failed intervention in a world where mass killing continues to claim untold lives right now? Hitler's now infamous quote on the eve of the implementation of his "Final Solution" to eliminate Germany's long-established and well-integrated Jewish population offers a powerful reason to both remember and recognize acts of hatred and mass murder. This question is also important when considering how failures to respond to genocide have affected modern day remembrance and historical understandings of the first internationally recognized crime against humanity.

Today, the Armenian Genocide is remembered all over the globe. Memorials represent a powerful way to shape collective memory and there are hundreds of commemorative symbols located in dozens of countries. Most are quiet, unassuming remembrances such as Armenian *khatchkars* or crosses with inscriptions and trees dedicated to remembering the dead and memorializing the event. Other memorials are meant to teach. The Armenian Genocide museum based in Washington DC, and the Yerevan memorial in Armenia that houses the "Eternal flame," represent a more didactic side of the story of remembrance. In Britain, the community charged with remembrance is small but increasingly engaged in discussions of the genocide. There is only one public memorial, not in England but in Wales, the home of W. E. Gladstone. A "Stone of Remembrance" in Cardiff reads "In Memory of Victims of the Armenian Genocide" and is translated in Armenian and Welsh. It was put up in 2007, desecrated the next year before Remembrance Day on April 24th, and later repaired. Other more unassuming memorials exist. In London, Armenians planted a commemorative apricot tree on Ealing Green and another memorial exists at Iverna Gardens at the Armenian Apostolic Church. There is also a *khatchkar* at an elementary school dedicated by school children to victims of the Armenian Genocide. Strikingly, Britain has the same number of official Armenian Genocide memorials as Germany.⁴

Gladstone's embrace of the idea of imperial responsibility ultimately worked against efforts to recognize, prosecute and later memorialize the Armenian Genocide. The evidence collected by men like Bryce left little doubt that this systematic, premeditated extermination of a minority

population indeed constituted a crime against humanity that warranted prosecution. However, as the events of the war crimes trials reveal, a seemingly universal notion of protecting human rights during wartime came out of an imperial context that had its own internal logic and political priorities.

The centrality of Britain is crucial in this regard. The British Empire was the only body with the resources and sense of purpose capable of launching a response. The trials failed because Britain did not truly represent, or could not in the end legitimately stand in as, an international body to pressure a fading Ottoman Empire to prosecute perpetrators. Britain's historical claim to this leadership role faltered in the face of attempts to join imperial and human rights concerns under the umbrella of a diverse, tolerant Christian-led empire which increasingly came into conflict during the war. These factors stalled the momentum of the humanitarian response that had led Britain to speak out against the killings in the first place. The notion of imperial responsibility cut both ways. It posited, albeit differently, a responsibility to Christian minorities and to securing the loyalty of the British Empire's Muslim subjects and ultimately, the Empire itself.

The failure of the British Empire to live up to its self-imposed responsibility resulted from the tension between pragmatism and idealism which gradually weakened the moral imperative and humanitarian impetus that sustained the commitment to protect minority rights over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

It would be easy to conclude that the Armenian Genocide fell victim to political expediency and was forgotten as one of the unfortunate casualties of Total War. The inability to effectively pressure the Ottoman government to follow through with prosecutions initiated the cycle of remembrance and forgetting that characterizes how the event is treated today in popular culture, by politicians and some historians. However, it is also important to understand this process of forgetting as part of the larger story of how British imperial politics shaped the early practice of the enforcement of a universal notion of human rights. The uneven legacy of empire still colors how genocide is represented and functions in the collective memory of both survivors and nations.

NOTES

Introduction The Crime of Genocide

1. Peter Balakian cites the number of 250 in *Armenian Golgotha* (New York: Knopf, 2009), xiii. Vahakn Dadrian claims this number increased to 2,345 in the weeks that followed. *The History of the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 221. For a full account of events of April 24, 1915, see Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 251–4.
2. On the American story see: Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris* (New York: Perennial, 2003); Jay Winter (ed.), *America and the Armenian Genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Merrill Peterson, “Starving Armenians”: *America and the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1930 and After* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2004).
3. Gary Bass focuses on the British response to the Eastern Question in the nineteenth century in *Freedom’s Battle* (New York: Vintage, 2008). Davide Rodogno takes a long view of British humanitarianism and considers it in the context of Great Power politics particularly in relation to the French. *Against Massacre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
4. See for example Stefan Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Margaret Anderson, “Down in Turkey, far away: Human Rights, the Armenian Massacres, and Orientalism in Wilhelmine Germany,” *Journal of Modern History* 79:1 (March 2007), 80–111; and Margaret Anderson, “A Responsibility to Protest? The Public, the Powers and the Armenians in the era of Abdülhamit II,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 17:3 (July 2015), 259–83.
5. Information comes from the British Periodicals I and II database published online by Proquest.
6. Anderson, “Down in Turkey, Far Away,” 80–111.
7. Jo Laycock, *Imagining Armenia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2009); Diane Robinson-Dunn, *The Harem, Slavery and British Imperial Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

8. This scholarship most recently has been considered in Ronald Grigor Suny et al., *A Question of Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
9. See for example Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*; Suny et al., *A Question of Genocide* Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Berghahn, 2008); Akaby Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question* (London: Croom Helm, 1984); Richard Hovannissian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide* (New York: St Martin's, 1992).
10. Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 14.
11. On the rise of internationalism see Mark Mazower, *Governing the World* (New York: Penguin, 2012).
12. E.J. Dillon, "Armenia: An Appeal," *Contemporary Review*, January 1896, 19.
13. Hansard Online, House of Commons Debate, 23 August 1916, vol. 85 c2650; James Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, Kessinger Facsimile (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2010), 594. Originally published in 1916.
14. Morgenthau quoted in Suny, "Writing Genocide," Suny et al., *A Question of Genocide*, 20.
15. Hansard Online, House of Lords Debate, December 17, 1919, vol. 38 cc 279–300.
16. "Joint declaration to Sublime Porte," May 24, 1915. The concept itself has a longer history but it was the declaration that gave "crimes against humanity" meaning as an act related to genocide. Rooted in Enlightenment thinking and early humanitarian ideology, the notion of a crime committed against a broadly conceived humanity first emerged in relation to slavery. Jenny Martinez locates the term "crime against humanity" in a treatise by an American legal scholar, Henry Wheaton, regarding public sentiment in relation to slavery in 1842 in *Slave Trade and the Origins of International Human Rights Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 115–16.
17. "Turks Talk of Reform: Punishment for Armenian Massacres," *The Times*, London, November 30, 1918.
18. Raphael Lemkin used the Armenian massacres as a case study to understand what he would first label as the crime of genocide in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment, 1944). The language of intent to eliminate particular populations through systematic and premeditated killing later was codified after the Holocaust in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (December 1948). <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html>, accessed April 5, 2012.

Chapter 1 W.E. Gladstone and Humanitarian Intervention

1. "Germany to Recognize Killings as Genocide," *Wall Street Journal*, April 25–26, 2015.
2. "Historical Narratives Compete in Turkish Centennial Events," *Wall Street Journal*, April 25–26, 2015.

3. Although this responsibility was most often cast as one to Christian minorities during this period, the British did not necessarily exclude other oppressed minorities in this vision. Amir Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). For British intervention on behalf of Jewish communities see Abigail Green, “Intervening in the Jewish Question,” in Brenden Simms and D.J.B. Trimm (eds), *Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 139–58.
4. Davide Rodogno’s comparative study, *Against Massacre* understands nineteenth-century humanitarianism as shaped primarily by Great Power politics. He rejects Gary Bass’ notion in *Freedom’s Battle* that a popular mandate pushed humanitarianism forward during this period. On the connection between humanitarian activism and geopolitics during this period see Michelle Tusan, *Smyrna’s Ashes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).
5. Green, “Intervening in the Jewish Question,” 146, 152–3.
6. The Tanzimat reforms, which attempted to modernize the Ottoman bureaucracy through centralization while granting greater equality between the empire’s subjects, were the result of the confluence of forces. British influence over the Ottoman government after 1839 played an important role in instituting these reforms as well as, according to Erik Zürcher, a genuine desire to “introduce European-style reforms.” Erik Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 50–2, 56–7.
7. Green, “Intervening in the Jewish Question,” 154.
8. Exact numbers are hard to determine and range from the many tens of thousands up to well over 100,000 killed. Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 51. “Mr. Gladstone on the Armenian Question,” *The Times*, September 25, 1896.
9. H.C.G. Matthew (ed.), *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. 13 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 427.
10. H.C.G. Matthew, *Gladstone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 reprint), 635.
11. George W.E. Russell, *William Ewart Gladstone* (1891; reprint Chalford: Nonsuch Publishing, 2007), 169, 183.
12. Matthew, *Gladstone*, 17.
13. During a visit to Greece in the 1850s, Gladstone admired the “fusion of the Church with the people.” Matthew, *Gladstone*, 167.
14. Diplomats pressured the Ottoman Empire to institute reform as part of the peace negotiations that concluded the Crimean War in 1856. Arman Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy and the Eastern Question* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute, 1999), 26–9.
15. This policy bordered on avoidance under the leadership of Lord Derby who, according to Geoffrey Hicks, tried to minimize concerns over Ottoman minority issues by keeping “things quiet and avoid any re-opening of the eastern question.” “The Struggle for Stability,” Hicks (ed.), *Conservatism and British Foreign Policy, 1820–1920* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 95–7.

16. On Gladstone and the Bulgarian Atrocities see: R.W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question* (1935; repr., New York: Norton, 1972); David Harris, *Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors of 1876* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); Richard Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1963); Richard Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979); and Ann Pottinger Saab, *Reluctant Icon: Gladstone, Bulgaria and the Working Classes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).
17. W.E. Gladstone, *The Bulgarian Horrors* (London, 1876), 30, 48. The pamphlet sold 200,000 copies in the first month and was reprinted in newspapers and other media. Over 10,000 people showed up to hear Gladstone speak at Blackheath on the topic several days after the initial publication of the pamphlet. Matthew, *Gladstone*, 283–4.
18. Liberalism and empire made strange bedfellows in the nineteenth century. For an analysis of this relationship see: Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn To Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). This proved at times “highly problematic” for a “Liberal Prime Minister of an imperial power.” Matthew, *Gladstone*, 375–6.
19. W.E. Gladstone, “England’s Mission,” *Nineteenth Century*, September 1878, 569–70; Matthew, *Gladstone*, 374.
20. Gladstone, “England’s Mission,” 584.
21. “England’s Mission,” 570.
22. The protection of minorities in general was important to liberal notions of empire. Eastern Orthodox Christians were singled out by High Churchmen like Gladstone as connected to an authentic early Christianity which inspired his efforts on their behalf. Matthew, *Gladstone*, 629, 635; J.F. Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992). On liberal imperial views on Jewish minorities see, Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 37–56. Religious and relief workers who supported intervention on behalf of Armenians cited Armenia’s early adoption of Christianity as a national religion and highly developed ancient culture as reasons for this particular connection. Michelle Tusan, “The Business of Relief Work: A Victorian Quaker and Her Circle in Constantinople,” *Victorian Studies* 51:4 (Summer 2009), 633–61.
23. Some of Gladstone’s most strident supporters during the Bulgarian Atrocities agitation came from northern England where religious Nonconformity was strong.
24. *Papers on the Eastern Question* (London, 1877). Papers published by this organization included works by the clergy, MPs, feminists, philanthropists and Gladstone himself.
25. Erik Zürcher, *Turkey*, 79–81.
26. Humanitarian advocacy groups were founded by missionary, feminist, philanthropic and regional and national political organizations and

- included: The Eastern Question Association; the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission; The Anglo-Armenian Association; The British Armenia Committee; The Armenian Red Cross; The Friends of Armenia, with branches in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England; the Armenian Bureau of Information, the Lord Mayor's Fund of Manchester; Armenian Orphans Fund (Manchester); The Religious Society of Friends, Armenian Mission; The Armenian Refugees Relief Fund run by the Armenian United Association of London; the Armenian Ladies Guild of London. Tusan, *Smyrna's Ashes*, 30–5.
27. In the end, the attempt to protect minority interests by adjusting the territories of the western Ottoman Empire to offer more autonomy to Bulgarians and others had only limited success. Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 37. See also Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy*, 70–9.
 28. The most notable were those published by The Friends of Armenia through its "Information Bureau," which printed articles, pamphlets and raised money for Armenian causes at meetings in provincial and urban venues. Meeting places included: Dundee, Hampstead, Hanley, Ipswich, London, Maidstone, Norwich, Rishton, Wigan and York. Hundreds of pamphlets published in the nineteenth century on behalf of Armenia causes survive in archival collections in Britain and the US. "Armenia," Friends of Armenia Information Bureau pamphlet, n.d. Bodleian Special Collections, Oxford, Bryce Collection, MS 210; "Occasional Paper, no. 3," International Association of the Friends of Armenia," April 28, 1897, London School of Economics Special Collections [hereafter LSES], Misc Collection 0019.
 29. The idea was not included in San Stefano and further limited Russian influence. Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others*, 3–5.
 30. E.J. Dillon, "Armenia: An Appeal," *Contemporary Review*, January 1896, 19. See also: "The Armenian Atrocities Agitation: Speech by Mr. Gladstone," *Daily Free Press*, August 7, 1895; "The Massacres in Turkey," *Nineteenth Century*, October 1896.
 31. "British Armenian Committee Minutes," Rhodes House Library Archives [hereafter RHL], Oxford.
 32. The decline of the "taxes on knowledge" in the early 1850s brought the war home to a wider reading public by making periodicals a central feature of British political life. The press played an important role in drumming up pro-war sentiment for this "wildly" popular war, in the words of one contemporary observer, even before the official war declaration was made against Russia on March 28, 1854. See M.S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 128–35 and Stefanie Markovits, "Participatory Journalism during the Crimean War," *Victorian Studies* 50:4 (Summer 2008), 561.
 33. "Communications with the Far East," *Fraser's Magazine*, November 1856, 580.
 34. David Fraser, *Short Cut to India* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1909), 13–46. Only after German plans to take over the financing and building of the

- southern route, the so-called Baghdad Railroad, sparked public outrage in Britain in 1903 did these plans for an overland route fade. On the controversy over the construction see: Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Edward Mead Earle, *Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Baghdad Railway* (New York: Macmillan, 1923); and Maybelle Kennedy Chapman, *Great Britain and the Bagdad Railway, 1888–1914* (Northampton, MA: Smith College, 1948).
35. "History of Eastern Church," *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 107, April 1858, 356–7. Christ Church in Istanbul now is part of the Anglican Diocese of Europe.
 36. These conceptions of Jews often were figured in a negative rather than positive light. See David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Anthony Wohl, "'Dizzi-Ben-Dizzi': Disraeli as Alien," *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 34, no. 3 (July 1995), 375–411. On the perceived importance of Christians along the proposed Anatolian Railway line see, Fraser, *Short Cut to India*, 298–307.
 37. "Correspondence respecting the rights and privileges of the Latin and Greek Churches in Turkey: Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty," *Edinburgh Review*, July 1854, 43.
 38. "The Eastern Question," *London Quarterly*, vol. 29, 1868, 405.
 39. No official numbers exist leaving a wide range of possible statistics. David Harris quotes numbers given by a Turkish tribunal, a British consular agent, American investigators, and Bulgarian historians ranging from 12,000 to over 100,000 dead. *Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors*, 22.
 40. R.J. Kendall used the terms in an article for the periodical *Public Opinion*, September 9, 1876. Quoted in Wohl, "Dizzi-Ben-Dizzi," 387.
 41. Quoted in John Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1911), 417.
 42. These reforms harkened back to failed attempts on the part of the British government to press for the modernization of the Ottoman government from within in 1839. In 1856, then British ambassador Stratford Canning was central in negotiating a liberalization of Ottoman policies towards non-Muslim subjects in the Treaty of Paris. The Tanzimat Reform Edicts of 1839 and 1856 both dealt with the issue of reforming the status of Ottoman minorities. For a contemporary account of the treaty negotiations see George Douglas Campbell Argyll, *The Eastern Question*, vol. 1 (London: Strahan, 1879), 1–35 (reprint). See also: Donald Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 31–3 and Vahakn Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, 14–20.
 43. Seton-Watson and a generation of historians who followed argued for the importance of the controversy generated over the Bulgarian Atrocities in shaping liberalism during the late 1870s. R.W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question*. Those writing in this tradition after Seton-Watson include: David Harris, *Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors*; Richard Shannon *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*; Richard Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question*; and Ann Pottinger Saab, *Reluctant Icon*.

44. "Lessons on Massacre, 1877," Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 44696 f. 66, British Library.
45. Morley, *Gladstone*, 417.
46. *Ibid.*, 418.
47. *Ibid.*, 419.
48. Quoted in Wohl, "Dizzi-Ben-Dizzi," 386.
49. *Ibid.*, 388.
50. Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 44454 ff. 124–6, British Library.
51. The piece appeared in print as "Sonnet on the Massacre of the Christians in Bulgaria" and was compared to Milton's sonnet on the "Massacres at Piedmont" by one reviewer. *The Athenaeum*, July 23, 1881, 103–4.
52. "Derby at the Meeting of Conservative Working Men, Edinburgh," *The Times*, December 17, 1875.
53. Between September 1 and December 1876 Derby received 455 memorials and petitions on the subject. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, 148.
54. Gladstone to Layard, [19] April, 1877. Gladstone Papers, Box 9, GLA 437, Huntington Library.
55. On Gladstone and the Bulgarian question see: H.C.G. Matthew, "Gladstone, Vaticanism, and the Question of the East," in D. Baker (ed.), *Studies in Church History* (1978); R.W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*; Harold William Temperley, "The Bulgarian and Other Atrocities, 1875–78," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1931, 105–46.
56. A collection published by the Association included the following articles: "Armenia and the Lebanon" by J.W. Probyn, "The Slavonic Provinces of the Ottoman Empire" by W.E. Gladstone, "Fallacies of the Eastern Question" by Rev. William Denton, and "The Martyrs of Turkish Misrule" by Millicent Fawcett.
57. Those in attendance included the Duke of Westminster, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Sir G. Campbell, MP, the Bishop of Oxford, Anthony Trollope, Mr Fawcett, MP, Sir T.F. Buxton, Mr S. Morley, MP, Mr Trevelyan, Mr Cowper-Temple, Rev. Canon Liddon, Rev. W. Denton, E.A. Freeman, Lord Waveney and others that included "Ladies ... accommodated in the gallery." "The Eastern Question Conference," *Illustrated London News*, December 16, 1876, 575.
58. *Papers on the Eastern Question* (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1877).
59. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*.
60. "Topics of the Week," *The Graphic*, January 6, 1877, 2.
61. Gladstone to Hugh Mason, August 10, 1878. GLA 502, Huntington Library.
62. Gladstone to A. (Abraham) Hayward, November 17, 1878. Gladstone Papers, GLA 759 (89), Huntington Library.
63. "The war in Turkey," undated fragment. Gladstone Papers, GLA 759 (148), Huntington Library.
64. David Brooks, "Gladstone and Midlothian: The Background to the First Campaign" *The Scottish Historical Review*, 61:177, Part 1 (April 1985), 50–1.

65. "Mr. Gladstone in Scotland," *Fraser's Magazine* (January 1880), 103.
66. Quoted in Brooks, "Gladstone and Midlothian," 57.
67. Diary for November 24, 1879. Quoted in Matthew, *Gladstone*, 293.
68. Brooks, "Gladstone and Midlothian," 56.
69. *Ibid.*, 67.
70. *Ibid.*, 59.
71. Diary for December 28, 1879. Quoted in Matthew, *Gladstone*, 293.
72. Quoted and reported in "Mr. Gladstone in Scotland," *Fraser's Magazine*, January 1880, 107.
73. *Ibid.*, 110.
74. *Ibid.*, 117.
75. W.E. Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches*, 1879, ed. M.R.D. Foot (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1971), 47.
76. "Mr. Gladstone in Scotland," *Fraser's Magazine*, January 1880, 111.
77. *Midlothian Speeches*, 90–4.
78. *Ibid.*, 178–9.
79. "Mr. Gladstone in Scotland," *Fraser's Magazine*, 103.
80. *Ibid.*
81. *Midlothian Speeches*, 173.
82. *Ibid.*, 160–1.
83. Ronald Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but No Place Else: A History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 25–9.
84. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question*, 570.
85. Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question*, 183–4.

Chapter 2 The New Diplomacy

1. "Lord Beaconsfield at Aylesbury," *The Times*, September 21, 1876.
2. "The New Ministry," *Blackwood's Magazine*, June 1880, 790.
3. G.C. Thompson, *Public Opinion and Lord Beaconsfield, 1875–1880*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1886), 184; David Harris, *The Bulgarian Horrors*, 44–5, 110–11.
4. Gladstone quoted in Gordon Waterfield, *Layard of Nineveh* (New York: Praeger, 1963), 358.
5. W.E. Gladstone to Henry Layard, April [19], 1877. Gladstone Papers, GLA 437, Huntington Library.
6. Layard to Gladstone, May 9, 1877. Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 44454, British Library.
7. This was the largest number of consuls employed in the Near East since the British government had taken over administration of this system from the Levant Company, which had run the consul system as a loose commercial network starting in 1592. Reforms to the Levant Consular Service in 1877 raised standards for applicants and set out to make the service more "English." As Constantinople attaché Lord Strangford put it: "We must have Englishmen

- in our public service in Turkey, if we do not send out Englishmen we must Anglicize our Levantines, and for my part I think we can afford to do both.” John Dickie, *The British Consul* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 61–3.
8. On late nineteenth-century missionary activity in the Near East see Dorothy Anderson, *The Balkan Volunteers* (London: Hutchinson, 1968).
 9. Scholars interested in Britain’s engagement with the Ottoman Empire primarily have relied on accounts written by travel writers to understand this world. See for example, Billie Melman, *Women’s Orient* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1992); and Nancy Stockdale, *Colonial Encounters among English and Palestinian Women* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2007). A notable exception is Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
 10. Henry Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*, Part II, Elibron reprint (London: John Murray, 1853), 431.
 11. William Bruce (ed.), Austin Henry Layard, *Autobiography*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1903), 157–60.
 12. *Ibid.*, 248–51; Waterfield, *Layard of Nineveh*, 227–36.
 13. William Gregory’s comments in the House of Commons, quoted by Waterfield, 297–8.
 14. Sir Arthur Otoway quoted by Bruce in Layard, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 112, 267.
 15. Layard to Granville, quoted in Waterfield, *Layard of Nineveh*, 236.
 16. Layard to Lady Huntly, April 25, 1853. Layard Papers, Add. MS 38944, f. 120, British Library.
 17. Layard to Lady Huntly, October 23, 1857. Layard Papers, Add. MS 38944, f. 164, British Library.
 18. Waterfield, *Layard of Nineveh*, 287–8.
 19. Layard to Morelli, July 20, 1876. Layard Papers, Add. MS 38966.
 20. Layard to Lady Gregory, November 30, 1876. Layard Papers, Add. MS 38966, f. 198, British Library; Shannon, *Gladstone*, 109.
 21. Layard, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 195.
 22. *Ibid.*, 121–2.
 23. “Our Relations with Turkey: Notes of a Conversation with Sir H. Layard.” *Contemporary Review*, May 1885, 612.
 24. Layard, *Nineveh*, 4.
 25. Layard to Viscount Redcliffe, September 10, 1877. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39124.
 26. This was spelled out in Article 61 of the treaty that recognized Britain as the legitimate protector of Ottoman Christian minority interests.
 27. Lord Strangford attended Oxford and served as a student attaché to Constantinople in 1845. He later served as Oriental Secretary during Crimean war. Beaufort’s own interest in the Ottoman Empire stemmed from a tour to Syria, Asia Minor and Egypt which provided the basis of a popular two-volume travel book that went into multiple editions based on her adventures in 1861 called *Egyptian Sepulchres and Syrian Shrines including some stay in the*

- Lebanon, at Palmyra, and in Western Turkey*. She met her future husband after he reviewed her book and they married soon after in February 1862. Their mutual interest in the western lands of the Ottoman Empire resulted in her second book, *The Eastern Shores of the Adriatic*, published in 1864 after a tour they took to Albania, Montenegro, Dalmatia and Corfu. *Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004, 467–8.
28. Upon the death of her husband, Lady Strangford took charge of her own fortune, from which she had only been drawing a £200 allowance. Lord Strangford was worth £3,000 when he died, while her fortune was estimated at £27,885 when she died. Lady Strangford's will, Beaufort Papers, Huntington Library.
 29. Anderson, *The Balkan Volunteers*, 14–15, 208.
 30. Lady Strangford's Bulgaria Journal. Beaufort Papers, Huntington Library; DNB, 457.
 31. Journal, February 11, 1877. Beaufort Papers, Huntington Library.
 32. Susan Thorne, *Congregational Mission and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).
 33. Journal, February 18, 1877. Beaufort Papers, Huntington Library.
 34. Eugene Schuyler to Lady S, Philippopolis, 1876 (Turkey). Beaufort Papers, Huntington Library.
 35. Journal entries: October 14–November 11, 1876. Beaufort Papers, Huntington Library.
 36. *Ibid.*, February 13 and 20, 1876.
 37. *Ibid.*, October 14, 1876.
 38. *Ibid.*, November 11, 1876.
 39. Strangford to Layard, September 8, 1877, Layard Papers, Add. MS 39015, f. 54, British Library.
 40. Strangford Journal, February 11, 1877.
 41. *Ibid.*, November 11, 1876.
 42. Strangford to Layard, May 22, 1878. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39020, f. 134: emphasis in original.
 43. Freeman quoted in Anderson, *Balkan Volunteers*, 16.
 44. Strangford to Layard, Feb 19, 1880. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39031. More relief schemes followed including the Victoria Hospital at Cairo for British. She died on the outbound voyage to Port Said where was on her way to set up a subscription hospital for British seamen.
 45. Layard to Everett, February 7, 1880. Everett Collection, Middle East Center Archive (MECA), Box 2, File 4b.
 46. Diary, February 8, 1882. Everett Collection, MECA.
 47. Diary, February 7, 8 and March 9, 1882. Everett Collection, MECA.
 48. Strangford to Layard, September 2, 1877. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39015, f. 54, British Library.
 49. Strangford to Layard, October 24, 1877. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39016, ff. 86–88, British Library.

50. Strangford to Layard, May 10, 1878. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39020, f. 71, British Library.
51. Strangford to Layard, July 1, 1878. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39021, British Library.
52. Strangford to Layard, September 21, 1878. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39022, f. 82, British Library.
53. The fund eventually raised over £13,500 from subscribers in Britain which Strangford gave to Layard to distribute. Strangford to Layard, February 19, 1880. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39031, f. 243, British Library.
54. Strangford to Layard, April 5, 1880. Layard Papers, 39032 f. 240, British Library.
55. Strangford to Layard, April 30, 1880. Layard Papers, 39033, f. 95, British Library.
56. Ibid.
57. Personal writings, March 11, 1883. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39143.
58. "Conversation with Layard," *Contemporary Review* (May 1885), 611.
59. Confidential Print Correspondence on "Protestant Constitution" negotiations, April, May, June 1880. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39156, British Library.
60. Layard to Granville, June 1, 1880. Layard Papers, Add. MS 39156, f. 145, British Library.
61. Donald Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide; Nasserian, Britain and the Armenian Question*.

Chapter 3 Hamidian Massacres and the Media

1. Letter from Anglo-Armenian Association, December 19, 1894. Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 44519 f. 285, British Library.
2. London School of Economics Armenian pamphlet collection.
3. Suny, "*They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else*," 106–7; Raymond Kevorkian, *Complete History of the Armenian Genocide*, 9–11.
4. Suny, "*They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else*," 101.
5. Quoted in Suny, "*The Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else*," 111.
6. For a contemporary account of the Bank takeover see Simon Vratzian (ed.), translated by Haig Partizian, *Bank Ottoman: Memoirs of Armen Garo* (Detroit, Michigan: Hairenik Press, 1990).
7. "The Armenian Atrocities," *The Speaker*, April 13, 1895, 408.
8. Suny, "*They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else*," 109–10.
9. "Armenian Atrocities," *The Speaker*, 408.
10. Ibid., 409.
11. "The Sassoun Massacres," *The Speaker*, December 1, 1894, 597.
12. The term is often attributed to W.E. Gladstone. See n30 below.
13. Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act* (New York: Henry Holt, 2007), 38–9.
14. Queen Victoria's Journals, February 2, 1895, vol. 101, 30.
15. Ibid., December 4, 1895, vol. 102, 139

16. *Ibid.*, December 10, 1895, vol. 102, 145.
17. "The Year of Shame," *Westminster Review*, February 1898, 118.
18. "The Present Government in Turkey," *Edinburgh Magazine*, July 1897, 21. According to Donald Bloxham, guilt ultimately rested with the Sultan who incited hatred and encouraged rumors of Armenian intrigue among the Muslim population who took part in the massacres. *Great Game of Genocide*, 55.
19. C. Chryssaphides, "The Last Sultan of Turkey," *Fortnightly Review*, December 1910, 996.
20. "Abdul Hamid," *Pall Mall Magazine*, June 1903, 264.
21. Lord Fisher, *Memories* (New York: George Doran, 1920), 101.
22. "Gossip about the Ex-Sultan," *Review of Reviews*, July 1909, 55.
23. Sir Edwin Pears, *Life of Abdul Hamid* (London: Constable and Co., 1917), 3.
24. Chryssaphides, "The Last Sultan of Turkey," 1004.
25. Pears, *Life of Abdul Hamid*, 265.
26. "The Present Government in Turkey," *Edinburgh Magazine*, July 1897, 21.
27. Monsieur Jean Broussahi to W.E. Gladstone, January 21, 1891. Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 49656, f. 16, British Library; Nubar Pasha to Gladstone, April 22, 1885, Add. MS 52402, f. 28; Patriarch of Armenians in Turkey, Nerces, May 11, 1880; Director of L'Armenia to Gladstone, May 21, 1892, Add. MS 44514 f. 292.
28. Edward Atkin to Gladstone, December 19, 1894. Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 44519 f. 285, British Library; Gladstone to Bryce, March 11, 1881. Gladstone Papers, GLA 185, Huntington Library.
29. Margaret Anderson, "A Responsibility to Protest?," 260.
30. Letter from Gladstone to the Sultan quoted in "The Massacres in Turkey," *Nineteenth Century*, October 1896, 662.
31. "Mr. Gladstone," *The Times*, September 25, 1896.
32. Gladstone, "Paths of Honor and Shame," *Nineteenth Century*, March 1878, 593.
33. "What is the Eastern Question?," *St. Pauls* (1878), 279.
34. R. Bosworth Smith, "The Eastern Question: Turkey and Russia," *Contemporary Review*, December 1876, 148.
35. John Probyn, "Phases of the Eastern Question," *British Quarterly Review*, April 1878, 519.
36. Gladstone to C.B. Norman, July 6, 1896. Gladstone Papers, GLA 537, Huntington Library.
37. Alfred Havighurst, *Radical Journalist: H.W. Massingham* (Cambridge University Press, 1974), 45. The *Chronicle* had become an influential "friend of the Progressives" in the early 1890s, according to Massingham's biographer.
38. Gladstone to Massingham, [n.d.]. Gladstone Papers, GLA 505, Huntington Library.
39. Gladstone to Massingham, September 11, 1896. Gladstone Papers, GLA 507, Huntington Library.

40. Ibid.
41. Gladstone to Massingham, September 13, 1896. Gladstone Papers, GLA 508, Huntington Library.
42. Gladstone to Massingham, September 11, 1896. Gladstone Papers, GLA 507, Huntington Library.
43. MacColl to H. Gladstone, September 16, 1896. Viscount Herbert, Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 46043, f. 30, British Library.
44. MacColl to H. Gladstone, September 17, 1896. Viscount Herbert, Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 46043, f. 32, British Library.
45. The illness of his friend the Duke of Westminster led to the choice of Liverpool over London for the speech. Herbert Gladstone to Malcolm MacColl, September 15, 1896. Viscount Herbert, Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 46043, f. 29, British Library.
46. "Mr. Gladstone on the Armenian Question," *The Times*, September 25, 1896.
47. Notes on Liverpool speech. Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 44526, f. 182, British Library.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., f. 175, Gladstone Papers, British Library.
50. Gladstone to Massingham, September 21, 1897. Gladstone Papers, GLA 512, Huntington Library.
51. Queen Victoria's Journals, vol. 102, Dec 11, 147. Reported comments of Mr Goschen.
52. Bryce to Gladstone, December 22, 1896. Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 46019, f. 34, British Library.
53. MacColl to H. Gladstone, September 17, 1896. Viscount Herbert, Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 46043, f. 32, British Library.
54. MacColl to H. Gladstone, September 16, 1896. Viscount Herbert, Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 46043, f. 30, British Library.
55. Gladstone to Massingham, June 15, 1897. Gladstone Papers, GLA 511, Huntington Library.
56. "Lord Salisbury on the Free Expression of Public Opinion," pamphlet (1896). "Armenian Pamphlets," Coll MISC 0019, LSES.
57. "The New Humanitarianism," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, January 1898, 100.
58. "The Inhumanity of Certain Humanitarians," *National Observer*, December 14, 1895, 122.
59. Morley, *Gladstone*, 417n.
60. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, 69–78; Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 207.
61. W.T. Stead, "Relations of the Press and the Church," *Christian Literature and Review*, 1894.
62. Shannon, *Gladstone*, 73; 78.
63. W.T. Stead, *The MP for Russia*, vol. 1 (New York: Putnam, 1909), ix.
64. "The Progress of the World," *The Review of Reviews*, September 1893, 233–43.

65. "The Progress of the World," *The Review of Reviews*, December 1894, 534.
66. "The Progress of the World," *The Review of Reviews*, January 1895, 6–14.
67. "Character Sketch," *The Review of Reviews*, July 1901, 20–6.
68. "The Armenian Fiasco," *The Review of Reviews*, March 1896, 236.
69. For example, a biography of Swiss activist Madame Thoumaian in the *Woman's Herald* dubbed her "A Heroine from Armenia." *Woman's Herald*, August 10, 1893; "Letter to the Editor," from Lucy Thoumaian, *Woman's Signal*, June 6, 1895, 416–17.
70. Lady Henry Somerset, "A Cry from Armenia." Response to a Letter from Armenian Women of Constantinople to Lady Henry Somerset, *Shafts*, 3:9 (1895), 132.
71. Berta Buss, "Armenia: What is Best?," *Shafts*, November, 1896, 150.
72. Somerset, "Annual Address," *Woman's Signal*, June 25, 1896, 405.
73. *Woman's Signal*, April 22, 1895, 121; "Lead Editorial," August 29, 1895, 487; "Foreign Troubles," October 10, 1895, 232.
74. "Armenians at Hawarden: Mr. Gladstone and the Refugees," *Woman's Signal*, April 25, 1895, 264–5.
75. *Ibid.*
76. Michelle Tusan, *Women Making News* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 121–7.
77. Donations ranged from £100 to one shilling and totaled for one week over £240. "Lady Henry Somerset's Efforts for the Armenian Refugees," *Woman's Signal*, October 15, 1896, 246.
78. The campaign ended in March 1897. "Lady Henry Somerset's Letter of Thanks," *Woman's Signal*, March 18, 1897, 172.
79. Margaret Anderson, "A Responsibility to Protest?," 260.
80. E.J. Dillon, "The Fiasco in Armenia," *Fortnightly Review*, March 1896, 346.
81. "The Sultan and his Victims," *The Speaker*, March 14, 1896.
82. "The Massacres in Turkey," *Nineteenth Century*, October 1896, 662.
83. "The Red Book," *The Speaker*, February 22, 1896, 205.
84. "The Responsibility of the Turkish Government for the Massacres," Information (Armenia) Bureau pamphlet, LSES collection.
85. "The Armenian Massacres," *The Times*, September 25, 1896.
86. E.J. Dillon, "Armenia: An Appeal," *Contemporary Review*, January 1896, 19.
87. "The Year of Shame," *Westminster Review*, February 1898, 120.
88. *Ibid.*, 146.
89. Decypher, Sir Philip Currie, June 8, 1895. FO 78/4693.
90. Sir Philip Currie to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, June 27, 1895. FO 78/4693.
91. Edward Atkin to Sir Philip Currie, July 19, 1895. FO 78/4693.
92. "The Sultan and his Victims," *The Speaker*, March 14, 1896.
93. "The Two Eastern Questions," *Fortnightly Review*, February 1896, 193.
94. E.J. Dillon, "The Condition of Armenia," *Contemporary Review*, August 1895, 189.

95. H.F.B. Lynch, "The Armenian Question," *Contemporary Review*, February 1896, 272.
96. Quoted in Lillian M. Penson, "The Principles and Methods of Lord Salisbury's Foreign Policy," *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 5:1 (1935), 100. This policy shift demonstrated Salisbury's keen consideration of public opinion in making his decisions, 101.
97. Robert Zeidner, "Britain and the Launching of the Armenian Question," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (1976), 480.
98. *The Times*, October 8, 1896 cited in the entry for October 20, 1896, H.C.G. Matthew (ed.), *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. 13, 427.
99. "The Year of Shame," *Westminster Review*, February 1898, 126.
100. "Medical Mission among the Armenians: Occasional Paper," March 21, 1896, Friends House London.
101. The leader of the medical mission, Dr Dobrashian, to fled to England with his family. "Friends' Mission, Constantinople: Letter from A.M. Burgess at the Request of Many Friends and Supporters of the Mission," Burgess Papers, Friends House, London.
102. Edward Annett, "Fifty Years Among Armenians," 17. Burgess Papers, Friends House, London.
103. Friends of Armenia Annual Reports, 1897–1902, British Library.
104. The international character of this organization meant that these networks came to include both British and American philanthropic organizations. *Friends of Armenia*, "Constantinople News," January 1920, ns 75; "Constantinople News," October 1920, ns 78.
105. "Medical Mission among the Armenians: Occasional Paper," March 21, 1896.
106. Not everyone took this line on the Eastern Churches. High Anglicans like Gladstone joined the Quakers in believing that they could revivify the Eastern Churches while the Church Missionary Society maintained that these churches had strayed too far from their Apostolic beginnings to be saved. Matthew, *Gladstone*, 264–6 and Andrew Porter, *Religion vs. Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 217.
107. "Industrial Work, Constantinople: Letter from Ann M. Burgess," 1904. Burgess Papers, Friends House, London.
108. Burgess to Miss Peckover, Constantinople, January 23, 1921. Burgess Papers, Friends House, London.
109. Ann Mary Burgess Obituary. Burgess Papers, Friends House, London.
110. "Fifty Years Among Armenians," 24.
111. "Friends' Mission in Constantinople: Appeal for Completion of New Buildings Fund and for Additional Subscribers," 1906. Burgess Papers, Friends House, London.

Chapter 4 Revolution, Massacre and War in the Balkans

1. "The Turkish Revolution," *Fortnightly Review*, September 1908, 353–68, 356.
2. *Ibid.*, 354.
3. *Ibid.*, 353.
4. "The Young Turk," *Atbenaeum*, November 6, 1909, 554–5.
5. The most important book on the subject is Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2014).
6. W.T. Stead, "Our Death Camps in South Africa," *Review of Reviews*, January 1902, 8.
7. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); Kevin Grant, *A Civilised Savagery* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
8. "Expert Opinion," *Punch*, May 31, 1905.
9. This was a period of intense and sometimes violent activity among both Armenian and Turkish revolutionaries who wanted to see the enactment of liberal reforms to the empire. According to Ronald Grigor Suny, reform rather than separation from the empire was the goal of the *Hunchaks* and *Dashnaks* who cooperated with their Turkish counterparts in attempts to liberalize the empire. Suny, *History of Armenian Genocide*, 141–7.
10. "The Progress of the World," *Review of Reviews*, September 1900, 216–17.
11. Hensley Henson, "The Sultan's Jubilee and the Armenian Massacres," *Saturday Review*, September 15, 1900, 332.
12. "British Statesmanship," *Fortnightly Review*, October 1901, 644.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Herbert Vivian, "The Future of Balkistan," *Fortnightly Review*, June 1904, 1048.
15. "The Progress of the World," *Review of Reviews*, June 1912, 595.
16. W.L. Courtney, "Dr Dillon," *Fortnightly Review*, July 1933, 26, 28.
17. Noel Buxton, "Freedom and Servitude in the Balkans," *Westminster Review*, May 1903, 489–90.
18. İpek Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).
19. Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else", 141–4.
20. Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, 49.
21. Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else", 25–9.
22. Eyal Ginio, *The Ottoman Culture of Defeat: The Balkan War and their Aftermath* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
23. Pears, *Life of Abdul Hamid*, 293.
24. *Ibid.*, 294.
25. *Ibid.*, 326.
26. "The Coup d'etat in Turkey," *Saturday Review*, February 20, 1909, 230–1.
27. "Notes of the Week," *Saturday Review*, August 8, 1908, 161.
28. Angus Hamilton, "Turkey: The Old Regime and the New," *Fortnightly Review*, September 1908, 373, 382.
29. Mark Sykes, "Modern Turkey," *Dublin Review*, January 1909, 171.

30. "Correspondence respecting the constitutional movement in Turkey, 1908," Consul-General Lamb to Sir G. Lowther, Salonica, August 20, 1908. Parliamentary Papers [Cd. 4529] Turkey. No. 1 (1909).
31. Consul-General Eyres to Sir G. Lowther, Constantinople, August 26, 1908. [Cd. 4529]
32. Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, Therapia, September 20, 1908. [Cd. 4529]
33. Ibid.
34. Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, 1–2.
35. "Coup d'Etat in Turkey," *Saturday Review*, February 20, 1909, 230.
36. Bedross Der Matossian, "From Bloodless Revolution to Bloody Counter-revolution: The Adana Massacres of 1909," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 6:2 (Summer 2011), 152–73.
37. Adana's pre-1909 population consisted of 62,250 Muslims, 30,000 Armenians, 5,000 Greeks, 8,000 Chaldeans, 1,250 Assyrians, 500 Christian Arabs and 200 foreign subjects. Muslim migrant workers exceeded Armenians by 2:1. Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, 156–7.
38. Report on the "causes of the recent massacres" from Doughty-Wylie from Adana dated, July 24, 1909. Included in Sir G. Lowther correspondence to Sir Edward Grey Constantinople August 8, 1909. FO 424/220, 69–74.
39. Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, April 21, 1909. FO 424/219, 80–84.
40. Ibid.
41. In Britain, he was made Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George and decorated by the Turkish authorities for valour with the Order of Majidieh.
42. Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, April 21, 1909.
43. Vice Consul Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, April 24, 1909. FO 424/219, 85–7.
44. Vice Consul Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, May 2, 1909. FO 424/219, 107–8.
45. "Disturbances in Asia Minor," *The Times*, April 19, 1909, 5; Mr McKinnon Wood, HC Deb, April 21, 1909 vol. 3 c1508.
46. Catoni's report is included as an enclosure in the correspondence between Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, Therapia, June 15, 1909. FO 424/219, 195–200.
47. Doughty-Wylie's report enclosed in the correspondence between Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, Constantinople, August 8, 1909.
48. Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, Therapia, June 15, 1909. FO 424/219, 195–200.
49. Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, Constantinople, May 4, 1909. FO 424/219, 87–92.
50. Ibid.
51. Catoni report in correspondence between Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey. Therapia, June 15, 1909. FO 424/219/ 195–200.

52. "Ihsan Fikri," *The Times*, April 30, 1910, 13.
53. *The Times*, September 23, 1909, 3.
54. "Affairs in Turkey," HC Deb, April 22, 1909, vol. 3, cc 1653–1654.
55. "Massacres of Armenians in Asia Minor," HC Deb, May 18, 1909, vol. 5, c382.
56. Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey Constantinople, May 6, 1909. FO 424/219, 92–6.
57. Vice Consul Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, May 7, 1909. FO 424/219, 122–4.
58. Ibid.
59. Zabel Yessayan, *In the Ruins* (Boston: AIWA Press, 2016), xii, 231.
60. Tusan, "The Business of Relief Work," 633–62.
61. Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey Constantinople, May 6, 1909. FO 424/219, 92–6.
62. Vice Consul Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, May 2, 1909. FO 424/219, 107–8.
63. Vice Consul Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, May 3, 1909. FO 424/219, 109–10.
64. Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, Constantinople, May 6, 1909. FO 424/219, 92–6.
65. Vice Consul Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, May 2, 1909. FO 424/219, 107–8.
66. Lilian Doughty-Wylie quoted in Yessayan, *In the Ruins*, 33–5.
67. Helen Davenport Gibbons, *The Red Rugs of Tarsus* (New York: Century Co., 1917), 111–32.
68. "The Adana Hospital," *The Times*, August 12, 1911.
69. Ibid.
70. Vice Consul Doughty-Wylie to Sir G. Lowther, Adana, May 4, 1909. FO 424/219, 110–12.
71. On November 17, 1915, a woman was reported to have come to Gallipoli to lay a wreath and pay her final respects. Some believe it was his wife Lilian, while others suspect it was his long time love, the explorer and archeologist Gertrude Bell. Georgina Howell, *Gertrude Bell* (New York: Farrer, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 156–61.
72. Christopher Clark, *Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to War in 1914* (New York: Harper Collins, 2013).
73. "The Friends of Armenia," *The Times*, October 29, 1909.
74. Tusan, *Women Making News*, 176–80.
75. "Constitutionalism A La Turque," *Saturday Review*, April 24, 1909, 520–1.
76. "Obituary," *The Times*, January 21, 1924.
77. "Treatment of Subject Races," *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, June 1907, 81–2.
78. "Albania and Montenegro," HC Deb, May 8 1913, vol. 52, c2317.
79. Mark Sykes, "The Balkan Position," *Saturday Review*, November 16, 1912, 606.

80. Kevorkian, *Armenian Genocide*, 155.
81. “Albania and Montenegro,” HC Deb, May 8, 1913, vol. 52, c2319.
82. *Ibid.*, c2321.
83. *Ibid.*, c2322.
84. Quoted in Kevorkian, *Armenian Genocide*, 135.
85. *Ibid.*, 152.

Chapter 5 Genocide and the Great War

1. *Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, 9.
2. John Ellis and Michael Cox (eds), *The World War I Databook* (London: Aurum Press, 2001), 269.
3. 3 million men were conscripted into the Ottoman Army. Over 770,000 were killed. An estimated 18 per cent of the Anatolian Muslim population would also perish, along with 90 per cent of the Armenian population. Suny, “*They Can Live in the Desert*,” 208.
4. Very little work has been done to quantify exactly how many Greeks and Assyrians were massacred during the Armenian genocide. Donald Bloxham puts the number of Assyrian victims at between 20,000–30,000. Greek deportations are estimated at around 150,000. *Game of Genocide*, 98–9. Evidence of the wholesale deportation of Greek and Assyrian residents before and during the war suggests that these populations were victims of the anti-Armenian fervor due to their status as part of the Ottoman Empire’s remaining Christian minority population. For the Greek case see Ioannis K. Hassiotis, “The Armenian Genocide and the Greeks,” in Richard Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide* (New York: St. Martins, 1992), 129–51 and Thea Halo, *Not Even My Name* (New York: Picador, 2000). For the Assyrian case see David Gaunt, “The Ottoman Treatment of Assyrians,” in Suny et al., *A Question of Genocide*, 244–59.
5. A small population did survive in the historic vilayets but many found it difficult to live openly as Armenians. These crypto-Armenians became part of Turkish society and some converted to Islam. The story of how these Armenians lived in post-genocide Turkey is told in Fethiye Çetin, *My Grandmother* (New York: Verso, 2008); and in Raffi Khatchadorian, “A Century of Silence,” *New Yorker Magazine*, January 5, 2015.
6. Turkey allegedly brokered a secret treaty with Germany in August 1914 which promised protection against external threats. Nigel Steel and Peter Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli* (London: Papermac, 1995), 3.
7. Suny, “*They Can Live in the Desert*,” 220–5.
8. J. Ellis Barker, *Fortnightly Review*, December 1914.
9. World War I’s Eastern Front in general has generated less interest than the Western Front. These largely military histories do not deal with the British response to events on the Eastern Front and make little mention of events outside of major battles and military offensives. See for example: Norman

- Stone, *The Eastern Front, 1914–1917* (New York: Scribner, 1975), and Steel and Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*. A notable exception is Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).
10. W. Williams, *Fortnightly Review*, November 1915.
 11. As Paul Fussell observed in *The Great War and Modern Memory*, “Correctly or not, the current idea of ‘the Great War’ derives primarily from the images of the trenches in Belgium and France.” *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), ix.
 12. Stone, *The Eastern Front, 1914–1917*.
 13. Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, 12–13, 139, 173.
 14. Steel and Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*, 1.
 15. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, 61–8; Arman Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy and the Armenian Question* (Princeton: Gomidas, 2003), 172–87.
 16. Jo Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 1. In the words of Donald Bloxham, the genocide became a “useful propaganda tool for the Entente,” *Great Game of Genocide*, 134. See also Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 78–119.
 17. T.P. O’Conner and Harold Buxton were scheduled to accompany Williams. Williams to Bryce, November 26, 1913. Bryce Papers, MS Bryce 201, Bodleian Library.
 18. HC Debate 10 July 1914 vol. 64 cc1383–463.
 19. Records of Nubar Pasha’s meeting with British and European leaders is found in Vache Ghazarian (ed.), *Boghos Nubar’s Papers and the Armenian Question* (Waltham, MA: Mayreni Publishing, 1996).
 20. A.S. Safrastian to Bryce, October 7, 1915. Bryce Papers, MS Bryce 201, Bodleian Library.
 21. John Seaman, *A Citizen of the World: James Bryce* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006), 208.
 22. H.A.L. Fisher, *James Bryce*, vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 157–60.
 23. Seaman, *A Citizen of the World*, 80.
 24. Vartabed Astvazatourian wrote from the Armenian rectory on behalf of the Armenian Community of Manchester to congratulate him on his election to parliament in April 1880. Bryce Papers, MS 191, Bodleian Library.
 25. Bryce to “My Dear Gladstone,” December 22, 1896. Gladstone Papers, Add. MS 46019, f. 34, British Library.
 26. Seaman, *A Citizen of the World*, 203.
 27. Letter from Bryce, May 20, 1895. Bryce-White Papers, HM 71995, Huntington Library.
 28. *Ibid.*
 29. Letter from Bryce, January 8, 1896. Bryce-White Papers, HM 71996, Huntington Library.
 30. Nansen initially wrote Bryce to tell him that he had read his book and that Bryce had a following in Norway. They seemed to strike up a friendship, with Nansen sending him tickets to a lecture he was to give in London in

1898. Letter dated February 20, 1898. Bryce-White Papers, HM 71971, Huntington Library.
31. Bryce to Senator Theodore Burton, September 11, 1914. Bryce-White Papers, HM 71925, Huntington Library.
 32. Nicoletta Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons: Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship during the Great War* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 17–34; H. A.L. Fisher, *James Bryce*, 2 vols (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 2: 132–6; John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 237.
 33. This was done through a reinterpretation of the 1899 Hague Convention.
 34. Bryce to Theodore Burton, September 11, 1914. Bryce-White Papers, HM 71925, Huntington Library.
 35. J.S. Malcolm made this comparison in Fisher, *James Bryce*, 1: 293. On connections with Gladstone's Armenian campaigns see: "Anglo-Armenian Association: Letter of Appeal," January 31, 1893; "Viscount James Bryce," Obituary, *The Times*, January 31, 1922.
 36. Somerville College Bryce Memorial lecture, 1943. Gilbert Murray, *A Conversation with Bryce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944).
 37. *The Courier and Argus* (Dundee, Scotland), October 7, 1915.
 38. "Lord Bryce's Report on Turkish Atrocities in Armenia," *New York Times Magazine* (November, 1916).
 39. Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*.
 40. "Joint declaration to Sublime Porte," May 24, 1915.
 41. British consular officials starting in the nineteenth century warned of the threat posed by Russia and its attempts to win the hearts and minds of Orthodox Christians living in border towns like Erzerum. Everett Papers, MECA, St. Antony's College, Oxford. On the Russian view see Robert Nichols and Theofanis Stavrou (eds), *Russian Orthodoxy Under the Old Regime* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978); Paul Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Thomas Meininger, *Ignatiev and the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate* (Madison, 1970).
 42. Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, 653.
 43. "Manuscript on Turkish Massacres," Raphael Lemkin Collection, P-154 Box 8, Folder 14, American Jewish Historical Society, New York, NY.
 44. "Raphael Lemkin," in Paul R. Bartrop and Steven Leonard Jacobs, *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Holocaust and Genocide* (London: Routledge, 2011), 181–6.
 45. Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians*, 637, 652–3.
 46. Eric Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 1.
 47. Ronald Grigor Suny has written a study of Morgenthau and understands his role as central to shaping the discourse of genocide. Though the Ambassador reportedly was encouraged by then President Wilson to publish his findings, his report on the massacres came out only in 1919 and did not have the official status of Bryce's Blue Book. "Writing Genocide," in *A Question of Genocide*, 15–41. See also Balakian, *Burning Tigris*, 167–8, 219–24.

48. "Letter from Mr. H.A.L. Fisher," Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, xxix. See Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*; Tusan, *Smyrna's Ashes*, 123–4.
49. Joint declaration to the Sublime Porte, May 24, 1915.
50. David Bloxham has argued that, "the German role should still be seen in a comparative, interactive context with those of the other Great Powers." *Great Game of Genocide*, 115. See also Margaret Anderson, "Down in Turkey," 80–111.
51. Toynbee quoting from the *New York Tribune*, October, 1915. Arnold Toynbee, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 117.
52. *Ibid.*, 7.
53. Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians*, 25.
54. Toynbee to Bryce, July 22, 1916. Bryce Papers, MS 203, Bodleian Library.
55. Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians*, xvii.
56. Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 78–84.
57. Toynbee papers, Bodleian Library, Box on Armenia, "Memorial," September 26, 1924. Quoted in Nassibian, 81.
58. Charles Masterman to Bryce, June 14, 1916. Bryce Papers, MS 202, Bodleian Library.
59. Masterman to Bryce, June 20, 1916. FO 96/207.
60. Masterman to Bryce, June 14, 1916. FO 96/207.
61. "Lord Bryce's Report on Turkish Atrocities in Armenia," *Current History* 5:2, November 1916, 321.
62. Masterman to Sir John Simon, June 20, 1916. FO 96/207.
63. Toynbee to Bryce, June 20, 1916. FO 96/207.
64. *Ibid.*
65. Toynbee to Bryce, March 11, 1920. Bryce papers, MS 206, Bodleian Library.
66. Bryce to Nubar, May 9, 1915, in Ghazarin, *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, 23.
67. Bryce to White, August 12, 1914. Bryce-White Papers, HM 66725, Huntington Library.
68. Bryce to White, October 15, 1915. HM 66728.
69. Bryce to White, February 28, 1917. HM 66730.
70. Bryce to White, July 16, 1916. HM 66729.
71. Lord Curzon to White, August 12, 1916. HM 66743.
72. Bryce to C.P. Scott, December 17, 1916. Scott Papers, Add. MS 50909, f. 55, British Library.
73. Bryce to C.P. Scott, March 11, 1917. Scott Papers, Add. MS 50909.
74. "Visit of Boghos Nubar to Mr. Picot, with Messrs. Sykes, Mosditchian, and Malcolm" held in London on October 27, 1916, in Ghazarin, *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, 393–7.
75. Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis*, vol. 5 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), 429. Some historians still use the disloyalty argument as an explanation for the mass killings. See Rogan, *Fall of the Ottomans*, chapter 7, "The Annihilation of the Armenians," 139–58.

76. Stephen Bonsal, *Suitors and Supplicants: The Little Nations at Versailles* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1946), 194.
77. *Ibid.*, 186.
78. *Ibid.*, 198.
79. Williams to Nubar, London, October 27, 1916, in Ghazarin, *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, 261.
80. Michelle Tusan, "Crimes Against Humanity," *American History Review* 119:1 (February 2014), 50–2.
81. Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians*, 652.
82. "Lord Bryce's Report on Turkish Atrocities," *Current History Magazine*, November 1916.
83. Pamphlet in Bryce papers, MS 209, Bodleian Library.
84. A.S. Safrastian to Bryce, March 14, 1917. Bryce papers, MS 204, Bodleian Library.
85. Coakley, *The Church of the East*, 336–40.
86. Archbishop of York to Archbishop Davidson, October 1, 1915. Davidson Papers 371, Lambeth Palace Archives.
87. Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris*, 280.
88. Archbishop of Canterbury to Archbishop of York, November 24, 1915. Lambeth Palace Archives.
89. *Ibid.*
90. Arnold Toynbee, *Acquaintances* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 149.

Chapter 6 Saving "The Remnant"

1. Keith Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2014).
2. "'Armenian Settlement Report' presented by the Armenian (Lord Mayor's) Fund, being the body nominated by HM Government to deal with Armenian Settlement," London: Armenian (Lord Mayor's) Fund, 1925.
3. *Ararat*, July 1915.
4. "Armenian Relief," A. Williams, Letter to *The Times*, November 15, 1915.
5. "Lord Mayor's Fund" pamphlet (1923). Douglas Papers 61, Lambeth Palace Archives.
6. Aneurin Williams to the Archbishop, May 16, 1916. Davidson Papers 371, Lambeth Palace Archives.
7. For a history of Near East Relief see, Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones*, 91–123.
8. James Barton, *Story of Near East Relief* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 84.
9. *Ibid.*, 4–5.
10. Stephan Thernstrom (ed.), *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1980, 136.

11. "Friends of Armenia," pamphlet. n.d.
12. "Industrial Relief: Conclusions and Proposals," *Friends of Armenia*, March, 1917.
13. Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 84–5.
14. *Ibid.*, 100–3.
15. Edward Annett, "Fifty Years Among Armenians," 17.
16. "Semi-Jubilee of Miss A.M. Burgess," *The Orient*, January 28, 1914.
17. Hetty M. Rowe to Algerina Peckover, July 24, 1916. Burgess Papers, Friends House, London.
18. Burgess to Mr Hurnard, March 9, 1916. Burgess Papers, Friends House, London.
19. CMS *Gleaner*, "Ann Mary Burgess," May 1922, 98.
20. Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 74.
21. *Ibid.*, 82.
22. *Ibid.*, 83–4.
23. Burgess to Algerina Peckover, April 20, 1922. Burgess Papers, Friends House, London.
24. Burgess to Peckover, December 8, 1922. Burgess Papers, Friends House, London.
25. Members included James Bryce, Lady Henry Somerset, Lady Frederick Cavendish, MPs Noel Buxton, Aneurin Williams, and journalist Edwin Pears. Armenian Red Cross Annual Reports, British Library.
26. "Appeal for Funds," Armenian Red Cross Pamphlet.
27. First Annual Report, February 14, 1916. British Library.
28. Most of the money came from subscriptions and donations which equaled £4,739. First Annual Report, 1916, British Library.
29. Events the first year that collected money for the fund included: E.T.A. Wigram, "The Cradle of Mankind"; Miss Amelia Bernard lectured at St Matthew's Parish Hall, Brook Green; Drawing room meeting held at Bolton hosted by the Reynolds; Mr N.I. Tiratsoo addressed School House Kineton on "Armenia Past and Present" and published a companion pamphlet.
30. Armenian Red Cross Annual Reports, British Library.
31. Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 41.
32. Imperial War Museum online collection, Armenia/2.
33. Gullace, 'The Blood of Our Sons', 17–34.
34. The fate of some of these girls has started to come to light recently in memoirs written by survivors and their children. See Çetin, *My Grandmother* and Halo, *Not Even my Name*.
35. Keith Watenpaugh, "The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920–1927," *American Historical Review* 115:5 (December 2010), 1315–39.
36. Robinson to Douglas, June 3, 1923. Douglas Papers 61, Lambeth Palace Archives.
37. Manoug Somakian, *Empires in Conflict: Armenia and the Great Powers, 1895–1920* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1995), 77–82.
38. Armenian Red Cross, 4th Annual report, adopted January 23, 1919. British Library.

39. Somakian, 82.
40. Churchill, *World Crisis*, vol. 5, 429.
41. *Ibid.*, 364. Born in Constantinople in 1851, French-educated Boghos Nubar spent much of his life in Egypt. His work as head of the Armenian National delegation put him into regular contact with European leaders during the war making him, according to his biographer, “politically the most centripetal Armenian figure during the years 1913 through 1918.” Vatche Ghazarian (ed.), trans., *Boghos Nubar's Papers*, xviii.
42. Undated Armenian Red Cross Pamphlet. Davidson Papers 371, Lambeth Palace Archives.
43. Armenia/2, Imperial War Museum Archive.
44. J.A.R. Marriott, *Fortnightly Review*, June 1916, 943.
45. LMF Pamphlet [n.d.]. Bryce Papers, MS 210, Bodleian Library.
46. Armenian-run organization in Britain included the Armenian Ladies' Guild of London. It was organized on November 2, 1914 and made clothes to send to volunteers and refugees through Robinson's contacts in Russia. Asking for help from all British dominions, the organization raised about £1,192 in 1915. The Armenian Refugees' Relief Fund was run by prominent Armenians living in London and collected money from “Armenian colonies in the Far East” that was then given to the *Catbolicos* (the head of the Armenian church). It had raised £7,249 by the Fall of 1915. *Ararat Magazine*, July–September 1915.
47. Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 253.
48. Lord Mayor's Fund, flyer, March 1919; the figure cited was 800,000.
49. LMF Appeal, March 25, 1919. Bryce Papers, MS 210, Bodleian Library.
50. Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 107.
51. Watenpugh claims that after the war, NER switched its focus from ameliorating “a discrete humanitarian emergency . . . to a long term program for solving humanitarian problems.” *Bread from Stones*, 94.
52. A large number of these refugees arrived before the signing of the treaty from Smyrna and its surrounding areas. Skran, *Refugees in Interwar Europe*, 44–6. Elisabeth Kontogiori, *Population Exchange in Greek Macedonia* (Oxford 2006), 6.
53. John Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 337. The Chatham House study was a survey which resulted from a tour of the region in fall of 1937 and was funded by Rockefeller foundation.
54. Maud Mandel, *In the Aftermath of Genocide* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 20.
55. Bruce Clark, *Twice a Stranger* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 151–7.
56. On the history of Save the Children see: Clare Mulley, *The Woman Who Saved the Children: A Biography of Eglantyne Jebb* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009); Kathleen Freeman, *If Any Man Build: The History of the Save the Children Fund* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965); Edward Fuller, *The Rights of the Child*; Dorothy

- F. Buxton, *The White Flame: the Story of the Save the Children Fund* (London: Longmans, 1931).
57. This cooperation was widely acknowledged at the time. As the final intertitle read in the film, *Salvage Austria*, “Save the Children Fund has spent over a quarter of a million pounds in saving Austrian and Hungarian children. A large portion of that has been administered by the Society of Friends.” British Film Institute Archive.
 58. LMF Appeal, March 25, 1919. Bryce papers.
 59. Barton, *Story of Near East Relief*, 109.
 60. *Ibid.*, 110–11.
 61. *Ibid.*, 95.
 62. *Ibid.*, 412.
 63. “Near East Conference,” Hansard Deb, March 30, 1922, vol. 49 cc985–1009.
 64. “Eastern Committee Minutes,” December 9, 1918. British Library.
 65. *Ibid.*
 66. “Lausanne and its Lessons,” 324.
 67. Clark, *Twice a Stranger*, 11–12. According to Skran, “Refugee movements in inter-war Europe dwarfed all previous ones,” *Refugees in Interwar Europe*, 14.
 68. “Armenia” as a territory after the war had a precarious existence. Modern Armenia began as the Soviet Armenian Republic in December 1920. It was taken over by Russian forces and became part of the USSR in December 1922. Widespread starvation and inadequate resources made it a difficult place to support settlement despite efforts by the League to make it a permanent home for the Armenians. Richard Hovanissian, *The Republic of Armenia: Between Crescent and Sickle*, vol. 4 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
 69. Harold Nicolson, *Curzon: The Last Phase* (London: Constable, 1934), 315.
 70. Clark, *Twice a Stranger*, xii.
 71. A small Christian minority population was allowed to remain in Constantinople after Lausanne. For a history of this community see Talin Suciyan, *The Armenians In Modern Turkey* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2016).
 72. Curzon’s response to Williams letter on Armenia, December 6, 1921. FO 286/879.
 73. Lancelot Oliphant to Australian and Canadian Consulates, January 8, 1923. FO 286/879.
 74. Correspondence with New Zealand Consulate, January 9, 1923; April 10, 1923. FO 286/879.
 75. Correspondence with Canadian Consulate, December 20, 1922. FO 286/879.
 76. Charles Gore, “The Living Remnant,” Aleppo, March 29, 1925. Marshall Fox Papers, Friends House, London.
 77. Typescript to Douglas from Buxton on LMF stationary on June 30, 1924. Douglas Papers 61, Lambeth Palace Archive.
 78. *Ibid.*, Jan 1926. They estimated rescue costs of £8 per girl.
 79. *English Review Advertiser*, December 1928, 626.
 80. Michelle Tusan, “Genocide, Famine and Refugees on Film: Humanitarianism and the Great War,” *Past and Present* (forthcoming).

81. Ninth Report of the Emergency and War Victims' Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, April 1922. British Library.
82. Fuller, *Right of the Child*, 95.
83. Emphasis in original. Emily Robinson to John P. Fletcher, November 8, 1926. Friends Armenia Committee, ARM/P/3. Friends House, London.
84. BAC Armenia file, Augusta to Harris, December 28, 1929, RHL.
85. Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 248.
86. The Refugee camp in Bakuba was discussed as part of the Iraq settlement immediately after the war. T161/50, National Archives.
87. He was the grandson of the Earl of Iddesleigh who, though a loyal political Conservative, had close ties with W.E. Gladstone.
88. Northcote to mother, December 3, 1918. Northcote Papers, Add. MS 57559, British Library.
89. Northcote reported speaking Armenian "quite well" by July 5, 1919 in a letter home. Refugee statistics come from Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, 49.
90. Letter dated July 18, 1919. Northcote Papers, Add. MS 57559, British Library.
91. Robert Hewsen, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001), 242. On the history of modern Armenia see: Richard Hovannisian, *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, vol. II (Palgrave, 2004) and Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 246–56.
92. Letters from September 23 and 24, 1921. Northcote Papers, Add. MS 57559, British Library.
93. Nassibian, 248–9.
94. Northcote was still employed by LMF in March of 1926 but expressed his wish to "come home." Funding given by Save the Children discussed in letter from February 3, 1922. Northcote Papers, Add. MS 57559, British Library.
95. Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, 344.
96. Curzon to Williams, December 6, 1921. FO 286/879.
97. Charles Gore, "The Value of the Living Remnant," unpublished manuscript written in Aleppo, March 29, 1925. Friends Armenian Committee papers, Friends House, London.
98. Quakers had been involved in the Near East since the 1860s where they started a medical mission and later engaged in industrial work and philanthropic activities. Tusan, "The Business of Relief Work," 633–62.
99. John Ormerod Greenwood, *Quaker Encounters*, vol. 1 (York, England: William Sessions, 1975), 194–5.
100. Armenia Committee Minutes, August 25, 1925. Friends House, London.
101. Fox to Lucy Backhouse, February 18, 1927. Friends Armenia Committee, ARM/P/4, Friends House, London.
102. Marshall Fox, "Descriptive Account of the First steps towards the housing of homeless Armenians in Lebanon and Syria, 1926–1934." Armenia Committee, MS vol. 216/1, Friends House, London.

103. Ibid.
104. William Jessop, “Armenian Refugee Situation in Syria,” marked “Confidential and Not for Publication.” Friends Armenia Committee, November 5, 1931.
105. Armenia Committee Minutes, February 5, 1930. Friends House, London.
106. Lilie Chouliaraki, *The Ironic Spectator* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).

Chapter 7 “Crimes Against Humanity”

1. Stefan Ihrig, *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2014), 108–46.
2. Confidential letter to Pollock from J.H. Morgan (War Office), October 29, 1918. Bodleian Special Collections, Oxford, Hanworth Papers [hereafter HP]; War Cabinet meeting minutes, October 31, 1918.
3. The most comprehensive study of the war crimes trials is Vahakn Dadrian and Taner Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials* (New York: Berghahn, 2011). See also Kevorkian, *Armenian Genocide*, 699–798; Dadrian, “The Turkish Military Tribunals’ Prosecution of the Authors of the Armenian Genocide: Four Major Court-Martial Series,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 11:1 (1997), 28–59.
4. October 22, 1918. CAB 23/14/37.
5. Tusan, “Crimes Against Humanity,” *American Historical Review*, 47–77.
6. The civil war effectively ended Russia’s ability to maintain its claim that it was the rightful protector of Ottoman Christians over Britain. This, alongside the sensation caused by the Blue Book, allowed Britain to strengthen its already strong claims to protect Ottoman minorities. Though little has been written about the impact of the civil war on Ottoman Christians, the story of the war itself is chronicled in David Foglesong, *America’s Secret War against Bolshevism: U.S. Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1917–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).
7. Lewis Einstein, *Contemporary Review* 111 (1917), 494.
8. T.P. O’Connor quoting Curzon in a House of Commons debate on “Armenians,” March 28, 1923, vol. 162, cc630–43.
9. Brock Millman, *Pessimism and British War Policy* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 208, 230.
10. According to Lloyd George, “Young men from every quarter of this country flocked to the standard of international right as to a great crusade.” David Lloyd George, “Winning the War,” *The Great Crusade: Extracts from Speeches Delivered During the War* (New York: George H. Doran, 1918), 23.
11. Ibid., 34.
12. This number is documented in John Ellis and Michael Cox, *World War I Databook* (London: Aurum Press, 2001), 246. Little has been written about the troops who served in the Mediterranean during and after the war. Eugen Rogan shows that the British campaigns in the Middle East in particular relied heavily on Indian troops during the war and breaks down the numbers as

- follows: Gallipoli (9,400); Persian Gulf (50,000); Egypt (116,000) and Mesopotamia (590,000). *Fall of the Ottomans*, 73.
13. "The War and the Empire," *Great Crusade*, 136.
 14. "The War Aims of the Allies," *Great Crusade*, 263.
 15. Lloyd George's response to the Ottoman delegation, July 16, 1920, quoted in Kevorkian, *Armenian Genocide*, 769.
 16. David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace* (New York: Henry Holt, 2001), 404.
 17. A comparison between the war crimes trials held at Leipzig and Constantinople is found in Gary Bass, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance*, 58–105.
 18. For contemporary accounts of Leipzig see: Claud Mullins, *The Leipzig Trials* (London: H.F. & G. Witherby, 1921); "German War Trials: Report of Proceedings before the Supreme Court in Leipzig," (London: H.M.S.O., 1921).
 19. Paul Halpern, *A Naval History of World War I* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 401; Paul Halpern (ed.), *The Mediterranean Fleet, 1919–1929* (London: Ashgate, 2011), 4.
 20. M.P.A. Hankey Diary entry, October 29, 1918. Hankey served as the Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defense from 1912–38, and the British Secretary to the Paris Peace Conference, recording his personal observations of the Conference in his diary. Hankey Papers, 1/6. Churchill College Archives, Cambridge University.
 21. J.C. Hurewitz (ed.), *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record*, 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 2, 128–30.
 22. "Turks Talk of Reform: Punishment for Armenian Massacres," *The Times*, November 30, 1918.
 23. "More Armenian Massacres," *The Times*, January 4, 1919.
 24. Dadrian, "Turkish Military Tribunals' Prosecution," 28–59.
 25. Vartkes Yeghiayan (ed.), *British Foreign Office Dossiers on Turkish War Criminals* (La Verne, CA: American Armenian International College, 1991), vii–xxvi.
 26. Admiral Calthorpe, Constantinople, January 7, 1919. FO 371/4173.
 27. Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 538.
 28. As quoted in Vahakn Dadrian and Taner Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul*, 58.
 29. *Ibid.*, 40–1.
 30. *Ibid.*, 127.
 31. *Ibid.*, 66.
 32. *Ibid.*, 126.
 33. *Ibid.*, 104.
 34. Stefan Ihrig, *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination*, 7.
 35. Paul G. Halpern, "Calthorpe," *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 563–5.
 36. See Churchill's correspondence regarding Calthorpe: May 6, 1913, CHAR 13/22A-B; March 5, 1915, CHAR 13/62/14; March 6, 1915, CHAR 13/62/16. Churchill Archives.

37. "Sir Somerset Gough-Calthorpe," *The Times*, July 28, 1937, 16.
38. "The Turkish Armistice," *The Times*, May 16, 1930, 19.
39. The sister flagships stationed in the Mediterranean were the *Lord Nelson* and the *Agamemnon*. The latter was recorded as the site of the historic signing. Sir Frederick Maurice, *The Armistices of 1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943), 85–7. A diary entry from a sailor present at the negotiations published in *The Times* and a separate *Times* article, both cited above, claim that those aboard the *Lord Nelson* also had a role to play.
40. "The Turkish Armistice," *The Times*, May 16, 1930, 19. See Erik Zürcher, *Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2014), 189–91 for a detailed account of the signing of the Armistice.
41. "Minutes," October 31, 1918, War Cabinet 494A. CAB/23/14.
42. "Minutes," November 4, 1918, War Cabinet 496. CAB/23/8.
43. "Eastern Report," November 14, 1918, no. XCIV. CAB/24/145.
44. Ahmet Tevfik Pasha served as grand vizier four times between 1918–22. Zürcher, *Turkey*, 404.
45. "Eastern Report," November 28, 1918, no. XCVI. CAB/24/145.
46. "Eastern Report," December 5, 1918, no. XCVII. CAB/24/145.
47. "Eastern Report," January 23, 1919, no. CIV. CAB/24/145.
48. "Minutes," October 31, 1918, War Cabinet.
49. "Minutes," January 15, 1919, War Cabinet 494A. CAB/23/9.
50. "Eastern Report," January 30, 1919, no. CV. CAB/24/145.
51. He was made Pasha in 1888 and served as Grand Vizier five times. He became unpopular because of his cooperation with the British and anti-nationalist leanings. Zürcher, *Turkey*, 391.
52. "Eastern Report," January 30, 1919, no. CV. CAB/24/145.
53. Pollock to A.J. Balfour, February 8, 1919. HP, MS. Eng. Hist. c. 943.
54. Tusan, "Crimes Against Humanity," 47.
55. February 3, 1919 committee session discussed in Kevorkian, *Armenian Genocide*, 763–5.
56. Pollock to Lloyd George, February 7, 1919. HP, MS. Eng. Hist. c. 943.
57. "Remarks on Projet D'Organisation Des Tribunaux." HP, MS. Eng. Hist. c. 943.
58. Pollock to A.J. Balfour, February 8, 1919. HP, MS. Eng. Hist. c. 943.
59. These dossiers are held in the National Archives. Some are published in Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*.
60. Pollock to Balfour, February 26, 1919. HP, MS. Eng. Hist. c. 943.
61. Lloyd George quoted in Kevorkian. Lloyd George reportedly announced in front of his fellow Allied leaders Woodrow Wilson, David Lloyd George, Georges Clemenceau and Vittorio Orlando that this case was a good testing ground for the League but that it was not yet able to carry out this mission. Kevorkian, *Armenian Genocide*, 766.
62. As Ambassador Louis Mallet directly linked these crimes after the armistice: "It will be necessary to provide for the punishment of any Turks

who can be proved to have been responsible for the perpetration of instigation of (1) Armenian massacres (2) outrages committed on any other subject races, Greeks, Nestorian Christians, etc. (3) ill-treatment of prisoners.” Louis Mallet to Sir R. Graham, “Necessity of punishing Turks responsible for Armenian Massacres and other outrages,” January 17, 1919. FO 371/4172.

63. Bass, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance*, 106–7; Akçam, *Shameful Act*, 368–72.
64. Plans to enquire into German war crimes against British subjects were underway by late October 1918 when the British Attorney General set up a committee authorized by the War Cabinet to investigate, October 29, 1918, Staff Captain (J.H. Morgan) to Sir E. Pollock. HP, MS. Eng. Hist. c. 943; Kevorkian, *Armenian Genocide*, 764.
65. Telegram from Sir E. Crowe (Urgent) December 20, 1919. Later this question would be extended to include German atrocities against Poles. HP, MS. Eng. Hist. c. 943.
66. Damat Ferit quoted in Kevorkian, *Armenian Genocide*, 770.
67. German war criminals were tried at Leipzig based on prosecution lists and evidence gathered by Allies. Mullins, *Leipzig Trials*, 35–50.
68. Admiral Calthorpe, “Report,” Constantinople, January 28, 1919. FO 371/4172.
69. “Treatment of British Prisoners of war and Armenians,” Letter from British High Commissioner, January 7, 1919. FO 371/4172.
70. Calthorpe, “Report,” Constantinople, January 24, 1919. FO 371/4172.
71. *Ibid.*, January 28, 1919. FO 371/4172.
72. “Treatment of British Prisoners of war and Armenians,” Letter from British High Commissioner, January 7, 1919. FO 371/4172.
73. “Eastern Report,” February 6, 1919, no. CVI. CAB/24/145.
74. “Eastern Report,” February 13, 1919, no. CVII. CAB/24/145.
75. “Eastern Report,” March 13, 1919, no. CXI. CAB/24/145.
76. As quoted in Akçam and Dadrian, *Judgment at Istanbul*, 69.
77. “Eastern Report,” March 27, 1919, no. CXL. CAB/24/145.
78. “Eastern Report,” April 9, 1919, no. CXV. CAB/24/145.
79. “Eastern Report,” April 16, 1919, no. CXVI. CAB/24/145.
80. On the verdict and reaction see, Dadrian and Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul*, 177–8, 195.
81. “Eastern Report,” April 16, 1919, no. CXVI. CAB/24/145.
82. “Eastern Report,” April 24, 1919, no. CXVII. CAB/24/145.
83. “Eastern Report,” May 22, 1919, no. CXXI. CAB/24/145.
84. Calthorpe understood the importance of this event and worried about its damaging effects on Anglo-Turkish relations. J.G. Wilson Heathcote to Baron Kinross, Kinross Papers, KIN 6072, Huntington Library. See also Vahakn Dadrian, “A Textual Analysis of the Key Indictment of the Turkish Military Tribunal Investigating the Armenian Genocide,” *Armenian Review* 44:1 (1991), 3.

85. At the end of May, Calthorpe began prosecuting Greek soldiers for atrocities against Turkish civilians that included court marshals and penal servitude. He believed that the Greek landing started a vicious cycle of reprisals between Christians and Muslims. "Turkey Report," CAB 24/145 no. 122.
86. "Situation Report," H.V. Whittall, Lieut., Document received May 17, 1919. FO 608/79.
87. "Eastern Report," May 22, 1919, no. CXXI. CAB/24/145.
88. "Eastern Report," May 29, 1919, no. CXXII. CAB/24/145.
89. "Eastern Report," June 12, 1919, no. CXXIV. CAB/24/145.
90. "Eastern Report," June 19, 1919, no. CXXV. CAB/24/145.
91. Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace*, 428, 536–7. France no longer wanted to support its force of 80,000 occupation troops and negotiated peace with the nationalist government at Angora in Fall 1921.
92. "Eastern Report," June 5, 1919, no. CXXIII. CAB/24/145; "Eastern Report," July 3, 1919, no. CXXVII. CAB/24/145.
93. "Eastern Report," July 31, 1919, no. CXXXI. CAB/24/145.
94. De Robeck quoted in Gary Bass, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance*, 145.
95. As quoted in Dadrian and Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul*, 80.
96. *Ibid.*, 195.
97. "The Massacre of Armenians," *The Times*, February 28, 1920.
98. "C.U.P. Maneuvers," *The Times*, July 21, 1919; "Young Turks Again In Power," *The Times*, October 13, 1919; "Grand Vizier Ousted," *The Times*, October 9, 1919; "The Massacre of Armenians," *The Times*, February 28, 1920; "Grand Vizier's Troubles," *The Times*, August 9, 1920; "Damid Ferid Pasha," *The Times*, October 8, 1923.
99. "Eastern Report," No. CXXIX, July 17, 1919. CAB 24/145.
100. Bass, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance*, 144–5. See also Eric Bogosian, *Operation Nemesis* (New York: Little Brown, 2015).
101. Erik Zürcher considers the debates over genocide denial by nationalists after the war in *Young Turk Legacy*, 202–4.

Chapter 8 Winston Churchill's *Realpolitik*

1. Warren Dockter, *Churchill and the Islamic World* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2015).
2. Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis*, vol. 5, vii.
3. Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front*; and Nigel Steel and Peter Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*.
4. John S. Churchill (HMS Queen Elizabeth) to WSC, April 27, 1915, Churchill College Archives, Cambridge, Churchill Papers [hereafter CP], CHAR 1/392/30–47.
5. "Notes on the Armenian Question," December 28, 1928. CP, CHAR 8/258.
6. J. Ellis Barker, *Fortnightly Review*, December 1914.
7. Telegram from Vice-Admiral John De Robeck, Dardanelles, to Admiralty, on preparations for minesweeping operation, CP, CHAR 13/65/114, March 21,

- 1915; Telegram from Vice-Admiral John De Robeck, Dardanelles to WSC, CP, CHAR 13/65/143, April 3, 1915.
8. Churchill, *World Crisis*, vol. 6, 317–18.
 9. Churchill to Lord Kitchener, May 21, 1915. CP, CHAR 2/65/58.
 10. As cited in Martin Thornton, “Winston Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty,” www.churchillarchive.com, accessed March 23, 2016.
 11. Paul Halpern, “Sir John Michael de Robeck,” DNB, 79.
 12. Churchill, *World Crisis*, vol. 5, 430.
 13. Admiral Calthorpe, January 7, 1919. FO 371/4173.
 14. Telegram from Calthorpe, dated January 6, 1919, Constantinople. FO 371/4173.
 15. Churchill, *World Crisis*, vol. 5, 431–2.
 16. Eastern Report, October 11, 1917, no. XXXVII.
 17. Dockter, *Churchill and the Islamic World*, 49–50, 60.
 18. “Mr. Gladstone,” *The Times*, September 25, 1896.
 19. “Conflicting Aims in the Near East,” de Robeck to Commander of Grand Fleet, [n.d.]. De Robeck Papers, Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge.
 20. Conference Conclusions, held January 5, 1920 at Downing Street. CAB 23/37.
 21. *Ibid.*
 22. *Ibid.*
 23. Curzon, “The Peace with Turkey: Appendix,” January 7, 1920. CAB 23/37.
 24. Tusan, “Crimes Against Humanity,” 69–76.
 25. Lawrence, “Peaceable Kingdom,” 574. The brutality of British imperial rule against Muslims during this period is further explored by Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia*.
 26. HO 45/10955/312971/103.
 27. Letter from Sadrud Din, January 1, 1920. HO 45/10955/312971/100.
 28. HO 45/10955/312971/105.
 29. HO 45/10955/312971. Mr Petersen and Major McDonald attended a private screening of the film on behalf of the Foreign Office.
 30. Response to Secretary of State’s inquiry regarding Mr Amir Ali’s objections to *Auction of Souls*, January 24, 1920. HO 45/10955/312971/98.
 31. Letter sent on behalf of Lord Curzon, January 5, 1920. HO 45/10955/312971/92.
 32. Proofs of Chapter 17, “Turkey Alive” in “The World Crisis.” Churchill to Lloyd George (copy), CP, CHAR 8/243.
 33. Draft Chapters from “The Aftermath,” vol. 4 of “The World Crisis,” 50, 55. CP, CHAR 8/258.
 34. Telegram from Richard Webb [assistant High Commissioner to Turkey]. February 26, 1919. CP, CHAR 16/5.
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. *Ibid.*
 37. Sir Henry Wilson, [Chief of Imperial Staff] to WSC, April 21, 1920. CP, CHAR 16/46.

38. Details of meeting with Williams conveyed to WSC, February 2, 1920. CP, CHAR 16/44.
39. Fromkin, *Peace to End all Peace*, 404. By February 1920, plans were underway to further reduce forces in the Middle East to “30,000 white” and “110,000 native” troops which would cut expenditures in the region from £40 million to £20 million. Estimates Committee Minutes, February 6, 1920. CP, CHAR 16/44.
40. Churchill, *World Crisis*, vol. 5, 442.
41. Secret telegram from Sir H. Rumbold, Constantinople, September 19, 1922. CP, CHAR 8/258.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Aubrey Herbert to Churchill, May 12, 1920. CP, CHAR 16/47A.
44. R.H. Campbell to Sir A. Sinclair, June 11, 1920. CP, CHAR 16/47A.
45. Handwritten note at the bottom of prisoner report, MI2b, May 21, 1920. CP, CHAR 16/47A.
46. HC Deb, March 7, 1922 vol. 151cc.1118, 1125.
47. Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*.
48. Churchill, *The World Crisis*, vol. 5, 153–4; 158.
49. A list of the names and affiliations of the men reprinted in Yeghiayan, *British Foreign Office Dossiers*, 460.
50. FO 371/6504.
51. *Ibid.*
52. “Turks’ British Captives: Exchange for War Criminals,” *The Times*, October 5, 1921; “Turkish War Criminals: Double Negotiations,” *The Times*, October 17, 1921.
53. “Turkish War Criminals,” *The Times*, Letters to the Editor, Muriel Bromley Davenport, October 19, 1921.
54. “Turkish War Criminals,” *The Times*, October 6, 1921.
55. “Staff Minute Sheet,” September, 1919. De Robeck Papers, Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge.
56. These experiences are recounted in documents found in FO 371/6505.
57. Emphasis in original. A. Rawlinson, *Adventures in the Near East* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1923), 312.
58. *Ibid.*, 342. Emphasis in original.
59. “Report by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Alfred Rawlinson of the ill treatment suffered by himself and the men under his command whilst prisoners of the Turks,” November 11, 1921. CP, CHAR 2/117/4-33.
60. Rawlinson, *Adventures in the Near East*, 342.
61. *Ibid.*, 338.
62. Letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Alfred Rawlinson to WSC, Nov 1, 1921. CP, CHAR 2/117/3.
63. J.H. Godfrey, *The Naval Memoirs of Admiral J.H. Godfrey*, vol. 2 (manuscript). Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College Cambridge.
64. “Conflicting Aims in the Near East,” de Robeck to Commander of Grand Fleet. De Robeck Papers, Churchill Archives, Cambridge.

65. Gary Bass traces Wilson's admiration for Gladstone back to his teenage years understanding him as almost a father figure to Wilson, *Freedom's Battle*, 315.
66. Published statement of the Near and Middle East Association held in the Philby Papers, MECA, St. Antony's College, Oxford.
67. Shorthand Notes of a Meeting of the Eastern Committee, December 2, 1918. "The Caucasus and Armenia," 4–7. MSS Euro F 112/274, British Library.
68. *Ibid.*, 9–13.
69. France signed the Angora Accord with Turkish nationalists in 1921. Fromkin, *Peace to End all Peace*, 536–7.
70. Churchill, *World Crisis*, vol. 5, 432–3.
71. "Draft of acceptance speech," CP, CHUR 2/317.
72. "Mr. Churchill Honoured," *The Times*, February 4, 1949.

Conclusion Forgetting Genocide

1. Quoted by Stefan Iring in *Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 347–8. Sources for the quote come from: Louis P. Lochner, *What About Germany?* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1943), 12; see also, "Document L-3," in Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, ed., *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, vol. 7 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 753.
2. Gary Bass, "Nuremberg," *Stay the Hand of Vengeance*, 147–205.
3. Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007).
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