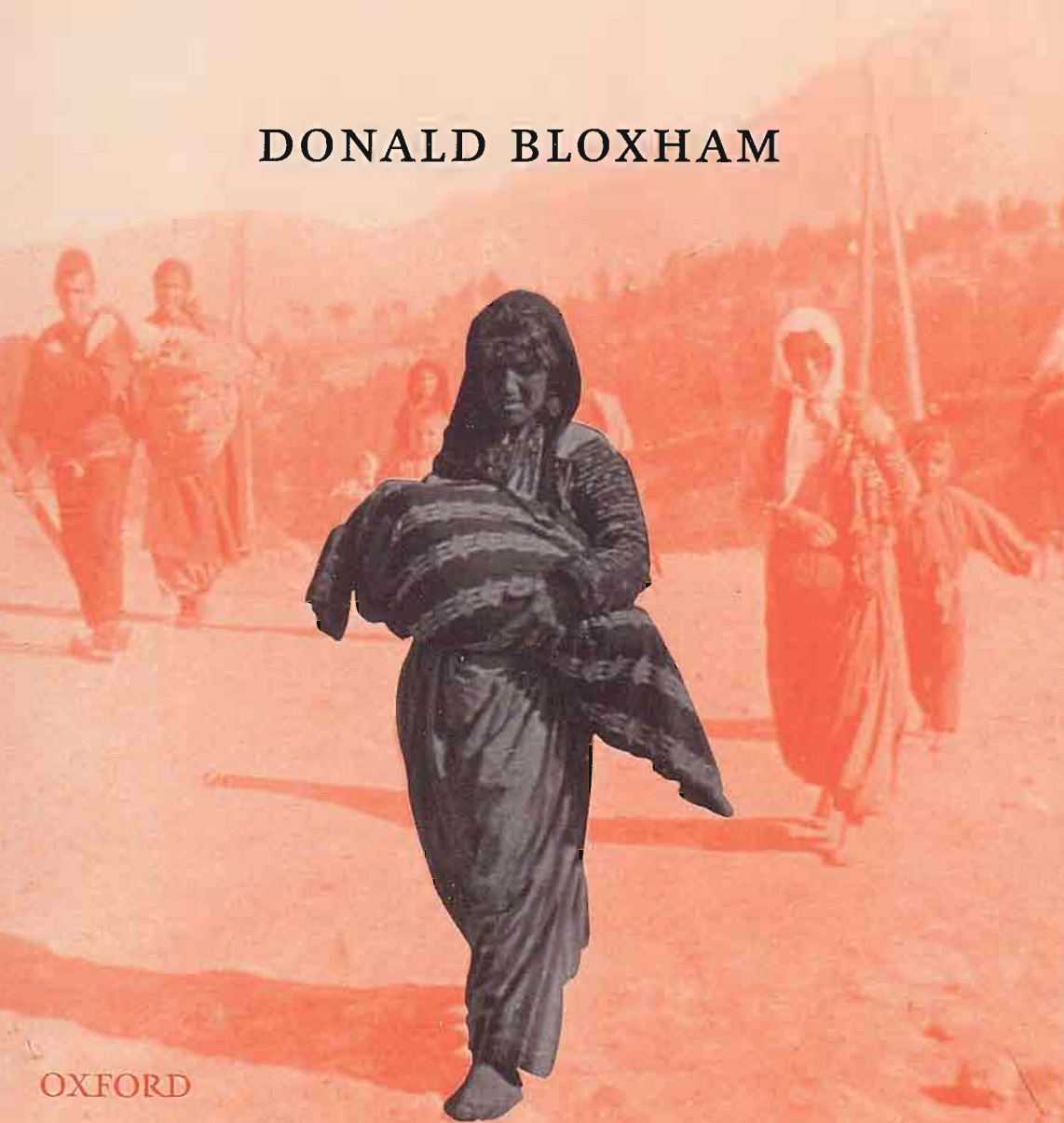


# THE GREAT GAME OF GENOCIDE

*Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians*

DONALD BLOXHAM



OXFORD

## THE GREAT GAME OF GENOCIDE

*The Great Game of Genocide* discards the polemics that for nearly a century have clouded our understanding of the terrible fate that befell the Armenian community in the early twentieth century. It also rejects the views of many influential histories that have anchored their explanations in the belief that there is a neat chain of cause and effect.

Instead, it shows the need to appreciate the interactions of the period and their complex outcomes—between the Ottoman empire in its decades of terminal decline, the self-interested policies of the European imperial powers, and the agenda of some Armenian nationalists in and beyond Ottoman territory. The international context of the process of ethnic polarization that culminated in the massive destruction of 1912–23, and especially the obliteration of the Armenian community in 1915–16, deserves and receives particular attention.

The genocide continues to be denied in certain quarters around the world. *The Great Game* reveals how such denials stem from the historical 'Armenian question' itself, with many of the considerations governing the modern European-American-Turkish stances on the issue little different to those that existed before the First World War.

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IMPERIALISM, NATIONALISM, AND  
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Donald Bloxham

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**For Berjoohi Day, née Tilbian, where she will accept it**

## PREFACE

The central historical event of this book is the destruction of some one million Armenian Christians under the auspices of the Ottoman government in 1915–16. The accompanying analysis seeks to cast new light on that event and on the ways it has been reshaped in the political and historical consciousness of the world ever since. The book's title, derived from the popular name for the nineteenth-century Russo-British race for hegemony in central Asia, alludes to the importance throughout of inter-imperial struggle and the changing geopolitics of the Near East.

The project from which the book evolved originally intended to focus upon Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide, and Western acceptance of that denial. But it soon became clear that denial and its accommodation could not be properly understood without knowledge of how the outside world related to the deeds of the Ottoman empire during and immediately after the First World War itself. I then realized that, in turn, it was impossible properly to explain this pattern of interaction without reference to the vital earlier interaction between the Ottoman state and the 'Great Powers' in the 'Armenian question' up to and during the genocide. Indeed, as I argue hereafter, that interaction was one of the main causes of the genocide in the long and short terms. These three channels of enquiry are intimately connected, and in reverse order constitute the three sections of *The Great Game of Genocide*.

My contentions are based on synthesis and re-evaluation of scholarly studies, and on research among the diplomatic archives of Germany, Austria, France, Britain, and the USA, and published Ottoman and Russian primary sources. The research and much of the writing were completed during a Special Research Fellowship funded by the Leverhulme Trust and held at the University of Southampton from 2000 to 2002. The manuscript was completed during a period of leave from the University of Edinburgh, an institution that I joined at the beginning of the academic year 2002–3, and a period of matching leave provided by the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB). I would like to express my profound thanks to both funding bodies and both universities for their different forms of support, without which the project would have been much longer in materializing if it did so at all.

My intellectual and personal debts are of course manifold, but before recounting them I will reverse the traditional order of things in a list of acknowledgements and begin with the regulation caveat rather than the names of those concerned. The Armenian genocide is a controversial topic, and it is inevitable that my theses will offend some readers. Indeed, few of the

people who have directly and indirectly shaped this book will agree precisely with my interpretations, and some may be upset by them. It is thus more than usually important to state at the outset that not only are the analyses presented here my own, so too are their flaws, and the naming of individuals below in no way indicates their consent to my arguments.

I have benefited from discussions on early twentieth-century history with Paul Bailey and Jill Stephenson. David Brown provided many insights on the Eastern question; more importantly, we have maintained the strong friendship that we began as impoverished doctoral students. Tony Kushner was a source of common sense. Akaby Nassibian gave early encouragement when the project was in genesis. Fikret Adanir, Ronald Suny, Richard Hovannisian, and, particularly, Hans-Lukas Kieser have advised me in various ways. Aram Arkun, Rouben Adalian, Hilmar Kaiser, Fuat Dündar, and Taner Akçam have generously responded to my questions. Hew Strachan helped secure the AHRB leave by kindly agreeing to act as a referee for the project. Ruth Parr and Anne Gelling at Oxford University Press have once more been models of friendly efficiency and enthusiasm. Colin Richmond again agreed to the arduous task of reading a Bloxham typescript; Cordelia Beattie was introduced to the same experience. Finally, I should record my heavy intellectual borrowing in this project—a debt which will be obvious to anyone who has read his ground-breaking works on genocide—to Mark Levene.

On a personal level, I want to thank, in addition to many of the above, Nick Kingwell, Simon Payling, Tom Lawson, David Laven, Seamus Spark, Jim McMillan, James Nott, Martin Rourke, Paul Nugent, Julius Ruiz, Jeremy Crang, Paul Addison, Tom Brown, Frank Cogliano, Nick Phillipson, Harry Dickinson, Harry Hagopian, Hagop Bessos, Nareg Bedrossian, and the late, much-missed Tim Reuter. My parents and my brother are, as ever, owed my deepest gratitude, my partner Lucia my love. Roupen Nahabedian has become a good friend since our first meeting five years ago, while Larry Day, another with personal connections to the Armenian genocide, has encouraged me to write what I felt I should write rather than parroting received wisdom—a true mark of friendship given his background. It is to Larry's mother that this book is dedicated: Berjoohi is a Cypriot Armenian whose grandparents were murdered in 1915; she taught me the meaning of a passion for history.

D.B.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Portions of this book have appeared in different forms as the following publications: 'The Armenian Genocide of 1915–16: Cumulative Radicalisation and the Development of a Destruction Policy', *Past and Present*, 181/1 (Nov. 2003), 141–91; 'Three Imperialisms and a Turkish Nationalism: International Stresses, Imperial Disintegration and the Armenian Genocide', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 36/4 (2002), 37–58; 'A Reassessment of the German Role in the Armenian Genocide of WWI', in Hans-Lukas Kieser and Dominik Schaller (eds.), *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah* (Zurich: Chronos, 2002), 213–44.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAPA	Auswärtiges Amt-Politisches Archiv, Bonn (Political Archives of the German Foreign Office)
ADNA	Archives of the Délégation Nationale Arménienne, Bibliothèque Nubar, Paris
AND	Armenian National Delegation (under Boghos Nubar)
AR	<i>Armenian Review</i>
ARF	Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnakzutiun)
BNP	<i>Boghos Nubar's Papers and the Armenian Question 1915–1918</i> , ed. Vatche Ghazarian (Waltham, Mass.: Mayreni, 1996)
CUP	Ittihad ve Terraki Cemiyeti (Committee of Union and Progress)
DA	<i>Revidierte Ausgabe der von Johannes Lepsius unter dem Titel Deutschland und Armenien 1914–1918 herausgegebenen Sammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke</i> , Version 2.10, ed. Wolfgang Gust (1999); <a href="http://home.t-online.de/home/wolfgang.gust">http://home.t-online.de/home/wolfgang.gust</a>
DBFP	<i>Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939</i> , ed. W. N. Medlicott and Douglas Dakin (London: HMSO, 1968–86)
<i>Documents</i>	<i>Documents on Ottoman Armenians</i> , 3 vols., ed. Prime Ministry Directorate General of Press and Information (Ankara: Prime Ministry, Directorate General of Press and Information, 1982–6; first vol. simply entitled <i>Documents</i> )
ÉM	Records of the État-Major de l'armée de Terre, Service historique de l'armée de Terre, Vincennes, Paris
FO	Foreign Office records, Public Records Office, Kew, London
FRUS	<i>Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States</i> (Washington, DC: USGPO)
<i>Grandes Puissances</i>	<i>Les Grandes Puissances, l'empire ottoman et les arméniens dans les archives françaises (1914–1918)</i> , ed. Arthur Beylerian (Paris: Panthéon Sorbonne, 1983)
<i>Große Politik</i>	<i>Die große Politik der europäischen Kabinette 1871–1914: Sammlung der diplomatischen Akten des auswärtigen Amtes</i> , 40 vols., ed. Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht

Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and Friedrich Thimme  
(Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und  
Geschichte, 1922–7)

HHSA

Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna

IJMES

*International Journal of Middle East Studies*

NARA

US National Archives and Records Administration,  
College Park, Md.

NEA

Near Eastern Affairs Division of the US State  
Department

*Osmanlı Belgeler*

*Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915–1920)* [*Armenians  
in Ottoman Documents (1915–1920)*], ed. Prime  
Ministry, General Directorate of the State Archives of  
the Turkish Republic (Ankara: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti,  
Başbakanlık Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1995)

PRO

Public Records Office

RG

Record Group (of NARA)

*Zdl*

*Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des  
Imperialismus: Dokumente aus den Archiven der  
zarischen und der provisorischen Regierung*, ed.  
M. Pokrovski (Berlin: Deutsche Gesellschaft zum  
Studium Osteuropas, 1931–6)

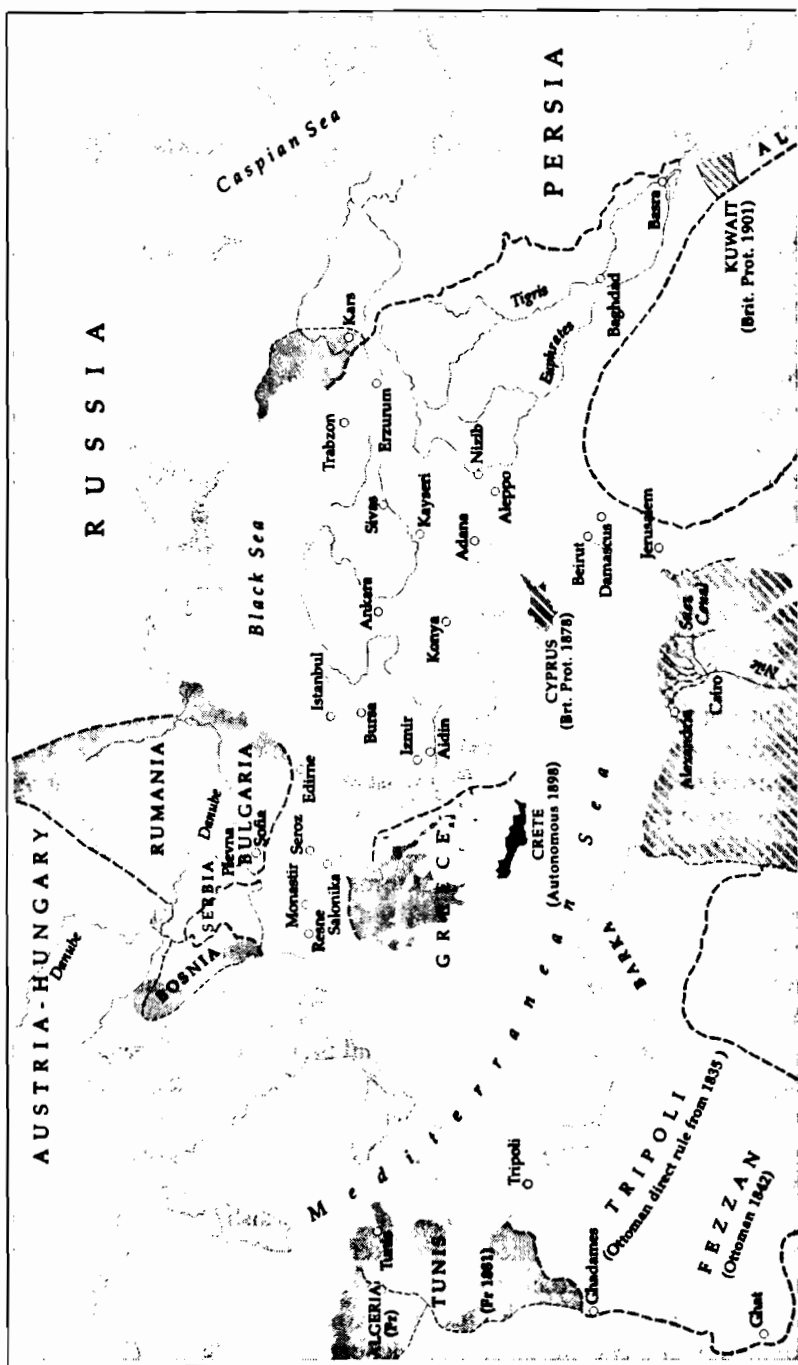
## Introduction: Genocide and the Armenian Case

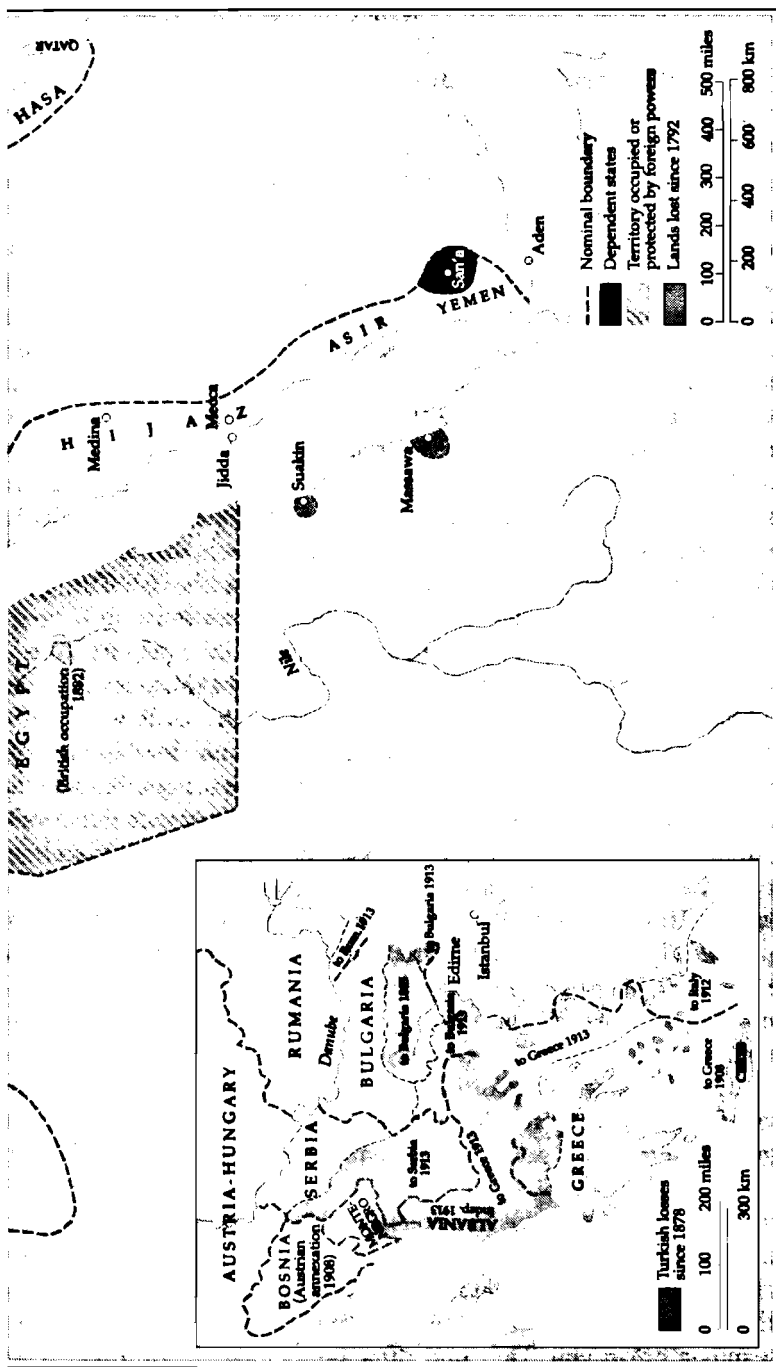
During the months from autumn 1914 to summer 1915 the Ottoman government made a series of decisions resulting in the decimation of its Armenian Christian population. The pre-war Armenian community had been scattered throughout the empire. The majority belonged to the Armenian Apostolic church, though there were also Catholic and Protestant minorities. There were particular Armenian concentrations, though not demographic majorities except at the local level, in the historic Armenian settlements.<sup>1</sup> These were Cilicia, to the north and north-west of the Gulf of Alexandretta on the Mediterranean coast, where Armenians had lived since the early Middle Ages, and the eastern provinces of Anatolia, the wider region bordered by the Mediterranean, Cilicia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea, where Armenian settlement dates back 3,000 years (see Map 2). Together, Anatolia and Cilicia constitute most of the territory of modern Turkey.

During the First World War the Armenians of eastern Anatolia were either killed *in situ*, which was the fate of many of the men and male youths, or deported to the deserts of modern-day Iraq or Syria in the south. Along these deportation routes they were subject to massive and repeated depredations—rape, kidnap, mutilation, outright killing, and death from exposure, starvation, and thirst—at the hands of Ottoman Gendarmes, Turkish and Kurdish irregulars, and local tribespeople. The Ottoman army was also involved in massacres. The kidnapped and other surviving women, and many orphans, were then subject to enforced conversions to Islam as a means of assimilation into the ‘new Turkey’.

The deported Armenians of Cilicia and parts of western Anatolia were not subject to the same level of harassment on their journeys southward; they passed relatively unmolested to their desert fates or to exile from their homelands. Thus, though varying to an extent according to local conditions, these death marches served the same overall purpose—the destruction of significant collective Armenian existence on Turkish soil. Many of those who made it to the desert concentration centres were massacred in a series of attacks in 1916. Together, these events comprise the Armenian genocide. Approximately one million Ottoman Armenians died, half of the pre-war population and two-thirds of those deported.<sup>2</sup>

Introduction





Map 1: The Ottoman empire in 1908 and the Balkan peninsula in 1913

The primary perpetrators of the genocide were the leaders and central committee of the 'Committee of Union and Progress' (İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti; CUP), the ruling faction in the Ottoman government. The CUP was formed out of the heterogeneous opposition groups collectively known as the Young Turks that developed in the late nineteenth century. It was instrumental in subordinating the last significant sultan, Abdülhamid II, in a coup of 1908.

The nationalism of the CUP became more pronounced and exclusive during the death throes of the Ottoman empire in Europe in the Balkan wars of 1912–13, against the backdrop of a longer erosion of Ottoman territories, particularly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In justification of its deportation policy, the CUP pointed to Armenian nationalist agitation, contending that it aimed to tear apart by secession what remained of the empire. Given the history of Russian sponsorship of Balkan Christian independence or autonomy movements, and at a time of existential crisis for the empire during a war with its 'hereditary' Muscovite enemy, the CUP also suspected Russian–Armenian military collaboration in the Caucasus–Persian–Ottoman border regions. Thus, according to the CUP's professed logic, the Armenian deportations were a 'military necessity'.

Yet while undoubtedly precipitated by the war, the deportations and massacres served the purpose of solving by violence what European diplomats had dubbed 'the Armenian question'. They enabled the CUP to secure Anatolia as an ethnically 'purified' core area for the national development of the Turkish people. Moreover, the events of 1915 cannot be seen in the isolation of the war years. The political agitation for reform or autonomy in the Armenian community from the 1870s had itself been exacerbated by large-scale massacres that had occurred across the empire in 1894–6 and in Cilicia in 1909, and was also influenced by the many everyday oppressions and discriminations that had intensified in the second half of the nineteenth century. While there is no straight line connecting the massacres of the 1890s with the genocide of 1915, for the guiding ideologies of the perpetrators were different, and the earlier killings were not conducted under the same sort of close centralized authority as their later counterparts, both occurred in the key context of the empire's terminal decline. Moreover the very fact of the 1894–6 killings was a precedent, shaping the mindset of state and victims alike.

Nor did the travails of the Armenians end with the winding down of the genocide in 1916. In 1918, after the Bolshevik revolution had removed Russia from the world war, regrouped Ottoman forces pressed into Transcaucasia to fulfil the expansionist ambitions the government had had when it entered the European conflict in 1914. They now came into contact with former refugees from eastern Anatolia as well as the inhabitants of what had formerly been



Russian Armenia, and was since May 1918 an independent republic centred on the capital Erivan. More massacres of Armenians ensued in the war between the two states, and it is probable that atrocities were also committed by the Armenians, as they certainly had been by Armenian bands in eastern Anatolia in 1917. Furthermore, intercommunal clashes and mutual 'ethnic cleansing' occurred between Armenians and Azerbaijanis from May 1918 as both polities sought to establish their borders and consolidate themselves internally.

The Ottoman defeat in October 1918 brought a temporary respite until a resurgent nationalist movement under Mustafa Kemal ('Atatürk') took advantage of Allied disunity to re-establish Turkish control of Anatolia and relaunch the assault on the Armenian state in 1920. Swiftly overrunning the ill-prepared Armenian army, Turkey imposed a draconian peace on the republic, reducing its territory to the barren, land-locked lands possessed by the state today. At the turn of 1920–1, Bolshevik pressure and penetration resulted in the incorporation of Armenia into the Soviet empire for the duration of its existence. At the same time, Turkish nationalist forces were driving the French occupying force out of Cilicia, and were only too happy to see tens of thousands of Armenians depart with them—many of these were refugees from the wartime genocide who had only returned to the area under the false security of the French presence. Over the succeeding years, the nationalists then set about 'encouraging' the few remaining Armenians in the Anatolian interior to leave, while the last major Armenian presence, in Istanbul, was subject to increasing economic and political discrimination.

My contribution to the study of the events of 1915–16 and beyond, and their causes and legacies, is not intended as a restatement of their occurrence, though anyone who knows of the destruction of the Armenians also knows that it is still formally denied by the CUP's successor regimes in the Republic of Turkey. My first purpose is to provide a new interpretation of the development of the genocide and, to that end, to critique the existing explanations.<sup>3</sup> As for the world outside the Ottoman empire, I seek to chart the relationship between external intervention in state–minority relations from the mid-nineteenth century, through response to the genocide itself and the post-war division of the Near East, to the latter-day acceptance of the denial agenda of the modern Republic of Turkey. Most important, I try to show that these stories are not distinct: great power involvement in Ottoman internal affairs was a key element in exacerbating the Ottoman–Armenian dynamic towards genocide while Turkish sensitivity about external intervention on behalf of the Armenians—whether directed towards reforms before 1914 or independence after 1918—was a vital contributory factor to the emergence of denial.

These aims will be explained in greater detail towards the end of this Introduction, but beforehand it is important to place the project into a set

of wider contexts intended to justify my selective highlighting of a problem—genocide—that affected tens of millions in the twentieth century alone. I shall try to explain my focus on the Armenian genocide by examining firstly the way that genocide in general, and the Armenian case in particular, have impinged on the modern consciousness, and secondly by making a case for the intrinsic historical significance of the events of 1915–16.

### **The Politics of Identification and Indifference**

Superficially, one of the striking facts about the Armenian genocide is that it is so little known. A growing circle of scholars and a larger number of Armenian community activists have carried the memorial flame, and periodically brought wider public attention to the matter, as, for instance, in the repeated but as yet unsuccessful attempts to get congressional recognition for the crime in the USA. With the advent of Britain's first Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2001 the Armenian genocide also raised its head a fraction there, though paradoxically because of protest against its exclusion from official notice. France, with its comparatively large Armenian population, has been more forthright in its official pronouncements on the crime (see Ch. 6). Nevertheless, the Armenian genocide has yet to enter the collective consciousness of most non-Armenians.

Why, though, do I describe the absence of awareness about what has been called the first modern genocide as surprising only on the surface? First, because few genocides are well known. The obvious exception is the Holocaust, yet it is only in the past two decades that that has impinged more than superficially on the consciousness of the non-Jew or the non-specialist. Moreover, the complex of slaughter that went on alongside the 'final solution of the Jewish question'—the killing of Slavs, Romanies, and the mentally and physically disabled—is not the subject of a proportionate interest.

Convention dictates that we identify the ongoing Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide as the chief reason for its low profile. I would contend that this is only part of the answer, not least because the factor of denial has actually attracted a certain interest that might not otherwise have been present, particularly in leftist and liberal circles. Besides, in terms of the weight of literature, the Armenian genocide is, beyond the Holocaust, one of the most discussed cases in history. Given that, we must look to explanations of a much more general nature as to the exclusion of this and other genocides from 'collective consciousness' in the non-Armenian world, and particularly in the hegemonic West, whose politicians dictate international norms and whose historians inscribe historical memory.

The twentieth century showed itself to be both a century of genocide and a century of forgetting genocide, or more accurately of ignoring genocide. History and politics are inextricably intertwined. The Holocaust has assumed prominence for many reasons, including its sheer scale, the extent and intent of the killing. But another part of the explanation is that it was perpetrated in Europe by Europeans against Europeans. It is clear also that a prominent American Jewish community and the agendas of the state of Israel play some contributory role in a way that cannot be replicated amongst, for instance, survivors of the Nazis' Romany victims, or the peoples of the Bangladesh Chittagong hill tracts, another subject of state-sponsored decimation.<sup>4</sup> In narrow, elite terms, history has recorded the politics of the past and, in circular fashion, the political priorities of the present influence what parts of the past history is to examine. Since genocide is generally perpetrated by the strong against the weak, it is in most cases susceptible to being written out of 'History' by the proverbial victors.

Of the many other instances of outright genocide or state-sponsored mass murder in the twentieth century alone, the Rwandan case has at least a nominal resonance, shaped by its chronological proximity.<sup>5</sup> Awareness of 'ethnic cleansing' in the territory of the former Yugoslavia has been a beneficiary of technological advance, deployed within the framework of a recent, if deeply compromised, emphasis on 'humanitarian intervention' in foreign policy. Nevertheless, genocides with little geographical or chronological proximity are particularly susceptible to marginalization in the 'West', as they can be dressed up as acts by and against distant 'others' whose fates can tell us little of our own condition. There is a chasm, for instance, between the effect of occasional newspaper articles or campaign press releases in Berlin on the Armenian genocide and the form of historical awareness of that genocide engendered in, say, Lebanon, with its large Armenian minority and its particular historical relations with the Ottoman empire, or again in the Armenian quarter of Jerusalem, with its graffiti enjoining the passer-by to 'remember the Armenian genocide'.

### **The Politics of Identification and the Armenian Case**

Conceptual borders are related to geographical boundaries, but the relationship is not precise or consistent. The 'idea' of Europe has varied along with opinions of where its borders with 'Asia' lie. Here we encounter the conceptual relationship between the West and the Armenian question. Despite an Armenian presence in European football tournaments, it is unlikely that the British 'man in the street' today would consider the people of the Transcaucasian Republic of Armenia to be European, though his French equivalent

might be less categorical. In geopolitical terms, the fashionable regional depiction of Armenia's identity today might well be as part of the Near Eastern economic bloc. The central power of that grouping is Turkey, itself a country that has remained, contrary to its wishes, outside 'Europe'. The chief reasons for Turkey's failure to gain admission to the European Union are the wholly legitimate ones of its human rights record and its authoritarian, militaristic tendencies, but there remains the suspicion that Turkey is viewed from the 'community's' power centres as somehow not 'of' Europe. The 'Near East', the 'hither East', or just 'the East' have long sufficed in the 'West' to label this 'otherness'. 'The Orient', as Edward Said famously argued, 'has helped to define Europe... as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience'.<sup>6</sup>

Yet Europe's relationship with Turkey, as with its former Armenian population, has often been more ambiguous than contrasting. The Ottoman empire had been an integral element in European affairs since the fourteenth century. Not only was it of great size and hereditary power, it also possessed extensive European territories. Indeed, before the period 1875-1913, when the empire was all but pushed out of Europe, much of its centre of gravity was in the south of the Balkan peninsula, in Thrace, parts of Bulgaria, and Macedonia—the region known as Rumeli.

Armenians also held the attention of a large number of their European and American contemporaries, with travellers and missionaries providing the first links. Much of the attention devoted to Ottoman Christians from the nineteenth century was related to their tribulations and periodic massacres. 'Suffering Christianity' was often juxtaposed with the 'terrible Turk', and no more so than during the First World War. Some Western observers also depicted Christians as an industrious, modernizing force, as contrasted with the stereotype of the indolent, backward Muslim. Equally, it was possible to stigmatize Armenians by reference to the very qualities that made them stand out. As one pastor of the American Reformed Church put it in 1922, 'in the East we meet types of Christianity that are very far removed from normal standards, both in faith and conduct'. These shortcomings were apparently illustrated in sharp business practice. 'The people of the East', he wrote, estimated their neighbours as follows: 'two Jews are equal to one Greek, and two Greeks are equal to one Armenian. This means that in commercial shrewdness one Armenian is equal to four Jews. Such people are generally unpopular everywhere.'<sup>7</sup>

In some ways the comparison between Armenians and Jews is well founded; not in the pejorative sense, but in the sense of an ethno-religious minority that, owing to traditional religious restrictions on its socio-economic role, developed particular vocational specialisms and a proportional over-representation in commercial and financial functions that contributed to the emergence of powerful stereotypes. As the German Ambassador in

Istanbul commented in 1913, earlier Armenian massacres had been seen by some in Germany as a 'natural reaction to the parasitic system of the Armenian business class. The Armenians are known as the Jews of the Orient.' However, he noted, it was forgotten that the Armenians in Anatolia comprised a strong peasant community.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the peasantry constituted some 70–80 per cent of the Armenian population, and of the urban remainder, many were living hand-to-mouth existences as small artisans or labourers. Jews and Armenians have frequently been categorized together as 'middleman minorities', vulnerable because of their social visibility and the great disparity between the economic power of some and the political power of the whole. The comparison should not be overplayed, because there were important differences between Christian anti-Semitism and Muslim anti-Christianism. It suffices here to draw attention to the fact that while both groups might be thought to have had some claim to 'westernness'—the Armenians on account of their religion, the Jews of their location, and both of their 'modernism'—both were given up by Europe.

The very ambiguity of the relationship of 'the West' to Turkey and Armenia has shaped international responses to the destruction of the Armenians, just as it shaped perceptions of the people. This ambiguity explains the emergence of the specific phenomena of denial and its acceptance, as opposed to their more common relatives, ignorance and indifference. The Ottoman Armenian population 'mattered' at some shared cultural level in the West; therefore its destruction did not go uncriticized or unremembered in the way that the crimes of many states have. Frequently before, during, and after 1915 Turkish leaders responded to external criticism with comparisons with the record of European colonialism and slavery, but to no avail.<sup>9</sup> Consequently a more proactive method of displacement—official denial—had to be deployed by the Turkish state that emerged from the ashes of the First World War lest it inherit the moral stigma of its predecessor and even have to compensate its former victims in land and money under international pressure. But because the 'new Turkey' reasserted itself under Kemal, it inherited the solicitousness enjoyed by the Ottomans of the powers with the greatest interests in the region. Denial has thus been accepted externally because Turkey simply mattered more in a material sense than Armenia or the Armenians.

Owing to this unique alignment of circumstances the phenomenon of Armenian genocide denial has become a litmus test of morality in Western foreign policy. If a crime that had considerable resonance in Europe and the USA at the time of its commission could be forcibly submerged, the prospects for recognition of and response to other crimes past and present with less geographical or cultural association are obviously dim. And because denial in the Armenian case is explicit, its roots, contexts, language, and reception can all be analysed, making it also a particularly clear illustration of the way

collective memory is manipulated by power relations. This paradigmatic significance is one of the reasons I have singled out the Armenian genocide for analysis from the legion of others which might have been selected.

Other aspects of the book have wider ramifications too. In the interests of context and comparison the book will incorporate reference to the fate of Ottoman 'Assyrians',<sup>10</sup> Greeks, and Kurds during and after the First World War, and other groups in and beyond the empire as well, including Muslims from the Balkans and the Russian-controlled Caucasus. Indeed, Albanian, Bosnian, and Georgian Muslims, Kurds, 'Gypsies',<sup>11</sup> and some Arab and Jewish groups<sup>12</sup> were also moved around the empire in and around the war period for purposes of assimilation and, in some cases, punishment, though none were so comprehensively dislocated as the Armenians, and none subject to the near-total murder that decimated Armenian numbers. Thus even within this broader history of dislocation and suffering there are compelling intellectual reasons for examining the Armenian case in its specificity.

The Armenian genocide was probably somewhat more systematic than the CUP's attack on the Assyrians. Collectively, Armenian suffering was more intense, and the state intent more explicitly murderous, than was to be the case in either the post-war purge of 'ethnic Greeks' from Anatolia and the reciprocal purge of Muslims from Greek territory, or the prolonged Kemalist assault on the Kurds. Though these episodes are testament to the gathering strength of ethnic nationalism in the region, in the Greek case, inter-migration was the ultimate end; in the Kurdish, assimilation, if Turkish policies frequently shaded into mass slaughter, as during the mid-1920s and late 1930s. Within the wider history of inter-group massacre and forced displacement in the chain from central Asia through the Caucasus, Anatolia, the Balkans, and eastern and central Europe from the mid-nineteenth century during the crisis and collapse of the Ottoman, Qing, Romanov, and Habsburg empires, the Armenian genocide constitutes an unusually complete instance of communal obliteration.<sup>13</sup> This is something that the later, even greater extremity of the Holocaust has tended to obscure.

The Armenian genocide was consummated amidst that bigger bloodbath, the cataclysm of the Great War. When juxtaposed with the death-tolls of the trenches, the Armenian fate shows itself to be significant in terms of both absolute and relative numbers. The military dead of the war totalled approximately nine million men. Not counting the Armenian soldiers who died in combat in Ottoman ranks, the Armenian people lost between eight hundred thousand—a figure accepted in 1919 by Kemal himself<sup>14</sup>—and one and a half million of their number, with a more precise probable range lying between one million and twelve hundred thousand (albeit that tens of thousands more died at the hands of Turks and others in the more complicated circumstances of 1917–23<sup>15</sup>). A figure of one million is greater than the entire losses inflicted

on the British empire. It includes women, children, and the elderly as well as young men, and must be subtracted from a worldwide Armenian population of about four million, not the far more numerous inhabitants of the chief European combatants.

Proportionately, the two million-strong Ottoman Armenian population suffered more during the war than any other population, more even than Serbs in the Austro-Hungarian empire, more than Caucasian Muslims, and more than oft-forgotten ethnic groups elsewhere, such as the Muslim Kyrgyz of central Asia, who fell victim in large numbers in 1916 to a Tsarist collective libel of disloyalty bearing similarities to CUP 'rationales' for the events of 1915. The tortured relationship of the Armenian genocide to the world beyond the Ottoman empire goes much further than a shared experience of slaughter, however, and here we arrive at the precise subject matter of this book and the angle from which it is approached.

### **The Armenian Genocide in the International Context**

In the scholarship on the Holocaust, one theme addresses the reactions of the free world to the events in Nazi Europe, asking whether more could have been done to help the Jews, and if so, why more was not done. The focus is on straightforward Anglo-American responses to a situation they had done nothing to agitate.<sup>16</sup> After the war Germany admitted responsibility for the 'final solution' and had its archives combed, thus making commemoration of the Holocaust relatively straightforward. If during 1939–45, therefore, the 'bystander' situation was one of pure reactivity, and there were comprehensive differences between the determinants of wartime and post-war confrontation with the Holocaust, neither fact applies to the Armenian case. In that case, though the main international players have changed over time, there is a definable relationship between the actions of the great powers on one hand and on the other both the genesis of the genocide and the difficulties of modern acknowledgement of the same.

The relationship of the European powers to inter-communal strife in the Ottoman empire did not commence with the first dispatch received in London, Paris, or Berlin in 1915 about massacres in the Ottoman provinces. One beginning can be vaguely traced back to 1569, the year in which France was granted the concessions of the 'capitulations'. These were subsequently gifted to other European powers and made permanent. Though originally granted willingly by Ottoman rulers as a way of bestowing favour and consolidating alliances, the capitulatory system of legal and economic privileges for citizens of the Christian powers and their Christian clients living in the Islamic state would become a thorn in the Ottoman side, a prime symbol

of external interference, compromising Ottoman sovereignty and helping to drive a wedge between Muslims and Christians.

Alternatively, we might look to 1774.<sup>17</sup> In that year, the Sublime Porte concluded the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca with Russia, giving it effective control of the north of the Black Sea and the right of passage from that sea to the Aegean through the vital waterway known as the Dardanelles straits. Russia also acquired the right to build an Orthodox church in Istanbul and protect its congregation, an achievement that formed the dubious basis for future Russian claims to intervene in the name of all Orthodox Ottoman subjects, including millions of Balkan Christians.<sup>18</sup>

These developments suggest that religious and ethno-religious affinity were manipulated to promote and sustain great power interests in the Ottoman empire. What precisely those interests were—profit, prestige, territorial expansionism, dismemberment of the Ottoman territories, maintenance of the Ottoman empire, containment of other states' regional ambitions—varied between powers and over time, and up to the definitive Lausanne treaty of 1923 their interplay constituted the 'Eastern question'. The policies of the world powers influenced relations between the Ottoman state and its minorities just as they influenced, say, Ottoman finances or the form of the Ottoman armed forces. In fact, just as European imperialism was a total system, including economic, political, ideological, and cultural weapons in its arsenal, so too the impact of the powers on the Ottoman polity in each sphere was related.

The nineteenth century, particularly from the Russo-Turkish war of 1827–8, saw the intensification of all of these external forces. Ottoman reformers borrowed European models of reform, often under pressure from Europeans, only to find that Ottoman strength relative to the Christian powers was still declining, external influence in Ottoman internal affairs was increasing, and territories were being lost at an accelerated rate. It is the sheer extent of great power influence in the empire from the mid-nineteenth century that enables us to go beyond truisms about an increasingly interdependent world at the time and talk meaningfully of the 'international factor' as a key determinant of Ottoman development and policy, as was true of the semi-colonial experience of late imperial China. For instance, for most of the nineteenth century it was British policy to support the Ottoman empire against Russian advances. This entirely extrinsic factor, along with Austro-Hungarian fear of a large Slav state emerging from the ruins of the Ottoman empire in Europe, and, from the 1890s, the German interest in the Near East, was the most important element in the preservation of the empire in rump form until the First World War. So loud were European voices at Istanbul that, even as Britain's influence was on the wane at the end of the century, Prime Minister Salisbury could speculate in all seriousness during the Armenian massacres of 1896 that the



powers' ambassadors 'should be instructed that a change of Sultan was probably a desirable expedient'.<sup>19</sup>

The explosion of the First World War involved an Ottoman attempt to throw off all of its shackles, and by 1923 Turkey had succeeded in many areas. It was also in a position to renegotiate its international relationships, and, despite having lost huge tracts of territory as a result of the war, it inherited the strategic Ottoman position on the Russian and Persian borders and around the straits. Almost immediately upon the establishment of the Bolshevik regime in Russia, Turkey was being seen in some British quarters as a potential bulwark against its northern neighbour, in a way that bears comparison with early cold war views of Germany from 1945. With the onset of the cold war proper, from 1947, Turkey's strategic importance was further enhanced. An inherited enmity between Turkey and Russia was opportune for the Western bloc, but the partial, pragmatic rapprochement which had occurred between Turkey and the Soviet regime from 1919 meant that Turkey had continually to be fêted as well as prodded by the Western powers.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain, Turkey has retained a key regional role as an agent of stability in a politically unstable area. As a conservative but modernizing, non-expansionist, and officially secular nation state, though far from the ethnically homogeneous entity it claims to be, it offers something of a model for the development from 'backwardness' to the state organization most favoured in the Western-led international system. Accordingly, the mainstays of that system conveniently ignore the sensitive subject of the Armenian genocide just as they ignore the ongoing plight of Turkey's Kurds. This is the context of great power realpolitik, which is vital to the whole issue, particularly in the second and third parts of the book, which examine external responses to the deportation and murder process, and the way that the historical record of massive human suffering has been used and abused up to the present for economic and political advantage in the Near East. But 'high politics' is not the only mode of analysis, nor study of the relationship between cause and intended effect in the policies of the powers and the Ottomans. This is especially the case in the first section, where I aim for something more multifaceted than a study of power relations with the Ottoman empire over the Armenian question.

Manoug Somakian asserts that 'the key factors which propelled the Armenian Question to the fore' were 'the inability of the Ottoman Empire to modernise itself, the example of the success of the Balkan independence movements, and the conflicting and shifting interests of the Great Powers in their dealings with the Ottoman Empire'.<sup>20</sup> In fact it is impossible to dissociate these three elements; the first and second were inherently linked to the third. The relative Ottoman sloth in modernization only mattered because competitor regimes had modernized or were in the process of modernizing, while the Balkan

independence movements enjoyed success largely because of the sponsorship of the adjacent powers, particularly Russia. The first section of the book, then, is a story of international interconnectedness in the most complete sense, a situation where internal Ottoman policies, both successful and failed, addressed problems thrown up by Ottoman development, which was in turn, in large part, influenced by external political, military, economic, and cultural encroachments.

The pressure to reform to survive irreversibly changed the constitutional fabric of the Ottoman empire. The Ottoman rulers sought to prevent Christian secessionism by trying to tie the loyalties of their Christian subjects to the fortunes of the state. Reform programmes upset many Muslims with their rhetoric of inter-religious equality, while failing to safeguard significant changes for groups such as the Armenian rural population of Anatolia, or to protect them from the Muslim backlash against their 'inappropriate' aspirational behaviour. Meanwhile, Armenians and others were encouraged by spasmodic European pressure on the Porte to believe that they had reliable defenders to which to appeal in their plight: they did not. Christian separatism and great power sequestration of Ottoman lands also meant that the ethnic composition of the empire was markedly changing, and along with it the political orientation of the Ottoman elite. Many aspects of this immensely complex, society-wide process did not primarily concern Ottoman-Armenian relations *per se* until the final quarter of the nineteenth century, and were as much as anything else a function of the changing nature of Ottomania from early modern empire to centralizing, modernizing state and, finally, to nation state, a shift that concluded in 1923 at Lausanne.

The most sophisticated studies of the genocide have formed a broad consensus stressing the significance of these changes in the constitution of the empire in its declining decades.<sup>21</sup> Ottoman demography was fundamentally altered by the secession of primarily Christian minorities in the Balkans and the influx of Muslim refugees from the Balkans and Tsarist rule in the Caucasus. The first great reconfiguration of Ottoman population policy away from the prevailing recent if compromised model of greater inter-religious inclusiveness and towards a more exclusive focus on the (Sunni) Muslim majority came under Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909). This was the climate in which the 1894–6 massacres were perpetrated. Subsequently, the CUP led a drive towards the hegemonic European state model of ethnic-national homogeneity, preparing the ground for Kemal's secular republic. An intrinsic part of this drive was the mass expropriation of Christians in order to transfer capital to Muslims for the creation of a Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie as an engine of Turkish nationalism and economic independence. During the crisis period of the First World War, these extant tendencies towards exclusion and chauvinism were expressed in the fullest and most unrestrained form, through murder.

One of the many pieces of evidence supporting interpretations of the origins of genocide in changing state structure and ideology is the comparative stability of Ottoman–Armenian relations before the second half of the nineteenth century. Armenians, as non-Muslim monotheists (dhimmis) like other Christian groups and Jews, occupied a position in the Islamic theocracy that, if definitively subordinated and even despised, was still legally assured. Communal life, as orchestrated through the confessional order known as the millet system, was therefore stable, if at the individual level, particularly for Armenian peasants in eastern Anatolia; sundry exploitations and oppressions were part of everyday life.<sup>22</sup>

There is much truth to the observation that prior to the onset of modernity as manifested in the famous Tanzimat reform programme of the mid-nineteenth century, Ottoman toleration of non-Muslims compared favourably with the record of many European states towards their religious minorities. This system of stability through institutionalized prejudice worked on condition that the dhimmis continued to accept the hierarchical status quo and that the state continued to enforce it. The reform question and the rise of nationalism proved fatal to it, for both affected the aspirations of the minorities and the attitudes of the Muslim elite and majority. Nevertheless, even up to the 1890s large-scale, government-approved massacre of dhimmis was generally reserved—as in the Greek wars of independence in the 1820s, in Syria and Lebanon in 1860, and Crete in 1866–8, or in the ‘Bulgarian atrocities’ of 1876—for minorities actively in revolt, whether such uprisings were ideologically nationalistic or, as was the case in the Armenian town of Zeytun in 1862, more local and ‘traditional’ in origin.

The last three decades of the empire’s existence, would, conversely, be marked by increasingly massive and indiscriminate state-approved slaughter of hitherto ‘protected’ Christian communities, most notably in 1894–6 and 1909, while the 1915–16 genocide was of a different scale and intensity to anything that preceded it. In fact it was only after the promotion of the ‘Armenian question’ to the international diplomatic table that it became such a toxic matter for successive Ottoman regimes as to be met not with discrimination, persecution, or gradual economic marginalization but with massive, immediate murder. To employ the language of economics, we need to distinguish between the ‘necessary’ and the ‘sufficient’ ingredients for genocide. The Muslim–Christian polarization stemming from the reforms of the nineteenth century and the effects of the influx of Muslim refugees from the same time would fall into the former category, the ‘internationalization’ of the Armenian question into the latter. As we shall see, ‘internationalization’ provoked the ultimately annihilatory answer to the Armenian question that justifies a focus on the Armenian fate as markedly ‘different’ from the multitude of repressions affecting subordinate groups in all empires at all times.

Armenians had a great stake as Christians in the outcome of the key Tanzimat reform decrees of 1839 and 1856, but the modern watershed of the Armenian question specifically was the 'Eastern crisis' of 1875–8 that ushered in the rule of Abdülhamid II. The 1878 Treaty of Berlin was drawn up in the aftermath of the third Russo-Turkish war of the century, the secession of Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania, and part of Bulgaria, greatly reduced sovereignty in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and the rest of Bulgaria, and the loss to Russia of key provinces on the Ottoman–Caucasus border. It contained stipulations for reforms and protection for the eastern Anatolian Armenians in the light of grievances accumulated over previous years. The Armenian question was dragged into international debate to the distress of the Ottomans who saw the stipulated reforms as a harbinger of future impositions leading to pressure for Armenian autonomy or even independence. Furthermore, over the ensuing years, unrequited Armenian grievances and aspirations would increasingly be expressed not through the traditional Armenian ecclesiastical hierarchy or through ecumenical political institutions but through nationalist parties. Their very existence intensified Abdülhamid's paranoia of imperial collapse.

The ostentatious actions of the Armenian political parties were influenced by the desire to regain the attention of external powers—notably Britain or Russia at different times, but also France—in the way that seemed to serve Bulgarians so well. The inflated expectations of those nationalists failed to take sufficient account of the different strategic positions and ethnographic distributions of the Balkans and eastern Anatolia respectively, for in the latter Christians lived amidst a Muslim majority. The nationalists also failed to comprehend exactly what 'reform' meant to the Great Powers.

Two truths tended always to prevail about the attitude of the powers to crises in the Ottoman empire. First, strength of sentiment about 'suffering Christianity' only translated to policy when it coincided with material interest, as it did for Russia with the 'Bulgarian atrocities' of 1876. Secondly, atrocities against Muslims in and around the region—whether in the Crimea and the Caucasus from the time of the Crimean War, in Bulgaria in 1876, or during the Balkan Wars of 1912–13—were ignored by the Christian powers. Both truths had very real ramifications in the Ottoman empire. Protests unaccompanied by substantive action had a detrimental effect on the lives of Christians by making Ottoman governments and the population at large question the location of their loyalty while failing to protect them from the consequences of that shift in perspective. The powers' rhetorical bias towards suffering Christianity only confirmed the Ottomans' prevailing sense of embattlement and identification with suffering Islam.

The period of the 1870s–1923, therefore, was not just one of the most radical change in the character of the Ottoman social order, but also one of the

accentuation of the Armenian question at a dangerous time. As the empire was pushed more and more out of Europe, the Armenians were increasingly exposed as a major compact Christian community in the 'Asian' interior. The reform question was fatefully raised for the final time by Russia in 1913-14, to the fury of the CUP, just as the Balkan wars were concluded with the eviction of the Ottoman empire from virtually everywhere in Europe, and the Ottoman territories were being inundated by hundreds of thousands more Muslim refugees.

### Pitfalls in the International Approach

There is always a danger when emphasizing structural factors in history of seeming to absolve individual actors of decision-making power and moral responsibility. It is distinctly unsatisfactory, particularly for victims of genocidal regimes, to have massive suffering attributed to anything other than a discrete, objectively repulsive and preferably personalizable *ideological* hatred—whether, as in the case of the Holocaust, that personification of hatred is Hitler, the Nazi party, or Germans as a whole.<sup>23</sup> The scale of the crime is directly proportionate to the strength of the human need for unequivocal accountability. As genocide is one of the ultimate crimes, so the logic goes, a monstrous and preferably personalizable criminal and a monstrous, indisputable motive are required to link cause and effect by a thick, straight line. Reference to general historical forces and socio-political structures cannot satisfy this need, and nor should it.

The dangers of impersonalizing causation in the Armenian case are even more profound than with the Holocaust, because of the tendency in much Turkish and pro-Turkish scholarship to exculpate the perpetrators by the abuse of context. In the most extreme form of this tendency, blame is shifted, as in the work of Kamuran Gürün, Esat Uras, and many others, onto Armenian revolutionaries, and nothing made of the history of state-sponsored anti-Armenian discrimination and persecution.<sup>24</sup> Elements of the catastrophe are also lifted out of context to illustrate that the Armenian fate was only one of deportation, disease, and wartime hardship, featuring some random murders unauthorized from the power centre. Here the actions of the Ottoman state are understood in a purely reactive framework, the role of any state ideology completely ignored and the significance of Armenian revolutionaries greatly overstated. This is what Robert Melson has termed the 'provocation thesis', and its advocates include some of the most prominent Western Ottomanists, as well as the CUP perpetrators themselves.<sup>25</sup>

The 'international context' has been the subject of particular abuse. Thus it should be stressed straight away that though the ambit of *historical* and *moral*

responsibility for the Armenian genocide extends to the great powers, criminal, legal responsibility remains entirely with the Ottoman government during the First World War. The powers were not co-perpetrators, as some historians have wrongly labelled Imperial Germany (see Ch. 3). The Armenians were not, as Salahi Sonyel has suggested, simply 'victims of European diplomacy', nor, contrary to the argument of Ersal Yavi, was their fate solely due to their being caught 'in the pincers of European imperialism'.<sup>26</sup> It is essential not to further the claims made by apologists for the Ottoman state ever since 1915 that external actions caused upheavals in which the Armenians inevitably perished, that Britain and Russia stimulated Armenian revolt by their interventions and thus left the state no choice but to remove the Armenians for its own security.

An economic version of this abrogation of state responsibility has achieved some popularity with the widespread acceptance among Ottoman economic historians of Immanuel Wallerstein's 'world systems theory'. This approach owes a considerable debt to Marxist analyses of imperialism, and 'dependency' and 'underdevelopment' theories. It seeks to explain, with particular relevance to international trading relations, the way that economies beyond the 'centre' of the advanced European powers were penetrated and controlled or 'peripheralized' in the interests of the centre within a burgeoning 'world economic system' during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Characteristically, such control took the form of undercutting indigenous industries and keeping the peripheralized economy in a condition of underdevelopment as a supplier of raw materials for secondary processing in the centre states, which then sold their surplus back to the primary producer. While the theory has some explanatory power for certain regions in and beyond the Ottoman empire at certain times, not least in the underdeveloped world in the present, and while it originates in a thoroughly laudable attempt to understand exploitative relationships between different national economies, it has a dangerous potential in its application to the Ottoman case.

One influential strand of world systems analysis identifies the non-Muslim population of the Ottoman empire as a comprador class that cooperated with or at least did not oppose European economic penetration since it benefited from the trading privileges passed on by the Europeans through the capitulatory system. Working from the undeniably disproportionate number of Armenians and Greeks occupying commercial and financier positions, particularly in the urban centres of Istanbul and western Anatolia, Christians are thus depicted as having markedly differing interests from the Islamic state in which they dwelt and, by their very presence, as forestalling the development of a Muslim bourgeoisie and inhibiting Turkish national development. Ignoring the very limited number of Christians who actually did benefit from the capitulatory system and the self-imposed cultural obstacles to the

development of profit-oriented capitalism in a Muslim society that had hitherto venerated consumption, and disregarding the evidence that suggests that Christian economic success was good for the economy as a whole, the vision is of an ethnically stratified labour market in which a self-conscious minority monopolized the crucial bourgeois positions. When this logic is taken to its extreme, the violent expropriations and boycotts of Greek and Armenian businesses under the CUP, and even the deportations of both groups, become justifiable as a measure of Turkish ethnic assertion, even self-defence, against the oppressive minority. Effectively, we have an economic version of the 'provocation thesis', endorsing some of the justifications of the perpetrators themselves.<sup>27</sup>

Perpetrator ideology—the most important element in genocide—is strangely absent in either of these two strands of analysis. What may be said of the nationalist ideology that guided the CUP? Though developing later than the nationalisms of many of the Ottomans' subject peoples, and growing partly in reaction to them, Turkish nationalism was still the ideology of what would become the most powerful group in the empire by the First World War; the inheritors, indeed, of the imperial mantle. Consequently it had a particular colour and, within the remaining Ottoman domains, a much greater influence than other nationalisms. Any nationalist dynamic that emerged between ruler and ruled would inevitably be a distinctly unequal one.

The ideology of the CUP alone could translate its agenda into the mass expropriation and murder of Christians. We are entreated by such leading scholars as Donald Quataert and Roderic H. Davison, who see the hermeneutical limitations of world systems analysis and of the international diplomatic approach of 'Eastern question' historians, to recognize the space that still existed for the late Ottoman state to determine its own course.<sup>28</sup> Quite so, as historians tiring of the implicit stereotype of supine orientals in much Western scholarship on late imperial China have also observed over the past two decades. Yet this means that alongside acknowledging Ottoman efforts to resist European economic control, for instance, or to discard the capitulations and make favourable alliances, we must also acknowledge the weight of the state's agency in less praiseworthy aspects of 'national development': in this case, mass murder.

Debates are ongoing about the precise relationship within CUP nationalism of first ethnic 'Turkishness', secondly pan-Turkism and 'Turanianism'—an identification with 'Turkic' peoples in the Caucasus and across into central Asia; and thirdly an enduring sense of Islamic imperial supremacy within the Ottoman polity in which Muslim elites continued to regard themselves as the *milleti hâkime*, the 'dominant millet'. Contrary to some of their supporters and most of their national constituency, some of the CUP leaders were explicitly atheistic, schooled in Western secular thought whence they imbibed

the anti-religious positivism of thinkers such as Auguste Comte and embraced the crude social Darwinism popular among nationalists across Europe at the turn of the century. These ideas would not only provide much of the ideological justification for removing Christians, but by freeing their proponents from notions of religious confraternity they also meant that CUP leaders could begin to think about the destruction of ethnic Kurdishness.

On the whole, we should not view the various ideological elements of late Ottoman nationalism as contradictory, though different aspects were emphasized in different places to different constituencies at different times.<sup>29</sup> Blends of religious and 'racial' identity were common to most of the ethnic nationalisms that developed in eastern and southeastern Europe in the late nineteenth century. And, as M. Şükrü Hanioglu has shown, some important CUP members were distinctly under-theorized activists whose main ideological precept was their commitment to the preservation of the Ottoman state.<sup>30</sup> Only with the advent of Kemal's intensive secularization campaigns would religion be systematically rooted out of official ideology. It is important for the moment only to note that by 1914, on the eve of war and genocide, no nationalist formulation envisaged Ottoman Christians within the contract of mutual obligation.

### **The Great Game of Genocide: An Overview**

I do not intend to devote any space at all to the question of whether the Armenians were murdered en masse, nor the probity of the ample evidence about the killing, and certainly not to sanction any implicit or explicit discussion of whether genocide and mass theft were in any sense justifiable. Deniers and obfuscators should not be allowed to set the agenda, and bad-faith disputes do nothing at all to promote the scholarly examination of complicated phenomena. The orchestrated murder of the Armenians is taken as a given, a starting point for discussion, not its endpoint. Yet this is not to suggest, contrary to an 'Armenian' historiography that is keen—mainly as a response to denial—to enforce a standard line on interpretation of the genocide, that there is not ample scope for debate about the precise relationship between intention and contingency in the development of the CUP's destruction policy in 1914–15.

While such debate would be the sign of a mature historiography, it also touches issues of great sensitivity for Armenians as well as Turks. Simply put, Armenian nationalist activism was important in shaping Ottoman policies towards Armenians in 1914–15 and in the run-up to the 1894–6 massacres. Nevertheless, beyond identifying the contingencies that influenced policies without any ineluctable determinism in play, we need at all times to bear in



mind the availability of alternative courses for the main Ottoman actors, and to remember the role played in their decisions by ideology and prejudice, up to and including visceral hatred. Thus, while I allow the Marxian caveat that choices are inevitably conditioned by circumstance, that 'man' makes history, but not just as 'he' would like, Armenians were killed because of choices made by players who were in the strict sense of the word responsible. This is the context for my assertion that the Armenian genocide was one particular ideological response to the very real, related external and internal structural stresses that had accumulated on the Ottoman empire by 1915.

My first section, consisting of two chapters, seeks to explore the intimate relationship between state intent, contingency, and action from the rise of the Armenian question to its terrible denouement. It dissects the historical background and the way the genocide unfolded, providing a point of reference, an empirical core, for the following sections. The first chapter examines four interconnected themes from the early nineteenth century up to 1914: external political, military, and economic engagements with the Ottoman empire; the development of subject Christian nationalisms within the empire, leading to autonomy and/or secession, or pressure for those ends; the entrance of Muslim refugees into the shrinking empire from the Caucasus and from lost Ottoman lands in the Balkans, which simultaneously introduced an embittered, anti-Christian constituency and increased competition for land resources; and Ottoman governmental policies regarding each of these developments, from the reform period of the mid-century, through the reign of Abdülhamid II, with its accompanying Armenian massacres and great power pressure for Armenian reforms, to the 'second constitutional period' from 1908 onwards in which the CUP came to the fore.

The unfolding of the genocide in 1914–16 is the preserve of the second chapter. The genocide emerged as each of the four aforementioned themes were developed in the incubator of a war seen by the CUP as a Darwinian struggle for imperial collapse or renewal. Limited Armenian nationalist activity in tandem with Entente powers, particularly Russia, was important in triggering escalations in Ottoman policy, as was the flight of some Muslims from the Russian-controlled Caucasus. Since this is sensitive ground, the chapter concludes, after extensive empirical reconstruction, with an attempt to ascertain precisely what can and cannot be said of the different forms of historical responsibility for the emergence of the Armenian genocide.

Here at the outset it cannot be emphasized too strongly that I do not seek to find some spurious middle ground between sharply conflicting interpretations, but instead to replace what are often little more than blame narratives with an integrated historical assessment.<sup>31</sup> For instance I do not consider it at all incompatible with acknowledging the overarching responsibility of the CUP to criticize Armenian political leaders who in their relations with the

powers acted according to their perception of long-term national interest while aware that in the short term they might be exposing fellow Armenians to the wrath of the state. In both cases, however, understanding is essential before judgement. The diffuse responsibilities of the Great Powers in the development of the Turkish–Armenian polarization will also become clear over these first two chapters. The succeeding section deals with their responsibility at the moment of destruction itself.

The third chapter has actually been included more because of the needs of historiography than history. It debunks the notion disseminated by a number of historians that Imperial Germany, Turkey's ally in the world conflict, was a co-perpetrator of the genocide. The actual German role was in the main rather prosaic, characterized by the callousness and strategic self-interest that would probably have marked the behaviour of any power in its position. My critique nevertheless still serves a useful analytical purpose in terms of the wider aims of the book, for alongside the subsequent chapter it reinserts Germany's role in 1915 into the appropriate context of general imperial machinations in the region. The European 'imperial factor' lacked the ideological imperative required to bring tensions fully to the boil in the Ottoman empire, but by both omission and commission it prepared the ground handsomely for ethnic conflict, in Germany's case by bolstering militarily a power with whom it had for two decades been coquetting, and sponsoring explosive, irregular, insurgent ethnic warfare in the territories of its imperial/military opponents.

Some of the allegations against Germany both in 1915–16 and in some recent scholarship derive from the way Germany insinuated itself with Abdülhamid in the 1890s. One of the German techniques of gaining a competitive advantage with a Russophobic and increasingly Anglophobic Ottoman regime was to disavow any political interest at all in the Armenian question, forswearing intervention in Ottoman 'internal affairs' and cultivating relations even as other powers were self-righteously recoiling from the Armenian massacres of 1894–6. It is not difficult to locate anti-Armenian sentiment among some German diplomats and soldiers, nor among the intellectuals enrolled to further and justify German ambitions in the Near East.<sup>32</sup> Some of these attacked the 'treacherous' and 'parasitic' Armenians whose presence was perceived to be opportune to Germany's imperial rivals and debilitating to the Ottoman empire. Yet the existence of such opinions does not prove official German 'anti-Armenianism' any more than Russian overtures towards Ottoman Armenians in the 1870s or 1913–14 prove Russian pro-Armenianism. Each is simply the mirror image of the other, each an imperialist attempt to use the Armenian question, either negatively or positively, for particular imperial ends. In the German case the end was the extension of its regional economic influence, in which the approval of the Ottoman government was crucial. In

the Russian case in 1913–14, and even into the early months of the First World War, the end was the extension of informal political control in Ottoman territory, towards which influence over the Ottoman subject peoples rather than the government was necessary.

The use and abuse of Armenian suffering by the world powers continued during and after the world conflict. Chapter 4 examines the way that the Entente powers related to the Armenian question in the key period from the beginning of the genocide through to the conclusion of the Lausanne peace. The magnitude of the change in the Ottoman state in these years was mirrored by quantum shifts in the international situation. Initially reluctant to draw attention to the Armenian plight lest it alienate the large Indian Muslim community, Britain suddenly began to highlight the atrocities as in autumn 1915 the campaign intensified to influence American entry into the war. Russia's protests against the ongoing slaughter were angled at keeping its own Armenian population happy, while at the same time Petersburg was planning how to minimize the Armenian national presence in the eastern Anatolian territory Russia was set to inherit upon a successful conclusion of the war.

In the aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution, the issue for the other Europeans was the race for control of the Near East and central Asia. For Germany this meant the radical expansion of imperial aspirations as embodied in the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which happily consigned the Russian Armenians to the Ottoman ally. For Britain and France it meant scrambling for the larger portion in a two-way split of territorial influence that had previously been earmarked under the famous secret agreements of 1915–16 for tripartite division with Russia. At the same time the vacuum left in the Caucasus and central Asia invited a German–Turkish threat to British interests in India. Part of the British strategy for countering this threat was encouraging Armenian resistance in the Caucasus by intimating that a substantial sovereign territory in Anatolia would be the reward for past and future Armenian sacrifice.

When the war ended, and the Wilsonian doctrine of national self-determination presented itself as an obstacle to the overt pursuit of imperial aims, neither Entente nation showed itself willing to back its fine words of support for 'the little ally' Armenia. British forces withdrew from the Caucasus before the nascent Armenian state was divided between Kemal's Turkey and the Soviet Union. In the meantime Britain made a huge contribution to ethnic conflict in Anatolia by sponsoring Greece's military occupation of part of western Anatolia. The move not only gave impetus to the Kemalist movement, it led finally to a vastly destructive war between Greece and Turkey in which both sides committed extensive atrocities against Anatolian civilians of the contrary religion. France further inflamed the ethnic situation in Cilicia

by its own imperial machinations, including the manipulation of Armenian national aspirations.

As France was forced out of Cilicia in 1920–1 and Britain's Greek proxy likewise out of Anatolia in 1922, each power was forced to readjust to the realities of the situation. This included recognition of a reduced but ethnically cleansed and sovereign Turkey, again to the detriment of Armenians. Though Turkey's size and influence were now greatly reduced, the Ankara regime could also revive the Ottoman practice of playing the powers off against each other in its own interest while consolidating itself domestically.

If the Europeans could discard the Armenians as easily as they had picked them up, American diplomats also swiftly learned that there was no political capital to be made in the Armenian cause. As with Germany in the 1890s, a useful means for the furtherance of political ends in Turkey for a power with aspirations in the region was a declaration of non-interest in the Armenian question. The strength of the diplomatic disavowal of concern was in direct proportion to the strength of US domestic sentiment that continued, unrealistically, to push for the establishment of an independent Armenia after Kemal's defeat of the Greeks. The American diplomatic role is the subject of Chapter 5.

Despite their rhetoric, America's diplomats were not simply adhering to a general regional policy of non-interventionism, far less isolationism. Their non-intervention was highly selective and self-interested. American policy towards Armenia and Turkey was capitalistic in the broadest sense of the word, concerned with fostering the regional peace essential to stability, trade, prosperity, and, thereby, so the argument went, the conquering of communist tendencies. In this vision, the support of small, insecure states like Armenia at the cost of the goodwill of a potentially major regional anti-Bolshevik power like Turkey made no sense at all.

American diplomats were clearly culpable in one area. In their attempt to play down the Armenian question and counteract domestic agitation, they embarked on a sustained and public campaign to revise recent Ottoman history in favour of the Turks, or at least against the Armenians. Equally, the nationalists quickly learned how to pressurize the State Department successfully whenever the sensitive Armenian question was raised. Thus a selective American non-interventionism translated into a compliant policy of distortion and non-recognition of the events of 1915–16. The die was cast in the crucible of the post-war decade, long in advance of the cold war 'proper', and long before the Turkish state machinery of denial was cranked up to full power from the 1980s onwards.

Of course after the Second World War the world was different. With the changes from 1945 onwards in the international system, the introduction of the concept of genocide in international law, growing awareness of genocide

as a phenomenon after the murder of the European Jews, and increased Armenian commemorative activity and political activism in the diaspora, not least terrorism, Turkish denial had to adapt, and the international community too. Nevertheless, in accommodating Turkish denial the European and American states were only making explicit what had been implicit since Kemal's nationalists had reinvigorated Turkey as a regional player at the end of the First World War. Chapter 6 deals as epilogue with the contortions still engaged in by Turkish politicians and historians and some of their counterparts in the West. Since it is a study of distorted memory as well as wilful displacement, it also confronts aspects of Armenian 'memory' of the crime, and the way that the expression of that memory has been shaped as much by the memory battle itself, and by ongoing Armenian national and nationalist concerns, as by the actual events of 1915-16.

Beyond the orthodox chapters, I have inserted a pair of 'interludes' to conclude each of the first two sections of the book. These put the 'Armenian question' into broader, comparative contexts. The first examines the way the genocide fitted into greater Ottoman demographic schemes, state-formation in the Caucasus from 1918 to 1920, and the ethnic homogenization process common to other states in the Balkans and east-central Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. The second shows how the international community responded to the post-genocidal situation, drawing comparisons with attitudes to 'border adjustment' in inter-war Europe. It also illustrates how after the murderous 'resolution' of the Ottoman Armenian question Britain was instrumental in its occupation of Iraq in exacerbating a regional Kurdish question that endures to the present. Together, these interludes help illustrate the decided contemporary relevance of a topic too often consigned by occidental historians to the realms of murky interplay between barbarous orientals.

# Part I

## Mass Murder in an International System

## Prologue: Eastern Questions, Nationalist Answers

The pan-Turkist theorist Yusuf Akçura wrote in 1904 that Pan-Islamism and inter-religious 'Ottomanism' had failed. Modernizing nationalism was the only way for the Ottoman state to survive.<sup>1</sup> In structural terms, the CUP thus provided the latest in a series of attempted remedies for the ongoing decline of the Ottoman empire. The prescription for the future of the Christians of the empire varied greatly between these remedies. Armenians themselves were more or less passive players during much of the critical reform period that was to reshape Muslim and state attitudes towards them so significantly. Only from the 1860s, with the establishment of an Armenian national constitution, and particularly from the late 1870s as the Armenian question was brought to the international table, did Armenian assertiveness become a factor in the equation, alongside the complex of political and economic challenges confronting the empire from within and without. By that point the Ottoman state was increasingly resistant to any further reform measures threatening sovereignty in its remaining domains. The solution to the empire's nationality problems was ultimately directed at 'problem' populations themselves rather than their grievances and aspirations.

### Origins and Aims of Ottoman Reform

Even at its peak in the sixteenth century, the century in which Sultan Selim I conquered most of eastern Anatolia from the ailing Persians, the Ottoman empire was starting to show some structural weaknesses.<sup>2</sup> Only military failure, the reversal of the Ottomans' traditional martial advantage, would really drive the reform movement, however. In the century after the Ottoman defeat at Vienna in 1683, particularly with the loss to Russia in 1774, the significant and growing differential in the ability of the states to wage war, created by European technical and organizational superiority, grew stark.

The wars of imperial expansion and exploitation waged by the Europeans were at the same time a cause and an expression of their dominance. If Russia had not fully shared in the advances of the north-western European states, it had huge reserves of manpower and resources at its disposal. With these weapons, it embarked on its own programme of expansion southwards and south-westwards. In its dealings with the Ottoman empire Russia also had

ideas to legitimate its drive: that of Russia as heir to the orthodox inheritance of Byzantium, as expressed through the ownership of the prize of Istanbul; and later pan-Slavism, a device angled at securing predominant Russian influence among the orthodox Slavs, millions of whom were under Ottoman rule.<sup>3</sup>

The drive south-westwards in search of a warm-water port, which lay beneath much Russian rhetoric, began in the late eighteenth century, meeting with its first major success in the gains embodied in the treaty of 1774. Simultaneously, a coordinated assault began on the Caucasus, the land approach to the Ottoman empire and western Persia between the Caspian and the Black Seas. Half a century later, by 1828, after an uncertain process of consolidation in the northern Caucasus, the Persian lands of the south-eastern Caucasus passed to Russian control, among them much of Azerbaijan and a substantial part of Caucasian Armenia. From that point until the end of the First World War, the Armenian nation would be split between the rule of mutually antipathetic Christian and Muslim empires.

At the same time, Russia defeated the Ottoman empire in what is today Georgia in the south-western Caucasus. The Ottoman and Russian empires now shared a substantial Transcaucasian border over which war would repeatedly be waged. The 1829 Russo-Turkish Treaty of Adrianople also confirmed Russia as protector of an autonomous Serbia and the Danubian Principalities, and provided for the negotiated settlement of the Greek question, the result of which was Greek independence in 1830. Russian policy was to extend its influence into the Ottoman empire without destroying it, much as was the aim with Persia. This policy was temporarily consummated by the 1833 treaty of 'alliance and mutual defence' of Unkiar Iskelesi,<sup>4</sup> and Russian overtures to Ottoman Kurds and Armenians over the ensuing decades were pursuant to it.<sup>5</sup>

The 1828-9 war and the treaty of Unkiar Iskelesi had come about in part because of the Greek events and Russian involvement in mitigating a threat to the Ottoman empire from the ruler of Egypt, Mehmet Ali. Alongside military defeat, insubordinate vassals such as Mehmet Ali and separatist nationalism, particularly if it enjoyed great power sponsorship, were the gravest dangers for a state that had traditionally thrived on its ability to co-opt and integrate its diverse subjects. Russia and to a lesser degree Austria-Hungary (which was itself concerned with the dangers of separatist nationalism) focused particularly on the empire's Balkan possessions as areas for fostering either client states or outright annexations. The nineteenth century saw a stream of secessions or, more frequently, in the interests of maintaining the balance of power, erosion of Ottoman sovereignty in the provinces to the point where it was no more than nominal. As well as the loss of Greece and effectively Egypt, in the first twenty-nine years of the nineteenth century alone the empire had

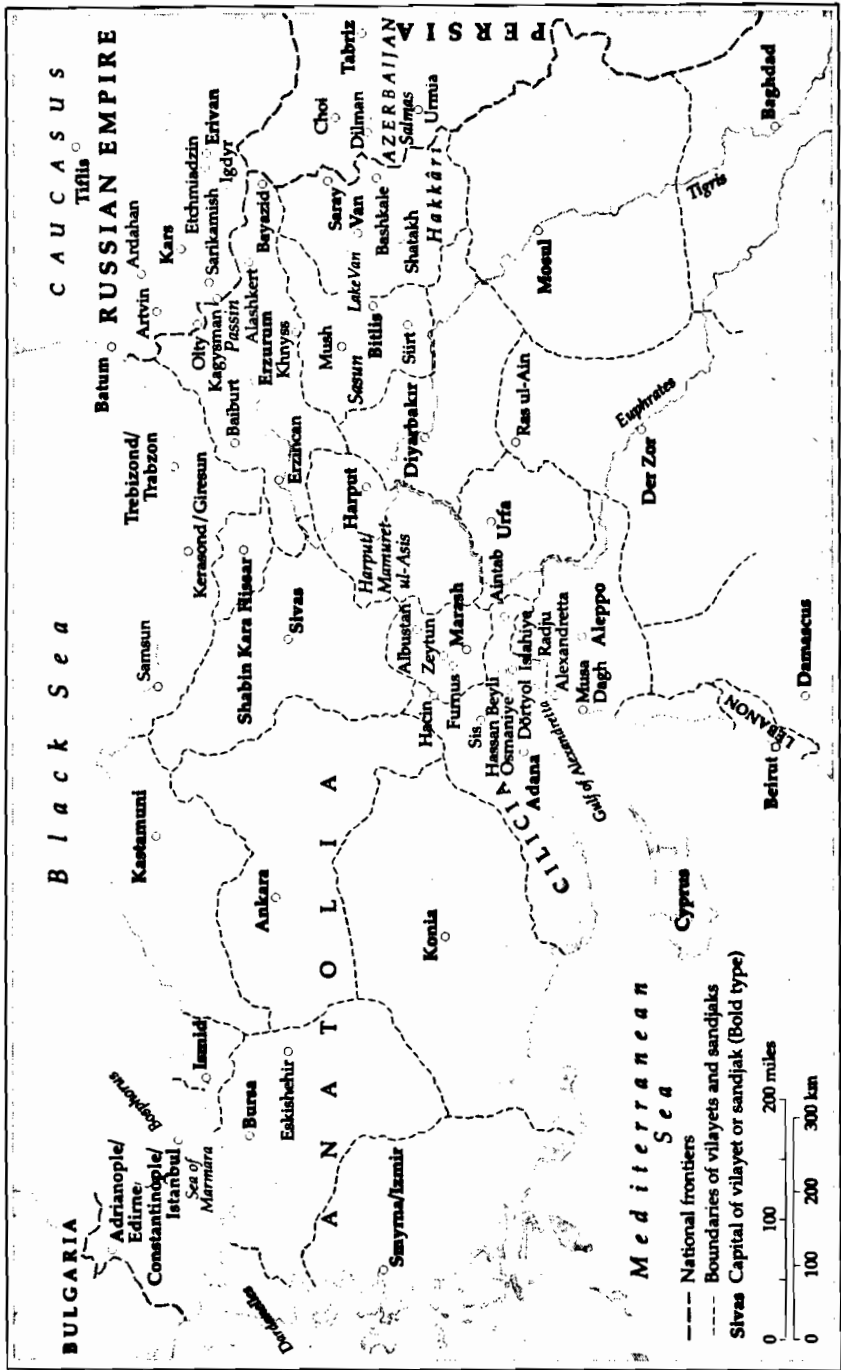


lost control of Bessarabia, Serbia, Abaza, and Mingrelia. It would go on to cede ownership of or genuine sovereignty over Moldavia and Wallachia in 1856, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kars, Ardahan, and Cyprus in 1878 (the losses of that year alone comprising one-third of Ottoman territory and 20 per cent of the empire's inhabitants), Crete in 1908, Cyrenaica and Tripoli in 1912, and Macedonia and Albania in 1913 (see Map 2).

The antidote to Ottoman ills was perceived to be socio-economic reform borrowing from the West, and specifically from the French revolutionary model that had underpinned Mehmet Ali's military success.<sup>6</sup> Sultans Selim III (1789–1807) and Mahmut II (1808–39) had already made strides towards reform, particularly with Mahmut's secularization of aspects of education and administration, and his introduction of the governing institution of the 'Sublime Porte'. However, understandably, these bold innovations were based on only a shaky grasp of the economic and philosophical revolution that governed European material advancement. As in any society, altering the mindset of a people to adopt the substance as well as the form of change would take much longer than one generation,<sup>7</sup> and would not be achieved until Kemal's time. The next steps, however, would be taken by the men of the Tanzimat.

The two major decrees of the Tanzimat were the 1839 *Hattı Şerif* of Gülhane and the 1856 *Hattı Hümayun*, both drawn up in the reign of Abdülmecid. The latter *hat* (decree) was a restatement of the values of the former, yet it went considerably further in its rhetoric of inter-religious equality and secularization and its view of a new form of inclusive common identity—patriotic Ottomanism—to replace the traditional theocratic order among the Sultan's subjects. Unlike the 1839 decree, which attributed the decline of the state to an absolutism that failed to observe Islamic law properly, it made no mention of Islamic law or the Koran, and confirmed that apostasy from Islam would not be punishable by death. Muslims and non-Muslims should be equal in terms of military service (though the latter could pay a tax in lieu), and in the administration of justice and taxation, as well as in entry to schools and public employment. It also stipulated the need for proper adherence to annual budgets, establishment of banks, use of European skills and capital, and codification of penal and commercial law.

The 1856 decree had been deemed necessary to confirm its predecessor owing to the lack of progress made in implementing the terms outlined in 1839. The reforms touching the status of non-Muslims derived from the need to tie in the aspirations of the large Christian communities with the future of the state, and to deter, for instance, Russian interventions on behalf of Orthodox Christians, as in the Serbian independence struggle. Both the 1839 and 1856 decrees were issued in the context of international strife, the first after the Mehmet Ali crisis and the second at the end of the Crimean War, and



Map 2: Anatolia in 1915

thus, while sincere in their general intent, both had aspects of a public-relations exercise, for it was essential for the Ottoman empire to retain the support of other Great Powers to balance Russian influence. Reforms for Christians were vital to this end, though within the empire and the Ottoman elite there was a tension between the need to reform and the desirability or otherwise of greater equality between Muslims and non-Muslims, and between the need to adapt to the demands of external powers and the desire to retain internal sovereignty.

The 1856 *hat* was particularly appealing to the most important supporter of the empire, Britain, because it was effectively, as one historian describes it, 'the magnum opus of Lord Stratford', then Stratford Canning, British ambassador to the Porte. This dictated quality rankled among the Ottoman elite, even rousing Reşid Pasha, author of the 1839 *hat*, to criticize it for requiring too much change too soon (see Pl. 1). Reform should be gradual and certainly not imposed from outside to the detriment of the honour and independence of the state; and it should certainly not favour Christians at the perceived expense of Muslims.<sup>8</sup> Similar opposition would also emanate from within the Porte, helping to bring the Tanzimat reforms to an end in the 1870s.<sup>9</sup>

Such reactions were not new, however, even though the 1839 decree had been much more authentically Ottoman in origin than its 1856 counterpart. Each of the four major Tanzimat statesmen, Reşid included, was at one time or another called the *gâvur pasha*, the 'infidel pasha', for his role in the reform process,<sup>10</sup> and this despite the fact that none wished greater equality simply for its own sake. Moreover the 1839 decree enjoyed the open and ostentatious support of the British Foreign Secretary and later Prime Minister Palmerston, which was far from an unalloyed benefit for the Porte. Indeed, after the issuance of the decree, Palmerston variously pressed the sultan for the removal of reactionary Ottoman provincial officials, and reforms for non-Muslims in zones of inter-European imperial conflict, such as for Syrian Christians, Palestinian Jews, and Cretan Greeks.<sup>11</sup> The interventionist agenda pursued on his behalf through Canning during the 1840s to bolster British prestige vis-à-vis Russia and to further the reform process was a matter of considerable irritation in Istanbul.<sup>12</sup> Such pressure would not, however, be applied consistently over the following half century, and it certainly did not have as its primary concern the actual well-being of Ottoman Christians, except in so far as that influenced the mood of the British electorate.

### External Support and Pressure for Reform

If Napoleon's invasion of Egypt had helped return Europe's attention to the Near East after conflicts in Europe, then Europe's defeat of Napoleon meant

that Britain stepped into France's pre-Napoleonic shoes as supporter and commercial partner of the Ottoman empire. From the time of Unkiar Iskelesi, Palmerston as British foreign secretary contrived to sell domestically the notion of the Ottoman empire 'as a link in the chain of European liberties' against the authoritarian Tsars.<sup>13</sup> A Britain seeking to contain Russian expansion in Europe, maintain the European balance of power and British hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean, and protect communications with India now looked to combat the advancement of Tsarist influence in the Ottoman empire, Persia, and central Asia. The beginning of the great game went hand in hand with the development of the 'Eastern question' into the major threat to European stability in the century after the Congress of Vienna.

British policy towards reforms for Ottoman non-Muslims shifted discernibly in the aftermath of the major military manifestation of the Anglo-Russian antagonism in the nineteenth century, the Crimean War. The 1856 Treaty of Paris concluding the war incorporated reference to the *hat* of the same year, and thereby arguably created some space for future external intervention in Ottoman affairs to enforce reforms. At the same time, the empire was admitted to the European concert of powers, giving it a more equal status, and Britain, France, and Austria guaranteed by treaty the integrity of the Ottoman lands. Palmerston went further and opposed the establishment by the treaty of a machinery of great power supervision and enforcement of reforms for non-Muslims lest this portend future Russian intervention. His view now, and that of Canning's successor in Istanbul, Sir Henry Bulwer, was that Ottoman reform could not be force-paced from outside.<sup>14</sup> For Lord John Russell, British Foreign Secretary from 1859 to 1865, the major benefit of the Treaty of Paris regarding the Ottoman Christians had been that it confirmed the removal from Russia of the exclusive privileges of representation that the Tsars had pressed since 1774.<sup>15</sup>

The achievements of 1856 highlighted a structural contradiction in the British desire simultaneously to sustain the Ottoman empire and to press pro-Christian reforms on the Porte. Britain's history of 'protection' of the Ottoman empire in Europe showed that much of this protection was negotiable, as for instance when opposing Greek independence had become more trouble than supporting it. On the other hand, not infrequently, Britain would have to support, tacitly or even explicitly, swift Ottoman repression of Christians in order to forestall possible intervention by other powers.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Britain was keen to discourage minorities from thinking that they had external support, since that might only have furthered separatist ambitions. Neither of these final two aims was really achieved, as we shall see, but for the time being the immediate goal of supporting the Ottoman empire tended to eclipse the longer-term ends of encouraging its reform into a self-sustaining polity.

The die of British foreign policy was cast through the massacres of Lebanese and Syrian Christians in 1860 (which gave the opportunity for French intervention and the establishment of a separate administration for Lebanon), the Cretan massacres of 1866–7, and up to the beginning of Russian reassertiveness in the 'Eastern crisis' of 1875–8. Thus Bulwer could even recommend to the Porte the settlement of Muslim Circassians in Bulgaria as a way of intimidating the locals into compliance with Ottoman rule. Bulwer and the Foreign Office deliberately sought to portray the Ottomans as positively as possible, and Christian insurgents and plaintiffs correspondingly negatively, partly to combat persistent, popular anti-Turkism in Britain.<sup>17</sup>

Britain remained consistent in one reform sphere, however. Ottoman economic stability and development would in British eyes be underpinned by liberalized trade relations, though a precondition for all these things was the security of life and particularly property stipulated in the 1839 *hat*. Development would also create another market for British surplus manufactures, which in turn, incidentally, would tie in British business and investment interests with the future of the Ottoman empire. Thus it was necessary, in the American lexicon of a later era, to force open the Ottoman door. In 1838, the Anglo-Turkish commercial convention undermined Russian commercial advantages by abolishing restrictive and protectionist practices and fixing import–export tariffs. This opened the Ottoman market to a significantly increased volume of foreign trade, and with it greater contact with Europe.

Coastal, western, and new urban areas became particularly entangled in the international economy, supplying raw materials and receiving processed goods. They also became susceptible to the downturns and depressions of the 'world system' which would in turn impact negatively in diffuse ways upon internal stability in the Ottoman empire, leading some Muslims who were adversely affected to embrace reactionary Islamism.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, despite encouraging economic liberalism, the powers were not prepared to acquiesce to the Ottoman request to remove the capitulations; this was effectively a refusal to act on an equal footing, for amongst other things the capitulations included favourable tariff terms.<sup>19</sup> Nor, with the British obsession with *laissez-faire* economics, would London agree to the sensible advice of Canning to support Ottoman reform with a long-term, low-interest loan; nor for the same reasons to the establishment of a national bank for the empire that might serve as a viable Ottoman credit institution but subject to Ottoman regulations and supervision.<sup>20</sup> The consequence was a cycle of Ottoman borrowing of European money at high market rates, failure to repay, and furthering borrowing to repay the interest on previous loans.

At the outset of loan discussions around 1850, the Porte, and particularly the Sultan, were wary of falling into the debt of the imperialist powers, seeing the diminution of Ottoman sovereignty that this augured.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the

toll of the Crimean War made international borrowing a necessity, and the creditworthiness acquired by the Ottoman empire in the eyes of European investors as a result of the agreements of 1856 meant that the Porte could for the first time avail itself of loans floated in Paris and London.<sup>22</sup> These were essential because an economy lacking a modern bourgeoisie was incapable of generating the capital needed to fund the Tanzimat reforms. The British-run Imperial Ottoman Bank was established in 1856, and amalgamated with French interests in 1863, serving to reinforce traditional French economic relations with Istanbul and giving France, too, a strong incentive to maintain the empire in some form. Indeed, France would become the Ottomans' greatest creditor.<sup>23</sup> The bank's credit funded investment in the Ottoman infrastructure,<sup>24</sup> and ongoing excess in consumptionist Istanbul.

Despite the aspiration towards economic rationality, by 1876 and the Eastern crisis the empire was declared bankrupt. This was not simply Ottoman incompetence, for in the context of worldwide economic depression a number of semi-advanced states also defaulted in these years. Nevertheless, in 1881 the Ottoman Public Debt Administration was formed, giving France and Britain control of Ottoman fiscal policy to ensure repayment of defaulted loans and thereby reassuring European investors and consequently increasing capital investment. This ushered in an era of intensified economic competition between states, as French and German capital investment in particular was guided by national imperial ends.<sup>25</sup>

Penetration and control at this level actually inhibited the ability of the Ottoman state to develop the economy,<sup>26</sup> and compromised Ottoman sovereignty, particularly in the peripheral areas most susceptible to external penetration. The heightened level of European competition also led in the last years of the nineteenth century to a *de facto* division of the empire into great power zones of economic interest, as best illustrated by the German Baghdad railway project.<sup>27</sup> British imperial policy had by that time shifted again, in its emphases if not its ends. (See Pl. 2.)

British policy had always been more anti-Russian than pro-Ottoman. Christian consciences, some in successive British cabinets, were shaken by ongoing anti-Christian abuses—though not by the brutality of insurgent Christian irregular forces or their Russian 'protectors'—and no more so than during the 'Bulgarian atrocities' of 1876. After the Crimean War, serious British sacrifice to support an Ottoman edifice that had seemingly failed to help itself would be most controversial, particularly if it meant bolstering Istanbul's rule over Christian peoples—and up to the Eastern crisis, talk of 'suffering Christianity' had generally conjured up Slavs and Greeks in the Ottoman European dominions. To square such considerations with Palmerstonian orthodoxy, and to protect British investments and prestige by sustaining the empire in some form, in 1878 Disraeli's Foreign Secretary Salisbury

determined in negotiating a solution to the Eastern crisis that Britain's commitment now was only to defending the 'Asian' dominions of the empire and the straits against Russia. In Anatolia, the population was, after all, predominantly Muslim.<sup>28</sup>

Prevention of Russian encroachment through eastern Anatolia—the very Armenian homeland—from the Caucasus was the real key to protecting the land route to India, which passed through northern Syria and Mesopotamia. Meanwhile maintaining Ottoman control of the straits would protect Britain's position in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>29</sup> Britain therefore negotiated hard to reduce Russia's wartime territorial gains in north-eastern Anatolia, preventing it from advancing further than Kars, Ardahan, and Batum, and guaranteeing British military support for the Ottomans in the case of future Russian aggression. Yet Russia still incorporated territories with a significant Armenian population, and so Britain also had to find some method of combating the tsarist rhetoric of liberating Christian Armenians from the Ottoman yoke, and undermining the appeal of Russian rule for a people suffering terrible hardships in the eastern provinces. Of these hardships, more will be read shortly.

Following the 1856 practice of internationalizing the Christian question to take it out of Russian control, when the Armenian question *per se* raised its head in 1876–8 the British were instrumental in making that too an international affair. Indeed, through the mechanism of the Anglo-Ottoman Cyprus Convention that so influenced the shape of the decisive Berlin Treaty of 1878, the British themselves actually acquired a disproportionate responsibility to oversee the implementation of Armenian reforms. To this end, a series of 'military consuls' were dispatched to the eastern provinces. At the same time, Britain succeeded in replacing Russian proposals for the maintenance of Russian troops in eastern Anatolia as overseers of the reform process with its own notion of general European supervision. Yet with the exception of the few British consuls, no European manpower was stipulated to substitute for the Russian presence.<sup>30</sup>

The presence of the British consuls in turn raised Russian suspicions about British ambitions in Anatolia, for it introduced an entirely new element into the British representation in the area. Meanwhile the regime of the new Ottoman sultan, Abdülhamid II, was utterly opposed to the consuls' influence as an infringement of his sovereignty. From the early 1880s the reformed 'three emperor's union' of Germany, Russia, and Austro-Hungary signified to Gladstone's isolated new British ministry that the reforms should not be pressed, and the Armenians were left in stasis.<sup>31</sup> Gladstone and his predecessor Disraeli had in any case forfeited much influence in Istanbul first because of Gladstone's anti-Turkish rhetoric, secondly by the British failure to uphold Ottoman rule in Europe, and thirdly by the British commandeering of Cyprus as a

base of direct British influence vis-à-vis Russia. Ottoman disillusionment would only be confirmed when in 1882 Gladstone occupied Egypt in the interests of 'order', France and Britain having established dual financial control there in 1878.<sup>32</sup> Yet for Britain this too was all part of the great imperial calculus. With the straits secure, and dominion over Egypt and a controlling share in the new Suez canal (obtained in 1875) giving Britain a commanding position over another approach to India and helping pave the way for the British retreat from European affairs in the closing years of the century, the need for a quiescent Istanbul was no longer pressing. London had, nevertheless, still to consider the effect on British prestige and Muslim opinion in India if Russia extended its influence in Anatolia.

What is the balance of the British policy of qualified support for the Ottoman empire? For the duration of the Tanzimat period temporary Ottoman stability had been artificially supported by arms and capital from without, thus ensuring that a stimulus to urgent reform was removed, while at the same time the empire's freedom to develop according to its own tenets was being consistently reduced by European economic control. Short-term stability was purchased at the expense of storing up grievances among the minorities, and other structural weakness in the empire, and of grievances amongst Ottoman elites about repeated intervention in their internal affairs. Quite what course reform would have taken either in the absence of external pressure distorting the preferred course of some reformers or the presence of more consistent external pressure to enact the said reforms is an open question. Yet it is certain that periodic British pressure on the Porte for implementation of the reforms led many Ottoman Christians to keep appealing to the powers with no real chance of success, while angering the Ottoman authorities, who were increasingly sensitive to signs of perceived internal disloyalty or ingratitude.<sup>33</sup>

The Armenians themselves were in arguably the most difficult position, in no place constituting a demographic majority that would have formed the basis for national separation, and living in precisely the region that Britain was most determined to see maintained within the Ottoman empire. They were, nevertheless, encouraged by alternate Russian and British pressure for reforms, and by the end of the Tanzimat had begun to appeal to these powers in desperation, having lost their initial faith in the Ottoman reform agenda. The reform years had seen significant changes in their situation, but as a whole by no means for the better.

### **Social Change and Ethnic Polarization in the Ottoman Empire**

Ottoman reform was complicated by powerful reactionary and centrifugal forces. On theological grounds Muslim religious leaders opposed attempts to



legislate for greater equality between Muslims and non-Muslims. Some of the leaders of the non-Muslim millets also opposed fundamental restructuring, for their personal status was assured within the Ottoman theocracy.<sup>34</sup> In the category of centrifugal forces came the ayans—powerful provincial Muslim leaders—and, in eastern Anatolia, tribal leaders, landowners, and urban notables. Also in this category came Christian nationalists. For the moment, the Muslim religious leaders and local rural and urban elites are of special interest, particularly as their roles were played out in eastern Anatolia and Cilicia.

The Russo-Turkish War of 1828–9 had illustrated what tenuous control the Ottomans had over their eastern borders. A note on demography is necessary as an introduction to some of the characteristics of Ottoman rule in the area. In western Anatolia, nearer the historic core of the empire, Turks were in the majority, with smaller Kurdish and Armenian populations, substantial Greek groupings in the interior and on the Black Sea coast (along with Muslim Lazes originally from the Caucasus), and on the Mediterranean in and around Smyrna/Izmir. In eastern Anatolia there was a much greater mix, with no group forming an absolute majority. This was partly because it was the area of historic Armenian settlement, and later also of the Kurdish dispersion across Persian and Ottoman territory, and partly because the inaccessible mountains of parts of the region provided a defensible refuge for various religious minorities in successive Near Eastern empires, both Byzantine and Muslim. In eastern Anatolia, or at least the 'Armenian plateau' and its surrounds, the area that by the First World War consisted of the provinces of Van, Erzurum, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Harput/Mamuret-ul-Asis, and Sivas, Armenians formed a plurality with the Kurds, the largest single population group. When the third largest population group of Turks was added into the mix, alongside smaller Islamic populations of Georgians, Lazes, and Turcomans, Muslims had a significant regional numerical superiority over the combined population of Armenians and schismatic Christian groups such as Assyrians and Jacobites.<sup>35</sup> In Cilicia, Armenians comprised 20 to 25 per cent of a predominantly Muslim population.<sup>36</sup>

Most rural Armenians had been dependent on Islamic landlords before the Ottoman conquest.<sup>37</sup> This was continued thereafter under Turks and Kurds. With the exception of a few inaccessible areas such as Zeytun in Cilicia, where Armenians had historically enjoyed a *de facto* autonomy and the right to bear arms, Armenian peasants were generally under the 'protection' of landlords and Muslim tribal leaders against rival tribes, and accordingly had to pay tributes in money and in kind. Amongst the other indicators of their subordinate religious status, Armenians, like all non-Muslims, also had to pay a special tax in lieu of military service (an arrangement that most groups were happy to perpetuate even after 1856), and their legal testimony had not been

considered equivalent to that of Muslims. Armenians were unique among non-Muslims in having to provide winter quarters for nomadic tribesmen, often for several months in succession. As well as imposing a great financial burden on individual households, this practice also led to widespread theft and assaults, notably rape of Armenian women. Settled Muslim populations also suffered from the impositions of nomads. The Tanzimat reforms were supposed to address many of these issues.

Nomads and local principalities were a problem for the state's agenda of centralization and control, as expressed most obviously in its attempts to harmonize taxation and conscription, and to create the security of property necessary for economic development. In the more inaccessible mountainous regions, *derebeys*—or 'lords of the valley'—held particular sway over the local populations, often drawing their power from hereditary grants of land or position from the sultan. The state traditionally tried alternately to subordinate them or induce them to act as regular local authorities.<sup>38</sup>

In Cilicia it took twenty years from the first initiative to neuter the *derebeys* and forcibly settle their tribal support base until the initially successful conclusion of this policy in 1865 by the iron fist of the Ottoman 'reform division', which was in fact a major military force.<sup>39</sup> The violence of this process of centralization and sedentarization should not be underestimated. On an even greater scale, the 1830s and 1840s saw the so-called second Ottoman invasion of 'Kurdistan', a state assault against the virtually autonomous Kurdish principalities of eastern Anatolia. Many thousands of non-combatants were killed alongside men of fighting age, and the Ottoman military campaign, part-orchestrated by German military advisers, also involved mass conscription of Kurds and commandeering of Kurdish property. It resulted in the grave alienation from the state of ordinary Kurds and their traditional leaders, and vigorous resistance led by the greatest of the emirs, Bedr Khan.<sup>40</sup>

Bedr Khan's resistance from 1840 was the first Kurdish movement transcending the local interests of individual tribal chieftains. The revolt was of fundamental significance in galvanizing Kurdish opposition to the state, such that the emir attempted to form a breakaway state in the areas of Kurdish population density, including most of historic Armenia. He also made overtures to both Armenians and Assyrians to join him. Both refused, the Armenians putting their faith in Ottoman reforms to improve their lot, and the Assyrians seemingly encouraged in their actions by a belief that Western missionary interest in their Christian heritage would translate to great-power intervention on their behalf. One result of this divergence in ethnic interests was the slaughter in 1843 of thousands of Assyrians by Bedr Khan's forces, and attacks in 1850 on Armenians. The government continued persecuting the Kurdish emirs until around 1865,<sup>41</sup> and a renewed Kurdish independence movement manifested itself after the 1877–8 war.<sup>42</sup>

The events of 1840–50 denote the deterioration of relations between Kurdish and other local Muslim elites and, on one hand, the state and, on the other, the Christians, as the hierarchical balance between Christians and Muslims was upset. This was perhaps even more important for settled Armenians than nomadic Assyrians. Anti-Christian sentiment intensified as Muslims felt confirmed in their belief that the Christians—no longer under even their nominal religious ‘protection’—were to be the beneficiaries of the reforms that were so altering the traditional order, under a state leadership that owed its existence to external powers.<sup>43</sup> Such antagonism exhibited by a formerly superordinate group is a common phenomenon when inherently unequal social systems begin to fragment.<sup>44</sup> Ordinary Muslims, meanwhile, heavily resented the increased taxation and conscription that greater centralization brought.

The stereotype of disproportionate Christian advancement as a result of reform was reinforced as Christian social visibility increased in certain areas that were particularly evident to visitors to western cities and also to the Ottoman elite in Istanbul. The 1838 Anglo-Ottoman commercial treaty accelerated this process with its stimulation of international trade. As regards the Armenians, the anti-Christian stereotype was founded upon urban merchants, moneylenders, and ‘middlemen’ and rural traders; upon certain regions and elements of the agricultural economy, notably in Cilicia;<sup>45</sup> and upon the association of Armenian success with Westernization and foreign influences, because of the Armenian importation of Western technologies<sup>46</sup> and the diasporic character of Armenian trade networks. The prominence of Armenians as agents and brokers for European interests and the extension to some individual Armenians of capitulatory benefits seemed to confirm a picture of Christians not pulling together with the Muslim population in the interests of the state on whose territory they dwelled.<sup>47</sup> The Christians in question were less compradors<sup>48</sup> than simple proto-capitalists maximizing their advantageous economic situation,<sup>49</sup> and indeed pursuing normal human desires for improving their position. Nevertheless, to Muslims they seemed to provide only the most obvious element of a link between external and internal Christian forces antithetical to the established order.

Beyond specific urban centres and regions, however, the Tanzimat did not bring the envisaged reforms in eastern Anatolia, bringing instead dislocation and no little chaos. This was due in large part to non-implementation or obstruction of reforms by Ottoman provincial officials reliant on the support of, or even under the control of, local Muslim notables with an interest in the status quo. ‘Reform’ even resulted in a worsening of the condition of parts of the peasantry. In the case of eastern Anatolia, the comparatively tolerant religious tradition of Bedr Khan was replaced by the rule of often militant sheikhs of Sufi orders.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the imposition of centralized taxes and

partial central control effectively meant that for many Armenians the pre-existing tax burden was doubled.<sup>51</sup> Further, the practice of Kurdish 'wintering' in Armenian quarters persisted despite legislation to the contrary in 1842, for the nomads regarded it as a hereditary right,<sup>52</sup> while the breakdown in the client-protector system meant that many Kurdish tribes simply began to pillage, kidnap, and rape on a much greater scale than hitherto.

From the mid-century, the Armenian population suffered as its lands were appropriated in little more than legalized theft by sedentarizing nomads, and also allocated to Muslim refugees, or muhajirs, fleeing from Russian rule from the late 1850s and from the new Balkan states thereafter.<sup>53</sup> These muhajirs brought into Anatolia both competition for resources and a considerable residue of bitterness about the treatment they had received at the hands of Christian regimes, bitterness that they often took out on indigenous Christians.<sup>54</sup>

As with the fate of the Ottoman empire in general, the Armenian situation was gravely affected by military conflict. The Crimean War years punctuated Russia's drive to consolidate its rule in the Caucasus and saw an intensification of the tsarist oppression of the region's Muslim peoples.<sup>55</sup> The Circassian population was subjected to a programme of forced expulsion, deportation, and massacre at the hands of the Russian government in which a minimum of tens of thousands perished.<sup>56</sup> In 1860 a general migration administrative commission was established to cope with the influx of what would ultimately be at least one million over the next half century, joining past and present Chechen, Crimean Tatar, Muslim Georgian, and Turcoman immigrants.<sup>57</sup> Through the nineteenth century and up to 1913 the Circassians were the largest single ethnic group among the 5-7 million Muslims that would arrive either voluntarily or, in most cases, through expulsion or threat of expulsion by their former rulers.

Among successive swathes of muhajirs were men such as Yusuf Akçura who would drive both the ideologies of Turkish nationalism and pan-Turkist irredentism in the tsar's Muslim domains.<sup>58</sup> Owing to their ethno-religious links to the Caucasian peoples, politicized refugees also proved useful in stimulating Caucasian uprisings in the 1878 Russo-Turkish war, declared by the sultan to be a holy war (jihad). This was a precursor of the greater cross-border insurgent warfare that would stimulate widespread attacks on civilian populations in the First World War.<sup>59</sup> Finally, such muhajirs and their descendants would be heavily represented among the gendarmerie and irregular forces that later took such an active part in murdering Armenians on the deportation convoys.<sup>60</sup>

In sum, the Tanzimat reforms were frequently imperfectly carried out or just ignored, while the very real hardships that they sought to address even intensified in the circumstances of the mid-nineteenth century. The fact that

the promise of equality was not realized, while inequality and Christian consciousness of that inequality was heightened, combined to produce what Stephan Astourian calls a sense of 'relative deprivation' among the Armenians.<sup>61</sup> At the same time as this sense was being developed, so too was the Armenian capacity for articulating it.

One important developmental impact of the Tanzimat was the opening of the empire not just to greater European economic penetration but to Western missionaries and their schools. This complemented and channelled an Armenian cultural renaissance begun early in the nineteenth century in which a modernized vernacular and proto-'national' literature had started to provide a social glue for disparate Armenian communities.<sup>62</sup> The Armenians attending predominantly American mission schools learned something of social emancipation, and developed different interpretations of how to achieve it. Contrary to a popular misapprehension, which may be based in part on the unfortunate role of British and American missionaries in the lead-up to the 1843 Assyrian massacres, missionary activity did not seek to inculcate rebellious or nationalist feelings amongst the Armenians. Before the Eastern crisis of 1875-8 the missionaries were the main manifestation of Western influence in eastern Anatolia; thus, unlike some of their peers in other Ottoman regions where Western merchants and diplomats were thick on the ground, they did not play a political role, though it is certain that this is how some Muslim elements perceived them, with their protected, capitulatory status. The missionary rhetoric of individual emancipation and development surely contributed inadvertently to the growth of nationalism, but the missionaries remained staunchly opposed to the methods and agenda of the later Armenian political parties.<sup>63</sup>

Changes in the millet system also furthered the process of communal evolution. When the Protestant millet was brought into existence under British pressure in 1850, it joined the Catholic, Jewish, Greek, and Armenian millets as the medium for administration of the non-Muslim Ottoman populations. With its British-influenced internal constitution stipulating democratic representation and the separation of religious and civil affairs, it provided a model for changes in the other millets.<sup>64</sup> Traditionally, the millets had functioned as 'little theocracies'. The 'spiritual head of each community had had civil, fiscal, educational and even penal jurisdiction over his flock', but had nevertheless generally been sure to coordinate his policies with those of the Ottoman government with whom his interests were bound in.<sup>65</sup> The 1856 *hat* stipulated greater secular input into the governance of the millets, and with the establishment of the 'Armenian National Constitution' of 1863, increasing lay authority was institutionalized in the Armenian millet.

The church would continue to function as a primary focus of national as well as religious identity, but there was now a strong modernizing bourgeois element involved in the running of social, educational, and administrative

affairs.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, an increasing number of bourgeois educated in Europe gained first-hand experience of enlightenment benefits and brought back to the Ottoman empire more concrete notions of modern nationhood.<sup>67</sup> To simplify considerably, the ground was prepared for the metamorphosis of the religious order into a system of proto-nationalities.

In this epoch of social reimagining, Christians led the way among the peoples of the Ottoman empire, and Armenians among the peoples of eastern Anatolia.<sup>68</sup> The Armenians were led in turn, however, by a politicized vanguard often living cosmopolitan, urban lives remote from rural eastern Anatolia—and in the case of the vastly influential intellectual developments stemming from Russian Armenia, even living outside the empire altogether—yet harking back to it as the ancestral home of their people. Thus whatever ideas were seeping into Armenian elite consciousness, and whatever economic strength some Armenians possessed, this was not matched in the majority of the Ottoman Armenian population, the peasantry, which was primarily concerned with its own grinding poverty, and was joined in its plight by Kurdish and Turkish peasants. Nor did Armenian political leaders have the wherewithal on their own to ameliorate the conditions of their brethren.

Up to the Eastern crisis, the only political weapon at the disposal of Armenian leaders was repeated appeals to the Porte, 529 being sent by the patriarchate from 1860 to 1870, for instance. Land theft, arbitrary provincial rule, kidnap and rape of Armenian women, and not infrequent unpunished murders of the menfolk were the primary grievances—precisely the issues of life and security that the 1839 *hat* had set itself to address. These petitions rarely produced any tangible effect except irritation amongst the subjects of their criticism. Nevertheless Armenian leaders at first retained faith in the reform agenda of the Porte, ascribing their ills to incompetent officialdom and Kurdish lawlessness.<sup>69</sup>

Patriarch Mkrtych Khrimian (1869–73) first prescribed a scheme wherein the Kurds would be disarmed and displaced to separate them from the Armenians, with nomadic Kurds forcibly settled in the new Kurdish region. He developed this theme into one of Armenian administrative autonomy, an approach similar to that adopted by the famous Armenian writer Raffi in his 1876 treatise *What Needs to be Done about Turkish Armenia*. The same proposition was taken up by Khrimian's successor, Nerses Varzhbedian, who officiated during the Eastern crisis, when the Armenian question was brought to the international table.<sup>70</sup>

### **The Internationalization of the Armenian Question**

Armenian demands acquired a new urgency during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–8. In that conflict, taking advantage of the breakdown of state authority,

both Ottoman and Persian Kurds, including irregulars in the Ottoman armies, murdered some 5–6,000 Armenians in the regions bordering Russian and Persian territory. Accordingly, the advance of the Russian troops into eastern Anatolia, with key Russian-Armenian generals at their head, brought security of life, not to mention Russian imperial rhetoric about liberation from the Ottoman yoke. Armenians had developed fears of Russian rule in previous decades in the light of tsarist attempts to interfere with church affairs in the Caucasian Armenian territories conquered in 1828. These fears were now subordinated, given the greater peril that Armenians faced under Ottoman rule.<sup>71</sup> However it should not be overlooked that many Kurdish peasants also welcomed the security provided by the Russian presence.<sup>72</sup>

Varzhabedian drew the obvious conclusion from the traditions of international horseplay over the Eastern question and opened negotiations with both Britain and Russia. He pressed both powers to the end of administrative autonomy in 'Armenia', threatening the British that unsatisfied Armenian aspirations would lead to future agitation resulting in full annexation to Russia. (For its part, Russia preferred the prospect of indirect influence in the Armenian provinces to that of Armenian autonomy.) British diplomats not only saw danger in Russian influence in Armenia but felt it inevitable that any autonomous region would fall prey to Russia at some future point, as well as pointing to the demographic problems of a Christian-administered state with a majority Muslim population. This explains the British vigour in 1878 in pressing to alter the proposed terms of the peace settlement away from any question of autonomy and towards simple reforms addressing such issues as Kurdish and Circassian depredations.<sup>73</sup>

For the Armenians, the Berlin Treaty spelt some small achievement but a much greater failure: success in raising the claim at the international table but failure to attain genuinely enforceable reforms. Khrimian reflected the latter verdict as on his return from negotiating as Armenian representative in Berlin he made a famous speech contrasting the violent, ostentatious, and successful methods of the Balkan revolutionaries with the pacific and unsuccessful methods of the Armenians, and spoke of the need for an armed liberation struggle.<sup>74</sup> For the Ottomans, the fact that the Armenians had solicited the intervention of the powers made them the instant objects of suspicion, like the Bulgarians and the Greeks before them.

Thus the international Armenian question was born as the Eastern question intersected with the agrarian question, the question of demographic change in Anatolia, and the development of Armenian national consciousness. If the Tanzimat failed to improve Muslim-Christian relations in Anatolia, and even exacerbated them, outside Asia Minor the Ottoman grip was weakening on Christian and non-Christian provinces alike. Some other

solution to Ottoman decline needed to be found, and it took the shape of the policies of Abdülhamid II.

### **Abdülhamid II and Pan-Islamism**

The last significant sultan came to the throne in 1876 at the height of the Eastern crisis and amid the collapse of Ottoman finances. Abdülhamid continued significant aspects of the reform agenda, contrary to his European reputation as a reactionary, a reputation inspired by his rejection of constitutionalism, his reappropriation to the sultanate of important prerogatives of the Porte, and his many repressions. Mirroring the agenda of his sometime contemporary Nicholas II In Russia, at the same time as retracting some of the more liberalizing political reforms, he vigorously pursued centralization and modernization. He was particularly concerned with developing internal communications and the railway infrastructure that would improve the efficiency of the Ottoman army and facilitate greater control over the imperial peripheries.<sup>75</sup> The advanced paranoia he developed on a personal level because of the fate of his predecessors, and on the imperial level by the losses of 1875–8, also spawned investment in a widespread intelligence network.

Abdülhamid moved away from the theoretical doctrine of greater religious inclusiveness and equality and towards that of pan-Islamism, an attempt to mobilize the empire's Muslims into a more robust political unit. Logically, non-Muslims would have to accept a return to a formally subordinate status. The sultan also appealed to Muslims beyond the empire, playing on the symbols of the Caliphate held by the Ottoman dynasty.<sup>76</sup> There was a functional as well as an ideological sense to this, for with the recent territorial losses the empire had for the first time a preponderance of Muslims in its population. Moreover as Ottoman control over the European provinces was eroded, Ottoman elites started to look eastwards, to see Anatolia as an indivisible whole, the seedbed for Muslim renewal. This too made practical sense, for increasingly the Ottomans had nowhere else to look. But the ramifications for Armenians would be serious indeed, particularly as the international political constellation for most of the 1880s meant that the reforms were effectively a dead letter.<sup>77</sup>

As early as 1879 the Kurdish leaders in the Russian and Persian border areas took advantage of their situation at a time of a poor harvest to demand a greatly increased tribute in cattle and agricultural equipment from the Armenians; this precipitated widespread starvation and tens of thousands of deaths. Reflecting the agrarian origins of many of their grievances, one of the first popular Armenian resistance movements was established under the name of 'the Agricultural Society' in 1882 in Erzurum province. Its main agenda was



orchestrating communal defence against the Kurds, given the utter failure of the state to provide this.<sup>78</sup> Other indigenous resistance groups developed in the early and mid-1880s, and were swiftly clamped down upon. One such was the Armenakan party that was founded in the Van province in 1885, seeking self-administration for the Armenians.

Abdülhamid's pan-Islamism was actually a pan-Sunniism, an appeal to the majority Muslim grouping of the empire. Fundamentalism was given an opportunity to flourish, and, in an attempt to appeal to the grassroots, Sufi sheikhs were promoted for propaganda purposes.<sup>79</sup> Groups such as the heterodox Alevis, many of whom were ethnically Kurdish, were subject to an orchestrated attempt to subsume them within the Sunni community.<sup>80</sup> Pan-Islamism spelt a rapprochement with the majority of the Kurds by way of reversing centrifugal tendencies among them, while Abdülhamid simultaneously promoted a large number of Kurdish leaders in order to prevent intra-Kurdish unity.<sup>81</sup>

One method of establishing central influence over Kurdish tribes, above the heads of local authorities, was the establishment in 1891 of a number of Kurdish cavalry regiments bearing the sultan's name—the Hamidiye. These rapidly grew in manpower to more than thirty thousand, in a region in which regular troops and police were sparse, which was an ominous sign for Armenians who had already suffered so many unlawful attacks. European observers agreed that the Hamidiye had been established in response to the development over the previous years of Armenian revolutionary and self-defence groups, and combating the parties and their actions would certainly form one of the areas of Hamidiye activity.<sup>82</sup> They were gifted grazing areas along the Russian border, underlining their nature as a sort of border militia designed to create an Islamic barrier between Russia and the Armenians.<sup>83</sup> They also took advantage of their effective immunity from prosecution and local control—it is anyway debatable how much control could realistically have been brought to bear—to plunder and terrorize widely in Armenian villages.

Matters were made yet worse for Armenians by the continued influx of muhajirs from the Caucasus, intensified by the 1877–8 war and the ensuing annexation of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum, and the establishment of the new Balkan Christian states.<sup>84</sup> (See Pl. 3.) In Turkish ethnic memory the suffering and dislocation experienced at this time is known as the *sökümü*, the disaster or 'unweaving'.<sup>85</sup> Not only did most of these Muslims head for Anatolia, for many it was their second eviction, if they had originally fled from the Caucasus to the Balkans. The government offered incentives for many of these to settle along rail routes,<sup>86</sup> and the policy of settling muhajirs in Armenian areas appears to have become systematic, putting more pressure on the land and increasing Armenian insecurity of life and property.<sup>87</sup>

Between 1870 and 1910 some 100,000 Armenians emigrated, and between 1890 and 1910 at least 741,000 hectares of Armenian property were illegally taken or confiscated by representatives of the state.<sup>88</sup>

Population transfer had been used since the fourteenth century to import Muslim colonists into conquered or depopulated regions to change the demographic balance and/or to reinvigorate these areas. After the Ottoman conquest of eastern Anatolia, for instance, Kurds had been encouraged to settle there in the midst of the Armenians.<sup>89</sup> The practice developed over time to incorporate punitive group deportations—the practice of *sürgün*, exile.<sup>90</sup> The difference in the decades of Ottoman decline was that transfers were not always determined by the Ottomans, being forced upon them as parts of the empire were removed.

Strategic muhajir settlement and even the creation of the Hamidiye bear comparison with Russian colonial practices. The use of Cossack and Russian settlers in the Caucasus, Siberia, and Central Asia was a standard method for Russia to consolidate control of conquered regions. Armed colonists provided willing militias to expel native populations and thereby incorporate their lands into greater Russia.<sup>91</sup> In eastern Anatolia, though the land was actually already under the suzerainty of Istanbul, muhajir settlement and behaviour served as a means of consolidating Ottoman control over lands whose future disposition had been threatened in 1877–8. This was a process of internal colonization.

It is no coincidence that a statistical battle began in 1878 between the Armenian Patriarchate and the Porte over the Armenian population of the eastern provinces, in an attempt by the former to undermine any demographic case for Armenian separatism. A restructuring of the provincial administration and a redrawing of the provincial boundaries served to further the goal of artificially reducing local Armenian majorities which the muhajir influx was achieving in reality, as well as reinforcing central control.<sup>92</sup> The Armenian population was also declining relative to its own prior growth trajectory. Many had fled to Russian territory after the withdrawal of the Russian armies in 1829 and 1878, as they would after the massacres of 1894–6.<sup>93</sup>

In the field of foreign affairs Abdülhamid originally looked to pursue a neutral policy towards the powers. Yet particularly as international tensions and polarizations intensified with the end of the 'Bismarck system' in 1890, he increasingly looked to play one off against another. Germany, though it would never commit itself to the defence of the empire, was used as a foil on one hand to its lapsed ally Russia, and on the other to Britain, of whom the sultan was highly resentful after successive 'interventions' and the loss of Cyprus and Egypt. Like Russia and Germany, Abdülhamid feared British influence among Anatolian Christians since the Treaty of Berlin, and feared most of all the

resurrection of the Armenian reform question that had been temporarily laid to rest in the early 1880s by the changing constellation of the powers.<sup>94</sup> While recognizing German strategic and economic goals in the Near East, the sultan believed Berlin's intimations that this influence would never be translated into intervention in Ottoman internal affairs; thus Germany would be particularly useful for resisting external pressure for Armenian (and Macedonian) reforms.<sup>95</sup>

German economic ambitions were actually important to the Porte since of all the powers Germany was best equipped to challenge British and French interests, which it went on so to do. Germany embarked upon a 'penetration pacifique' of the empire, drawing a sharp division between political and charitable aid to the Armenians—the latter would be provided by a growing missionary colony.<sup>96</sup> German intentions would be spelt out by State Secretary Jagow in the Foreign Ministry in May 1913: Germany's 'Orientpolitik' was predicated upon maintaining the Ottoman empire as long as possible, but meanwhile consolidating its economic interests in its Asiatic spheres of influence in order that if and when the empire did collapse, German political influence could be 'brought to bear'.<sup>97</sup> To the concern of Berlin, but far more so that of Abdülhamid, the sultan's agenda of consolidating control over the remaining Ottoman territories would again be threatened during the mid-1890s from within the Armenian community.

### **The Armenian Political Parties**

If Bulgaria's success in freeing itself in all but name from Ottoman suzerainty left a deep impression on Abdülhamid, it provided a model of agitation for Armenians adopting Khrimian's suggested line of action.<sup>98</sup> The Armenian nationalist political parties—foremost the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF; Dashnaksutiun) and the Hnchak party—were formed in the late 1880s in the comparative safety of Russian Armenia at about the same time as organized constitutionalist Muslim groups were being formed in opposition to Abdülhamid's autocratic rule.<sup>99</sup> If the Armenian national awakening had been a product of European notions of nationalism, the Armenian parties were at the outset heavily influenced by Russian populism and Marxism. As they worked out the balance of their doctrine, for both the Hnchaks and the ARF nationalism came to predominate over socialism. The Hnchak goal was the creation of an independent socialist Armenia; the ARF's was, as a first stage at least, an autonomous Armenia under Ottoman suzerainty.<sup>100</sup>

Two things must be said of the Armenian nationalist parties. First, the grievances that they sought to highlight were all too real, yet this does not mean that such grievances had to be expressed through the medium of

intensified nationalism. Secondly, nationalist organizations had developed or were developing in almost all the Christian populations of the empire, so objectively there should have been nothing exceptional in Ottoman eyes about their formation in the Armenian community; but by the same token—since nationalism was being expressed ubiquitously—it is probable that Armenian political nationalism would have found expression irrespective of the extent of the Armenian plight in the eastern provinces. The parties certainly desired reform, but their version of reform was not just a desire for equality and security but for a very specific form of national status. Thus the parties were neither a particular 'provocation' of the state nor the only 'logical' expression of Armenian suffering, though they have been portrayed as the former in Turkish nationalist historiography and as the latter in much 'Armenian' scholarship. From the view of the palace, the significant characteristic of the parties was the agenda they shared with the previously successful Bulgarian revolutionaries, and the geographical location of the community they sought to 'liberate'.

The emergence of the parties signified the end of organized Armenian pressure for evolutionary change in the Ottoman empire, the path still advised by, amongst others, American missionaries.<sup>101</sup> In a significant overstatement of its own strength and importance, and one which could hardly have been better calculated to raise Ottoman hackles, the first flier of the ARF declared its intention to 'fight until its last drop of blood for the liberation of the fatherland'. The third flier claimed the ARF would set for itself 'the exact hour of the common uprising in Turkish Armenia'.<sup>102</sup> Similar statements emerged from the Hnchaks.<sup>103</sup> This agenda was exploited by Abdülhamid to play on Kurdish fears of the loss of Kurdish territory to Armenians.<sup>104</sup>

In the early 1890s, the parties, particularly the Hnchaks, infiltrated Ottoman Armenia to coordinate revolutionary activity and import arms.<sup>105</sup> Following the model of Bulgarian nationalists, the Hnchaks led the movement to recapture the attention of the powers, sometimes by ostentatious, terrorist methods and assassinations that also reveal a debt to the Russian populists. Not infrequently, these methods were turned on wealthy Armenians and Armenian opponents as well as oppressors of Armenians. Terrorism also served theoretically to inspire the peasantry which, according to Marxist orthodoxy, was far from developing the appropriate consciousness for mass action.<sup>106</sup> Ordinary Armenians, while suffering the many inequities of Ottoman rule in its decades of decline, also suffered in the reprisals brought down by the often violent and reckless policies of the revolutionaries, though on the other hand there were certainly instances where the fedayee fighters of the revolutionary parties served to protect Armenian communities. The ordinary Armenians themselves, like their Bulgarian counterparts during the Eastern crisis, evinced little enthusiasm for the nationalists' actions.

Contrary to the assertions of William Langer, there is no convincing evidence that the revolutionary leaders as a whole *desired* their actions to bring mass Armenian suffering as a way of attracting attention, though certain individuals did have this in mind.<sup>107</sup> More importantly, it is clear that the parties were prepared to *accept* Armenian suffering as a probable by-product of their behaviour. The relationship between protection, agitation, and gesturing to the outside world played itself out in a chain of calamitous events in the mid-1890s. The chain began with the first instance of large-scale, nationalist-influenced Armenian resistance in 1893–4 in the Sasun region of Bitlis province, and ended in slaughter on a huge scale.

### The 1894–6 Massacres and their Aftermath

The series of killings that took 80–100,000 Armenian lives directly and tens of thousands indirectly in 1894–6 were actually composed of three more or less distinct phases. The first was the Sasun rising and its bloody repression; the second was an empire-wide sequence of massacres in autumn and winter 1895; the third involved Armenian protest in Istanbul and unrest in Van province, both of which were again met with slaughter. Research on the second phase, which in terms of numbers killed was by far the most significant, remains in its infancy, and debates continue to rage about the extent of central control and intent in the massacres. This brief survey draws heavily on the most nuanced available analyses.<sup>108</sup>

To the Ottomans, mountainous Sasun, like Armenian Zeytun, which had been the subject of assaults in the name of 'centralization' in the 1860s, was an administrative anomaly. It was predominantly populated by Armenians living in a feudal system beneath Kurdish tribes, but also enjoying extensive autonomy from the state, such that the Armenians bore arms and had not paid any central taxes since the 1860s. It was thus a convenient base of action for the Hnchak party. A Hnchak presence was built up from 1890, and clashes occurred with Kurds over the following two years.<sup>109</sup> The first clashes with the state authorities came in 1893 as Armenians resisted the attempt by the governor of the province to impose centralized taxation, assaulting him in the process.

In 1894 the authorities of Bitlis again sought to impose what was effectively double taxation on the Sasuntsis, but this time they had been sure to obtain in advance the support of Kurdish nomads against the Armenians. Again, the Armenians refused to pay until they were properly protected from Kurdish impositions. Kurdish nomads encircled Armenian villages and in August widespread fighting broke out between the two groups. As the Kurds proved unable to defeat the Armenians, regular army units were called in, and over

the following two weeks the scattered, beaten Armenians were hunted down and killed irrespective of age, sex, or fighting status, with a probable minimum of 3,000 victims. Mass rape also figured.

This episode triggered an even more important chain of events, beginning with the external pressure brought to bear on the Ottoman government by horrified Europeans. British pressure resulted in Anglo-French-Russian participation in an Ottoman investigative commission, which in turn led to a British proposal in May 1895 for new reforms 'to give security and contentment to the Armenians by obtaining for them a fair share in the Administration' of the six 'Armenian' provinces, including at the level of assistants to the provincial governors and in the police force. The proposal also suggested forming the provinces into a single administrative unit to be overseen by a European-appointed control commission, and predictably met with formidable opposition from the sultan.

The next significant link in the chain of events came with a Hnchak-organized demonstration in Istanbul on 30 September 1895, designed to emphasize the Armenian reform demands more to the Great Powers than to the Porte. Many of the demonstrators were armed and were obviously expecting trouble, which they found in the form of an organized mob, supported by the police and the military. Dozens of demonstrators were killed, and Muslim groups also attacked Armenians elsewhere in the city who had been uninvolved in the demonstration.

The demonstration triggered the killing of hundreds of Armenians in the provincial centre of Trabzon on the Black Sea, and greatly agitated inter-ethnic tensions across the empire. Yet the most important single catalyst to the general massacres that were to begin within a few weeks was the Sultan's capitulation on 17 October to the reform demands of the powers, demands that had been given added force by the Istanbul demonstration.<sup>110</sup> The ensuing massacres were initially concentrated in the urban centres of the six provinces, but spread from the middle of November not only to rural districts but to western and southern Anatolia. Such Armenian resistance as could be mustered was ineffectual against the massed ranks of willing perpetrators, except in Zeytun and a few other settlements. In the vast majority of massacres, Armenian victims exceeded Muslim in the range of hundreds to one. The culminating and perhaps emblematic killing came in Urfa late in December 1895, as around 3,000 Armenians were incinerated in the cathedral in which they had sought refuge.

While plunder and smaller-scale incidents continued through the early months of 1896, the next significant events occurred in the spring and summer. Armenian revolutionaries were particularly active in Van province, avenging themselves against Kurds whom the authorities had not punished for their part in the foregoing massacres. Once again, however, the central

government interpreted the revolutionaries' actions—including minor clashes with security forces—as a dangerous revolt, and ordered severe repression. While a quite professional defensive campaign was being conducted by the revolutionaries in the city of Van, elsewhere in the city and the province perhaps 3,500 Armenians were killed by Kurds and other Muslims. Amazingly, however, this was not yet the final throw of the dice for the revolutionaries, who still sought to involve the powers in meaningful Ottoman reform.

In August 1896, the ARF came out of the Hnchak's shadow as it staged a remarkable coup in Istanbul. The revolutionaries had chosen their target carefully: it was the headquarters of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, the seat of foreign capital and economic control in the Ottoman empire. Their demand was autonomy of the six provinces; their threat, to blow up the bank along with its 150 hostages. Remarkably, the ARF-men contrived to escape unharmed, their exit facilitated by French intervention. The state had its revenge against an estimated 6,000 ordinary Armenians, however, as local Muslims and Kurdish migrants, all identically armed, plus a Hamidiye regiment, set about illustrating the price of the revolutionaries' actions.

One of the leaders of the bank occupation, Garegin Pasdermadjian, later rhetorically asked whether the powers had not warned the sultan only the previous year that further disturbances would lead to the landing of battle-ships to restore order? He doubtless had in mind a clause of the Treaty of Paris that provided for such action, as well as various British threats, and a pointless combined naval demonstration by the powers in 1895, the only measure of protest over the sultan's Armenian policy on which international unanimity could be agreed.<sup>11</sup> Pasdermadjian had not yet learned that promises of intervention were entirely conditional on propitious international circumstances, and he had gambled in Armenian lives.

The massacres aroused as much British public outrage and sympathy as had the 'Bulgarian atrocities', with Gladstone again posturing as the champion of liberal sentiment, pressing the Liberal Rosebery government for unilateral action and consequently helping to undermine it. Salisbury's Conservatives returned to power in June 1895 and would preside over the period of the major massacres. Interestingly, Britain's global position now meant that Salisbury could express his own and his public's distaste for continued Ottoman rule in serious musings about a final political division of the empire according to the lines of the *de facto* great power spheres of economic interest. At a time of diminished British interest in the Ottoman future, British statesmen could afford to pursue something approximating a genuinely humanitarian policy (albeit one still heavily coloured by sentiments of Christian confraternity), at least in terms of their pronouncements. And when it became clear that no

other power was prepared to risk the existing balance of power to force the sultan to bring an end to the 1895 massacres, Salisbury even considered unilaterally sending British warships through the Dardanelles, yet his cabinet and the Admiralty were opposed.<sup>112</sup> Abdülhamid could continue his dilatory policies, claiming that reforms could only be introduced when his realm had been pacified.<sup>113</sup>

Having fought to take the Armenian reforms and Armenian lands out of Russian hands as Disraeli's Foreign Secretary in 1878, Salisbury would have been only too glad in 1895–6 for Russian cooperation in forcing the sultan's hand. Yet by the combination of its earlier 'Armenian' and imperial policies, Britain had alienated not only the sultan but also those powers without whose cooperation intervention would not have been possible short of risking European war. At the zenith of pro-Armenian sentiment, Britain's ability to help the Armenians was at its nadir. Salisbury himself therefore finally came to oppose counter-productive, 'impotent threats', arguing that 'the ordinary rules of political science' must prevail, irrespective of Christian sentiment. He eventually ruled that tensions should not be aggravated by open demonstrations of sympathy for the Armenians.<sup>114</sup> His tentative proposals for Ottoman partition met with no support from Germany. Though public opinion had been agitated in Germany, to the extent that the Kaiser notionally entertained the idea of deposing the sultan, Germany's wider imperial goals were much more important, including taking the opportunity to exacerbate any Anglo-Russian antagonism over the issue.<sup>115</sup> (See Pl. 4.)

Russia was also opposed to British reform pressure. In the 1890s it was concentrating on its imperial project in the Far East and therefore wished for stability in the Near East, if it still kept avaricious eyes on the straits. As for Armenia, Russian policy remained as it had been stated in 1890: namely that Petersburg did not want to foster another Bulgaria—another 'ungrateful' new state.<sup>116</sup> Russia was also worried about the influence of the new Armenian revolutionary parties threatening its rule in the Caucasus, and of Britain amongst the Ottoman Armenians. In its Near Eastern policy it enjoyed the support of its new alliance partner, France.<sup>117</sup> In the face of this opposition to real pressure on the sultan, the 1895 reform programme remained the dead letter that the Treaty of Berlin stipulations had been. With the outbreak of Greco-Turkish war over Crete in 1897, a conflict that had some of its origins in knock-on nationalist activism from the Armenian crisis, the issue was completely submerged for a decade.<sup>118</sup>

The external observer might agree with Gerard Libaridian that

The game of musical chairs played by England, France, Germany, Russia...—alternating as 'defenders of Ottoman territorial integrity' and 'protectors of Christian minorities'—allowed the Sultan's government to exchange its economic prerogatives



and many of its sovereign territorial rights in outlying areas for the license to resolve domestic unrest in the core of the empire as it saw fit.<sup>119</sup>

In terms of their function for the Ottoman state, the 1894–6 massacres combined political elements of a 'cull' of a proto-national element, including terrorization and expropriation, with a neo-conservative religious backlash against an 'inferior', upstart religious group. They were also a warning to Armenian nationalists and the powers not to press the reform issue. The extent of Abdülhamid's direct complicity in the full spectrum of the massacres is, however, unclear. There can be no doubt of his responsibility for the Istanbul killings on his own doorstep, nor the Van killings of 1896, actions perhaps encouraged because by that time he realized threats of great power intervention were illusory. Yet fear of intervention does seem to have influenced his actions towards the original Sasun rising since, despite initial orders mercilessly to crush the Armenians, he swiftly developed qualms about the external ramifications this might have, as was the case with troubles in Macedonia at around the same time.<sup>120</sup> In the giant second phase of Armenian killings, claims of extensive central direction are undermined by the weakness of the state's infrastructure of control in the eastern provinces in particular. Moreover, the Hamidiye did not play anywhere near as significant a role in this phase as is often attributed to them.<sup>121</sup> Ordinary Muslims and muhajirs came to the fore, particularly Kurds (including some who had not hitherto taken part in abuse of Armenians), and, notably, Muslim religious leaders, students, and brotherhoods.

It may well be that the sultan was not always precisely informed about the extent and proximate cause of the massacres in the provinces, himself believing, and frequently being told, that Armenian insurrection was responsible, while rejecting reports by European diplomats as self-interested propaganda. This is not to absolve him of guilt, since he bore the primary responsibility of inculcating the atmosphere of anti-Christian, Islamic chauvinism in which the massacres took place. Moreover his policy of pan-Islamism had involved sending to the provinces religious emissaries who were in close contact with many of the leading local perpetrators. The most important factor, however, in encouraging the actions of private citizens and communal leaders outside the state hierarchy was the sense that they were acting in accordance with the true interests of the state and with the support of Abdülhamid. For his part, the sultan could not oppose the actions that had emerged in large part from the general policies he had sponsored, for his first priority was not to alienate the Muslims of the provinces. There can also be little doubt that he approved of the general thrust of the measures.<sup>122</sup>

Stephan Astourian is correct to emphasize the participation of many individual Muslims out of economic jealousy, a motive that could only have

been strengthened by the prevailing conditions of grave economic depression. Participation in killing could also serve as a way for Kurds and Turks to integrate themselves in 'an active, mobilized community, . . . teaching a lesson to the infidels'.<sup>123</sup> Certainly, many Muslims travelled long distances to involve themselves in the killing and plunder. Transgressions against supposedly protected dhimmis could be justified on the basis that by appeals to the powers the Armenians had rejected Ottoman rule and therefore broken their contract with the state. Jelle Verheij argues convincingly that this factor explains why the victims were predominantly Armenian males: males occupied the public sphere, and therefore were more overtly 'political', while women, large numbers of whom were raped, kidnapped, enslaved, and forcibly converted, were not.

The attitude of local Ottoman officials to the massacres varied from place to place, as did that of troops and the police, who in some instances participated and in some did not. Yet these echelons were united in their belief that Armenians had in some sense provoked what was happening, and that Muslim actions were only a response. This explains why in the aftermath of massacre it was almost exclusively Armenians who were arrested. The very existence of Armenian revolutionary parties contributed to this feeling, the limited numbers, resources, and effectiveness of the party activists notwithstanding, and much was made of the Hnchak rhetoric of liberation and revolt and of putative plans for attacks on Muslims. Further grist to this mill was provided by well-publicized Armenian 'confessions' of responsibility—extracted under torture—for inciting massacres. There was, too, a general rumour abroad that Britain was behind the actions of the revolutionaries. While this was certainly not true, it is obvious that Britain was one of the key powers to whom the revolutionaries were trying to appeal, and Hamidian intelligence was active in surveillance of Armenian revolutionaries operating from Britain.<sup>124</sup>

The actions of the political parties in 1894–6 were undoubtedly sometimes catalysts for massacre, as was the reform plan of 1895, though this is of course a world away from suggesting that in any sense they justified the killings. As Mark Levene puts it, 'by entering into an armed dynamic with the state while projecting themselves as a national movement, [the parties] provided an open invitation for Abdul Hamid to portray all Armenians as a monolithic fifth column'; and 'by peaking [in the 1890s] without any genuine military capability to carry out their agenda, they not only stymied their own mobilisation, but left the Armenian population weakened'.<sup>125</sup>

In the years after 1896, under extensive Hamidian repression, the ARF, now the most important Armenian political party after a split in Hnchak ranks, shifted its activities back to Caucasian Armenia. Yet despite the failure to achieve tangible great power intervention in 1896, at its 1898 world congress

the ARF reaffirmed that 'without European intervention it would be impossible to bring to a successful conclusion the struggle to free our people'. 'Efforts must be funnelled into the task of bringing about intervention through all means.' Reforms, it still argued, and as it would again during the First World War, were only 'granted a people up in arms, in protest'. In order to attract European attention, while arms and a revolutionary spirit were to be introduced into Anatolia, demonstrations as such should continue to be aimed at Istanbul, the most visible of cities and that where European interests were most strongly invested.<sup>126</sup>

The ARF would continue into the early 1900s to prepare Ottoman Armenians for 'self-defence'. Notably it was involved in another insurrection in Sasun in 1904, and tried to assassinate the sultan in 1905.<sup>127</sup> In the Caucasus it went on to orchestrate resistance against Russification campaigns and against Azerbaijanis in a 1905-6 conflict, until the tsarist 'Stolypin reaction' forced it underground in 1908, just as it re-emerged in the Ottoman empire in the full light of the CUP revolution.<sup>128</sup>

### **The CUP Comes to Power**

Russia's military defeat at the hands of Japan in 1905 had two marked effects. It encouraged Ottoman nationalism and constitutionalism by providing an example of a non-European state defeating a Great Power by adopting Western methods. Ottoman constitutionalism was further boosted by the ensuing 1905 revolution in Russia and the 1906 revolution in Persia. Conversely, the Ottoman empire was under renewed threat, for, having been frustrated in the Far East, Russian imperialist ambitions now returned to the Near East. After the 1905 defeat Russia sought accommodation with Japan's ally Britain, which was happy to oblige out of wariness of Germany. This rapprochement manifested itself in a 1907 Anglo-Russian agreement to divide Persia into zones of influence that simultaneously entrenched Russian influence there and in the adjacent eastern Ottoman lands, and gave Britain a measure of control over the land approaches to India. In turn this rendered British support of the Ottomans even less necessary than it had become with the British acquisition of Egypt. Moreover Anglo-French tensions over the eastern Mediterranean had been removed by the Entente Cordiale of 1904, meaning that the three powers that would ally in the First World War were already converging on their Near Eastern policies.

The CUP coup of July 1908 began when Salonika-based revolutionaries heard of Anglo-Russian moves to solve the Macedonian question by the time-honoured method of imposing foreign control under nominal Ottoman sovereignty. Rumours of the division of the empire were rife.<sup>129</sup> The latest

solution to Ottoman decline, the 'second constitutional period', began theoretically as an attempt to reintroduce pre-Hamidian notions of a shared Ottomanism. But though some less ethnocentric groupings existed within Turkish revolutionary circles, formed around some of the leaders who had previously operated largely outside the empire, in Paris and Geneva, the revolution was conducted in Muslim and, increasingly, specifically Turkish interests.

The real power-holders, who came from Salonika, clearly did not desire reform for reform's sake for the non-Muslim groups, and had explicitly rejected the quasi-federalism of the dissident 'Society for Private Initiative and Decentralization', aligning themselves with the centralizing and nationalist faction of the external opposition.<sup>130</sup> If the CUP movement was 'liberal up to a point', 'the nationalistic elements far outweighed the liberal. Little thought was given to the non-Turkish elements in the Ottoman Empire by the victorious Young Turks other than that they must perforce all become Ottomans in a revived and powerful empire.'<sup>131</sup> The growing, exclusive Turkish nationalism among CUP leaders in the first decade of the twentieth century still seems to have foreseen, at least as a matter of pragmatism, the coexistence of different Muslim groups under a modernizing Turkish hegemony. Thus for instance it was important not to alienate Kurds, hence the persistent failure of the CUP to address the grievances of eastern Anatolian Armenian peasants.<sup>132</sup>

Contrary to common perception, the alliance of convenience between Young Turks in opposition and the ARF had been an uneasy one from the beginning. The Balkan secessions of the nineteenth century meant that the CUP suspected non-Muslim revolutionaries of having anti-state rather than anti-regime goals.<sup>133</sup> The CUP had not shown any real sympathy during the massacres of the 1890s, and indeed would go on to incorporate in its regional committees local notables who had actually been instrumental in organizing those massacres.<sup>134</sup> The aims of the ARF, as stated at its 1907 world congress, were incongruent with the centralizing agenda of the CUP: they entailed a broad local autonomy for 'Turkish Armenia' based on federal ties within Ottoman boundaries.<sup>135</sup> The Hnchaks did not collaborate with the CUP.<sup>136</sup>

The Salonikan section of the CUP was formed from an echelon of bureaucrats and soldiers dissatisfied with the way that the empire was being run.<sup>137</sup> Many of these men had been exposed to Western intellectual trends and instructors in the secular, Europeanized training institutions established under the Tanzimat, notably the Harbiye (military academy), the Mülkiye (civil service academy), and the Tibbiye (medical school).<sup>138</sup> Here, alongside an ardent Hamidian patriotism inspired by some of the educational reforms made since 1876,<sup>139</sup> a 'social Darwinism' was also imbibed in the

same half-digested manner that it was among many other nationalists who found their inspiration less in Darwin himself than in the crude misapplications of his theories handed down by Herbert Spencer and others.<sup>140</sup> This sort of Manichaean thinking acquired an immediate relevance in the years of imperial decline. The CUP's goal was a redistribution of power in favour of themselves and their interests, and a more vigorous defence of the Ottoman construct and the 'national' interest group to which they allied themselves.<sup>141</sup>

A disproportionate number of CUP leaders originated in peripheral Ottoman lands, thus particularly sensitizing them to territorial diminution and the sufferings of dispossessed Muslims.<sup>142</sup> This also made them particularly susceptible to ideas of national re-expansion to incorporate Muslim populations to the east, as expressed through pan-Turkism, one of many pan-national ideologies in vogue in Europe at the time. Both tendencies were reinforced from 1908 by the wide dissemination in the Istanbul press of articles by Caucasian Muslim authors, elaborating on the tsarist repression of Muslims as the culmination of centuries of Russification and Christianization, and calling for Ottoman solidarity in resistance.<sup>143</sup>

The quintessentially Western ideology of nationalism was the import that drove the genocide, the impulse 'to streamline, make homogeneous, organise people to be uniform in some sense... [to] compete, survive and develop'.<sup>144</sup> CUP nationalism was a late developer, later than the famously late national unification drives of Germany and Italy that arguably paved the way for the authoritarianism and ethnic exclusivism of fascism. It was also shaped by, and in reaction to, the ethno-nationalist movements in the Balkans. Over the course of the nineteenth century and into the beginning of the twentieth, the basis of nationalism everywhere shifted from liberalism to authoritarianism, statism, and ethnocentrism. In the Ottoman empire, under an increasingly secular and ethnically defined movement, any remaining vestige of religious obligation towards non-Muslims was now irrelevant.

For a while the CUP pursued *laissez-faire* economic policies. Though in opposition some 'Young Turks' had identified the dangers of Western economic penetration, its destructive effects on other cultures from the Native American to the Sudanese to the Chinese,<sup>145</sup> and though the Japanese example further illustrated how a protectionist, interventionist polity could thrust itself forward, the problem of insufficient capital and a non-existent bourgeoisie remained. If anything, under the CUP the empire was initially opened up yet further to foreign capital and enterprise, including for the first time in any substantial measure that of the USA, as the CUP tried to maintain good relationships with all the powers while diversifying the sources of investment and, thereby, limiting the extent of any one country's control.<sup>146</sup> The CUP also

hoped in vain that its commitment to reform would result in the powers abandoning the capitulations.<sup>147</sup>

The second constitutional period was one of political embattlement for the CUP. Bosnia-Herzegovina was formally annexed by Austria-Hungary in the very year of the coup, Bulgaria declared outright independence, and Greece finally subsumed Crete. Together these events tended to discredit any form of liberal constitutionalism. 1909 saw an attempted counter-coup by reactionary forces, which in turn led the CUP to depose Abdülhamid on 27 April. Revolts by the Druses south of Damascus followed in 1910, as did revolts in Albania and Yemen in 1910 and 1911. Then came the Tripolitanian war and ensuing losses to Italy, and the Balkan wars in 1912–13 in which Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria seized Macedonia and then proceeded to fight amongst themselves over the spoils. Of these developments the most significant were the final ones, with the loss of most of the remaining parts of Rumeli, and secession even of the Muslim province of Albania, an event that accelerated the transition from a general Muslim consciousness in the CUP to a specifically Turkish one.<sup>148</sup>

The CUP was discredited by its failure to keep the empire together in the Turco-Italian war and was ousted in the summer of 1912 by another group of officers, only to return in a second coup in January 1913. The new ruling triumvirate consisted of Talât, who was to become Minister of the Interior and subsequently Grand Vizier; Enver, who was to become Minister of Defence; and Cemal, who was to become Minister of the Marine and Governor of Syria. (See Pls. 5–6.) They were answerable to and supported by the party's hugely influential, secretive central committee.

### **The 1909 Cilician Massacres**

Despite early noises about intercommunal solidarity, Armenians were awakened to their limited prospects under the CUP as early as the spring of 1909, when as many as 20,000 were murdered in some 200 villages in Cilicia, alongside several hundred other Christians. Up to 2,000 Muslims were killed by Armenian resisters. There is no absolute clarity about the proximate causes and the level of governmental responsibility in this massacre, for like the later genocide much of the reconstructive work has had to rely on European diplomatic and consular evidence. As with the 1895–6 massacres, we can identify the general significance of a combination of factors that will by now be familiar.<sup>149</sup>

Muslim resentment about the constitutional freedoms given to Christians was a major precipitant, as, inadvertently, were rather ostentatious Armenian nationalistic celebrations of this freedom. (A similar pattern had been

established in anti-Christian riots in Aleppo in 1859.<sup>150</sup>) Economic jealousy was again important, and many Muslim merchants benefited from Armenian losses. Demographic shifts were also significant, particularly given a backdrop of recent famine. Cilicia had become a reception area both for Christians fleeing the 1890s massacres and Muslim migrant workers and Balkan and Caucasian muhajirs: migrant Kurds, Turcomans, and Circassians would all be prominent in attacking Armenians in similar social classes.

In an atmosphere of competition, and in the context of new-found Armenian freedoms, the increased number of Armenians in Cilicia led to rumours that Armenians wished to establish an independent kingdom there. Tensions were only heightened by the fact that the constitution permitted Armenians to obtain arms, and some nationalist leaders had strenuously encouraged Armenians to exercise this right. Both Muslims and Armenians accused each other of purposive mass armament. For the Armenians, the perceived need to arm was heightened by periodic individual murders by Muslims.<sup>151</sup>

The attempted counter-coup in Istanbul of 12–13 April provided the immediate triggers for the massacres, as reactionaries in the military called for the restoration of Islamic law. They were put down by forces loyal to the CUP on 24 April. Further rumour-mongering and individual quarrels also served as both catalyst and pretext. During both phases massacres began in the town of Adana and swiftly spread to the rest of Cilicia, ending on 27 April, though incidents continued until the end of May. What was most disturbing for the Armenians was the participation of the local authorities, the police, and the military in the massacres.

The CUP centre in Istanbul may not be held directly responsible since its authority for much of the time had been compromised by the counter-coup. Moreover, many CUP members and Armenians worked together to protect the constitution. Nevertheless, the orders emanating from the Ministry of the Interior to Adana at the beginning of the massacres were more concerned with restoring order for the purposes of preventing external intervention than of protecting Armenians. Local CUP leaders in Cilicia were also involved in instigating and ordering massacres; after all, many had been drawn from the ranks of pre-revolutionary regional elites and had past records in attacking or condoning attacks on Armenians. Finally, many of the soldiers loyal to the CUP who were sent to Cilicia after 24 April also took part in the massacres, though there is no proof that this was on senior orders. In the aftermath, not only was there no substantive attempt to punish the perpetrators or restore Armenian property, but some of the culpable officials were left in their jobs, and the commissions of enquiry assigned to investigate mimicked their Hamidian forebears in their keen interest in blaming insurrectionary Armenians. They could find no evidence to substantiate these claims.<sup>152</sup>

External involvement in all of this was minimal. The British could do nothing on their own, but for good measure Foreign Secretary Grey justified London's inactivity in terms that perfectly illustrate the contorted nature of its earlier attempts to balance pressure for reform with support of Ottoman integrity. A declaration against the massacres, he suggested, 'might be a direct incitement to the Armenians to create disturbances which might provoke retaliation on the part of the Turks in the shape of massacres with a view to bring about the intervention of the Powers on behalf of the Armenians'.<sup>153</sup>

### **Turkish–Armenian Polarization in the Era of the Balkan Wars**

Following the attempted counter-coup, the Young Turk liberals were left even more decidedly on the sidelines and a 'law of associations' forbade the formation of political associations linked to non-Turkish ethnic or national goals.<sup>154</sup> Measures of enforced cultural Turkification, revolving particularly around language use, were introduced during 1910 and 1911, and more Turkic and other Muslims from abroad, particularly Bosnia-Herzegovina, were encouraged to immigrate to be settled around railway lines.<sup>155</sup>

Vahakn N. Dadrian contends that the 1910 CUP congress provided 'the outlines of a genocidal scheme';<sup>156</sup> others have focused on the 1911 congress.<sup>157</sup> With their rhetoric of enforced homogenization, the conferences certainly illustrated the breakdown of remaining notions of inter-religious inclusivity, and they were the final straw for the ARF, which after vainly trying to pressure the CUP to rein in its chauvinist faction and to improve conditions in the eastern provinces, fully broke away from its alliance in May 1912.<sup>158</sup> Yet from the Ottoman point of view, 'Turkifying' the Armenians need not be equated with an intent to kill them, as the following case may illustrate. Ahmed Riza, leader of the Parisian CUP in opposition, had written in the late nineteenth century that one of the chief faults in the Ottoman system was that it had been too tolerant of non-Muslim minorities; enforced conversion would have preempted any secessionist difficulties.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, any form of national separatism from the non-Turkish minorities was, he considered, treachery. However, Riza would not have countenanced murder. From 1912, from his position in the Ottoman Senate, outside the power centre of the new CUP-dominated government, he became one of the most vocal critics of CUP policies, including later the Armenian deportations.<sup>160</sup>

The Balkan wars of 1912–13 and the CUP internal coup certainly signified the death of any remnant of CUP pluralism.<sup>161</sup> The empire's remaining European lands in Macedonia were torn away with the exception of the plain up to Edirne/Adrianople. Sixty thousand square miles and some four million



inhabitants, along with the empire's most commercially and agriculturally advanced lands, were lost. The wars and their attendant atrocities and ethnic cleansing, in which Muslims were the primary victims, accelerated the influx of refugees into Anatolia, greatly embittering relations between the empire and its successor states (and also between those states). The loss of more predominantly Christian territories and the entry into Anatolia of 400,000 more muhajirs only increased the great Muslim predominance in an empire that had in the mid-nineteenth century been approximately 56 per cent non-Muslim.

Though there is no definite causal relationship between the population displacements and the coming Armenian genocide, it is beyond dispute that Muslim suffering on this scale, and the indifference of the outside world to it, heavily coloured late Ottoman perspectives, providing a model of the 'solution' of population problems and accentuating an already brutalized ethos of state demographic policy in the region. The wars cast Muslim-Christian relations into the sharpest of relief, with widespread Christian draft evasion and Ottoman Bulgarian and Greek soldiers, though not Armenians, swapping sides to fight alongside their ethno-religious brethren. Accordingly, the state sanctioned deportations of small groups of Christians from the vicinity of military communications routes.<sup>162</sup>

Taner Akçam has revealed a potentially significant outcome of these developments in his discoveries about CUP thinking on the demographic restructuring of Anatolia in the aftermath of the war. Shortly after Enver's appointment as Minister of Defence in January 1914, a series of secret meetings was held to discuss the cleansing of Anatolia of its non-Muslim 'tumours'. Implementation began, it might be argued, with the dispossession and harassing of the Greeks of Anatolia, and Akçam suggests that the relocation of Armenians to Syria and Iraq was also envisaged.<sup>163</sup> Of course there is a huge gulf between speculation and even planning on one hand and execution on the other, particularly on the scale that the war years would bring. Nevertheless the intimate relationship between intention and contingency was in the process of being illustrated by expulsions of perhaps 130,000 ethnic Greeks to Greece from the Aegean islands, Thrace, and then the western Anatolian coast in 1913-14. The contexts of these expulsions were the Greek role in the Balkan war, the migration of Muslims from Greek territory, the loss of Macedonia and the mutual ethnic cleansing and refugee movements that had taken place between Bulgaria and Turkey, and the escalating prospect of war with Greece over the disposition of the Aegean islands.<sup>164</sup>

There was also a significant economic angle to the attacks on the Ottoman Greeks, for 1913-14 saw a concerted CUP attempt to create a Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie at the expense of Christians. Drawing heavily on the model of the

'national economy' devised by the German theorist Friedrich List, the CUP regarded it as essential in the formation of a centrally controlled and independent economic system that the key positions in the economy be occupied by 'reliable' citizens whose interests coincided with those of the state.<sup>165</sup> The prescription was for a reorganization of economic resources in favour of 'ethnically desirable' citizens and therefore of the ethnically defined state itself. The new bourgeoisie would also complement the process of effective Islamization of the peasantry that had unfolded in much of rural eastern Anatolia by the dispossession of Armenians and by muhajir settlement. Together these would be the vital elements for a modernizing, Muslim-Turkic national economy in Anatolia.

Trade boycotts had been part of a general strategy suggested for use against Christians by Young Turk radicals even before the 1908 coup. Tellingly, force was given to the strategy in 1908 by Greece's sequestration of Crete and, particularly, Austria-Hungary's formal annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina after decades of de facto rule and incorporation of the economy of the region within Vienna's sphere. Boycott was first used in revenge against Austria, and then against Ottoman Christians, indicating again the way that internal and external 'enemies' were associated in the mind of Muslim Ottomans.<sup>166</sup> 1909 saw abortive trade sanctions against the Ottoman Greeks that were reintroduced in 1910 and then with much more energy in 1913-14. The anti-Greek policy reached its conclusion under the CUP during those years and in 1915-16 in a combination of population engineering and economic appropriation, using boycotts, murders, terrorization, and then deportation of parts of the western Anatolian Greek population.<sup>167</sup> There are some parallels here with the Chinese Boxer rebellion, a violent rejection of Western economic control that itself turned upon local Christians. In 1913-14, Armenian businesses were also sporadically boycotted as the attention of the CUP was returned to the Armenian question at a critical moment.<sup>168</sup>

The end of the Balkan wars saw the final resurrection of the reform question for the eastern Anatolian provinces. Now that the Armenian political parties were officially no longer cooperating with the CUP, Armenians inside and outside the empire felt free to appeal again to the Great Powers, and Russia was only too happy to avail itself of an opportunity to re-establish its imperial influence in the Ottoman dominions. A reform plan was consequently promoted with Russian support by the Catholicos of all Armenians, whose See was at Etchmiadzin in Russian Armenia. Like the scheme suggested in 1878, it was brought up at a time of Turkish weakness just as the defeated empire was agreeing peace terms with its Balkan opponents at the London conference.<sup>169</sup>

In the revised form in which it was finally foisted onto the Ottoman empire in February 1914, the plan entailed the creation of two zones out of the six

'Armenian' provinces and Trebizond on the Black Sea coast, to be administered by neutral European inspectors approved by the Porte. For most ordinary Ottoman Armenians, though not the nationalists, reform was not necessarily a step towards autonomy or union with Russian Armenians. It was rather a means of ensuring greater social justice and security of life and property under a regime that was growing ever more discriminatory. Grievances again included the depredations visited by muhajirs, including the appropriation of Armenian property left during flight from the 1894-6 massacres.<sup>170</sup>

Reflecting the relative significance of the Great Powers' economic and political interests in the Ottoman empire, the reform negotiations were primarily a Russo-German affair, with Germany seeking to limit the extent of Russian influence just as Britain had done in 1878. Britain was reluctant to antagonize either the Porte or its Russian alliance partner, though like Germany and the CUP it viewed Russian sponsorship of the reform plan as preparation of the ground for subsequent annexation of the 'Armenian' provinces, against a recent backdrop of increased Russian agitation against Armenians and Kurds, and increased control over the adjoining regions of Persia.<sup>171</sup> Undoubtedly for some CUP extremists the Armenian reform plan was the last straw. Massacres were threatened that according to their proponents would dwarf even the Hamidian killings.<sup>172</sup> As the deportations began the next year, Talât rebuked Armenian leaders for raising the reform issue at a critical time for Turkey, stating his intention to make reforms a redundant concern for fifty years.<sup>173</sup>

### **'On the Crater of a Volcano'**

Taken to its logical conclusion, Turkish policy from before the reform plan would at some point have required the marginalization of the Armenian national community of eastern Anatolia at least, to tackle the 'anomalous' population itself, to remove the excuse for European encroachments, and to secure the land for Muslims. This would certainly have entailed policies of cultural and linguistic Turkification such as those initiated from 1910, and probably furtherance of the sort of dilution by muhajir settlement and 'encouraged' emigration that had already occurred over previous decades.<sup>174</sup> Abuses against Armenians in the eastern provinces further intensified during the period of the Balkan wars and the Armenian reform negotiations, such that in Bitlis province alone in mid-1913 Armenians were being murdered at the rate of twenty-seven per month.<sup>175</sup> The following February the US Consul-General in Izmir/Smyrna observed that 'there are many who believe that we are living on the crater of a volcano, and that, if race hatred

is thus systematically cultivated for some time to come, at last there will be some kind of an eruption'.<sup>176</sup>

Nevertheless, whatever thoughts of ethnic homogenization were present in 1913–14 did not translate smoothly into action. Despite the great deterioration of CUP–Armenian relations, there is little evidence that a policy physically to destroy the community was forged prior to the First World War. Besides, even had CUP leaders entertained thoughts of deportation of Armenians—as seems feasible for leaders of a state in a high level of paranoia about the allegiance of its subject populations, and one that had an established tradition of demographic engineering—there was still a considerable gulf between simple deportation or terrorization and the type of total dislocation and slaughter that occurred in 1915–16. And terrible as the 1894–6 and 1909 massacres had been, they had not the same scale or centralized systematization as the coming killing, and were thus qualitatively different from what was a case of full-blown genocide.

It is hard to overstate the magnitude of the decision to go to war in the face of generations of Ottoman orthodoxy about staying free of conflicts in which Ottoman territory was not concerned. This war, moreover, was against not only the 'hereditary enemy', Russia, but against the two powers—Britain and France—that until the 1890s had been the empire's staunchest European allies. Since traditionally, too, Russia and Britain had been most heavily involved in Armenian affairs, an opportunity availed itself for any Ottoman leaders so disposed for 'vengeance' against a domestic community that had availed itself of external support. Conversely, since Germany had traditionally stood aloof from minority issues for reasons of its own self-interest, and given that the Habsburgs feared nationalist secessionism as much as did the Ottomans, it was likely that the CUP would have unprecedented freedom of action in settling the Armenian question as it deemed fit. Finally, and equally ominously, the fifth provision of the 2 August 1914 German–Turkish agreement declared that Germany would 'assume responsibility for rectifying the eastern frontier of the Ottoman empire in a manner suitable for the establishment of a link with the Muslim peoples of Russia'.<sup>177</sup>

The Ottoman entry into the First World War was not, however, a long-planned affair. Despite the growing German presence in the empire, the CUP vacillated between favouring Britain and Germany. A pact with the Entente powers or neutrality were possibilities until late summer 1914. Even for Enver, the Germanophile Minister of Defence, the alliance with the central powers was an expedient measure agreed upon in the short term, and based primarily on the simple calculation of which side was most likely to win, albeit that Britain committed serious tactical blunders in its Ottoman diplomacy in 1914.<sup>178</sup> As several studies have observed, the war was used as a cover for the genocide, yet if the crime could not perforce have been planned against an

unsure future, such planning as there was must have developed after the declaration of war.

International factors, the interaction between Russia and Armenian nationalists particularly, continued to be important until well into the First World War in influencing a developing CUP policy. Continuities in this interaction were evident from the pre-war period, but there were also factors specific to the war, and to the new long- and short-term strategic goals of the combatant forces. The existence of a distinctly unequal but evolving, three-way dynamic contradicts both the determinist 'Armenian' historiography and the Turkish apologist literature. Indeed, it is entirely consistent with the development of state-Armenian relations to this point to suggest a symbiotic relationship between Armenian nationalist activism, the actions of external powers, and CUP policy.

When it began, the Ottoman war was fought in the interests of ethnic-national independence, what Talât later recalled had been the CUP's goal in 1913: 'the renovation and reorganization of our vital resources... to consolidate the existence of the empire'.<sup>179</sup> On one level, independence meant regaining control of fiscal policy from Britain and France, the abolition of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, and the impounding of foreign businesses. On another it meant the abrogation of the Armenian reform plan<sup>180</sup> and the capitulations. On a third it meant supplanting the economic function of the Christian minorities with the forced creation of a Turkish bourgeoisie. How such notions of national restructuring came to be expressed explicitly murderously and in the short term, however, may be understood only when we consider another intrinsic aspect of the drive for homogeneity and independence.

Preserving territorial integrity was the precondition for any national renewal. War also meant an opportunity to expand to incorporate Muslim territories in the east, a move that would have the added benefit of creating a buffer territory between Anatolia and Russia. In this new order, the future of Armenians would indeed have been a bleak one, for the radical change that had already occurred in the empire's ethnic profile would have been further intensified, the remaining Ottoman Christians rendered even more anomalous. But war also presented the threat of further, perhaps fatal, diminution of Ottoman territories.

For ordinary Ottoman Armenians, war, particularly against Russia, with its large Caucasian Armenian population, was a matter of anxiety. For some rash activists, it was an opportunity to snatch the territory of historic Armenia from the moribund Ottoman state by collaborating with the Entente. Extant Ottoman notions of reordering society crystallized as the CUP saw their

wartime plans fall apart and felt their territory to be under threat both from outside and within, as the stereotype of Armenians as proxies of the Great Powers in peacetime was extended into a stereotype of military collaboration during warfare: the 'inner enemy' and the 'outer enemy' were now fully merged in the Ottoman mind.

## Ethnic 'Reprisal' and Ethnic Cleansing

The negative war moves of revoking the capitulations and European financial control were easy enough for the CUP to make in the short term. More 'positive' measures were hampered by the limitations of the Ottoman war machine and the unrealistic nature of some of the CUP's war aims. The pan-Turanian and pan-Islamic campaigns conducted in the Caucasus and in Persia and the Arab lands respectively miscalculated the effect of Ottoman propaganda on other Turkic and Muslim peoples, as we shall see. The Caucasus campaign, which had as its immediate goal the recapturing of the 'lost territories' of 1878, was further hamstrung from the outset by poor planning.

As for Armenian policy, what we now know as the genocide emerged from a series of more limited measures implemented regionally. It developed into an empire-wide programme through a process of cumulative policy radicalization. Only by the early summer of 1915 may we speak of a crystallized policy of general killing and death by attrition. Amongst other things, this chapter is a plea for *normalization* of the study of state-sponsored mass murder, for a recognition that it emerges, like many other governmental policies in a spectrum of regimes, often piecemeal, informed by ideology but according to shifts of circumstance.

Generally speaking, historians of 1914–16 have sought to address the question of *when* it was decided to do away with the Armenians. Yet given the history of demographic engineering in the Ottoman empire, a full explanation for the Armenian fate must address not only the deportations themselves but also the violence of them, for the latter factor is the one that renders the Armenian experience really peculiar. The Armenian fate was composed of the two elements: ethnic cleansing, or forced collective displacement, and direct physical annihilation. Only because of the presence of both elements is the epithet genocide applicable, and I shall endeavour to show how both emerged and fused.

The Armenian deportations, except some of those ordered from the war zones by the military, were marshalled by the directorate for the settlement of tribes and immigrants—*İskânı Aşâyir ve Muhacirin Müdiriyyeti*—within Talât's Ministry of the Interior, under the leadership of Şükrü Kaya. Much of the killing, rape, and dispossession of Armenian deportees was the preserve of the irregular, paramilitary *Teşkilatı Mahsusa*, or Special Organization.

Army units were also involved, as were some Kurdish tribes and muhajirs who murdered and plundered on their own initiative once the Armenians had effectively been declared fair game by the CUP's decision to deport them.<sup>1</sup> Other tribes were uninvolved and some, notably the Alevi of the Dersim district, were prominent in rescuing several thousand Armenian deportees, if sometimes with pecuniary motives.<sup>2</sup>

At its height in the First World War the Special Organization consisted of 30,000–34,000 men, drawn from the ranks of the Ottoman gendarmerie and Muslim bands, including muhajirs, and criminals specially released from prison. It was staffed by young army officers and was under military authority, but civilians from the CUP central committee were integrally involved at the highest level, most prominently Behaettin Şakir and Dr Nâzım. However ruthlessly it behaved prior to the spring of 1915, as in the pre-war harassing of Greek communities,<sup>3</sup> the deployment of the Special Organization from 1914 is not a reliable indicator of genocidal intent.<sup>4</sup> It originated as a means of forwarding the ethnic war outside Ottoman boundaries by irredentist agitation, guerrilla warfare, and assassination, including of prominent Armenians.<sup>5</sup> The timing of its change to an instrument of indiscriminate mass murder is a key indicator of the development of a fully genocidal policy.

There is one point in 1915 by which consensus suggests that a policy of general killing had definitely been arrived at. 'The Van uprising', which took place in the second half of April, writes Vahakn N. Dadrian, 'was a desperate and last-ditch effort to thwart the Turkish design to proceed with their matured plan of genocide by launching the massacre of that province's Armenian population as an initial step.'<sup>6</sup> The famous rising, which ended in May with the establishment of Armenian rule in a major eastern Anatolian city, was according to this consensus the pretext the CUP wanted to begin their pre-determined, empire-wide anti-Armenian programme. The first measure in this plan, so the argument goes, was the decapitation of the Armenian nation with the series of mass arrests that began on 24 April, the day chosen later by Armenians to commemorate the genocide.

The pretext theory is intuitively appealing.<sup>7</sup> One can then retrospectively identify as preparations for genocide previous discriminatory measures, such as extensive arms searches in Armenian communities, the disarming of Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman armies—in February 1915—and their assignment to labour battalions. It changes the interpretation of the whole destruction process, however, if the 24–6 April arrests are seen as a reaction to the anticipated Anglo-French landings on the Gallipoli peninsula on 25 April<sup>8</sup> and the news of the Van rising from 20 April.<sup>9</sup> As for the disarming of soldiers, it was undoubtedly motivated by distrust of Armenians, but also fed into a tradition of discrimination against non-Turkish soldiers in the allocation of military functions, through which Greeks also suffered.<sup>10</sup> Conscript-



tion, furthermore, had long been used as a way not only of consolidating the army but of reducing the manpower and solidarity of perceived troublesome groups.<sup>11</sup> When the killing began, the defenceless, enfeebled soldiers of the work battalions were easy prey, but the primary motive for forming the battalions in the first place was exploiting the manpower made available by military mobilization to improve the infrastructure of the empire, in a wartime intensification of the empire's recent history of transport modernization.<sup>12</sup> This would have its own tremendous human cost but it was not a calculated policy of murder.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the CUP probably did regard arrests and arms searches as 'preventative' measures,<sup>14</sup> designed to forestall orchestrated Armenian support for the Entente forces, given that it was well aware which side of the conflict most Armenians desired to prevail. (And we know that the ARF had indeed procured weapons in Istanbul at least during the early months of the war.<sup>15</sup>) That arrests were blanket, and made no attempt to investigate genuine guilt, was not unusual in CUP policy at the time.

As for the fate of the empire, even with the first successes in defeating the Entente landing troops at Gallipoli, the external threat remained, though it was not as immediate. Though Russia had been weakened by events on the European front, it still loomed in the Caucasus, and the CUP anticipated a huge offensive in the spring of 1915;<sup>16</sup> and the British were still advancing up the Tigris and the Euphrates. Yet this was the time, in the period from April to June 1915, when the policy of oppression broadened across the empire and increased to genocidal proportions: that is, in a period of national retrenchment, if not emergency. This interpretation first requires the substantiation of a detailed study of the war to 24 April, which will illustrate the many facets to the pre-history of the Van rising.<sup>17</sup> (See above, Map 2.)

### **Ethnic Agitation and 'Ethnic Reprisal' in the Eastern Border Regions**

Ruthless war requisitioning began in August 1914, before the Ottoman entry into the war. The Christian communities were disproportionately targeted, in continuation of the existing practices of economic dispossession.<sup>18</sup> A general anti-Christian chauvinism was encouraged by a declaration of jihad (holy war) in November 1914. Christians and Entente nationals were cast as collective targets when Talât and Cemal respectively threatened reprisals against them for any Muslims that died in bombardments of coastal settlements; there was of course no mention of reprisals for Ottoman Christian deaths.<sup>19</sup> The laws of war were further infringed when Enver and Cemal pushed for the use of human shields composed of Entente nationals—including the French

and British population of Istanbul—at the most exposed points to deter attacks on Gallipoli and the Syrian coast respectively.<sup>20</sup>

As the first, smaller Armenian deportations were taking place from Cilicia early in April, the two thousand inhabitants of the Greek village Arnavutköy on the Bosphorus were given twenty-four hours to leave their homes on suspicion that they would support Russian landings.<sup>21</sup> At the evacuation of the Gallipoli peninsula on 10 April the Christian population of some 22,000 was given two hours' notice, and scattered in small groups amongst the predominantly Turkish populations of western Anatolia.<sup>22</sup> After the attempted Dardanelles landing this measure was to be extended to all the Christian—predominantly Greek—settlements on the coast of the Sea of Marmara since some Greeks were suspected of supplying enemy submarines with provisions and fuel. In excess of 40,000 were thus deported to the interior.<sup>23</sup>

The jihad was announced with German encouragement to smooth the path for invasions of the Caucasus and Persian Azerbaijan, and to appeal to Muslim subjects of Britain and Russia. It was one of a broader set of strategies used by both alliances to undermine the other by stimulating anti-imperial insurgency on ethnic and/or national grounds, conceptually comparable to the British sponsorship of the Arab revolt or German appeals to Ukrainian nationalists. Before the outbreak of war, in August 1914, a CUP emissary tried unsuccessfully to encourage the Ottoman section of the ARF to sponsor anti-Russian insurrection among the Caucasus Armenians in the event of war.<sup>24</sup> Infuriated at the rebuff, the emissary, Behaettin Şakir, condemned the Armenians and ordered the assassination of some ARF leaders.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, the Russian authorities were pursuing parallel schemes. The foreign minister Sergei Sazonov thought it 'desirable to maintain the closest relations with the Armenians as with the Kurds in order to... exploit them at any given moment' if war descended. Weapons were to be distributed over the Ottoman border 'if the rupture occurs or becomes unavoidable'.<sup>26</sup>

Russian policy was less offensive than defensive. Since its war strategy was predicated upon defeating Germany in the west, it foresaw only 'active defence'<sup>27</sup> in the Ottoman conflict, and to this end it was important to keep Russian commitments to a minimum and to utilize any means available at the discretion of the military commander and viceroy of the Caucasus, Count Illarion Ivanovich Vorontsov-Dashkov.<sup>28</sup> One such means was presented by an approach from the Armenian Catholicos of Etchmiadzin early in August 1914 seeking Russian-guaranteed postwar autonomy for 'Turkish Armenia'.<sup>29</sup> In September the Tsar announced that the eve of liberation from Turkey was nigh. In November he encouraged the Catholicos with the deliberately vague assertion that 'a brilliant future awaited the Armenians', and that at the war's end 'the Armenian question will be resolved in accordance with Armenian expectations'. He also issued a veiled warning for the Armenians

not to follow the example of Bulgaria in turning away from its Russian sponsor.<sup>30</sup> Vorontsov-Dashkov declared that Russia remained in favour of enforcing the earlier reform scheme, and he called for Armenians in Russia and 'across the borders' to prepare to implement Russian instructions in the event of war.<sup>31</sup> These half-promises were a deliberate deception since Russia had no desire for an autonomous Armenia in the six provinces.<sup>32</sup>

Vorontsov-Dashkov's opportunistic 'plan for revolt among the Turkish Armenians' foresaw the creation of armed Armenian bands under military command in the Caucasus at Olty, Sarikamish, Kagysman, and Igdyr, and, in Persia, bands at Choi and Dilman under the authority of the Russian military and the Choi consulate.<sup>33</sup> Units in Urmia further south were also to be formed from the Assyrian population for defensive purposes.<sup>34</sup> Five volunteer battalions were consequently formed—two were added later—with the support of the ARF-dominated Armenian National Bureau in Tiflis to fight alongside the Russian army.<sup>35</sup> The units were composed of men hailing from the Transcaucasian territories taken by Russia in 1878, or those who had fled to the Caucasus more recently from Ottoman rule. Some were also volunteers from the international diaspora.<sup>36</sup> Most prominent among the indeterminate number of Ottoman Armenian participants<sup>37</sup> was one of the unit leaders, the ARF deputy for Erzurum in the Turkish Parliament, and veteran of the 1896 Ottoman Bank occupation, Garegin Pasdermadjian.

The Russian policy served domestic as well as war strategy. The mass of Armenian volunteer soldiers were deployed on the eastern front, to prevent them pressing political aspirations in Anatolia. The smaller irregular volunteer battalions could act as a sop to the Russian Armenian population, and at the same time could provide useful advice on the terrain and, given their motivations in fighting, be of genuine military assistance.<sup>38</sup> Crucially, however, and as has been ignored in the literature, these volunteers were also supposed to provide a stimulus to Ottoman Armenians to take up arms. Boghos Nubar, the man appointed by the Catholicos to head the 'Armenian National Delegation' (AND) that championed the cause of Armenian reforms on the international stage from 1912, recalled that the volunteers were to provide an example for their Ottoman 'compatriots... in a common action to acquire the rights of autonomy'.<sup>39</sup>

From November 1914 the volunteer units assisted Anatolian Armenian communities in preparing for 'self-defence',<sup>40</sup> the long-standing strategy used by the political parties to help Armenians protect themselves in the adverse conditions prevailing in Anatolia. The purpose of the volunteers at the war's outset was not dissimilar to that of the Ottoman irregular formations—though the individuals joining the volunteer battalions may not be compared with the criminal elements of the Special Organization—since they too tried to incite insurgency. Comparison may also be made between the

Armenian self-defence organizations and similar groups organized among the Caucasian Muslims and exploited by the Ottoman empire and the central powers during the First World War.<sup>41</sup>

Nubar and the French *consul en retraite* in Istanbul both cited pro-Entente incidents in the early war months involving native Armenians in Erzurum and Van provinces.<sup>42</sup> Yet such eruptions as there were in the interior—for example assaults on the gendarmerie or the cutting of telegraph cables in Van from late 1914, localized clashes between Armenian groups and Ottoman forces in Bitlis in February 1915—were small in scale, suggesting a lack of enthusiasm among the larger Armenian population, and marked by a lack of discernible organization.<sup>43</sup> With some exceptions Russian agitation amongst potentially rebellious Ottoman and Persian Kurds was less successful still, owing to the incoherence over recent years of Tsarist policy towards them, and also to the CUP addressing some of their grievances.<sup>44</sup> The Ottoman–German jihad was also largely a failure, though the (false) religious imperative probably encouraged some Muslims to participate in the coming Armenian genocide,<sup>45</sup> and the rhetoric assured the loyalty of many Sunni Kurds. For all sides in the conflict, external sponsors of insurgency were more enthusiastic than their ethnic brethren, the prospective cannon fodder on the ground in ‘enemy’ territory.

Nor did the sponsoring powers evince much concern for the danger that their policies would inevitably engender for the communities concerned. The Russian Foreign Minister Sazonov accurately predicted that the Persian Assyrians and Armenians alone could not withstand Ottoman military advances, being insufficiently trained, organized, and equipped.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless Vorontsov-Dashkov continued with his design, and upon the battle of Sarikamish in December, consistent with the imperative not to over-extend their military line, Russian forces were withdrawn from Urmia and Tabriz, giving the inhabitants almost no notice and leaving them to their fate.<sup>47</sup>

Ottoman and German agitation bore a little fruit in Azerbaijan and elsewhere in the Caucasus, where advancing Ottoman forces were joined by several thousand Muslims,<sup>48</sup> just as it did with some Kurdish tribes in the Persian border areas and small numbers of activists further afield in British and Russian territory. The Russian response in the Caucasus included expelling suspect Muslim communities over the Ottoman border, and doubtless also massacre.<sup>49</sup> For their part, the weight and viciousness of Ottoman responses to incidents sparked off internally or by the approach of the Armenian volunteer units can be inferred from veiled official references to the dispatch of ‘militia and tribal forces’ or ‘punishment units’.<sup>50</sup>

These overtly murderous measures demonstrate that Armenians were already fair game to military and irregular operatives in eastern Anatolia. Ottoman forces had no compunction about rationalizing the severest

methods to 'completely crush' any incidents lest they assume more than 'merely regional proportions',<sup>51</sup> including taking 'rigorous measures against the families of deserters and traitors' and punishing 'severely peasants who support these outlaws'.<sup>52</sup> At this stage, up to the end of March 1915 at least, massacres were therefore a warning against future unrest, and the 'punishments' were explicitly publicized as such;<sup>53</sup> this was a qualitatively different use of violence from the later massacres of deportation caravans, the occurrence of which was actually denied and played down by CUP leaders.

Ottoman intelligence was aware of Russian plans from the beginning. Russian promises were trumpeted by Russian ARF leaders,<sup>54</sup> Armenian solidarity was invoked in the Russian press,<sup>55</sup> and rumours were abroad of future Russian-sponsored Armenian autonomy in return for an uprising.<sup>56</sup> The Ottoman Third Army command reported from the Russian border on 24 September 1914 that 'the Russians have provoked Armenians living in our country through Armenians in the Caucasus, ... forming armed bands, and storing arms and ammunition in many places to be distributed to Armenians'. The Ottoman embassy in Teheran had already notified the government of the issuance of arms to Armenians in Persia and the Caucasus, while in late October military intelligence observed the gathering in Kagysman of thousands of men, 'mostly ... Ottoman Armenians and army deserters [forming] ... organized guerilla bands'. The civil authorities in Bayazid in eastern Erzurum reported the flight of army deserters to Russia 'and many Armenians from the villages of the region, with the help of some Kurds, to join the bands formed ... in Igdyr', bands which were later estimated at 6,000 strong. The predominantly Christian settlements Artvin and Ardanus were also mentioned as bases.<sup>57</sup> The accuracy of these numbers is impossible to assess, but Ottoman accusations of widespread desertion and of Armenian soldiers and civilians passing to the Russian side are corroborated by a variety of sources.<sup>58</sup> The difference in CUP eyes between Armenian desertion and that of Muslims, which was also of a large scale, was its perceived purpose, which was to ally with the opposition.<sup>59</sup>

The Ottoman invasions of Persia and the Caucasus saw the plunder of 4-5,000 Armenian villages and the murder of some 27,000 Armenians and many Assyrians in and beyond Ottoman territory between November 1914 and April 1915. The litany of expanding atrocities corresponded to a significant degree at first to the approximate geographical *locus* of Armenian bases and action. The most famous case concerns the failed grand offensive of the Ottoman Third Army in its drive into Russian territory at the turn of 1914-15 to regain the Transcaucasian territories lost in 1878. The ensuing, crushing Russian victory at the battle of Sarikamish wiped out almost the entire Ottoman Third Army and was greatly aided by the delaying actions of a volunteer battalion. It led to much CUP propagandizing about the treachery

of the Armenians as a whole,<sup>60</sup> and, alongside the earlier desertions, forms a backdrop for the disarming of Armenian soldiers in February 1915 and massacres by the retreating Ottoman forces.

Immediately on the outbreak of war in November the volunteer unit led by the famous Armenian partisan Andranik assisted the Russian column crossing the Ottoman border from Persian Choi in the conquest of Saray in the east of Van province. Simultaneously, another force to the north occupied Bayazid with the assistance of a second battalion of Armenian volunteers.<sup>61</sup> Together, these expeditions were to move on the city of Van. A third preliminary strike from Erivan via the Alashkert region towards the fortress-city of Erzurum was halted near the border after the taking of Karakilisse.<sup>62</sup> When Russian and volunteer forces withdrew from Bayazid and Karakilisse on 12 December, the Special Organization wrought destruction on some eighteen villages, murdering the males of 270 families.<sup>63</sup> The pattern was repeated in the Caucasus: alongside Ardahan, where Ottoman forces had initially been defeated with the use of Armenian volunteers, Artvin, Ardanus, and Olty were targeted as Ottoman forces advanced into Russian territory in late November and December.<sup>64</sup> With the withdrawal from Saray amid the general Russian retreat from Persia at the end of December, Saray and the surrounding districts also became sites of extensive massacres on accusations of collaboration.<sup>65</sup>

If this was an 'ethnic reprisal' policy—meaning a policy of deliberately indiscriminate, collective measures—then doubtless many of the 'reprisals' were for imaginary transgressions, based more on ethnic stereotypes of Armenian disloyalty than concrete manifestations of the same. There is, however, evidence from the Ottoman side of atrocities, including murder, committed in some Russian-occupied parts of eastern Anatolia, just as Ottoman sources implicate Armenians in the killing of Muslim men in Kars and Ardahan, over the Russian border, from the turn of the year.<sup>66</sup> (While it is difficult to estimate scale, it is safe to say that the Russian use of irregular troops invited fracture of the laws of war just as did the Ottoman policy.<sup>67</sup> The Armenians, however, formed only a portion of the irregular troops operating in Russian service, alongside Cossacks, for instance, who are also identified in some of the Muslim testimonies as perpetrators, as are Russian soldiers.<sup>68</sup>) The most intense killings inspired by the Ottoman policy occurred in eastern Van province, where perhaps 10,000 Armenians were murdered in the region between Saray and Bashkale before the Van rising.<sup>69</sup> Why there?

First, Van was of great significance as a strategic point either for a Russian push from Persia into Mesopotamia and the interior of eastern Anatolia, or for an Ottoman strike in the reverse direction.<sup>70</sup> Since the Sarikamish defeat, and the closing of that military option, its significance was even magnified as a launching point for the other half of Enver's pan-Turanian offensive through Persia. The city was given added sensitivity by a prominent ARF presence and

a dense Armenian population, one with established pre-war connections with the Russian consulate. According to the British consul, the ARF had also secretly imported and distributed large quantities of arms in the course of 1914,<sup>71</sup> and asserted itself in the province, evicting some muhajirs (probably from previously Armenian properties).<sup>72</sup> With the appearance of Andranik's volunteers at Saray in November 1914 the Ottoman authorities demanded of the city's ARF leaders the immediate return of Armenian deserters.<sup>73</sup> As Ter Minassian describes, beginning in November, in the

district of Van and the high valleys and towns with a large Armenian population ...and in isolated Armenian villages...the extortions, search for deserters, and slashing of telephone lines degenerated into clashes between soldiers, gendarmes and *cheté* [Muslim brigand] bands, on the one side, and Armenian self-defense groups, on the other.<sup>74</sup>

At the end of November an Ottoman division commander at Saray explicitly raised the possibility of rebellion in Van, and shortly thereafter noted that 'the enemy is seizing the weapons from local people' and 'using these weapons to arm Armenians and form units. There are some Persian tribes among enemy units.'<sup>75</sup> This illustrates the contribution of the volunteer policy to further destabilizing intercommunal relations, and given that Van and nearby Shatak were on traditional lines of ARF arms supply and infiltration from Persia it is probable that Armenian volunteer units based in Persia had made contact with the Van Armenians.<sup>76</sup> Yet Van's own leaders were at that stage trying to appease the authorities and maintained this submissive attitude when Van's governor returned to the city at the end of March 1915 from campaigning in Persia, accompanied by several thousand soldiers and Kurdish and Circassian irregulars.<sup>77</sup>

At the beginning of March the governor Cevdet had met defeat in the Choi region as Russia reasserted its authority in Persia in preparation for a limited assault on Van to strengthen the Russian position.<sup>78</sup> He responded to a minor occurrence in the Shatak district in mid-April by demanding all the Armenian men from 18 to 45 years (a number put at 4,000, and certainly including numerous deserters) enlist as military labourers on pain of death and the deportation of their families. The ARF proffered 500.<sup>79</sup> On 17 April Cevdet dispatched his self-styled 'butcher battalions' to annihilate Shatak. The ill-disciplined irregular forces opted instead to attack closer Armenian settlements,<sup>80</sup> and the ensuing chain of massacres drove the Van Armenians and those of Shatak to their well-known resistance.<sup>81</sup> It would have been foolish for them to open hostilities unprovoked in this climate, particularly after the arms confiscations. Yet, based doubtless on his Persian experiences,<sup>82</sup> Cevdet was 'persuaded that the Armenians of Van were in collusion with the Armenian volunteer detachments'. He was attempting to isolate the city

from the outlying districts of the province,<sup>83</sup> and crush any sign of trouble with extreme, indiscriminate, vengeful violence.

For their part, a week prior to Cevdet's assault on the Van Armenian quarter on 20 April, the Armenians had been erecting defensive walls in preparation for possible attack. To ascribe the hatching of a plan to either side is wrong: in a terrible circularity, the Van Armenians, trying to maintain an escape route towards Persia, were driven to action by the very 'ethnic reprisal' measures Cevdet used to crush the Armenian 'threat'. He was not acting on a general policy of murder, since events in his province were atypical at the time. To add to the regional flavour of events, some Kurds rose up at around the same time, probably as an act of revenge against the execution of one of their sheiks in 1914 after disturbances in the Bitlis province.<sup>84</sup> There was also a near-simultaneous uprising amongst the Assyrians of Bashkale after the earlier treatment of their kin.<sup>85</sup>

### **Radicalization at the Centre, and the First Deportations from Cilicia**

Between the Ottoman Sarikamish defeat and the Armenian Van rising, Russian forces were insufficient to sustain a major thrust into Anatolia. In the interim the major threat to Anatolia affected the region's north-western coast: it was the beginning of the Anglo-French assault on the Dardanelles, designed to relieve pressure on the Russian Caucasus flank. The first major stage of the attack on the outer forts was from 5 to 17 March 1915. In Istanbul, preparations were made for a previously planned movement of the capital and its population to the interior of western Anatolia.<sup>86</sup> Parliament was suspended as part of the process, removing an important check on CUP actions.<sup>87</sup> Consistent with the established fear that Armenians would join with advancing Entente forces, the intention was to deport all of the Armenians from the area between Istanbul and the projected provisional government base, Eskişehir.<sup>88</sup> A similar plan for deportation of Christians may well have been entertained simultaneously for Smyrna/Izmir should the Allies land there, after a recent naval bombardment of the city.<sup>89</sup>

Mid-March also saw a series of meetings of the CUP's central committee.<sup>90</sup> Behaettin Şakir, director of the Special Organization, member of the central committee of the CUP, and the emissary who had approached the ARF in August 1914, was recalled from Special Organization operational HQ at Erzurum to attend, and presented evidence of the activities of the Armenian bands in eastern Anatolia. He argued that the CUP should fear the 'inner enemy' just as much as the 'outer enemy', and was delegated extended authority and independence to combat the former.<sup>91</sup> As the genocide



unfolded in subsequent months, Behaettin Şakir would drive around in his car from province to province, exhorting the local authorities to ever more vigorous action against the Armenians, much as Heinrich Himmler did for Germany during 1941–2 on the Russian front.<sup>92</sup> The end of March and the beginning of April saw an ominous build-up of irregular units for 'border' activities,<sup>93</sup> the departure for eastern Anatolia of others in the Special Organization hierarchy who attempted to organize a general massacre in Erzurum,<sup>94</sup> and the dispatch to various provinces of radical CUP emissaries, including the notorious Dr Reşid, sent to bring his iron rule to Diyarbakır, where he conducted a particularly vicious round of arms searches, incarcerations, and torture, and went on to become one of the most enthusiastic murderers.<sup>95</sup>

Taner Akçam argues that the March meetings 'led ultimately to the passing of the deportation law'.<sup>96</sup> The unleashing of the CUP and Special Organization emissaries, and their impact, certainly indicates the reservoir of ruthless anti-Armenianism waiting to be tapped among CUP leaders and operatives when given the signal. Cevdet in Van, for instance, clearly benefited from a more or less free hand in dealing with the situation. Yet the fact that the projected deportations from Istanbul and its hinterlands did not occur, owing to the Entente failure to break through to the capital, suggests that Armenian policy was still contingent upon the course of the war, not fully pro-active or general across the empire. From the end of March, deportations of Armenians also began from Cilicia, but they too were regionalized measures, and, analogous to events in eastern Anatolia, attributable to a combination of the history of Ottoman-Armenian relations in the area and to the course of the war in the adjacent Mediterranean.

A recurrent Ottoman fear was that Russia would attack through eastern Anatolia and drive on to Alexandretta, the shortest route to bisect the Ottoman empire and gain a Mediterranean outlet.<sup>97</sup> This still appears in 'justifications' for Ottoman wartime measures,<sup>98</sup> but was not just a paranoia or pretext: the fear was also expressed within the diplomatic circles of the central powers.<sup>99</sup> Further, since the British takeover of Cyprus in 1878, Alexandretta, along with the whole Syrian coast, was particularly vulnerable to maritime attack. The Porte had been awakened to the possibilities of a landing as part of the international pressure for reform during the 1895 massacres when a British warship was dispatched to Alexandretta to encourage compliance.<sup>100</sup> Meanwhile, in spring 1913, a Greek ship had attempted to land some 200 Armenians there to try to ignite an uprising among the native Armenians in the Adana province to stake a territorial claim at the close of the Balkan wars.<sup>101</sup> In the First World War the small Fourth Ottoman Army was assigned to protect the coastal regions from external invasion and to maintain internal security, particularly regarding the Armenians and the French-influenced Syrian population.<sup>102</sup> At the beginning of March 1915 the Ottoman authorities

searched the small, quiet Armenian population of Alexandretta for any evidence of communication with the British,<sup>103</sup> and later claimed that plans had been discovered for an Entente-sponsored uprising in Cilicia, a notion dismissed as propaganda in the historiography.<sup>104</sup>

In fact in November 1914, as the Armenian volunteers were setting to work in the Caucasus, Nubar was trying to establish a similar arrangement with the British military command in Egypt.<sup>105</sup> This was a part of a broader Armenian nationalist war strategy which also encompassed the Armenian volunteer battalions in the Caucasus. Cilicia was targeted alongside the eastern provinces as an integral part of an autonomous Armenia. Thus Nubar's AND and various national Armenian committees in the diaspora undertook a two-pronged diplomatic offensive, trying to persuade the western Entente governments of the benefits for the imperial balance of power for an internationally administered, neutral Armenian Cilicia,<sup>106</sup> while promoting the use of volunteer units from the diaspora. The units were envisaged to help form an Entente bridgehead and precipitate a general rising led by militants within key Cilician communities. The ARF theoretician and delegate of the Armenian committee in Sofia, Mikayel Varandian, had requested that, while the future of the eastern Anatolian Armenians seemed secured by Russia, the Armenians of the Cilician coast also be given 'the opportunity to take part in the war against Turkey'.<sup>107</sup>

Briefly in British military thinking the assault on the Dardanelles was to be accompanied by 'serious feints' against Alexandretta with a view to occupying it and cutting Ottoman rail communications.<sup>108</sup> Had this been followed through, it is indeed possible that the British would have armed Cilician Armenians in accordance with Nubar's approach.<sup>109</sup> During the Dardanelles build-up, in February 1915 Armenian representatives from the mountain town Zeytun contacted the Russian Caucasus army HQ to say that if supplied with arms and ammunition via Alexandretta they could provide a 15,000-strong interior uprising at that place which would both benefit a simultaneous assault on Cilicia and on the line of communications to Erzurum.<sup>110</sup>

Zeytun, we know, had a long tradition of resisting Ottoman repression and massacre and also of revolt against governmental impositions. Most notably, in 1895, alongside the neighbouring city of Marash, it had escaped the mass killings by successfully fighting off the Ottoman armies. In the First World War many Zeytunlis had militated against conscription since its introduction.<sup>111</sup> In their inaccessible mountain retreat, they presented an obstacle to the central control and uniformity of administration that the CUP required as part of their modernizing agenda, just as did large parts of the mountainous plateau of eastern Anatolia.

The potential leaders of the proposed insurgency in 1915 had led the 1895 self-defence operation, and some if not all belonged to the Hnchak party,

which had established a wartime alliance with Nubar's Ramgavar ('Democrat') party. Their proposal was based on the capacity of Hnchak committees in several Cilician locations—Zeytun, Adana, Dörtyol, Hacin, Sis, Furnus, Marash, and Aleppo—to stir their communities to revolt.<sup>112</sup> It matched the plans outlined from the diaspora.<sup>113</sup> Just as the revolutionaries had expressed the willingness to revolt without any Entente landing when the possibility of such a landing receded,<sup>114</sup> Nubar and the diaspora committees continued to press for participation in an attack on Cilicia into the late summer.<sup>115</sup> Though these plans gained greater urgency with the increasing destruction of the Ottoman Armenian community, they were not in the first instance inspired by them, as the timing of the above correspondence shows. National liberation, unrealistic as it was, was the aim of the revolutionaries from within and without.<sup>116</sup>

The Zeytunlis were not supplied with the weapons they requested, so it is impossible to assess whether the claim of 15,000 Cilician participants would have been substantiated. Such a high figure was surely a revolutionary's fantasy, just as was the claim of a committee of Ottoman Greeks that contacted French forces at about the same time promising to be able to deliver 100,000 Greek insurgents on an Entente landing in Asia Minor.<sup>117</sup> The important thing about these projections is less their accuracy than how they illustrate the strength of belief among nationalist activists on all sides as to the potential for successful irregular warfare, the German idea of 'Insurgierung': if Greek and Armenian revolutionaries themselves were prepared to predict such significant participation, it is unsurprising that the Ottomans were also prepared to subscribe to the notion. The Zeytun 'plan' corresponded to Ottoman suspicions and reached the ears of the Ottoman authorities, and was thus a contributory factor in the forthcoming deportations.<sup>118</sup>

Incremental deportations, which soon became a flood, began early in April from Zeytun after a small number of the Armenian deserters attacked Ottoman troops and then barricaded themselves inside a monastery in mid-March. This reflected the small scale and rather chaotic nature of such insurgencies emerging from within the Ottoman Armenian community itself, though a German missionary could report that Zeytun had been 'provisioned' for some sort of rebellion,<sup>119</sup> and the Entente presence in the Mediterranean may have influenced a few 'hotheads'<sup>120</sup> who had certainly tried to incite the Zeytun population to general action, and in February had even planned abortively to seize the local arsenal.<sup>121</sup> More importantly, reflecting as in Van the dialectical relationship between Ottoman repression and Armenian resistance, the latter increased as the deportations were extended.<sup>122</sup> This was attributable in part to the enforcement of revolt by ruthless activists; eyewitnesses reported that only two villages near Zeytun gave willing assistance to the resistance, while most of the population, if unwilling to surrender the

fighters, did not wish to excite passions.<sup>123</sup> Amongst the leading opponents of the deserters' actions were the majority of local Armenian civic notables who, with their families, became the first deportees.<sup>124</sup> The events of the First World War, combined with the strategic location, history, and topography of Zeytun, resulted in the CUP finishing once and for all with a 'problem' population irrespective of individual responsibility. The Armenians were replaced by a more 'compatible' population of Balkan muhajirs, and the town was renamed Suleymanli.<sup>125</sup>

On the Cilician coast itself during March, a number of inhabitants of the village of Dörtyol were publicly hanged on charges of contacting Entente ships in the Gulf of Alexandretta. The male population was rounded up and put to road-building, and some deportations occurred.<sup>126</sup> Here, again, the local and wartime history of the region was important in determining the course of events. Like Zeytun, Dörtyol had successfully held out during the 1909 massacres.<sup>127</sup> It was also the projected disembarking point for the landing of the revolutionaries in 1913. Dörtyol became an object of suspicion in the First World War as almost all of its inhabitants of arms-bearing age had deserted the army<sup>128</sup>—hence the road-building as an extension of the simultaneous military policy of putting Armenian soldiers in labour battalions—and was further jeopardized by the behaviour of a few of its inhabitants.

Alongside the periodic bombardment of Alexandretta and the communication roads and railways thereabouts, from the end of 1914 the British and French had also disrupted the functions of the port by periodically landing troops in and around it, cutting telegraph wires, and destroying or stealing military stores. On 18 December 1914 a British landing party succeeded in blowing up the strategically important Dörtyol railway bridge.<sup>129</sup> We know that at least one of the executed Dörtyol Armenians, and a number of others, had been in contact with the Entente ships,<sup>130</sup> and though there is no evidence that there was any common plan unfolding, this was certainly the suspicion which led to the evacuation of the settlement since on each landing the Entente troops were gleefully greeted.<sup>131</sup>

These episodes ramified in turn on other deportations and actions against Armenian communities from Adana and the Marash, for instance in the vicious arms searches and incarcerations that occurred in Marash city, or in the deportations from Hassan-Beyli. Likewise, the soon to be deported inhabitants of the village of Furnus, north of Zeytun, with its Hnchak committee, were called upon to swear loyalty to the government at the beginning of the Zeytun troubles.<sup>132</sup> The general military-strategic significance of the region spelt danger for every Armenian settlement in this atmosphere, as villages along military supply lines such as the Osmaniye–Islahiye–Radju railway from Adana to Aleppo were forcibly evacuated,<sup>133</sup> as had been some such settlements during the Balkan wars.

Government actions were grossly disproportionate. In April they were not yet general throughout the empire or, therefore, genocidal, but they were brutal. Unlike the deportations from 24 April onwards, which were all directed towards the desert regions in the south, the first Zeytun deportees were sent to a variety of destinations, including the barren salt lake area in heavily Turkish Konia, in western Anatolia.<sup>134</sup> Their treatment at and on the way to their destinations varied as in some places they were at first fed or permitted to be fed, in others not.<sup>135</sup> At this stage the measures were similar to the simultaneous deportation of the Christians from Gallipoli and the Sea of Marmora, and the American ambassador Henry Morgenthau was broadly correct in surmising a policy of 'breaking up a compact Armenian community...and by wholesale deportation which must deprive them of their ordinary means of livelihood locating them among purely Turkish villages where those who survive their ill-treatment need no longer be feared by the Government'.<sup>136</sup> The move to general deportation, and alongside it the active murder of the deportees, required a further trigger. This was duly supplied in the further unfolding of wartime events back in eastern Anatolia.

### **From Regional Measures to General Policy**

If general deportation was not itself a long-planned move, this was not for want of pressure for a final reckoning from different Ottoman quarters for extreme measures. Talât freely admitted to Morgenthau that the decision arose out of great deliberation in the CUP central committee, but this is less indicative of a plan<sup>137</sup> than of the ongoing search for a 'solution' of the correct nature and magnitude. Radical CUP members both in the central committee and the provinces pressed correspondingly earlier and harder. The border province of Erzurum had heard strong rumblings against the Armenian community since Sarikamish, but so too did Diyarbakır to the south, then well away from the war zone.<sup>138</sup>

CUP 'clubs', the regional agents of the party centre, had apparently been agitating for massacres since at least the time of the central committee meetings in the middle of March.<sup>139</sup> One obvious manifestation of the drive for 'revenge' was the assassination of Garegin Pasdermadjian's brother at the end of February.<sup>140</sup> Another occurred when a group of Armenians were forced under guard to destroy the memorial in their cemetery to the Russian soldiers lost in the 1828 Russo-Turkish war.<sup>141</sup> On 18 April, just before the Van episode, a meeting was called in Erzurum to address growing tensions. At the gathering, prominent CUP members, including one of the overall leaders of the Special Organization who had come from Istanbul at the head of an influx of irregulars after the March meetings, agitated for an immediate massacre.<sup>142</sup>

They were instructed to hold off by the governor until instructions had been received from Istanbul.<sup>143</sup>

The army was also prominent in pressing for draconian measures. On 2 May the military leadership requested of the Interior Ministry that Armenians in 'rebellious' regions in Van either be forced over the Russian border or dispersed in Anatolia. As well as addressing the problem of insurgency, it was argued, this would provide a form of revenge for the Russians' treatment of Muslims during the war, while vacating homes for those very refugees.<sup>144</sup> A week later the Interior Ministry issued deportation orders for Van and parts of Erzurum and Bitlis provinces in the face of the Russian advance, formalizing a policy which had already begun on a limited scale with the settlement of Muslim refugees from Alashkert in the Mush district of Bitlis.<sup>145</sup>

In between, on 4 May, two hundred Erzurum Armenians were arrested as the Russian left flank crossed the border in a two-pronged assault.<sup>146</sup> One prong was directed through the east of Erzurum province to the north-west of Lake Van, the other heading for Van city itself on the eastward side of the lake, both accompanied by Armenian volunteers.<sup>147</sup> As the force approached Van, and Cevdet's forces began to retreat with many of the Muslim women and children of the city,<sup>148</sup> Armenians were evicted from the rural border region—the Passin district and the wider plane of Erzurum—whereupon their villages were indeed resettled with Muslims. The Armenians were initially moved westward, with many gathering around the city itself.<sup>149</sup> Thereafter events proceeded at bewildering pace.

The arrival at Van on 18 May of Russian forces with Armenian volunteers as the advance guard seemed to confirm every Ottoman suspicion. Certainly the Van Armenians looked to Russia for aid at this dire moment, and contacted Choi and the Caucasus to try to secure it, as was known to the central powers.<sup>150</sup> The Russian army did come, slowly, while thousands of Armenians were dying in Van, but as an ad hoc measure, not because of a preconceived plan.<sup>151</sup> Nevertheless, by disrupting the rear and occupying Ottoman troops, the rising was instrumental in the failure of the Persian part of Enver's pan-Turanian campaign, as were the Armenian volunteers fighting in Persia by their delaying actions at the battle of Dilman at the end of April.<sup>152</sup> Equally important, both before and after 'liberation', an indeterminate number of Muslims were massacred in Van.<sup>153</sup> This added fuel to the ethnic fire, though the death toll was nowhere near the scale of 150,000 claimed as one justification for the subsequent deportation programme.<sup>154</sup> And at the Russian arrival, an estimated 80,000 Muslim refugees fled to Bitlis on the other side of Lake Van.<sup>155</sup>

During the concluding days of the Van conflict—16–18 May—and as the Armenian inhabitants of Khnyss on the Van–Erzurum border were massacred in the retreat from the other prong of the Russian invasion, the Interior

Ministry instructed the governor of Erzurum to deport those Armenians thus far evicted southward from their homes to the areas of southern Mosul, Der Zor, and Urfa.<sup>156</sup> On 23 May, as the Russians and some of the volunteers pushed on from Van towards Bitlis, this decision was extended throughout the provinces in closest proximity to Russian forces—Erzurum, Van, and Bitlis—as well as much of Cilicia and the coastal district of Aleppo.<sup>157</sup> For his part, Cevdet moved southwards and westwards into Bitlis in the face of the Russian advance, massacring as he went.<sup>158</sup> He was joined at the beginning of June by Enver's uncle Halil, the vanquished commander at Dilman. Between them they succeeded in repelling the Russians, and notwithstanding the deportation orders for the province's Armenians, continued with massive, indiscriminate murder on the spot among the Armenian and Assyrian population, though they were temporarily held up by knock-on Armenian resistance at Mush and Sasun.<sup>159</sup>

A plausible explanation for the absence of comprehensive anti-Armenian measures up to this point is Talât's own claim that he feared the international condemnation general deportation would bring down.<sup>160</sup> His account is tellingly free of moral scruple, and finds indirect substantiation in the post-war testimony of the German chief-of-staff of the Ottoman high command.<sup>161</sup> It is further reinforced by chronology. On 24 May, at Russian instigation, as the Caucasus authorities sought to bolster the enthusiasm of the Armenians in their ranks, the Entente issued a declaration promising to hold Ottoman leaders and officials accountable for atrocities against Christians.<sup>162</sup> From the very next day, eyewitnesses suggest that atrocities intensified yet further in certain areas.<sup>163</sup> On 26 May, the Supreme Military Command contacted the Interior Ministry, referring to an oral decision on the deportation of Armenians from all the eastern provinces, Zeytun, and other areas of high Armenian concentration, to the region south of the Diyarbakır vilayet, the Euphrates Valley, Urfa, and Süleymaniye.<sup>164</sup> (See Map 2.) In precise contrast to those Muslims encouraged into the empire in previous years, the deportees were not supposed to settle within twenty-five miles of railway lines. On the same day Talât sought the enactment of legislation legitimating deportations. Pursuant to these two communiqués a provisional law was promulgated on 27 May, permitting the military authorities to order deportations in the interests of 'security' and 'military necessity'.<sup>165</sup>

Ottoman sources only reveal intense agitation in CUP ranks at the Entente announcement, and the desire to establish a legal basis for the deportations that would spread the guilt for the measure across the whole government structure.<sup>166</sup> The official CUP press response on 5 June was to state the government's intention to continue its policies without being intimidated by its enemies.<sup>167</sup> It is highly likely, given the repeated intensification of anti-Armenian policy over the previous decades when outside attention had

been forced onto the Armenian question (as for instance in raising the reform question in 1895 and at the 1896 Ottoman Bank incident), that the Allied threat was itself responsible for precipitating the general deportation decision. On top of all the pre-war Ottoman–Armenian tensions, the established view of Russian–Armenian military collaboration, elements of vengeance for the events of the war since late 1914, the fall of Van, and Russian attacks on Muslims, CUP policy was now coloured by a reaction to this latest great power intervention in Ottoman internal affairs. At one and the same time the CUP leaders were put in the position of having nothing left to lose since their criminal culpability had already been invoked on the international stage, and they were—in their own perception—given an incentive by external ‘provocation’ finally to solve the problem of the ‘inner enemy’ in its entirety. There was nothing now, not even a practical rationale, to restrain the most vicious anti-Armenian tendencies as a ‘clean sweep’ began.

The very nature of the deportations is sufficient evidence of genocidal intent if such needs to be sought. Where the first anti-Armenian measures did not distinguish innocent individuals from ‘guilty’, the new ones did not differentiate between communities with revolutionary traditions or the great majority without, nor between border regions and the interior. Unlike the first Zeytun deportees, the Armenians were not to be sent to places where settlement was possible, if difficult; they were sent, defenceless and without provision or the means of subsistence, to desert regions where natural attrition could take its deadly toll. This was not all. In the orgies of murder, rape, mutilation, kidnap, and theft that accompanied the Erzurum deportations from the beginning of June, the desire of the radicals for massacre was also fulfilled as irregulars, soldiers, and Kurdish and other Muslim tribesmen descended on the deportees at strategic points. This slaughter was given euphemistic sanction by Talât’s authorization of the killing of resisters and escapees from the deportation columns.<sup>168</sup> Barely 20 per cent of the deportees from this phase of the deportation programme would reach their desert destinations. The twin track of measures—deportation and accompanying massive killing—was repeated throughout the expulsions from eastern Anatolia, though not across all the western provinces nor Cilicia, where the deportees passed relatively unmolested to their desert fates, out of reach of the Special Organization in the eastern provinces.<sup>169</sup> (See Pl. 7.)

One of the prime killing locations for the Erzurum deportees was the infamous Kemakh gorge, the sort of location frequently chosen because of the difficulty of escape. A Greek witness recalled a familiar pattern as deportees from Erzincan passed through the ravine, accompanied by Ottoman gendarmes:



Shortly, the gendarmes withdrew to the mountainside and, together with the *chetes* and the Kurds, began a hail of rifle fire. As soon as the first Armenians fell dead, the throng went into turmoil and turned back with screams of pain. But then they came upon the Turks of Erzinjan, who were following them with rifles and sabres and who now fell upon them without mercy. Before the situation got this far, all the beautiful women had jumped into the [Euphrates] river. The whole surface of the river was covered with them... The Turks were slaughtering in great numbers, but the Armenians were many, and by rushing upon them they managed to break through the line of Turks and reach the plain... A few days later there was a mopping-up operation: since many little children were still alive and wandering about beside their dead parents, the *chetes* were sent to round them up and kill them. They collected thousands of children and brought them to the banks of the Euphrates, where, seizing them by the feet, they dashed their heads against the rocks. And while a child was still in its death throes, they would throw it into the river...<sup>170</sup>

By late May, after a number of stages of radicalization in Ottoman policy, the move to a decision for general deportation was probably not a question of the shedding of any vestige of moral restraint: that had already been lost. At the same time we should not imagine that as soon as Talât and Enver opted for general measures they decided that each and every Armenian should die. There are two reasons for this.

First, the death of every single Armenian was not crucial for fulfilment of the aim of destroying the Armenian national presence in Anatolia and Cilicia. Given the small pockets of Armenians remaining across the empire after the war, and given the practice of allowing *some* converted Armenians to remain *in situ*, there was clearly space in the policy to allow for a few isolated and therefore irrelevant survivors. There was even space for tokenistic orders to protect some convoys of deportees en route,<sup>171</sup> possibly as a palliative to German and American diplomatic protests.<sup>172</sup> Orders to this effect were in any case largely either ignored or countermanded on the ground with the explicit or implicit approval of the CUP (see below). In the unlikely event that they were observed, the deported communities in question would still be permanently dislocated and their members would, in all probability, die simply from the conditions of their deportation and desert destinations.

The second reason that we should not imagine the deportation decision signified a decision for total murder is that it is unlikely that the CUP leaders instantly developed a precise template of how their inherently murderous scheme would unfold across the empire. A discrete decision for total killing, as endlessly debated in the historiography of the Nazi 'final solution' (see below), is a product of the *ex post facto* ruminations of genocide scholars. Logistical decisions still remained to be made in the months following 26 May concerning the pattern and schedule of the deportations. Indeed, the provisional nature of the establishment of the desert concentration centres in the

south for those Armenians who survived the deportations suggests the ongoing, improvised nature of the whole destruction process, as already illustrated by the somewhat ad hoc nature of decision-making in May.<sup>173</sup>

The scope of deportations was continually expanded within Anatolia until the end of the summer. After a brief hiatus after the specific deportation orders of 23 May, the expulsions spread westwards and southwards in quick succession in June and July, through the Sivas province and the adjacent district of Shabin-Karahissar (where 5,000 Armenians, men, women, and children rose up and took to the hills in mid-June after local massacres of Armenians), the provinces of Harput/Mamuret-ul-Asis and Trebizond/Trabzon, and into Thrace in the autumn.<sup>174</sup> At the beginning of July, as the deportations expanded in scope, so did the reception areas for the deportees. They now incorporated the provinces of modern-day Syria, with the stipulation that the Armenians should not exceed 10 per cent of the overall local population. This measure was designed to prevent the establishment of any critical mass of Armenians, facilitating assimilation and/or marginalization, and reflects the CUP's ongoing paranoia about concentrations of Armenians; it was also a practice established in the settlement of Bosnian and Albanian Muslims in Anatolia.<sup>175</sup> It has been suggested that the further rounds of massacres of deportees barely surviving in the desert concentration centres over the first half of 1916 was due to Armenian numbers exceeding this 10 per cent figure.<sup>176</sup> Though much more work needs to be done in the area, the theory has some substantiation since the greatest massacres occurred in the camps in the vicinity of Der Zor, which was precisely the area in which most concern over the number of Armenians was manifested.<sup>177</sup>

Estimates of the number murdered in these camps by Circassians, Chechens, and Arabs run as high as 150,000. This comprises the great majority of the 200,000 Raymond Kévorkian suggests were murdered outright at this stage of the genocide. The remainder of that total were killed at the other two points of the Der Zor-Ras ul-Ain-Mosul triangle (see above, Map 2), well into the interior, the projected 15,000 victims at Mosul killed under none other than Halil.<sup>178</sup> Given that these camps could never be self-sustaining entities, and that the government was utterly uninterested in adequate provision for the largely elderly, juvenile, and female inhabitants, massacre was a logical way of hurrying the inevitable process of death by attrition. Additionally, the self-inflicted problem—indeed threat, including to Ottoman troops—of the epidemic of diseases rife in these camps probably furnished both an excuse and an incentive to murder the Armenians outright, as it would at times in the genocide of both Jews and Romanies during the Second World War.<sup>179</sup> In the larger number of concentration centres nearer the Mediterranean coast, the huge death tolls were for the most part the result of starvation and disease alone.<sup>180</sup> The CUP could rationalize its policy of

obstructing German and American missionary assistance to the destitute remnant clinging to life by arguing that the 'inner resistance' of the Armenians against the Ottoman government could only be broken when they realized that they could not expect any help from foreign states.<sup>181</sup> (See Pl. 8.)

Complementing the process of destruction, the business of expropriation flourished, facilitating the further 'internal colonization' of eastern Anatolia. The Interior Ministry, through the 'commission for abandoned property', directed the auctioning of the property of deported Armenians to local Muslims and the donation of formerly Armenian housing to accommodate Muslims whose own dwellings had been destroyed, under the pretence that the dispossessed Armenians would later be compensated or reimbursed.<sup>182</sup> Some muhajirs benefited from this, as in Zeytun, but in many places land simply passed to existing Muslim landowners who had long seen themselves in competition with Christians.

The small pockets of Anatolian Armenians not subjected to deportation were disproportionately composed of Catholics and Protestants. Though they were religiously and to varying degrees politically separate from the majority Armenian Apostolic group, many of their members too were deported.<sup>183</sup> The existence of these smaller communities seems to have been useful to the CUP. It could use the promise of exempting them from deportations to give the appearance of concessions to the USA and its own alliance partners, the more so since these states had closer religious ties with the Catholic and Protestant Armenians, and indeed sometimes protested exclusively on their behalf. Thus the order for the exemption of Protestants came three days after the German embassy determined to raise the issue with Talât.<sup>184</sup>

Others provisionally and inconsistently exempted from the deportations were convertees to Islam, though the authorities deported many deemed to have converted only out of necessity.<sup>185</sup> The converted constituted approximately 5 to 10 per cent of the Ottoman Armenians, the majority of whom were children and women of childbearing age brought into Muslim households who had their names changed by way of absorption into the new national community.<sup>186</sup> Here many of the females were subject to forced marriage and/or sexual slavery in a horrific form of colonization of the body. Forced Islamization seems to have intensified among the survivors as the actual killing wound down from the summer of 1916 and spread to those Armenians left alive in vital professions such as military doctors.<sup>187</sup>

If we are to seek a point by which it is possible to speak of an accepted practice of general destruction that was maintained and extended until over a million Armenians were dead, we might consider the prisoners incarcerated in Istanbul on 24-6 April, then deported to Ankara. With very few exceptions they were murdered, but this only began on a large scale in mid-June.<sup>188</sup> By that time, Cevdet was turning Bitlis into a charnel house, the Shabin-Karahissar

rising had begun (on 12 June), and the slaughter of the deported Erzurum Armenians was under way.<sup>189</sup> The killing of the deportees was sanctioned on 14 June by Talât's authorization to kill resisters and escapees in the deportation columns,<sup>190</sup> and was pursuant to the logic he outlined three days later to a member of the German embassy staff. On 17 June Talât averred the Porte's intention to use the cover of war to finish for good with its 'inner enemies', thereby avoiding the problems of external diplomatic interference.<sup>191</sup> Shortly before, on 9 June, the Ministry of the Interior had issued the order directing the governor of Erzurum to auction off Armenian property:<sup>192</sup> the deportees were clearly not expected to return.

If general deportation was an exceptional initiative, it was also a radicalized continuation of earlier traditions of deportation and banishment, and it is, furthermore, unlikely that the CUP leaders perceived quite so sharply the dividing line that has been drawn in some of the scholarship between the first deportations from Cilicia and those from Anatolia.<sup>193</sup> In the latter deportations, traditions of population engineering and punitive dispersal were fused with another existing practice: that of collective 'reprisal' massacre, as perfected in the border regions—the element that transforms 'ethnic cleansing' into outright genocide. A continuum of another sort can be superimposed on Armenian actions in 1914–15.

### **Assessing the Armenian Nationalists**

The distinction between acts of self-defence and acts of revolt was and remains blurred: who was to decide when and why to take up arms against the state, and how was the state to perceive the intentions of Armenian arms-bearers in its midst? While to many Armenian nationalists and historians the Van uprising was of the same desperate, heroic part as the famous 'forty days of Musa Dagh'<sup>194</sup> in autumn 1915—when a community fled impending deportation to the hills on the Mediterranean coast south of Alexandretta and held off their assailants until their rescue by a French warship—and to the CUP they were simply two similar examples of treachery, the external observer might view them as different points on a continuum with pure voluntarism at one end and choiceless desperation at the other. The pure self-defence of Musa Dagh would be at the extreme of desperation, the Shabin-Karahissar, Mush, and Sasun resistance of late May to June alongside it, the Van rising slightly further down. The planned Zeytun rising would be still further down, perhaps at the mid-point of the continuum, while much nearer the point of pure voluntarism would be the behaviour of Pasdermajian and some of the Armenian deserters to Russian ranks from the outset of the war.

If not all forms of resistance were at the time responses to genocide, most were based on past experience, including of discrimination and massacre. Nowhere is this clearer than in the involvement in the Cilician uprising plan of the veterans of earlier resistance or in the participation in the volunteer units of earlier refugees from Hamidian and Young Turk rule.<sup>195</sup> The very large majority of Ottoman Armenians, however, remained terrified of what any action might bring. The same went for many diaspora Armenians, who feared CUP spies finding them in league with the empire's enemies and massacring their captive kinsmen in revenge.<sup>196</sup>

The Zeytun case and Ottoman documents on eastern Anatolia show that some Armenians were coerced into action, and also that Armenian communities condemned the reckless behaviour of a few of their number,<sup>197</sup> and particularly that of their co-religionists in the Caucasus and Persia, who provided the driving force for action as they had traditionally done.<sup>198</sup> Leaders of every Armenian political party are culpable for not heeding the early voices of caution from within their communities, and subordinating the immediate interests of the unpoliticized Ottoman Armenian masses.<sup>199</sup> So we are not talking about a movement of national consensus, let alone participation; this was certainly not a civil war situation, as apologists for the CUP have contested. Ironically, the level of Armenian nationalist action in 1914–15 was lower than it had been on the eve of the 1894–6 massacres. Nevertheless, the actions of the few demonstrably contributed to radicalizations of CUP policy.

The Armenian political leaderships were not all simply dupes, fooled into collaboration by Russian lies about future autonomy, though the Russian role in fostering an explosive situation does need to be highlighted. The first premier of the short-lived Caucasian Republic of Armenia, Hovhannes Katchaznuni, discerned that some nationalist leaders 'implanted our desires into the minds of others . . . by overestimating our modest worth we were naturally exaggerating our hopes and expectations',<sup>200</sup> but not all Armenians were ready to believe Entente assurances. Appreciating at least some of the interests of the powers, both Nubar and the Russian ARF spokesman Hagop Zavriev were aware in their own limited ways that Armenian claims had to be diplomatically 'defended' against their potential sponsors.<sup>201</sup> Yet Armenian representatives had precious few cards to play, and the biographer of the volunteer leader Andranik identifies the resulting dilemma: could the Armenians expect territorial favours in a peace settlement if they did not make some military contribution?<sup>202</sup> Nubar had also reflected in April 1915 that 'every oppressed people needs to comply with certain duties in order to be worthy of liberation'. His prescription: 'a unified rebellion of the Armenians against Turkish authorities wherever possible'.<sup>203</sup>

The promise of internal assistance to the Entente derived from the perceived need for Armenian leaders to be seen to contribute to overthrowing the

the empire, to maximize the weight of their claims to territory. In a word, they tried to prove to the Entente by the provision of force that they were worthy nationalists in the Darwinian international system that the 'Great Powers' had done so much to create. The gesture was as important as the scale of this contribution, and in Nubar's rhetoric of 'duty' there is a detectable preparedness for sacrifice as part of the gesture—a fateful restatement of Khrimian's 1878 call for a militant national consciousness. The volunteer battalions were integral to the bid, hence the loud proclamations on their formation. Their significance also guaranteed internecine strife, as there was to be later at the peace conferences, over which political party represented the Armenian nation—thus the ARF sought to retain exclusive control over the Caucasus volunteers, while the Hnchaks sought to form a separate battalion.<sup>204</sup>

Tellingly, Nubar came to understand the real significance of the volunteers. After the Russian–Armenian retreat from Van in July 1915 in the face of the Turkish advance, he recalled that previously

the illusion had been maintained that the volunteers had at least fought courageously and saved lives. This illusion vanished in the light of [the retreat]. I had predicted from the beginning that the volunteers were a danger in pushing the Turks to revenge, though at the same time I could never have imagined that that revenge would reach such a degree of cruelty and savagery. My initial fears and opposition did not merit... the accusation of lack of patriotism [that they received]. If later, in the light of events, I rallied to the unanimous opinion of our compatriots of all parties, I much regret today not having resisted to the end. The Turks have cruelly made us repent of this mistake... This opinion is not mine alone; it is a general belief today.<sup>205</sup>

If the dangerous logic of nationalist calculation was not fully apparent beforehand, it soon became so. Some observers, though, remained brutally pragmatic. Thus in May 1915, Arshag Tchobanian, the ARF poet and secretary of the Armenian committee of Paris: 'Our compatriots are facing a great crisis which may be the last. The Turks and the Kurds can kill individuals only; they will never succeed in killing the Armenian nation. I have total confidence in the future of our people.'<sup>206</sup> This notwithstanding, however, no matter how callous Tchobanian and his like, and whatever the scope of their actions, nowhere else during the First World War was the separatist nationalism of the few answered with the total destruction of the wider ethnic community from which the nationalists hailed. That is the crux of the issue.

### **The Administration of Murder**

It cannot be stated clearly enough that the somewhat improvised and often reactive nature of the destruction process as it developed in no way detracts from the overall intent manifest in the conduct of the measures when they

were under way. Though the breadth of participation in the destruction and the function it served for the Ottoman empire means that the Armenian genocide was ultimately a state project, its implementation was closely policed by the CUP. When general deportation had become policy it was rigidly enforced from the power centre, with provincial governors shadowed by watchful 'responsible secretaries'—*kâtibi mesul*—of the CUP to ensure appropriate execution of their instructions.<sup>207</sup> Reluctant officials were replaced by more enthusiastic ones, and sometimes even killed.<sup>208</sup>

The deportation orders themselves contain no explicit sanction of mass murder. Doubtless the CUP leaders did not want to leave incriminating documentary evidence, but neither did they wish to risk potential opposition from anyone in the larger governing structure with any qualms, including some cabinet ministers who were kept in the dark.<sup>209</sup> Yet testimony from various executors of the genocide at the few post-war trials conducted under the auspices of the new Ottoman government exposes the deliberate use of euphemism and camouflage in the instructions for 'care' of the deportees. It reveals that the onus was on outright killing, and the existence of oral and secret telegraph orders from Istanbul and local CUP functionaries to this effect,<sup>210</sup> though regional differences in the death tolls exacted from the deportation convoys suggests that there was not complete uniformity in this 'second track' of orders.

The fact that much of the killing was done by irregulars does not alleviate the responsibility of the power centre, since the deployment of irregulars for 'dirty work' was a time-honoured Ottoman tradition. While it clearly played a role in the Armenian genocide, the regular Ottoman army had rarely been used to exterminate communities. Such work had long been the preserve of better-qualified irregular specialists who were an integral part of the state's arsenal. Their actions had traditionally had the acceptance and tacit compliance of the Ottoman authorities and provided the latter with a means of avoiding the blame for atrocities. Irregulars had frequently been used against internal population groups in the past, while the army fought against external forces. Unlike the regular army, these irregulars were expected to live off plunder.<sup>211</sup>

Furthermore, there was a structure to the process at the macro level that does not necessarily come through if we look only at the bedlam of the experience of the attacks on the deportation convoys or the massacres on the spot in Bitlis, Van, and Diyarbakır.<sup>212</sup> Cornelia Sorabji has written of the 'ethnic cleansing' in the break-up of the former Yugoslavia that whatever arbitrary horrors individuals could invent in the process, they were only enabled to do so within an *ordered context*.<sup>213</sup> The same was the case in the Armenian genocide. Thus for instance when in July Dr Reşid took his murderous remit too far in Diyarbakır and started annihilating all the

Christians he could lay his hands on, he was informed by the Interior Ministry to restrict his measures to Armenians alone.<sup>214</sup>

### The Genocide in Summary

The Armenian genocide has been dubbed the first modern genocide. It was, as the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador Johann von Pallavicini described it, a means of 'creating a national state through the annihilation of foreign elements'.<sup>215</sup> This undermines Turkish claims that the deportations were purely a matter of security. Had a definition of national security, however paranoid, been the only reason for acting against the Armenians, the result might have been more like, for example, the Tsarist deportations of ethnic Germans, Jews, Poles, Latvians, or Lithuanians from areas near the eastern front during 1915—unpleasant and often incidentally lethal, but limited in scope, and with no design to decimate the deportees.

'Security' only assumed its significance because of the linkage in CUP thought with the drive for ethnic homogeneity and national territorial integrity in the 'heartlands' of the Ottoman empire, and political and economic independence for Turks as an ethnic-national group. Armenians in Cilicia and eastern Anatolia were already seen as obstacles to each of these ends. And with Entente military advances and the very real Ottoman fears of their implications for the empire, the presence of an internal 'alien' element was no longer just an obstacle, it seemed an immediate threat. The whole of the war in the Near East and the Balkans was drawn along ethnic-national lines and every imperial power was seeking advantage in their opponents' territory by offering incentives to nascent ethnic/religious/nationalist movements therein. The fact that such links did exist between Armenians and the Entente, though they were not quite of the nature the CUP imagined, was all the evidence that a paranoid and chauvinist regime required to confirm their suspicions of Armenian ethnic enmity.

Once the strategic city of Van had been 'liberated', the distinction between innocent and 'guilty' Armenians was rendered meaningless both ideologically and practically in CUP eyes. Now, even if not all, or only a minority of Armenians were active enemies, all would benefit from the situation that some of their number had brought about. (The CUP's fear of Armenian revolutionary potential was demonstrably coloured by its own success in overthrowing the Hamidian regime with only a small cadre.<sup>216</sup>) That, and the feared prospect of Armenians joining with Entente forces, could be forestalled if the Armenian population was once and for all physically removed. This would leave Muslims in sole occupation of the land—and, almost as important, of Armenian property—and would also render



redundant any Russian claim to a protectorate. And even if, as some officials could discern, the Van Armenians had risen only in self-defence, they still represented an obstacle to the prosecution of the war in the short term, and an ethnically defined challenge to Ottoman authority in Anatolia in the long term. Talât's shameless propagandizing about the 'Armenian threat' therefore made perfect sense in his terms, as did his observation that the deportations 'were determined by national *and historical necessity*.'<sup>217</sup> The First World War brought everything to a head.

This interpretation in itself is not partisan; the question is to what use it is put. For the CUP the Van rising was a realization of a prophecy of Armenian treachery, but because of the repressive and often murderous nature of CUP policy up to that time, the prophecy became self-fulfilling. Any claim that the murder of the Armenians when it unfolded was not a genocide, simply because there might not be unequivocal evidence of genocidal intent prior to May 1915, is as absurd as the suggestion that the Nazi 'final solution' was not a genocide because it was not inscribed before the invasion of Poland or the USSR that every Jew was to be murdered. Since the historiography of the Holocaust today is more mature and less politicized than that of the Armenian genocide, the question does not now really obtain, but it would be equally controversial for a scholar of the former as one of the latter to pinpoint exactly when that genocide began. Indeed, the scholarship of the 'final solution' has long been divided about the existence and timing of a single specific order for the annihilation of the Jews.

Part of the interpretative problem is that 'genocide' is more a legal term than a historical one, designed for the *ex post facto* judgements of the courtroom rather than the historian's attempt to understand events as they develop—that is, out of non-genocidal or latently murderous situations. In this sense, 'genocide' is a classic example of the past examined teleologically—a retrospective projection. As the epithet 'genocide perpetrator' has become the major stigma under international law, the politico-legal battle between, crudely speaking, representatives of Turks and Armenians has raged around the applicability of the term, and specifically the key notion of *intent* to destroy. It may be said categorically that the killing did constitute a genocide—every aspect of the United Nations' definition of the crime is applicable<sup>218</sup>—but recognizing that fact should be a by-product of the historian's work, not its ultimate aim or underpinning.

'Deciding' upon genocide is not like one man resolving to kill another, packing a gun, and then locating and shooting his victim, where intent is clearly illustrated by the prior wielding of the firearm. In such a case, it is eminently possible to prove state intent to kill individuals; but genocide involves mass, sustained, and indiscriminate killing, and often a period of the expansion of murder from individuals, even in large numbers, to whole

groups. Pinpointing the precise time within that period of radicalization at which a state framework that is demonstrably permissive of murder and atrocity becomes explicitly genocidal is extremely difficult and unlikely ever to be achieved definitively.

One scholar to have debunked the idea of a unilinear progression from idea to act via a 'Führer order' in the Jewish genocide is Peter Longerich.<sup>219</sup> To borrow from his analysis of the development of the 'final solution', if we think more along the lines of a 'policy of annihilation' we get the idea of a general consensus of destruction of the Armenian national community, a consensus which developed and was augmented over time around broad principles of discrimination and xenophobia, progressing from notions of removal by dilution and/or forced assimilation to physical removal by deportation and/or murder. Thus, phases of acceleration and radicalization become more appropriate terms of reference than discernible, discrete shifts in intent.

In the historiography of the Armenian genocide the writing of reconstructive history has too often been subordinated to ahistorical ends. Interpretations have been artificially dichotomized into pre- and post-'decision' periods. The confrontation at Van is a prime example of the confusion to which such an approach can lead. Put plainly, representatives of the official Turkish nationalist viewpoint have tried to use those events to illustrate Armenian treachery and thus to 'legitimate' subsequent CUP policy. On the other 'side', while proving that Van was a result of Ottoman provocation, scholars have argued that it must, therefore, have been a response to a preconceived policy of genocide, or at the very least that it gave the perpetrators the excuse they were looking for. The former interpretation cynically disregards the whole history of CUP policy up to April 1915; the latter ignores the complexities and contingencies of state policy-making in a period of prolonged wartime crisis. In reality, the Van episode contributed to the exacerbation of existing CUP policy and the unleashing of its most extreme tendencies. This is probably insufficient for scholars who have been involved in a long quasi-political battle to prove outright prior genocidal intent. Yet Van is precisely illustrative of a process of cumulative radicalization towards a policy of genocide, a radicalization with its roots in the interaction of great power imperialism, Near Eastern nationalism, and the decline of the Ottoman empire.

## Interlude: The Genocide in Context

Having removed most of the Armenians, and accepted the probable loss of the Arab provinces, it would be left to the CUP's successor regime to continue the homogenization process by removing the remaining Armenian population, then the Anatolian Greeks, and finally focusing on the Kurds. As with the development of the Armenian genocide, however, each of these episodes of persecution, displacement, and murder had its own dynamics, pattern, and intensity. The relationship between intention and contingency remained intimate, and as ensuing chapters will show, the Entente powers had a profound responsibility for the re-escalation of inter-ethnic violence after the close of the First World War. But before moving to the Kemalist period, we should recall that the Armenians were not the only targets of CUP population engineering and murder.

### CUP Population Policy and the First World War

The closest parallel to the wartime fate of the Armenians was that of the smaller Syriac-speaking Christian communities, designated collectively at the peace conferences as 'Assyro-Chaldeans'. Unlike the Armenians, these peoples had no modern political party to formulate and forward nationalistic demands, and remained constituted more in accordance with the traditional millet system.<sup>1</sup> In this sense they posed less of a political 'threat' to the CUP agenda. On the other hand, the regions in which they primarily dwelt were precisely those eastern border areas that were cast as suspect because of the traditionally weak influence of central government and their supposed susceptibility to Russian influence. While it is arguable that there was less orchestration from Istanbul in what may properly be called the Assyro-Chaldean genocide than in the Armenian case, some of the major perpetrators of the Armenian genocide were at the forefront of this campaign of mass murder—Reşid in Diyarbakir, Cevdet in Van and Persia, and Halil in Persia and then later in Bitlis (and each of these had strong personal links to one or more CUP triumvirs, it should be recalled)—and it is abundantly clear that no serious central objection was forthcoming to the violent removal of this, another ethno-religiously 'anomalous' population. The rhythms of murder of the two peoples were also related.

Some Assyro-Chaldeans fell victim at first to a similar set of wartime circumstances as Armenians in the border areas from the time of Ottoman mobilisation. Deportations occurred from along the Persian boundary, as did arrests and executions for alleged collaboration with Russia, while unequal clashes with Kurds and Ottoman irregulars took their toll from autumn 1914 onwards. Massacres grew in scope, particularly when the Russian troops withdrew from Urmia at the turn of 1914–15. As with the Armenians, however, it was from May–June 1915 onwards that the violence became more all-encompassing and spread more into the Ottoman interior. In total, the victims of outright massacre, wartime privation, and a few deportation marches, reach perhaps 250,000 of a pre-war Anatolian and Persian Assyro-Chaldean population of up to 619,000 people.<sup>2</sup>

From at least the time of the 1914 Turco-Greek crisis Greeks had also been mentioned as potential targets of a general ‘cleansing’, and in summer 1915 rumours spread among the Alevis of Dersim expressing the fear that they would suffer the same fate as the Armenians.<sup>3</sup> Some Kurds, like Greeks, were indeed targeted by the CUP.<sup>4</sup> In 1916–17 hundreds of thousands were deported from areas of eastern Anatolia, though in keeping with the traditional, one-eyed view of intercommunal violence in the Ottoman empire, no attention was paid in the West to these deportations of non-Christians. If partly precipitated by wartime insurrections by specific discontented Kurdish tribes, these deportations were harbingers of the more systematic assault on Kurdish communal existence after 1923. How, though, did the attacks differ from the assault on the Armenians?

Few Ottoman Greeks outside the western port of Smyrna/Izmir and its hinterland shared the desire of the many Athens statesmen who were thinking of *enosis*—the creation of a greater Greece, including parts of Anatolia. Moreover, the Ottoman Greek population as a whole was scattered over quite a wide area, not concentrated, like the Armenians of the eastern provinces, in the centre of the supposed Turkish heartland. The smaller-scale deportations of Greeks from the war zones into 1915 were partially reversed in the late summer, probably because they were deemed likely to risk the entry of the Greek state into the war against Turkey.<sup>5</sup> Further deportations in 1916–17 brought the total expelled to Greece during the war to a minimum of 105,000, and those deported into the Anatolian interior to a minimum of 50,000.<sup>6</sup> Gradual economic marginalization and a continuance of the forced emigration of 1913–14 would presumably have seemed a viable way for the CUP to rid itself of the Greeks given the absence of some of the circumstances that made the Armenian case a matter for the most radical and swift ‘solution’—namely war against a ‘sponsor’ state.

The Kurdish deportations of 1916–17 served a triple purpose: removing Kurds, especially those traditionally hostile to the government and/or outside

the Sunni community, from sensitive war areas in eastern Anatolia; diluting the concentration of Kurds in the region and moving them elsewhere for easier assimilation; and generally breaking down traditional tribal networks and economies in a continuation of nineteenth-century Ottoman policies of centralization. As the Swiss missionary Jacob Künzler put it, the deportations looked like an attempt to 'merge' the Kurds into the Turkish national body,<sup>7</sup> an action that in Turkish eyes would be easier than in the case of Christians, owing to the common religious heritage of the Muslim groups. Also, unlike in the Armenian case, the deportees were not attacked en route, though tens of thousands perished from privation and exposure during and at the end of their journeys to southern and western Anatolia.<sup>8</sup>

It can only be a matter of speculation as to how the CUP would have dealt with Kurds had the war continued or the central powers been victorious. With reference to the Kurdish deportations of 1916–17, the very enactment of the Armenian deportations and massacres was probably important in crystallizing broader Turkish nationalist aspirations. But with the turmoil of the last war years and then the Ottoman defeat, there would be a hiatus in the manifestation of Turkish anti-Kurdishness until the 1920s. From 1917 to 1918 the CUP's focus would return to matters Armenian, and from 1919 too, with Kemal to the fore, Turkish wrath would be directed at both Ottoman Greeks and Greek invaders.

If the ethnic violence of the succeeding years was not precisely the same as in 1915–16, many of the key perpetrators were, particularly in the Ottoman military in the thrusts into the Caucasus in 1918 and 1920. Key commanders simply transferred their loyalty from the CUP to the equally nationalist Kemal. Parenthetically, Kemal would also rely on many officials who had served under the CUP, with one of the most glaring examples being his later promotion to the post of Interior Minister of Şükrü Kaya, erstwhile chief of the directorate for the settlement of tribes and immigrants.<sup>9</sup> The primary difference between the genocide of 1915–16 and later anti-Armenian violence was in the context in which it occurred rather than the guiding ideology of the Turkish actors. In this sense, if we are to establish a rough dividing line it should not be between CUP and Kemalist actions per se but between the actions of 1915–16 and those afterwards.

The 1915–16 genocide was a one-sided destruction of a largely defenceless community by the agents of a sovereign state. The situation in Anatolia from around 1917 onwards is appropriately described by Levene as 'post-genocidal'. State authority had substantially collapsed after alternating Russian and Ottoman advances and the devastations imposed on population and infrastructure by war and genocide. Regular and irregular forces of 'Armenians, Kurds, Russians, Turks, Georgians, Azeris, as well as, belatedly, the British and the French' were 'all attempting to hold their own against each other'. In this

environment, brutalized Armenian bands, composed of army deserters, members of the Russian volunteer battalions, and survivors of the earlier massacres, engaged in atrocities alongside most of the other ethnic groups.<sup>10</sup>

Even beforehand, during the Russian advance into eastern Anatolia at the beginning of 1916, vengeful Armenian forces and Cossacks murdered many Muslims, as testified to in British sources.<sup>11</sup> As in 1915, the Russian advance also resulted in massive plunder of the whole Ottoman population, resulting in the starvation of thousands.<sup>12</sup> Though on a much smaller scale than the state-led murder conducted previously by the Ottoman state, Armenian atrocities from this time onward are the subject of a substantial Turkish literature, and have often been manipulated into a retrospective justification of the earlier deportations.<sup>13</sup>

The collapse of the Russian Caucasus front after the Bolshevik revolution meant that the Ottoman–Russian border region became at least as significant a military theatre as it had been in 1914–15. Accordingly, the locus of ethnic conflict spread fully into the Caucasus, where it had long been simmering. Germany coveted the mineral resources of the Caucasus for the sustenance of its war effort, while the door had reopened in an unlikely fashion for the pursuit of the CUP's expansionist ambitions. Russian troops deserted or withdrew haphazardly over summer 1917, and then in November the army was officially withdrawn, resulting in yet another flight northwards and eastwards of Armenians and Assyrians. At the beginning of 1918 the Ottoman army gathered itself to launch a renewed Caucasus offensive, with the renewed aim of opening up, through Azerbaijan, a link of contiguous Turkic population deep into Russian imperial territory. The commander-in-chief of the Ottoman armies was Halil.<sup>14</sup>

Standing before the Ottoman forces were three new Caucasian polities. Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia had formed the so-called Transcaucasian Federation as Russian rule evaporated in April. Internal and external pressures broke this fragile coalition the following month, with Azeri leaders looking, not without reservations, to the Ottoman Empire for protection, and Georgians likewise to Germany, against the backdrop of earlier German support of Georgian separatism. Abandoned by its neighbours, in June 1918 the Armenian National Council proclaimed independence in those areas as yet unoccupied by the Ottoman army. For its part, the Ottoman government was unwilling to concentrate too many troops against Armenia, preferring to compete with Germany (and Russia) for possession of oil-rich Baku in Azerbaijan. Thus it concluded a provisional, punitive peace with Armenia on 4 June.<sup>15</sup> Finally, the advance of British forces in Mesopotamia induced the Ottoman government to sign the armistice of Mudros with the Entente on 30 October 1918. The CUP was officially dissolved the following month.

Unsurprisingly, the Ottoman armies had conducted their campaign in complete disregard of the laws of war. They encountered fierce resistance first in eastern Anatolia from Armenian irregulars and former Armenian, Georgian, and Greek soldiers from the Russian army,<sup>16</sup> and then from the official armies of the Armenian republic, also founded on the bedrock of the volunteer battalions. German and Austrian sources leave little doubt as to the murderous intent towards any Armenians who came under the power of the Ottoman armies.<sup>17</sup> Full extension of the domestic genocide would in all probability have gone hand in hand with obliterating the Armenian state had the CUP been able fully to conquer it.

The most notorious single massacre of the period occurred in mid-September 1918 when the Ottoman forces captured Baku after stubborn resistance from local Armenians and Bolsheviks. According to some estimates 30,000 Armenians were slaughtered over the ensuing days by Azeris with the participation of the Ottoman army. Yet the background to this massacre is complicated by a recent history of Armenian–Azeri friction that had been marked by bloody intercommunal strife in 1905 and, more recently, extensive massacres of Azeris in Baku by Armenians in March 1918 amid a wider explosion of Armenian–Azeri violence over the first half of the year.<sup>18</sup>

### **Kemal and Resurgent Turkish Nationalism, 1919–23**

The four years after the armistice were characterized by the ascendance in Turkey of resurgent nationalism under Kemal. He only gradually assumed full control amid the chaos of eastern Anatolia, aided by remnants of the CUP.<sup>19</sup> Previously affiliated with a Young Turk grouping, Kemal had risen to prominence in the Ottoman army during the defence of Gallipoli. In spring 1919 he was dispatched by Istanbul ostensibly to oversee the disarmament of the remaining Ottoman forces in the eastern provinces, though since his views were well known, the primary motive may well have been simply to remove him from proximity to the capital. Upon landing at Samsun in May, Kemal disregarded his orders and set about rallying and ultimately assuming control of the soldiers and irregulars in the interior. Kemal's movement gradually established itself over the Allied-influenced Istanbul government. As a result of his success the peace treaty of Sèvres signed in August 1920 by Istanbul had to be renegotiated in the nationalists' favour at Lausanne in 1922.

In the interim years the Anglo-French front that originally secured the division of the Ottoman empire in its interests at Versailles fell apart. For its part, Britain retained control via League of Nations mandates over the former Ottoman territories of Palestine-Transjordan and Iraq. France came to early terms with the nationalists, relinquishing control of Cilicia and contenting

itself with Syria. The nationalists also defeated invading Greek armies in 1922, the latter the willing proxies of Britain in the quest to crush Kemal and extend Greek territory. In the Caucasus, after British forces departed in the second half of 1919, the nationalists consolidated and even extended Turkey's borders. At the end of 1920 they defeated and then imposed the draconian peace treaty of Alexandropol on the Republic of Armenia. This gifted to the nationalists territories up to and even beyond the 1878 boundaries, and though the treaty itself was superseded as the remainder of the Armenian Republic succumbed to Bolshevik penetration—Armenia's leaders had little choice if the country was to survive in any form—its territorial terms were confirmed in March 1921 by Russian–Turkish agreement.<sup>20</sup>

The chief issue concerning the Kemalists was maintaining the territorial integrity of eastern Thrace and Anatolia. At the heart of this claim was the rejection of a prospective Armenian state that, according to the Sèvres terms, would include much of eastern Anatolia. The successful conclusion of each campaign provided the opportunity to 'cleanse' the territory thus secured of opposing armed forces, but also of indigenous Christian civilian populations. Extensive massacres occurred in Marash in Cilicia, where at the beginning of 1920 at least 5,000 Armenians were killed during and after a battle for the town,<sup>21</sup> and on the conquest of Caucasian Armenia.

The Turkish military commanders were, like their predecessors under the CUP regime, graduates of the Harbiye military college, and were accordingly equally nationalistic. The commander of the Turkish armies that invaded Armenia in 1920 was Kâzım Karabekir, who had been involved in the 1918 CUP drive into the Caucasus and was one of the men whom Kemal had been dispatched from Istanbul to disarm. He exerted much of the pressure for the new invasion. He also engaged the assistance of a number of Special Organization operatives who were keen to continue their ideological task against the Armenians and who also saw the new campaign as a way of restating their patriotism and gaining the support of Kemal as protection against prosecution for their First World War crimes.<sup>22</sup> Reliable estimates are lacking as to the total number of Armenian civilians murdered by the nationalists as they invaded and occupied the lands they claimed. In the key fortress-city of Kars alone Armenian sources suggest 6,000 Armenians were killed shortly after Turkish entry at the end of October 1920. Similar stories of mass murder, rape, and ubiquitous pillage emerged on the conquest of Alexandropol.<sup>23</sup> Alexandropol, indeed, was occupied by Turkish forces for some five months while the Turkish–Russian border was being demarcated, and in that time, according to Soviet sources, some 60,000 Armenians were killed, of whom only half were adult males, and 18,000 carried away for forced labour.<sup>24</sup>

Yet once again this killing was not a simple extension of the one-sided murder of 1915–16. In the Caucasus, Kemal, like the CUP in 1918, was not

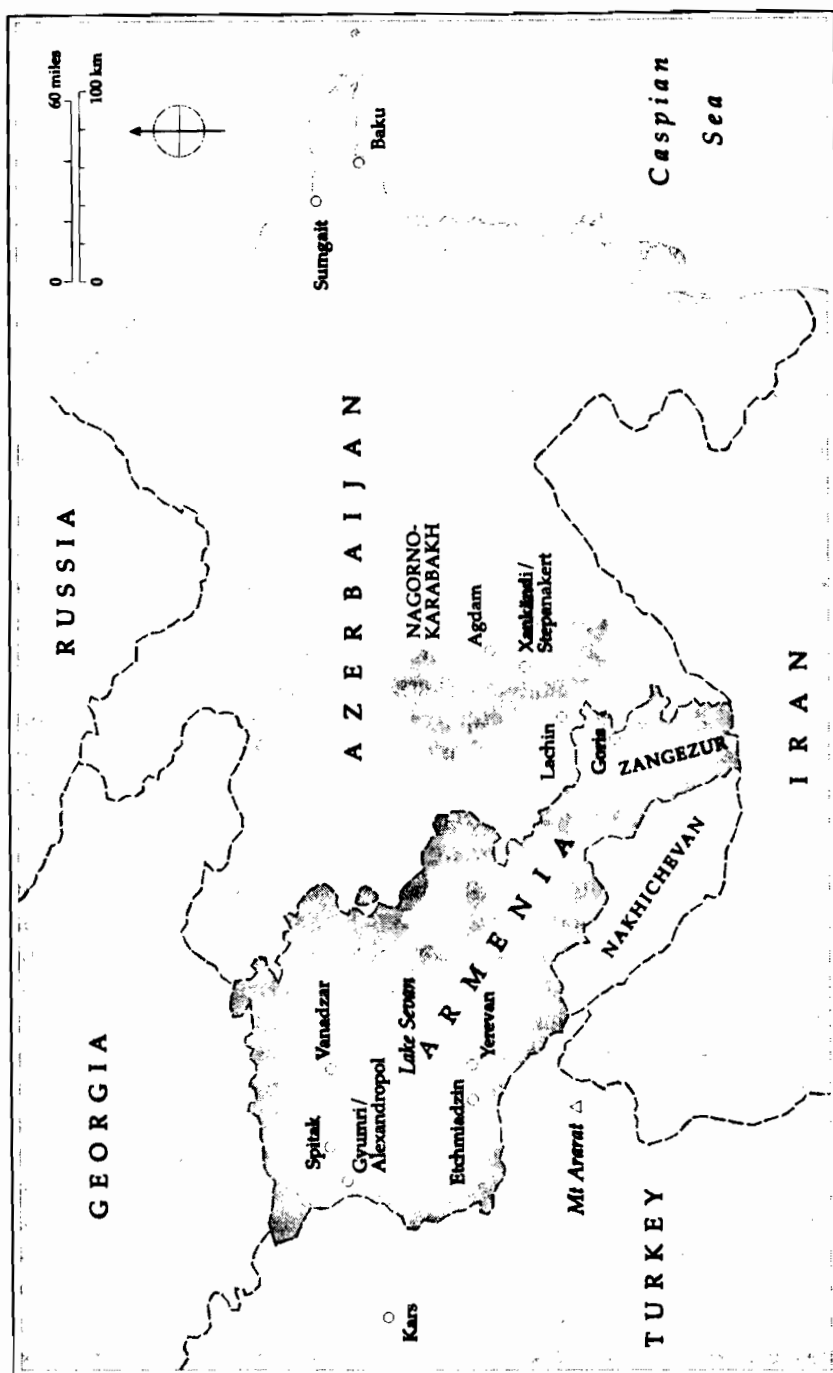


attacking an Ottoman minority but a sovereign state, if a weak one. And the dictation of a peace treaty with Armenia, however crippling to Armenia, was a *de facto* recognition of Armenian national existence somewhere. There was also a secondary dynamic. We have already encountered the history of Armenian–Azeri antagonism. This was exacerbated by further mutual killings and expulsions in the complex territorial dispute between the Transcaucasian states after the Russian collapse that would go on to raise its head again at the break-up of the Soviet Union.<sup>25</sup> In these disputes the Armenians gave as well as received.

### Armenia and Azerbaijan

Richard Hovannisian writes that ‘the smooth division of Transcaucasia into three neatly drawn ethnographic regions was impossible, but Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian extremists did their utmost to hasten the process of disentanglement and the removal of potentially troublesome “alien” enclaves within their respective countries’.<sup>26</sup> Border regions such as Zangezur, Karabakh, and Nakhichevan and areas of heavily mixed population became particularly susceptible to ‘disentanglement’. At the withdrawal of the CUP’s forces at the end of 1918 from the southern Transcaucasian territories of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum, territorial disputes between the three states spread into these regions as well. As Hovannisian again writes, ‘each of the newly independent states, finding its borders elastic, attempted to stretch outward at the expense of the others. And while each could logically justify its position, in the end it was political strength and force of arms that counted’.<sup>27</sup> On the various Turkish advances into the Caucasus, the power equation was decidedly in Azerbaijan’s favour, and Armenians suffered accordingly, but there is no doubt that extensive atrocities were committed on all sides, and according to the same rationales. (See Map 3.)

On the Armenian side, many of the key perpetrators were the former leaders of the volunteer battalions and Turkish–Armenian ‘self-defence’ operations. From mid-1918, Andranik was prominent in the destruction of Muslim settlements during the purging of the Armenian–Azeri border region of Zangezur. Hovannisian describes his actions as the beginning of the process of ‘transforming Zangezur into a solidly Armenian land’.<sup>28</sup> Alexandre Khatisian, one-time Prime Minister of Armenia, used similar language, averring that ‘it was not the will of the diplomats which was to bring about homogeneous populations in this or that region, but through the course of elemental behaviour’.<sup>29</sup> Andranik was stopped from expanding this policy into Karabakh by the local British commander, who had his own distinct political agenda.<sup>30</sup>



Map 3: Armenia and Azerbaijan in the present day

Andranik brought with him 30,000 Armenian refugees, many from eastern Anatolia, particularly Mush and Bitlis, where, under the protection of fedayee forces lead by Ruben Ter Minassian, they had managed to resist the Ottoman assault and escape to the Caucasus. Some refugees stayed in Zangezur, but Ter Minassian, a former member of the Armenian national council, ordered the transfer of many of them to the Erivan and Daralgiaz regions, where they replaced evicted Muslims in a move to ethnically homogenize key areas of the Armenian state. One of the fedayees accurately described this as ethnic cleansing, and the parallels to the settlement of muhajirs at Armenian expense in the late Ottoman empire are obvious.<sup>31</sup>

Writing in April 1920, Archbishop Khoren of Erivan put a gloss on such actions that was remarkably reminiscent of CUP rationalizations of the 1915 genocide. 'I must admit', he wrote, 'that a few Tatar villages under the Armenian Government have suffered, . . . but, every time . . . they were the aggressors, either they actually attacked us, or they were being organised by the Azerbaijan agents and official representatives to rise against the Armenian Government'.<sup>32</sup> In May, immediately after the Archbishop penned his account, Ter Minassian was appointed Armenian Minister of War and of the Interior in the ARF-dominated government, whereupon he expanded his homogenization campaign to include some of the areas of Kars and Nakhichevan into which the Armenian state had expanded since the end of 1918.<sup>33</sup> He and the ARF government have been praised by some Armenian historians for 'Armenianizing' Armenia and thus securing its future.<sup>34</sup> However, Armenian attacks on Muslims provided the Turkish nationalist forces with a pretext for the 1920 invasion in which Kars and Ardahan were seized.<sup>35</sup> In keeping with blinkered representations of the conflict from both sides up to the present day, the Turkish nationalists naturally ignored Azeri attacks on Armenians.

### **The Turco-Greek Wars**

Whereas in the Caucasus—the Armenian–Azeri conflict aside—and Cilicia atrocities by Turkish nationalist forces greatly outweighed those inflicted on Turks and the Ottoman Muslim population, the same was not true of the Turkish encounters with Greece. In these, Turkey was the victim of an invasion by another sovereign state. Landing in Smyrna in May 1919, backed by Britain in a bid to forestall Italian claims on the territory, Greek forces had occupied the city and advanced without Allied authorization into the interior, killing and looting as they went (see Ch. 4). This thinly veiled exercise in Greek imperialism was the very episode that gave real impetus to the establishment of the nationalist movement by rallying opposition. Much more destructive on both sides than the initial incursions was the full-scale Greco-Turkish conflict of

1921–2, which Arnold Toynbee characterized as a ‘war of extermination’.<sup>36</sup> Greek atrocities against the civilian population were in turn visited on Ottoman Greeks and Armenians. Particularly notable was the flight of Christian civilians alongside Greek soldiers to the Mediterranean coast in 1922, and the expulsion of others from the interior in other directions. This policy was of a part with the expulsion of Muslims from Balkan states in 1912–13 or the forced emigration of Ottoman Greeks in 1914, but the immediate stimulus had undoubtedly been provided by the Greek landing.

In their panicked retreat to the coast in September the Greeks scorched the earth that lay in their path, perpetrating extensive atrocities along the way.<sup>37</sup> The flight to the Mediterranean culminated in the burning of the Christian quarters of Smyrna/Izmir—with agents of the nationalists the probable arsonists—and then the flight by sea of the surviving refugees. The Greek defeat and the attendant ethnic cleansing of Anatolian Greeks, against the background of the pre-World War I Greek–Turkish and Bulgarian–Turkish population exchanges, was the precipitant for the infamous exchanges stipulated in the Lausanne treaty. According to that arrangement, in 1923–6, with a significant death toll on either side, some 1.25 million Greeks and 356,000 Turks, defined by religion rather than ethnicity as such, inter-migrated to conclude the homogenization process with the approval of what would now be called the international community.<sup>38</sup>

Overall, with the exception of some great individual massacres conducted in and around the context of military engagement and occupation, Kemalist atrocities were not of the same scale or systematization as the CUP’s 1915–16 crime. Kemal’s aim was consolidation of what had already been achieved by the 1915 genocide, and securing whatever else he could manage in terms of territory. After peace was concluded at Lausanne the new Turkish regime were largely content simply to put unofficial pressure on the few dozen thousand Armenians remaining in the interior in order to harass them into leaving.<sup>39</sup> This policy was akin to the general process of ‘border adjustment’ in eastern Europe as new nations emerged after the Versailles settlement.<sup>40</sup> The nationalist success in the territorial battle was then replicated in the economic sphere as Kemal refused to compensate Armenian genocide survivors for their stolen property, for this capital would be needed for the construction of the new Turkey.

### **The Turkish Republic and the Kurdish Question**

There was a certain inevitability to the confrontation between the new Turkish republic and its Kurdish population. Though Kemal contrived to maintain the loyalty of most Sunni Kurds in 1919–22, partly by playing on fears of anti-Islamic revenge by the powers and the Armenians, the murder

and removal of the large Christian minorities against whom Kurds had in recent decades been played off left them exposed as the most significant non-Turkish group. Even in 1919, as the nationalists were exploiting the Kurds as a vital ally in eastern Anatolia, Kâzım Karabekir was talking of the fundamental importance of establishing not only military but religious and political dominance in 'Kurdistan'. More liberal nationalists debated passing a law giving limited Kurdish autonomy in certain areas, but Kemal's intimates did not agree.<sup>41</sup> Some Kurds who had fled westward during the First World War were also prevented from returning to the eastern provinces.<sup>42</sup>

Kemal's determination to complete the ongoing process of centralization and 'nationalization' meant that unresolved questions of political structure and control in Anatolia would have to be decisively addressed. Kurdish tribal organization was the greatest such issue, but the religious question was also significant. Kemal's famous abolition of the caliphate in 1924 was a secularizing mechanism of removing competing *loci* and symbols of power, but for Kurds it signified the end of institutionalized equality, the idea of the brotherhood of all Muslims. Thus Kurdish political fears and ambitions were stimulated alongside religious outrage.

The twin political and religious facets of the Turkish-Kurdish dynamic became fused in official state rhetoric. Separate Kurdish collective life, customs, and economic networks would be pejoratively labelled backward or feudal; Kurdish religiosity and attachment to the caliphate could be stigmatized as political reaction; both needed to be attacked to establish the secular state and its norms as the primary *locus* of political loyalty. The attacks could be justified as assaults on 'all the evils of Turkey's pre-modern past', just as the assault on the Armenians had been rationalized in terms of danger to the state's present agenda.<sup>43</sup> In practice this worked out as follows, with Şükrü Kaya addressing the Kurdish situation in 1927. He was speaking two years after martial law had been declared in the eastern provinces because of a major Kurdish revolt under one Sheikh Said. Turkey sought, Şükrü Kaya claimed, to 'make law predominant'. This goal met its greatest resistance, he said, in 'certain Oriental provinces'—namely areas of eastern Anatolia. 'The Sheikhs assumed in their sphere the airs of little Sultans, the feudals, the chiefs of tribes prepared this resistance', he continued. 'Thus the shock [*sic*] was the consequence of a collision between the regime of the medieval spirit and the regime of civilization. As always and everywhere it was civilization which had the last word.' When asked what precisely 'feudalism' meant, Şükrü replied only that the word 'according to circumstances takes on a different meaning'. 'Here in the law project, it refers to the instigators of the insurrection in the East and has a very precise meaning.'<sup>44</sup>

Despite persistent state attempts from the mid-1920s onwards to portray the issues at stake as purely developmental, there was an obvious ethnic element. Just as the Armenian question had some of its roots in the mid-

nineteenth-century agrarian situation, so the Kurdish question had roots in the Tanzimat moves to centralize control of eastern Anatolia, but to reduce the Kurdish question to the socio-economic level alone would be as inappropriate as doing the same to its Armenian counterpart. The Kurds were obliged to conform to a very specific notion of citizenship shaped by ethnicity—Turkish ethnicity, as the very name of the new state suggested. Collective Kurdish existence needed to be broken down, and the atomized communities culturally assimilated, as was the case, for instance, for Turks from Crete who arrived as a result of the population exchange, or Jews in Thrace.<sup>45</sup> The Turkish claim to speak for the Ottoman Kurds at the 1923 Lausanne conference metamorphosed by 1925 into the claim that there were 'only Turks in Turkey', meaning that not only the Kurdish question but the very existence of Kurds would have to be denied; hence the enduring fiction that the Kurds were 'mountain Turks'.<sup>46</sup> On the same day that the caliphate was abolished so too were Kurdish newspapers and organizations.<sup>47</sup>

As for the outlook of the Kurds themselves, as in the final decades of the Ottoman empire, it is possible to identify a circular relationship between repression of an ethnic 'outgroup', the appreciation by that outgroup that they were regarded as 'different', and the development of discontent and separatist aspirations. The periodic, violent expressions of Kurdish discontent in the 1920s often sprang from a mixture of motives. Some religious sentiment was frequently involved, as were 'traditional' anti-state agendas reacting to Turkish attempts to extend central control and Turkic uniformity. But into this mix we also need to throw the development of specific forms of Kurdish nationalism, which were by no means incompatible with religious belief. In the Sunni Kurdish majority only a small intellectual minority possessed active nationalist ambitions prior to 1923. Nascent political movements remained fragmented for some time to come, but the abolition of the caliphate and state measures from 1923 gave real impetus to such notions.<sup>48</sup> The unfortunate result of each subsequent uprising for the Kurds, though, was the intensification of Kemalist repression.

An Alevi uprising in March 1916, stimulated partly by fear of the Armenian fate, partly by the desire to remove what limited state control there was in Dersim, had resulted in the brief rebel occupation of a number of towns in the region and a march on Harput before it was later crushed and a number of Alevis deported. Some of the same factors were present in the 'Kocgiri' Dersim revolt of 1920–1, for the Turkish forces in the eastern provinces contained many of the same personnel feared by the Alevis. Additionally, however, Woodrow Wilson's 'fourteen points' had made an impression on the leaders of the revolt, and those principles of self-determination—possibly within the context of an Ottoman federation—ran counter to the Kemalists' contemporaneous rhetoric of intra-Muslim solidarity. The insurgents called

for a Kurdistan including Diyarbakır, Harput, Van, and Bitlis. The Kemalist response was the systematic destruction of Alevi villages in which large number of non-combatants were murdered in addition to the 500 rebels numbered in the official Turkish figures.<sup>49</sup>

Dersim, now called by the Turkified name of Tunceli, continued to be a thorn in the side of the state. If Armenian Zeytun had been a 'miniature Montenegro', mountainous, inaccessible Dersim, like Assyrian Hakkâri, was equally anomalous, and on a larger scale; by the mid-1930s it was one of the final remaining areas into which state authority had yet fully to penetrate. In 1936 military government was imposed in the area along with modernization programmes. Despite some resistance to these impositions, the full-scale military assault marshalled on Dersim in 1937-8 was precipitated by only the most minor incidents and, probably more importantly, rumours of a potential revolt. In the course of the ensuing ground and air attacks by a Turkish force that grew to a strength of 50,000 men, at least 10,000 Dersimis were killed.<sup>50</sup> The mentality behind the destruction had been shaped over the previous thirteen years of great anti-Kurdish repression.

The year 1925 had brought with it an uprising of much more serious dimensions for the Turkish state than any hitherto. In that uprising, despite Turkish claims to the contrary, the stirrings of separatist nationalism in the Sunni Kurd community could be clearly detected, not least in the leader of the revolt himself.<sup>51</sup> Former leaders of the Kurdish Hamidiye were also involved, illustrating the depth of alienation even amongst Sunnis. (No Alevis took part, just as Sunnis had been absent from the Koçgiri rising. This division in Kurdish ranks would endure in some form up to the final decades of the twentieth century.<sup>52</sup>) The 'Sheikh Said' revolt has been dubbed a Turkish Vendée. The comparison is apt, conjuring up the paranoia and fury with which a nationalist regime crushed an uprising that seemed to threaten the very existence of the new order almost as soon as it had been established, just as did the French revolutionary forces in La Vendée in 1793.<sup>53</sup>

Kurdish nationalist sources claim that 15,000 people were killed during the repression of the revolt. The clampdown also provided the opportunity and the infrastructure for a more general repression of political opposition in Turkey, and for the furtherance, in turn, of Kemal's reform agenda. The more liberal Prime Minister Fethi Okyar was replaced by Kemal's former chief of staff İsmet İnönü, who expressed his determination to 'turkicize those who live in our country, and destroy those who rise up against the Turks and Turkdom'. The 'tribunals of independence' used to summarily try and execute rebels were applied to political opponents elsewhere in Turkey.<sup>54</sup> Martial law was declared in the eastern provinces.

Other rebellions followed, notably in the Ararat region in 1928-30. The selective deportations that had followed 1925 intensified under the military

administration of the eastern provinces. The deportation and enforced assimilation programme was codified and further expanded in the 1934 Resettlement Law, which detailed three classes of resettlement zone: those areas where it was desirable to increase the Turkish population (and in which muhajirs would also be settled); those in which the population was designated for transfer, resettlement, and assimilation to Turkish culture; and those where evacuation was required for health, economic, cultural, and security reasons. This was the legislation that paved the way for the 1938 attack on Dersim, which was in one of the areas scheduled for 'evacuation'.<sup>55</sup>

The British vice-consul in Trebizond reported of the Dersim slaughter that 'the military authorities have used methods similar to those against the Armenians during the Great war'. In terms of general Kemalist policy towards the Kurds, however, Martin van Bruinessen's distinction between genocide as such and 'ethnocide' is appropriate, for while Turkish policy towards the Kurds could employ mass murder as a means, physical destruction of Kurds was not a Turkish end. The end was, and continued to be, assimilation, forced or otherwise.<sup>56</sup> Of course this distinction would have made little difference to the Alevi-Kurds of Dersim, and is a matter of historical, intellectual nuance rather than moral judgement.

## Conclusion

In the thoroughness of its execution the Armenian genocide was an archetypal example of a nationalist genocide. It was also a *completely successful genocide* in its own nationalist terms, once the Bolshevik revolution and then Kemal's revivalist nationalism got Turkey off the hook. Whatever the reluctance of some international diplomats 'to put a premium on massacre and deportation' by accepting the demographics of the post-genocidal situation in post-war boundary-making,<sup>57</sup> the simple, undeniable logic of murder and deportation made a case for the incumbents of the territory that was, in the final analysis of the Lausanne Treaty, watertight. Those Turks pressing at the war's end for a 'just settlement' based on Woodrow Wilson's twelfth point would benefit from this Darwinian calculus whether or not they welcomed it.<sup>58</sup>

The genocide represents a clear logic of ethnic nationalism when carried to its absolute extreme in multinational societies. It remains a seminal moment in modern history, standing at the apex of those instances of 'ethnic cleansing' and less extensive killing during nation-building in and around the Ottoman empire (including in the Transcaucasian Armenian Republic) in the period of its terminal decline and the consolidation of its successor states. The Armenian genocide also served as a perverse justification-by-warning for the 'population exchanges' permitted in the Lausanne treaty,<sup>59</sup> and foretold the



massacres and deportations accompanying the break-up of Yugoslavia after the cold war, not to mention innumerable episodes in between, from the expulsion of ethnic Germans from eastern Europe after the Second World War<sup>60</sup> to the Israeli expulsion of Arabs in 1948.<sup>61</sup> The 'territorial solutions'<sup>62</sup> to population 'problems' used in the territory of the former Ottoman empire after 1918, with their debt to the Armenian genocide, were considered as a model by both the Czech leader Edvard Beneš and by David Ben Gurion in 1941 concerning the future ethnic organization of their own states.<sup>63</sup>

Hitler's rhetorical question ahead of the invasion of Poland asking 'who today remembers the Armenians?' is regularly invoked in the comparative study of genocide. It is less frequently observed that Hitler was referring to the harsh measures the Nazis would employ against Poles in the forthcoming invasion of Poland, not to the 'final solution of the Jewish question', which had still to develop into a programme of total murder.<sup>64</sup> The statement, however, retains significance because even leaving aside the outright Nazi genocides, their plans of mass population movement necessarily entailed massive human suffering and 'attrition'. Like the initial Nazi plans to relocate Jews in 'reservations' at different points in eastern Europe or even Madagascar, these schemes were inherently murderous.<sup>65</sup> And while Nazism was predicated upon a specifically racial-biological comprehension of national communities, it grew out of the milieu of ethnic nationalism which dominated state-formation in central and eastern Europe with the breakdown of the continental empires, and was heavily influenced, as were the CUP leaders, by a social Darwinist belief in life-or-death struggle between groups.

The Armenian genocide provided the emblematic and central violence of Ottoman Turkey's transition into a modernizing nation state. The genocide and accompanying expropriations were intrinsic to the development of the Turkish Republic in the form in which it appeared in 1924. Denial also emerged with the genocide itself, and was entrenched in the early years of the republic, since to Turkey's nationalist leaders the attention of the outside world on matters Armenian from 1915 onwards was, as it apparently always had been, a medium for interfering in Turkey's internal affairs or, worse, taking Turkish territory. There was little chance they would risk Turkey's integrity by confronting the ugly side of its birthright, and the same is sadly true of a number of historians, both Turkish and non-Turkish, and from the political left as well as elsewhere on the spectrum, who continue to sustain an idealized view of the Turkish 'revolution'. But if the great powers had hitherto each had different relations to the Armenian question and to earlier, lesser Armenian massacres, how did they respond to the catastrophic violence of 1915-23, and then to the republic's denial agenda? Those issues occupy the rest of this book.

## Part II

### International Response and Responsibility in the Genocide Era

## Imperial Germany: A Case of Mistaken Identity

Of the warring European powers, Germany has come in for the harshest criticism concerning its relationship to the genocide. Contrary to traditional diplomatic studies of the Ottoman–German alliance, which have depicted German and Austro-Hungarian misgivings about the deportations simply being outweighed by the interests of the wartime alliance,<sup>1</sup> a number of more recent analyses have suggested active German interest and involvement in the destruction process. Dadrian has stressed German complicity in the massacres, and, like Christoph Dinkel and Artem Ohandjanian, has even suggested German ‘stimulation’ of killings and expulsions, with particular reference to the role of German military representatives in Turkey.<sup>2</sup> Wolfgang Gust concurs with these condemnatory analyses.<sup>3</sup>

There are obvious reasons for students of the genocide to focus on Germany’s role. Germany was the Ottoman empire’s chief ally during the war, the Great Power with the most extensive influence over Ottoman policies. Given that Germany did not impede the destruction process in any significant way, and given too its history of advancing its influence in Istanbul by ostentatiously ignoring Armenian massacres, there are provisional grounds for particularly condemnatory judgements. Yet closer examination of the evidence suggests a much less sharp picture.

The following analysis is not an apology for German behaviour, though it does show that many of the accusations thrown at Germany are often simply unfounded in the available sources. More importantly, it problematizes the simplistic contexts in which assessments of the German role have hitherto been made, drawing attention to the complexities in the development and nature of German understanding of the escalating persecution and murder process, and setting the variety of German responses in the contexts of ethnic conflict in and around the Ottoman empire, the nature of the German–Ottoman alliance, and the general war situation. When taken in conjunction with the following chapter on Entente policies from 1915 to 1923, it argues that even during the war the German role should still be seen in a comparative, interactive context with those of the other Great Powers. As from the late nineteenth century, during the war Germany often found itself in a reactive role on the Armenian question as opposed to the more pro-active stance taken for propaganda or military purposes by one or more of the Entente powers. Moreover, it is hard to think that Britain, France, and Russia,

which only ever invoked the Armenian question opportunistically, would have exerted sufficient pressure on one of their own war allies to make it change what was by summer 1915 a fundamental state policy.

### **The German Connection: Personnel, Anti-Armenianism, and Cultural Context**

The first point to be made in assessing the German role is that many representatives of the central powers *did* have preconceived notions about the Armenians as an ethno-political community. This is somewhat less true of the diplomatic and consular staff on the ground than of the military representation. The former group had longer, direct experience of conditions in the Ottoman empire. They could observe at first hand the repressions and discriminations that led to any Armenian agitation. Though a variety of responses to the persecution were evinced from this echelon of German personnel, particularly before the genocide had fully unfolded, it supplied some of the keenest opponents of Young Turk policy: the cases of consuls Max von Scheubner-Richter and Walter Rößler are most worthy of mention for their active role in highlighting the murders and trying to aid the victims. The former was based in Erzurum, the place of the first mass deportation round-up in eastern Anatolia; the latter was posted to Syrian Aleppo, a chief initial destination for many of the deportations.<sup>4</sup> The well-known case of the German ambassador for much of 1915, Hans von Wangenheim, will be dealt with later.

Allegations against the German military include responsibility for the general notion of wartime deportation, and specifically connivance in the deportations from eastern Anatolia. Fritz Bronsart von Schellendorf (chief of staff of the Ottoman land forces), Otto von Feldmann (chief of operations at the general headquarters), and Felix Guse (chief of staff of the Third Ottoman Army) have been specifically accused. Given that there is incomplete contemporary documentation, accusations have often rested substantially on illustrations of general German anti-Armenianism, based on statements of prejudice from the wartime or post-war periods. When we read from Hans Humann, the German marine attaché in Istanbul, that 'The Armenians are being (as a result of their conspiracy with the Russians!) more or less exterminated. This is harsh but useful', or from Admiral Wilhelm Souchon, head of the Ottoman Navy, that 'it will be salvation for Turkey when it has done away with the last Armenian; it will be rid then of subversive blood-suckers', the presence of a murderous prejudice seems self-evident. However, there is no evidence that these men had any formulative role in Ottoman policy towards the Armenians.<sup>5</sup> More importantly, it cannot be assumed that the

simple expression of anti-Armenianism, even in the full-blown racist form that it sometimes assumed, equalled concurrence with genocide. As with the commanding officers Kress von Kressenstein and Colmar von der Goltz, belief in exaggerated Armenian culpability, with overtones of collective libel, could co-exist with pity for the victims of the deportations and condemnation of their treatment.<sup>6</sup>

Almost everyone posted to the Ottoman empire expressed disdain for one or other of the ethnic groups with which they came into contact, and these feelings were obviously predicated upon feelings of general cultural superiority, but European arrogance and superiority complexes could just as easily be directed at Kurds and Turks as Armenians. It is curious to hear the Bavarian Major Georg Mayer—who also subscribed to the notion of ‘rebellious Armenians’—being singled out for praise by Dinkel for his verbal denunciation of the deportations while at the same time he could collectively dismiss the Kurds as a murderous, thieving ‘rabble.’<sup>7</sup> Unsurprisingly, there is no suggestion that such stereotyping antipathy provided an impetus to murder non-Armenian groups.

It is, nevertheless, instructive to analyse the roots of the particularly strong anti-Armenian rhetoric of some of the German representatives, and especially the ubiquitous associations within that rhetoric of the Armenians with treacherous activity. In wartime, the stereotype of Christians as alien and/or com-prador minorities could translate easily into a stereotype of a military fifth column for Germany, as it did for the CUP. Moreover, the officers implicated in condoning deportations may have been influenced by deliberate Ottoman exaggerations and distortions of Armenian insurgent activity. The German soldiers had little knowledge of local history, conditions, and languages, and were reliant on the information supplied to them;<sup>8</sup> of the few available testimonies on the matter, at least one shows how the Armenians were presented to an uninitiated officer as the aggressors and Muslims as the victims.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout 1915, the German and Austrian-Hungarian embassies were quoting the CUP’s inflated figures of the number of Muslims killed by the Van insurgents or the Russian army and its Armenian contingent.<sup>10</sup> The coincidence of wartime events around the Van rising suggested links between enemies external and internal to the Ottoman empire.<sup>11</sup> These purported connections helped in German eyes to transfer the burden of moral guilt onto the Entente as agents provocateurs,<sup>12</sup> and meant that Germans were not predisposed to sympathize with Armenian suffering. For the purposes of elucidation we can actually use a concept introduced by Dinkel in the midst of his accusations against the officer corps. With the idea of a wartime ‘insurrection hysteria’, he identifies a self-explanatory rationale for the extreme views of the officers in question: a fear that Armenian revolutionary action in the rear would jeopardize the prosecution of the war.<sup>13</sup>

### 'Insurrection Hysteria' and the Military Context

The months before April 1915 witnessed a radicalization of the Continental war situation that had ramifications for the central powers' perception and acceptance of Ottoman actions. Germany itself slid into infringement of the laws of war, beginning with atrocities against civilians as the Schlieffen plan was undermined by unanticipated Belgian resistance at Liège. August 1914 also saw Helmut von Moltke ordering the death penalty for 'any form of unjustified war activity'; offenders were to be treated as 'terrorists'. In March 1915, more severe measures were legitimated, this time as a response to Russian atrocity: for each German settlement razed in East Prussia, two villages in Russian Poland would be burned.<sup>14</sup>

By March, Austria-Hungary was terminally weakened, Bulgaria and Rumania remained neutral, and the Allied forces were gathering for the assault on the empire, probably, as General Falkenhayn was correctly advised, at the Dardanelles. The task of answering these challenges, and of reinvigorating the German war effort, was to begin with the new offensive in the east at Gorlice-Tarnów. That escalation, planned in April, began early in May. It was prefaced in the west, at the second battle of Ypres, by the use of poison gas on 22 April 1915;<sup>15</sup> that extreme measure served literally at this crucial period—when the first mass Armenian arrests were occurring—as a smokescreen for the offensive.

Thus Germany's own policies, as death tolls spiralled and domestic opinion radicalized, in combination with the ruthlessness of Russian actions in eastern Europe, provide a very real moral 'hardening' within which Berlin's response to the Armenian fate must be placed. The spring months of 1915 were for Germany's allies a time in which draconian measures were not going to inspire criticism, and in which there was an atmosphere actually conducive to transgression of the laws of war and the blurring of civilian and military targets. The notion of the Armenian fifth column also fitted neatly into a larger mental map of the ethnic situation in and around the Ottoman empire.

Just as Russia sought to influence Armenians and Kurds in the Ottoman empire for its own war ends, an integral part of German military strategy at the outset of the conflict was to mobilize some of the different national and religious groupings against the Entente by sponsorship of nationalist revolt and jihad. Equally fantastically, the prevalent belief in the common agenda and latent power of 'world Jewry' underlay overtures from both sides of the world conflict to supposedly representative leaders of the international Jewish community.<sup>16</sup>

As one illustration of German policy in the Near East we might briefly consider the 'Georgian legion', founded by a group of Georgian nationalists under German direction in 1915. The manpower of this small fighting force was drawn from volunteers and prisoners of war persuaded that their real interests

lay with Germany, which would liberate them from Tsarism, hopefully grant them autonomy in the Caucasus in the post-war period, and protect them from feared Ottoman encroachment. Though for the duration of its life the force was only several hundred strong, of negligible military importance, and treated with suspicion by Ottoman forces, its movements hint at the potential of the initiative for intensifying the already dire ethnic conflict in the region by the introduction by Germany of one more element with an explicitly ethnic-nationalist agenda. Following the deportations in 1915, some of the Georgian troops were, for instance, accommodated in now-vacant Armenian villages near Trebizond, while others were at the disposal of the Ottoman armies in the fight against Armenian 'bandit gangs' remaining at large.<sup>17</sup>

German officers were also involved with the reorganization of the Special Organization, but in its function as a guerrilla and ethnic insurgency force rather than in the mass murder of the Armenians.<sup>18</sup> We know that the boundary between the phases of the Special Organization's functions is blurred, but the distinction between the phases provides a useful analogy to the German role in the area as between being conducive to a general stimulation of ethnic conflict on one hand and being instrumental in genocide specifically on the other. The same is true of the activities of the geopolitical theorist Baron Max von Oppenheim, an object of unsubstantiated innuendo about his complicity in the genocide, who gathered intelligence on the ground about the potential for Muslim insurgency in Russian territory and provided some of the theories underpinning the German embrace of jihad.<sup>19</sup>

The policy of fomenting ethnic uprisings was entirely serious, and self-consciously entailed setting one group against its neighbours. It was also largely a failure, as we have seen. Nevertheless, it helps to explain many of the Germans' blasé initial reactions to the treatment of the Armenians if we think of the central powers as having accepted the idea of a series of nationalist conflicts not always fought by regular armies. The Armenians, like Serbs in the Austro-Hungarian world-view, were credited with the sort of collective nationalist activity that German personnel were trying to inculcate in others, and were treated with a similar level of brutality. According to that logic, for some Germans 'military necessity' could stretch to accepting measures against swathes of the Armenian civilian population, up to and including—in a few proven cases—approving the Ottoman deportation of communities in the eastern provinces.

### **Deportation, 'Military Necessity', and Genocidal Intent**

From their continued tenancy in the upper echelons of the Turkish armies the highest-ranking German officers in the Caucasus/Anatolia bear a

co-responsibility for the deportation programme. However, the straightforward matter of locating acquiescence in deportations is not synonymous with proving German complicity in mass murder. One needs only to consult the widely available German foreign office correspondence with the embassy to see that into the summer of 1915 Wangenheim too countenanced deportations, but only in so far as they were necessitated by 'military considerations', 'served to safeguard against revolts', and the deportees were 'protected from plunder and massacre'. He communicated this directly to the Porte on 4 July in a protest against the form which the deportations had taken.<sup>20</sup> The distinction between deportation per se and genocide is potentially controversial, having shades of latter-day Turkish denials and 'relativizations' of the murder process, so it is very important to distinguish here between the perceptions of the CUP and those of German actors.

It is true that the Germans contemplated large-scale population movements in Europe during the First World War,<sup>21</sup> but that in itself is no evidence that the Armenian deportations were a German initiative, especially given the much stronger Ottoman tradition of demographic engineering. Nor is there any necessary correlation between deportation and genocide as such, as the wartime movement of the Kurds illustrated.<sup>22</sup> There were many ways of dealing with 'problem' populations, and many motives for 'solving' those problems. To illustrate this best in the case of Germany, we might contemplate the case of Paul Rohrbach, the geopolitical theorist who has also come in for criticism by Dadrian and, implicitly, Ohandjanian.<sup>23</sup>

Contrary to the innuendo of these scholars, Rohrbach's concern that the Armenians stayed within the Ottoman sphere did not equate with acquiescence in anything that the Ottomans chose to do to the Armenians. Rohrbach was certainly interested in exploiting the Armenians, and theorized about deporting them, but he also admired their modernism, and schemed in the economic interests of Germany as a pre-eminent future force in Asia Minor. His ostensibly fantastic suggestion—though such concepts were commonplace in geopolitical thought at the time—involved moving Muslims into eastern Anatolia and transplanting the Anatolian Armenian population to Mesopotamia, where he predicted that they could work fruitfully with and for Germany, for instance on the further construction of the Baghdad railway.<sup>24</sup> It seems that such a scheme was notionally entertained in Armenian circles before the genocide and may have been considered more seriously in desperation late in the war.<sup>25</sup>

The idea of making the southern part of the empire a focus of Armenian life and German-Armenian cooperation had also been endorsed by Wangenheim in 1913.<sup>26</sup> If we compound such schemes with a military acquiescence in deportations, here perhaps is the root of the wartime assertion from unnamed but 'usually trustworthy German sources that the first incitement to rendering



the Armenians harmless—if not in the actual way it has been conducted—originated from the German side'. Certainly Russian war propaganda focused on the theme, and some Turks and Armenians specifically mentioned Rohrbach's design. However, notwithstanding the improbability of the whole idea, the scholars who have brought to our attention that quotation from Austria's consul in Trabzon have notably failed to emphasize the crucial parenthetical caveat about the means to the end.<sup>27</sup>

It is difficult to account for the actions of a man like Lieutenant Colonel Böttrich, head of the railway department of the Ottoman general staff, who in October 1915 put his signature to an Ottoman order for the deportation of Armenian employees working on the Baghdad railway. Though this was not an order for killing per se, it was relayed after the fate of the deportees from Anatolia had become evident. Here we must look to Böttrich's desire to maintain his position in the Ottoman ranks—he was, after all, acting as an Ottoman soldier—and his personal turf war with the Baghdad Railway Company, which opposed the deportations, as did General Falkenhayn.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the distinction between indiscriminate, murderous, permanent population movement and more limited immediate-term security measures does have a resonance in explaining the actions of other German officers.

A focus upon 'military necessity' could act in one sense to restrict German involvement in anti-Armenian measures, and in another to legitimate participation in certain types of repressive activity. Thus on one hand when, in November 1916, the head of the German military mission to Turkey and commander of the Fifth Army, Otto Liman von Sanders, was apprised of the order to deport the Armenians of Smyrna/Izmir, he recognized the persecutory nature of the measure and interceded with threats of force on the grounds that deportation interfered with military security.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, we have the case of Captain Eberhard Wolffskeel von Reichenberg, chief-of-staff in the Fourth Ottoman Army, which was responsible for the coastal defences and internal security of Syria and Cilicia. In this capacity he was directly involved with crushing an Armenian defensive rising in the town of Urfa in September and October 1915; it has been suggested that he was thereby involved in the Armenian genocide.<sup>30</sup> Yet while his actions contributed to the death of Armenians who had been targeted simply because of their ethnic identity, the specific context of his involvement was the quelling of an interior revolt which posed security questions for the region. His correspondence shows that whatever the reality he viewed his operations as a form of warfare—a 'civil war', 'even if it's nothing great'—and therefore a separate matter from the 'evacuations' that followed, in which he was not involved, 'thank God, as those are the Turk's [*sic*] internal concerns'.<sup>31</sup>

A personal letter on the earlier and more famous Armenian resistance at Musa Dagh illustrates at once Wolffskeel's 'justification' for measures against

the insurgents; his blinkered, soldierly refusal to consider the wider implications of 'doing his duty' and supercilious distaste for Ottoman policy towards the Armenians; and his attribution of the situation to the general moral backwardness of the region:

A lot of Armenians are settled there who have shown a lack of comprehension for the government's kind offer to settle them elsewhere, and have taken up a position . . . in the mountains between Antioch and the sea, with the expressed intention of not letting themselves be deported. You can have various opinions about the justification and the value of the original measure taken by the Turks against the Armenians. Where they are now, though, there's no way you can cope with them . . . All of these never-ending political concerns are repulsive to me in themselves, as you can imagine, and God knows the entire Armenian question does not form a glorious chapter in Turkish history. The people, though, are at least 300 years behind in their entire conception of domestic politics.<sup>32</sup>

Thus though the distinction between acts of 'military necessity' and the murder process is specious from the victims' point of view, it was important in providing a framework for German military involvement. Besides, notwithstanding the cause of Armenian risings, the very instance of them posed an obvious military problem for the Ottoman empire and, thereby, for German soldiers serving with the Ottoman army.

The extreme, utterly unsympathetic anti-Armenian rhetoric of Feldmann, Guse, and Bronsart may be read—as it is by the proponents of direct German complicity—as an admission of German guilt by spurious justification of the deportations. Weight might then be added to these conclusions by the fact that directly alongside such contentions, those three officers guiltily colluded in the post-war Turkish agenda of denial that massacres had occurred. However, this is to suggest something of a self-contradiction in what are unashamed endorsements of deportation. A more internally coherent reading of the three men would be to take them at face value: that they saw the deportations per se as justified and did not want to understand them as genocidal, and preferred—also under the influence of the propagandist Ottoman perspective within which they had originally operated, and which was actually sponsored for public consumption by the German government—to minimize the ensuing massacres and blame them on irregular forces beyond central control.<sup>33</sup>

The role of these men may not be extrapolated to prove 'German' involvement as such in the genocide, what Dadrian claims was 'a firm German policy, forged at the highest levels of the government, to allow and, whenever required, to assist . . . in the implementation of a Turkish scheme to eliminate the Armenians in Turkey'.<sup>34</sup> Feldmann, Guse, and Bronsart served in the cauldron of the Caucasian theatres and had important roles in the failed winter 1914–15 offensive,<sup>35</sup> which foundered in part because of the important

contribution of the fourth Russian Armenian volunteer battalion.<sup>36</sup> Therefore within the general atmosphere of 'insurrection hysteria' they were, like Enver, outstanding candidates for participation in the search for scapegoat 'fifth columns'; they were also not direct witnesses to the fate of the deportees. Conversely, von der Goltz and Kress, who had expressed sympathy for the plight of the Armenians, had served in Syria or Mesopotamia where they were both removed from the tensions of the Russo-Turkish theatre and saw the terrible consequences of the deportations. But in any case it must be stressed again that irrespective of such distinctions, as expressions of a CUP policy the deportations were independent of the motivations and intentions of any German. The CUP was happy to use purported German agreement in deportation to implicate its ally in the murder scheme when that was useful (see below), but diplomatic reproaches from both the central powers to Istanbul were correspondingly and repeatedly rebuffed with the familiar formula that they represented 'interference in Turkey's internal affairs'.<sup>37</sup> We turn now to those exchanges in assessment of the German diplomats' comprehension of the fate of the Armenians.

### **The Development of the German Diplomatic Response**

From almost the beginning of the persecutions in spring 1915 Wangenheim and the German foreign office were informed of their broad development. Indeed, most of the supposedly incriminating evidence about Wangenheim's anti-Armenianism stems from 1913, 1914, and early 1915.<sup>38</sup> Yet it is untenable to infer that the unfolding of genocide from earlier forms of persecution was clearly visible as such at the time to each German representative.<sup>39</sup>

In mid-April, the ambassador, in Istanbul, physically distanced from events, reacted nonchalantly. He conceded that violent 'excesses' had occurred against the Armenians of eastern Anatolia and elsewhere, but some of these were exaggerated and in some cases were the fault of the Armenians themselves, stimulated by the Entente powers: for instance, German officers had purportedly witnessed Armenians in the Ottoman army turning their guns on their comrades-in-arms. In any case he argued, such trials and tribulations were brought on by every war, even in 'cultured countries', of which Ottomanism was clearly deemed not one.<sup>40</sup> This reaction was consistent with the information he was receiving. Even from Scheubner-Richter, who was to oppose the deportation measures so vociferously, reports of the build-up of tensions mentioned earlier Entente sponsorship of the Armenians leading to agitation in Bitlis and then in Van.<sup>41</sup> Though the Aleppo consul Rößler could detect no Entente hand behind the scenes in his area,<sup>42</sup> reports from the Caucasian theatre seemed to confirm the opinions of Scheubner-Richter

and some of the worst fears of the ambassador.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, as the Van episode unfolded, Wangenheim pictured the revolutionary activity of the Armenians as much wider and more orchestrated than he had originally thought,<sup>44</sup> suggesting at the end of the month that 'the Armenian subversion nourished by Russia has attained dimensions that threaten the existence of Turkey'.<sup>45</sup> This perception must be taken into account when we also see that in mid-May news of intended deportation from the Erzurum area and smaller deportations from Adana in the south-west arrived at the same time as the Russians joined the Armenians for the occupation of Van.<sup>46</sup>

Contrary to what one historian maintains, then, Wangenheim was not 'relieved' by the occurrence of the Van uprising as a legitimization of a policy of inactivity in the face of the growing persecutions.<sup>47</sup> Had there been prior knowledge of genocidal intent, or a culture of blaming the Armenians entirely for their own fate, or indeed total indifference, it would be very difficult to explain the discernible shift in the embassy's stance that occurred over the second half of June. That shift was almost the opposite of what Dinkel calls a toughening of the German position.<sup>48</sup>

On 7 July, Wangenheim noted to Berlin that

Before approximately fourteen days ago, the expulsion and resettlement of the Armenian population was restricted to the eastern provinces adjacent to the theatre of war, and to some of the districts of the Adana province; since then, the Porte has resolved to extend these measures to the provinces of Trebizond, Mamuret-ul-Asis and Sivas... though these regions are not presently threatened by enemy invasion.<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, almost exactly two weeks before, on 24 June, the next major round-up after Erzurum had occurred at Shabin-Karahissar, followed in the succeeding days by similar measures throughout the major Armenian centres of eastern Anatolia, and in July by the beginning of the extension of the deportations to the rest of the empire. In the first weeks after the announcement of the Erzurum deportations from 23 May, though it was now obvious that the Ottoman measures did not discriminate between men, women, and children, there were few concrete indications that what was transpiring was an empire-wide, centrally authorized plan of killing *per se*. More expulsions from the Adana district and Cilicia in that period, and the reports of the ways those deportations were conducted, alongside news of killings and robberies of deportees from Diyarbakır and Erzurum, confirmed the ruthlessness with which the Armenians were being treated,<sup>50</sup> yet the reporting consuls tended to ascribe responsibility for the atrocities either to the initiative of local authorities or to a failure to protect the deportees.<sup>51</sup> Only on 17 June did Wangenheim relay that the deportations were not just matters of military necessity. His judgement was based on atrocity reports from Erzurum, Aleppo, and Mosul,<sup>52</sup> and, no doubt, the information that he received on the same day

from one of his embassy staff about Talât's avowed determination to finish with the Armenians for good in order to forestall future intervention in Ottoman internal affairs.<sup>53</sup> In the last June days the Trabzon consul Bergfeld confirmed both that the measures were ordered from Istanbul and that the deportation of women and children 'borders on mass murder', a point which was driven home graphically with more news of the slaughter of the Erzurum deportees.<sup>54</sup>

The period from mid-June to early July was a watershed in the German diplomatic reaction, just as the idea of general destruction of the Armenians had become firm policy in CUP circles. The change in the ambassador's position alongside the proliferation of the deportations is marked by a modification of the language he used to describe events. Whereas previously variations on the terms 'expulsion' or 'executions' had sufficed for him to describe the situation in official despatches, on 7 July Wangenheim referred to an outright CUP attempt to annihilate ('vernichten') the Armenians of the empire. Thereafter, he endorsed the use of 'massacre'.<sup>55</sup> This growing appreciation of reality heralded the era of periodic German protests against Turkish policies.

German protests have been condemned as formulaic and lacking in real substance, designed to exculpate the embassy.<sup>56</sup> There is truth to this, for they were undeniably ineffective, even when the Foreign Office put more weight behind them, as they did in a position of self-perceived strength upon the defeat of Serbia in October 1915.<sup>57</sup> In the first instance, Wangenheim was not prepared to endanger 'important German interests' by interventions which he had always considered fruitless except in as much as they would elicit nationalistic CUP resentment.<sup>58</sup> His primary interest, and that of the German Foreign Office, was to protect the German name. Yet in comparison with the actions of Austria-Hungary's diplomats, Wangenheim's protests were veritably forthright, undoubtedly reflecting the relative weakness of the Dual Monarchy's position in the alliance,<sup>59</sup> if also the sensibilities of representatives of another multi-ethnic empire with a set of nationality 'problems' comparable to that of the Ottoman rulers. While Wangenheim issued notes of diplomatic protest, and his successor Paul von Wolff-Metternich, backed by the Foreign Office, made enough noise about the killings on Germany's behalf for the CUP to demand his removal from office,<sup>60</sup> Pallavicini remained *in situ* throughout the war, preferring instead to have periodic 'friendly words' with the CUP leaders.<sup>61</sup>

When Wangenheim's temporary replacement Prince Ernst zu Hohenlohe-Langenberg protested formally to the Porte in mid-August, Pallavicini observed that the CUP was now aware if it had not been before that it was dealing with a Christian power that saw it as its duty to protect other Christians. This was a contributory factor to a deterioration of relations

between the Ottoman empire and Germany and shows that criticisms of the genocidal policy were not easily made but rather carried with them a price.<sup>62</sup> The Dual Monarchy achieved as little for the Armenians as did the German embassy, but expended even less political capital in the process.<sup>63</sup>

We have already seen that as the deportations expanded the central powers were given misleading assurances by the CUP about the fate of various parts of the Armenian population. So too was the USA. Beyond the orders for the exemption of Protestant and Catholic Armenians, these assurances stated that no harm had come or would come to women and children,<sup>64</sup> that there would be exemptions (presumably of the 'innocent', however they might be defined) from the deportations,<sup>65</sup> and that Istanbul would ensure safety and provision for the deportees.<sup>66</sup> There were also unsuccessful attempts to hide the evidence of the fate of the deportees from German representatives in the provinces.<sup>67</sup> The provision of each such assurance may well have temporarily placated the German diplomats, such that they could salve their consciences by convincing themselves that their protests were having some mitigating effect;<sup>68</sup> after all, Wangenheim had stated that amelioration was all that might be hoped for.<sup>69</sup> The assurances may even have represented minor CUP concessions to their allies on the form if not the substance of the destruction programme. But the fact that the CUP sought to mislead the central powers in the same way as the neutral Americans contradicts any notion of German diplomatic consent in the treatment of the deportees. This behaviour was but one illustration of the nature of the CUP's alliance with Germany, which was in many ways held at arm's length.

### **The State of the Alliance**

Given that a primary CUP war aim was the removal of external influence, a general atmosphere of xenophobia pervaded the empire during the war years, and Germans were not always exempt.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, since the issue of removing foreign influence and the extirpation of the Armenian community were conceptually linked at a basic level it would have been illogical for the CUP to have permitted an external power to influence significantly its Armenian policy or any other sensitive policy sphere. The politicians of the Entente powers, like some later historians, overplayed the influence of Germany in Istanbul.

German influence was in theory to be exorcised from the Ottoman empire in the long run, just like its French or British counterpart; indeed, there actually appears to have been a particular CUP suspicion of the German banking fraternity by 1915. And though Germany might seem to have been in an opportune position to influence Ottoman affairs, its partner did not feel in

any way obligated to it. Particularly from the time of its successful defence of the Dardanelles against the British, the CUP felt it deserved respect and parity of treatment. If Germany was to attain the advantages to which Berlin felt entitled, and which would inevitably present themselves to someone at the end of the war because of the Ottoman need for foreign capital, these would have to be grasped with an 'iron hand' which, because of CUP sensitivity, would have to be 'clad in a velvet glove'. An independent post-war Ottoman empire might easily choose to work with the former Entente powers to remove German influence. As the then ambassador Bernstorff further expressed it to the new chancellor Hertling at the end of 1917, 'there is no gratitude when it comes to the survival of peoples'.<sup>71</sup> All of this is borne out by the observations of the Austro-Hungarians.<sup>72</sup>

While it is certain that the military advice of the Reichswehr was heeded by the Ottoman war ministry, the latter was not controlled by the former,<sup>73</sup> as the Ottomans' ill-advised thrust into the Caucasus in the winter of 1914–15 and the repeat venture in 1918 show. If the first invasion was a matter for disagreement in the German ranks, with Liman opposing it while Bronsart concurred but counselled caution, the 1918 advance was not at all consistent in German eyes with the Ottomans' 'proper military role', which was at that point 'to fight England', and not to impede the supply of raw materials from the Caucasus.<sup>74</sup> The common factor in these two ventures is that they were matters of CUP ethnic as well as military strategy. Like Armenian policy, they were not a matter for the influence of other powers, not even when adverse pressure emanated from the most powerful men in Istanbul's chief alliance partner, as it did in 1918 from Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff.<sup>75</sup>

If a reversal of German–Turkish relations would have been the only way to stop the killing (that is, by force), it is perhaps to apply latter-day values *ex post facto* to the most destructive conflict the world had then seen to suggest that humanitarian considerations could have had such a fundamental impact on German war strategy and post-war geopolitical design. Besides, the perpetuation of the alliance could be rationalized on both the public and political levels with reference to German suffering. Dissolution, it was argued, and not inaccurately, would impact significantly on the fate of German 'sons and brothers' in the 'murderous, bloody struggle in France and Russia'.<sup>76</sup>

Beyond the humanitarian issue, there were real pragmatic reasons for Germany opposing the genocide. That these did not alter the equation in any way shows once again how immovable the CUP was on the question. Almost without exception, observers of the situation in Anatolia saw that the deportations spelt economic disaster. From the American missionaries to Lepsius to Scheubner-Richter to the Austro-Hungarian embassy staff, the refrain was that removal of the Armenian population not only threatened German trade and industrial interests in the short term but signified the

destruction of, in Wangenheim's words, 'an industrious and intelligent element of the population for which the Kurds and Turks do not offer a provisional substitute worthy of the name'.<sup>77</sup>

Despite the many improvements made in the direction of the Ottoman armed forces by the German military mission, the Near Eastern theatres were still characterized by poor communications and supply, and these problems were compounded by the removal and/or antagonization of a large potential labour force.<sup>78</sup> These difficulties came to a head over the deportation of Armenians working on the completion of the Baghdad railway.<sup>79</sup> Symbolically, the murder of most of the railway workers, despite their importance, also laid to rest Wangenheim's and Rohrbach's aspirations for an Armenian community working in tandem with German interests in the area in the future.

In that longer term, the Armenians' function in the import side of the international commercial equation was of particular concern to a Germany seeking to exploit the Ottoman empire's potential as a market, while the skills profile and higher-than-average literacy of the Armenian population was attractive to potential investors hoping to share in a post-war economic penetration of the region.<sup>80</sup> Traders dealing with Armenians on a credit basis would also face financial ruin.<sup>81</sup> Here the CUP drive to create a Turkish bourgeoisie and German economic interests were profoundly antagonistic. The suggestion that Germany actually stood to gain from the genocide may be dismissed for what it originally was: a piece of propaganda stemming from the Entente countries but also from within the Ottoman empire.

Beyond hearsay and post-war assertion, the evidence is non-existent of German diplomatic approval of the Ottoman measures once it was known what they ultimately meant. And while hearsay can often be the only historical evidence available, it is to be treated with particular caution in this case. The reason is that some perpetrators conducted a whispering campaign claiming German authorship of the anti-Armenian measures, presumably to alleviate their own guilt and to bond their allies to them in the enactment of the crime. In Adrianople/Edirne, the consul of the Dual Monarchy reported early in November 1915 that after a brutal round-up of the local Armenian population, CUP members spread the word that 'Germany has unfortunately imposed this on us'.<sup>82</sup> The same is apparently true of some of the authorities in Anatolia, where it was circulated that the Kaiser wanted the Armenians dead.<sup>83</sup> If it is accepted that this was the crude ploy that the Austro-Hungarian representatives appear to have believed it to be, we might disqualify the evidence adduced by Dadrian where Talât and some of his contemporaries repeated the condemnation of Germany,<sup>84</sup> and question why Ohandjian reproduces only the cited phrase of the Adrianople consul's report, disregarding that consul's clear scepticism about the CUP's motives for making the claim.<sup>85</sup> Certainly when



the German embassy complained about the rumours, the Ottoman government made it clear that they had no foundation. In its publication in March 1916 of *La Verité sur la mouvement révolutionnaire arménien et les mesures gouvernementales*, an official justification of its Armenian policies based on a highly selective account of recent history, the CUP stated that the idea that the 'measures were suggested to the Sublime Porte by certain foreign powers is absolutely without foundation'. The Imperial Government, it reaffirmed, was firmly resolved to maintain its absolute independence, and would not tolerate external involvement in its internal affairs even by its friends.<sup>86</sup>

### Germany and the Entente Propaganda Campaign

More damaging assertions of German responsibility emerged from a propaganda campaign conducted by the other side in the war. Entente propaganda was based on a long-standing and simplistic notion of German control of the Ottoman empire,<sup>87</sup> and fed into a much larger propaganda war in which Russian atrocities against Jews, for instance, had been highlighted by the central powers.<sup>88</sup> The Entente allegations, and later allegations by Armenians, focused either upon unscrupulous German militarism or the suggestion that the murders would remove potential Armenian economic competition within the empire.<sup>89</sup>

From the time of acceptance of the full scale of the ongoing tragedy, around September 1915, the British government formally adopted publicity of the massacres as a strand of policy to influence American public opinion against the Central Powers.<sup>90</sup> German complicity was correspondingly implied both in parliament and the British and dominions' press. The content ranged from describing the killings as the 'latest manifestation of German Kultur', and the Kaiser as 'the massacrer in chief' of Armenia, 'as of Louvain and Charleroi';<sup>91</sup> to the more measured assessments of Viscount Bryce in the House of Lords that only Germany could stop the Turks.<sup>92</sup> The *Westminster Gazette* of 30 September<sup>93</sup> contained baseless but specific allegations about German consuls, and Walter Rößler by name, leading and inciting the Turks in their actions. These charges were subsequently repeated in the House of Lords by Lord Cromer. Arnold Toynbee, the historian working for the Foreign Office, also published the short account, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation*, to considerable popular interest, but the British focus on the Armenian and Assyrian plight culminated in the now-famous 1916 Foreign Office 'blue book', *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*.<sup>94</sup>

France also took up the charge. Interestingly, one of the chief French accusation tracts, penned by René Pinon and appearing both in *La Revue des deux Mondes* and as an independent publication, was written partly at the request of Boghos Nubar as he was negotiating with French diplomats on the

future of Cilicia. Nubar supplied Pinon with relevant information for the article, and as he admitted to the Armenian Catholicos, 'in order to win public sympathy, our case is presented from the French point of view, stressing the role and responsibility of Germany in the massacres'.<sup>95</sup>

All of this played on pre-existing German fears of the potential propaganda value gifted to the Allies by the German–Ottoman alliance.<sup>96</sup> After the Russian-inspired Entente protest against the ongoing atrocities on 24 May, the German Foreign Office looked to emphasize German action on behalf of the Armenians whilst stressing that the Armenians were in league with the Entente, and posed a threat to Ottoman 'self-preservation'.<sup>97</sup> The autumn propaganda campaign brought matters to a head, aided by reports of the massacres produced by the German missionary Johannes Lepsius in the Swiss press at around the same time.<sup>98</sup>

This is the appropriate context in which to understand the decision of the German government on 7 October 1915 to censor information about events in the Ottoman empire, and to formalize the 'spin' given thereafter to the issue in the nationalist press.<sup>99</sup> Censorship was not, as Ohandjanian implies, evidence of a German desire to obscure the murders as part of a crime in which they were complicit.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, the agitation by Entente powers against the massacres seems to have reinforced the notion that the Armenians were actively in league with Turkey's enemies. For instance, the German Foreign Office seized upon an ill-conceived article in the *Daily Chronicle* of 23 September, describing Armenia as 'our seventh ally', to aver once more that the moral responsibility for the 'resettlements' lay with London, St Petersburg, and Paris, alongside, of course, the Armenians themselves.<sup>101</sup> The *Wochenblatt der Frankfurter Zeitung* of 12 October also struck back at Cromer and Bryce, legitimately defending Rößler,<sup>102</sup> and blaming the allies for creating enmity between Muslims and the Armenians. In any case the Armenians had set the ball rolling, it argued, with the massacre of Muslims in the Van uprising. Censorship then was a move to limit the damage that would be done to the German reputation and war effort by association with the crime, enacted amid a general domestic diminution in enthusiasm for the war in the light of the Allied blockade and the solidification of the European fronts.<sup>103</sup> There was nothing inherently anti-Armenian about it, but it did feed off a well-documented belief within German official circles about extensive Armenian revolutionary action.

## Conclusions

The German response to the Armenian genocide should be seen as a function of relations with the CUP and the war situation. The implicit terms of the German–Ottoman alliance did not provide for interference with Ottoman

internal affairs beyond the prescribed military sphere. That sphere did not encompass the most important domestic projects of a CUP leadership that at its extremes regarded the war as a 'Turkish war... against all non-Turks'.<sup>104</sup> The first conclusion to be drawn, therefore, is that beyond the huge step of sundering the military alliance and thereby releasing more than a million more Entente troops onto the Reichswehr from the Near Eastern theatres,<sup>105</sup> a move which was in any case only within the power of the highest authorities in Berlin, well removed from the terrible realities of the situation, and occupied with other issues of greater national interest, the German diplomatic representatives in Istanbul could do very little to back up their protests against the ongoing genocide.

Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg and the German Foreign Office tacitly accepted that Armenians would be killed by their ally.<sup>106</sup> It is not edifying as a lesson in humanitarianism, but it is part of another universal truth observed by Zygmunt Bauman that 'morality conforms to the law of optical perspective'.<sup>107</sup> German official public denial and/or 'justification' of the genocide were logical ways of squaring the actuality of atrocity with the self-conscious pursuit of imperial and military interest.

The idea of a German role in the formation of the genocidal policy, however, has no basis in the available documentation. It appears to derive from misapprehensions of the nature of German imperialism, military goals, and the alliance with Istanbul. The inference to be drawn from Germany's accusers is a perpetuation of a wartime notion of the Entente: that German imperialism could easily accommodate genocide as part of a grander geopolitical strategy of gaining controlling influence in the Ottoman empire and removing potential competition. However, this is to misrepresent German—and indeed European—imperialism. It may even be to view that imperialism from a post-Nazi perspective.

European imperialism rested primarily on the dictates of power by economic expansion and prestige. For Germany, the former interest was not served by the huge disruption of the Ottoman infrastructure that the rushed removal of the Armenians brought. The latter interest was damaged by Germany's purported role in the genocide of a *Christian* people, as protests to the CUP and a multitude of diplomatic memoranda and official and unofficial objections within Germany observed.<sup>108</sup> (The wholesale murder of black non-Christians in south-west Africa by the German military in the previous decade was another matter.<sup>109</sup>) The issue of preserving prestige was compounded by the need to assuage neutral, particularly American, opinion, so the resultant German propaganda campaign is not indicative of guilt; rather, the Foreign Office and the censor were playing the same game that the Entente were playing.

Germany is not to be absolved of responsibility, however, including at the level of actual commission. On one hand, Liman had shown that forceful intercession was possible, and theoretically, therefore, that more intercession was possible. On the other hand, from early days Germany had been happy to fuel the explosive ethnic situation on its own account with actions such as the formation of the feeble 'Georgian legion' and sponsorship of the jihad. Given the recent history of the region, it was always likely that such policies would open up the Near Eastern conflict to civilian populations. As such those policies are illustrative of a more general absence of humanitarian consideration which, while balking at genocide, probably anticipated collective reprisals against the civilian populations, particularly the Christian minorities of the Ottoman empire, and notably the Armenians.

With the benefit of hindsight, admittedly, Pallavicini noted after the major deportations had taken place that the German ingratiating with the CUP had assured the leading Ottoman statesmen in their positions, particularly 'the intelligent but utterly uneducated fanatics like Talaat', and had allowed them to give free reign to their xenophobic policies.<sup>110</sup> From the very beginning, however, in November 1914, he had also noted that the jihad was being used by Enver to turn Muslims against local Christians. Finally, he had seen how difficult such an explosive policy would be to keep within any constraints, and predicted that it spelt grave danger for Christians if and when the Ottoman empire was attacked by the Entente.<sup>111</sup>

To the extent that a small number of German officers who served in the Caucasian/Anatolian campaigns were implicated in approving Armenian deportations from areas near the front, a definition of 'military necessity' should be taken at face value as their motivation, rather than cooperation in a scheme of genocide, from which those officers tried to distance themselves, if not successfully in moral terms. Whatever the precise justifications the few officers needed for their direct or indirect acquiescence in the deportations, it remains clear that distinctions must be drawn between the course of developments in the genocide itself and German—and Entente and neutral—perceptions of these events.

The horror developed incrementally in the eyes of the German authorities, and small mitigations, even though illusory, were always to be found by those seeking them in Ottoman deceptions and assurances. Not the weakest palliative was the ongoing belief that the Armenians and their 'external allies' had helped induce the deportations. In those very important senses, most of the literature on 'Germany and the Armenian genocide', like the first wave of literature on the Allied reactions to the Nazi Holocaust, is marred by anachronism, with justifiable outrage at the crime in its totality obscuring comprehension of the contemporaneous unfolding of events.<sup>112</sup>

Charges of callousness, chauvinism, bureaucratic and military tunnel vision, and above all, blind pursuit of national interest may justifiably be levelled at most of the Germans with an involvement in Ottoman relations. The flaws in the accusations of German influence on the genocidal scheme are, however, threefold. First, they show no sign of being able to break down the rather rudimentary wartime propaganda of the Entente. Secondly, they contradict the research that many of the same accusers have conducted upon the genesis of the genocide in Ottoman–Armenian relations. It is rather strange to chart the rise of the radical element of the CUP—with all of its clandestine scheming and ruthlessness—against the background of discrimination and periodic murder of the Armenians under other regimes, and then suddenly to introduce an alien element into the picture to explain the creation of a policy which had supposedly already been arrived at. Such arguments are not only inconsistent, they detract from the responsibility of the CUP as progenitors of the genocide. Thirdly, the accusations tend to put the Armenians into the centre of the analysis of great power policy in the Near East, which is a place they rarely occupied. This tendency will be amended in the next chapter, which is not a coherent narrative of Allied responses to Armenian suffering in 1915–23 but instead an analysis of the way that the Armenian question continued periodically and tragically to intersect with the greater imperial and military policies of the powers.

## Ethnic Violence and the Entente, 1915–1923

The CUP's military alliance with the central powers assured that Entente victory would result in massive sequestration of Ottoman lands. The wartime agreements reached between the Allies on territorial division were complicated by the withdrawal of revolutionary Russia in 1917, and then by Lenin's and Woodrow Wilson's calls for national self-determination amongst subject peoples. Nevertheless, in modified form, the terms of the Anglo-French understanding outlined in 1915 remained the effective basis for the Near Eastern peace treaty finally concluded at Lausanne in 1922–3 between the European powers and Kemal's nationalists. The outcome was attained by sharp diplomacy from Whitehall and the Quai d'Orsay, involving the fracture of tactical half-promises made to nationalist groups under Ottoman rule during the First World War, including Arabs and Armenians both in Cilicia and 'historic Armenia'. In the Lausanne treaty Armenia and Armenians were notable only by their absence.

In Allied rhetoric the murder of the Armenians gave them grounds for special consideration in the redrawing of the Near Eastern map. In reality, however, it merely served during the war as a useful propaganda tool for the Entente. Upon the Russian revolution, the main sponsor of the Armenians disappeared, but was replaced in the interests of military necessity by Britain as it tried to prevent another Ottoman–German advance into the Caucasus. With the Ottoman defeat and the rise of Kemal's nationalists, promises of support for Armenian independence evaporated as easily as they had been made, as Britain abortively tried to induce other powers, notably the USA, to assume the protection of the Armenian state, while concentrating its practical efforts on securing the Arab territories for its own ends. At the same time, a British-sponsored adventure in Greek imperialism in Asia Minor brought ethnic tensions back to the boil and precipitated the 'cleansing' from Anatolian soil of most of the remaining Christian groups.

### The Secret Agreements

Russian overtures to the Ottoman Armenians in 1914 found a parallel in the British encouragement of Arab revolt. The 1916 Arab rising can be traced to contacts established between the British and Sharif Husain of Mecca, head of

the house of Hashem, in September 1914.<sup>1</sup> It was a mirror image of the German–Ottoman sponsorship of jihad in British and Russian dominions, and sought, with an eye to Islamic sentiment in India, to undermine Ottoman pan-Islamism by playing on ethnic Arab nationalism. While the CUP alternately emphasized pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism to appeal to different audiences, British policy persistently emphasized the contradictions between the two. Where the problem lay for Britain was in exactly what form of statehood its Arab allies would expect in return for their sacrifice, beyond liberation from Ottoman control on an Entente victory.

The outbreak of war provided an opportunity for Britain to address fears of the German threat to Britain's predominant position in the Persian Gulf and the Indian ocean. This was achieved through the occupation of Basra in Mesopotamia in the first months of the war, and of Baghdad and Mosul respectively in 1917 and 1918. The three provinces would together form the British-mandated state of Iraq. On one hand the occupation begged the question of how Britain could uphold its interests in the area in the post-war period, given the spirit if not the letter of undertakings being negotiated with Arab leaders. On the other hand, the British focus on the Gulf meant Britain was prepared to make concessions in its established policy elsewhere in the Ottoman empire. On the CUP joining the central powers in October 1914, British Foreign Secretary Grey let it be known to St Petersburg over domestic dissent that on a German defeat 'the question of Constantinople and the Straits would be decided in conformity with Russian needs'. Elie Kedourie describes this Constantinople/Istanbul agreement as 'the true progenitor' of the Sykes–Picot agreement, that basis established secretly in November 1915 for the division of the Ottoman empire according to Entente imperial interests, and approved by Russia in 1916.<sup>2</sup>

The Constantinople agreement encouraged the French assertion of claims in its traditional 'sphere of interest', including to predominant influence in Syrian territory and northern Mesopotamia but also Cilicia up to the Taurus mountain range, including the Gulf of Alexandretta and a substantial portion of south-eastern Anatolia. Rome's interests too were provisionally accommodated after Italian joiinder in the war effort in spring 1915. In April 1917, Italy was allocated concessions in the Adalia and Smyrna regions of western Anatolia.<sup>3</sup> Britain and France were also prepared to recognize Russian primacy in north-eastern Anatolia, and in March 1916 it was agreed that Russia would annex the key strategic territories of Trabzon and Erzurum, alongside Van and Bitlis.<sup>4</sup> British interests were still protected against Russia since Britain would gain control of lower Mesopotamia to the south of Russia, and the two powers would be separated by the French zone of influence, thus giving Britain the buffer that it traditionally desired.

The Armenians of the eastern provinces were obviously not to be given the autonomy hinted at previously.<sup>5</sup> The established Russian fear of separatism

within Russian Armenia should the Ottoman Armenians be liberated was partly removed by the ongoing genocide, while the splitting of eastern Anatolia with France gave a potential alternative focus for Armenian national identity outside Russia's sphere. Russian intentions in Anatolia were based on established traditions of population engineering and ethnic divide and rule. Thus on the Russian advance into Ottoman territory in spring 1916, the authorities began to put into practice a design for the settlement of Russians, but particularly Cossacks, in the former border areas in order to break up Armenian contiguity. Restrictions were placed on the areas in which Armenians could resettle, and resettlement was sometimes made conditional on proof of rights to property and land—an onerous requirement given the conditions under which the refugees had left.<sup>6</sup> (The Russian Caucasus authorities did, however, provide for some of the Ottoman Armenian refugees in the Caucasus,<sup>7</sup> and during the 1916 occupation of eastern Anatolia they acceded to Armenian requests to search for and liberate Armenian women and children kept in Muslim households.<sup>8</sup>)

These policies provide the context for the Russian-inspired declaration of 24 May 1915.<sup>9</sup> The declaration should also be seen in the same light as diplomatic visits by the ARF's Dr Zavriev in May to Paris and London at Sazonov's behest to discuss a future autonomous Armenia, and similar Russian overtures to Nubar. The declaration was cynically conceived immediately after 24 April to maintain the impression built up over the previous few years amongst Armenians on both sides of the border that Russia was concerned for their plight and their future.<sup>10</sup> The strategy worked well until Armenian representatives discovered Russia's true intentions during 1916 (and even then, many Armenians felt they still had little choice but to support Russia). Well into 1916 Nubar would mistakenly continue to refer to the April/May discussions with Sazonov as the Petrograd 'agreement', as if they had real substance.<sup>11</sup>

### **First British Responses to the Genocide**

Britain was initially reluctant to support the 24 May declaration. Early suspicions about the news from the Ottoman empire played some role in this, as undoubtedly did the earliest British diplomatic assessments that, like their American and German counterparts, identified some Armenian insurgent action as exacerbating CUP policy, and ascribed massacres to both sides.<sup>12</sup> Above all, however, Britain, like France, feared the effect on international Islamic sentiment of the declaration. Britain succeeded in altering the wording of the protest to minimize the possibility that it might be interpreted as a piece of pro-Christian propaganda against the caliphal power.



The Russian proposition was that the protest read:

For about the last month the Kurdish-Turkish population of Armenia has been engaged in massacring Armenians, with the connivance, and often with the help of the Ottoman authorities ...

In the face of these fresh crimes committed by Turkey against Christianity and civilization, the Allied Governments announce publicly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold all members of the Ottoman Government, as well as such of their agents as are implicated, personally responsible for the Armenian massacres.<sup>13</sup>

The British and French requested the removal from the second paragraph of the phrase 'against Christianity and civilization' and, in an attempt to remove the emphasis somewhat from the specific plight of the Armenians, the Foreign Office also requested substitution of the phrase 'such massacres' for 'the Armenian massacres'.<sup>14</sup> Sazonov accepted the latter alteration, and as a compromise on the former, the phrase 'against humanity and civilization' was inserted,<sup>15</sup> thus inadvertently employing what was to become a powerful concept of international law—the 'crime against humanity'.<sup>16</sup>

Similar British fears militated against the acceptance of offers from Ottoman Armenians or volunteers from the Armenian diaspora to fight alongside Entente forces. But there was also sense in the British reasoning that arming irregulars and volunteers was an inefficient use of valuable war *matériel*, and that the deployment of such forces might encourage yet further massacres in the Ottoman interior.<sup>17</sup> Even though Britain was simultaneously supporting Arab revolt, and though the CUP triumvir Cemal was to show that from 1916 the CUP were eminently capable of mass reprisals against Arabs (including targeted deportations into the Anatolian interior of key individuals and their families) as well as Maronite Christians with suspected links to the French in Syria,<sup>18</sup> the dynamic which London was feeding was nowhere near as virulent as that between Turks and Armenians. Finally, while it was unspoken, we may also assume that there was an element of chariness at the prospect that supporting Armenian participation might suggest endorsement of any Armenian territorial claims. Parallel arguments had been explicitly employed by France in the spring when turning down the offer of a Greek émigré-led insurgency on the Black Sea littoral during any prospective Entente assault on the straits.<sup>19</sup>

As for any action to ameliorate the situation of the Armenians in the Ottoman empire, the general line of argument anticipated that used during the 'final solution of the Jewish question' in the Second World War. The British government felt that only Entente victory would bring real relief to the Armenians, and all else was subordinated to that.<sup>20</sup> Such financial relief as did flow from Britain in 1915–16 came from charitable sources organized under the auspices of the influential pro-Armenian committees. These monies were

dispersed by the Russian Caucasus authorities and American aid agencies in Turkey; they were dwarfed by American donations (see Ch. 5). To continue the comparison between British responses to genocide during the two world wars, it seems that in the first as in the second the warning of punishment for the chief perpetrators substituted for any overall policy of assistance to the victims.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, British influence was exerted on friendly Muslim tribes to protect and give succour to such Armenian refugees as they encountered,<sup>22</sup> and an amendment to the Aliens Restriction order at the beginning of 1915 meant that it would be easier for Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, and members 'of any other community well known as opposed to the Turkish régime' to gain refuge in imperial dominions.<sup>23</sup>

The principles of British policy came clearly into conflict with humanitarianism upon the Musa Dagh resistance in August and September 1915. The Third French Naval Squadron picked up the 4,083 survivors of the attempted deportation on the Antioch coast after the latter had held off the Ottoman forces for six weeks.<sup>24</sup> They were transported to Port Said in Egypt, having been refused permission by the British to land at Cyprus. Indeed, had the British Foreign Office been alerted in time they would have opposed the Egyptian landing too on the grounds of 'the present state of feeling' in Egypt, which would make it 'highly undesirable that the victims of insurrectionary fighting [*sic*] between Turks and Christians should be landed there.'<sup>25</sup> When the news of the landing reached London, the French Government was tersely informed that the swift relocation of the refugees to a less sensitive region was expected.<sup>26</sup> In the event, disputes about the disposition of the survivors continued over the ensuing months, and they were not moved.

During autumn 1915 British attitudes towards publicizing the Armenian plight shifted. September saw the beginning of the concerted effort to use the massacres to influence American entry into the war, and was thus also the month when conveniently British officials discerned there could be no doubt of the true nature of the CUP's anti-Armenian measures.<sup>27</sup> Yet if British efforts contributed to growing moral outrage in the USA, and gave proponents of war like Theodore Roosevelt a stick with which to beat the Wilson government,<sup>28</sup> they did not pay off in the way that was hoped. The USA never declared war on the Ottoman empire. As for the British, the limits of their humanitarian concern were again illustrated when in February 1916 the Russian authorities requested the contribution of a subsidy of half a million francs for relief work for Armenian refugees in Aleppo. The payment had to be secret in order not to attract the attention of the CUP. The Treasury, however, made it clear that the only value of such an act lay in the publicity which could be given to it in the USA,<sup>29</sup> and that 'unless important political advantages would accrue...voluntary and charitable funds provide the

proper medium by which persons in this country who so desire should contribute to the relief of Armenians'.<sup>30</sup>

There were signs, however, that Anglo-French attitudes could change along with the war situation. Just as the Entente failures at Gallipoli over the spring and summer of 1915 led the British and French to rethink the earlier offer from Greek émigrés to stimulate insurgencies in Ottoman coastal areas,<sup>31</sup> there was a point at which concern for Muslim opinion and the potential civilian cost in the Armenian question could also be outweighed by military exigency. Most of the existing scholarship on the question would suggest that that point was reached at the Russian revolution; however, we can look back as far as autumn 1915, as the destruction of the Armenians was at its apogee.

### **France, Syria, Cilicia, and the Armenians**

That the French government was less than committed to the Armenian national cause per se was illustrated from the end of 1915. After early defeats at Suez, Cemal, governor of Syria and commander of the Ottoman Fourth Army, reportedly used the ARF representative Zavriev to contact Russia with an offer that might bring down the Ottoman military effort. In return for marching on Istanbul with support from the Allies, Cemal would claim the leadership of a future independent Anatolian Turkey, including autonomous provinces of Armenia, Kurdistan, Cilicia, Syria, and Mesopotamia; Istanbul and control of the straits would be given up. Cemal also stipulated that he would take immediate measures to save and succour the Armenians, and many of those in the desert concentration camps were already in his sphere. Russia was keen to have Zavriev further the negotiations, seeing that as with its campaign of 'active defence' on the Caucasus border, even if Cemal was unsuccessful he would cause turmoil in the Ottoman ranks. For anyone committed to saving Armenians there was also the prospect that a friendly Ottoman leader in the south, where so many destitute Armenians were now located, could only be beneficial.

The British Foreign Office excluded itself from negotiations which would have impinged on dealings with the Arabs. However, London was happy for Paris to parley with Cemal with the proviso that he should never get to hear of the Anglo-Arab talks. After brief consideration the French Foreign Office rejected the overture on the simple, imperialist basis that future concessions to Cemal in Syria and Mesopotamia would compromise French claims to the land as expressed in the ongoing Sykes-Picot negotiations.<sup>32</sup> Cemal thus returned to his Ottoman responsibilities and to an iron rule over the Arabs. Compared with other CUP leaders, however, his behaviour towards the Armenians within his sphere remained ambivalent. Though he was nowhere

near as benevolent as his self-serving memoirs would claim, he nevertheless did mitigate the desperate conditions in some of the desert camps. In part no doubt Cemal had an eye to a future settlement with the Entente, but it seems that he also saw the persecutions as detrimental to the war effort, and did not have the virulent hatred of Armenians that other CUP leaders had.<sup>33</sup>

To understand the insecure French position it is necessary to understand the relative strengths of the Entente powers in the Near East. French forces were dwarfed by the British presence on land and this foretold problems that would become very real on the conclusion of the peace: the British might use their presence and their record of military sacrifice to claim a territorial *fait accompli* irrespective of the terms of the Sykes–Picot agreement. Thus Paris refused to allow an external element in the form of Cemal into negotiations in which it had only slight leverage already, and so the cart of the peace settlement was very decidedly put before the horse of winning the war.

The Arab revolt, when it began in 1916, would create yet another unpredictable element influencing post-war claims for land. And so though in 1916–17 France had no intention of opening a major theatre of operations in the Near East, it was keen to establish some sort of French or pro-French force, if only as a token. In the words of the Foreign Minister, this would 'have the advantage of making our presence felt' in the areas where France claimed special interests. Should the Arabs be successful, it would also enable France to get in on the act and help dictate the disposition of northern Syria. These imperatives resulted in the formation of the 'Légion d'Orient' in November 1916.<sup>34</sup>

The Légion at its height during the war consisted of more than four thousand men serving under French officers. It had originally been envisaged as an auxiliary unit drawing on a cross-section of the Ottoman population of Syria and Cilicia, including Arabs.<sup>35</sup> The British, however, probably wishing to restrict Sunni Arab recruitment to the forces of their prospective clients, and keen to maintain their own pre-eminent influence with the Arab insurgents, prohibited the recruitment of Sunnis.<sup>36</sup> The force was ultimately composed of Syrian, Maronite, and Lebanese recruits, and, above all, Armenians.<sup>37</sup>

The over-representation of Armenians was attributable to the Ottoman policy of genocide, but also to the rationales for an Entente attack on Cilicia that had been promoted from autumn 1914. Nubar and the ARF had jumped at the opportunity suggested by the British commander in Egypt, General John Maxwell, to press Armenian territorial claims and help in the defeat of the Ottomans. When the aforementioned Alexandretta landing plan was shelved and the Armenian option with it, Nubar resigned himself to increasing the flow of funds to the Russian volunteer units, regardless of his disagreements with the ARF, hoping vainly that they could liberate Cilicia at the

head of a Russian advance through eastern Anatolia. As the deportations began and intensified in Cilicia, however, Armenians in Egypt and elsewhere in the diaspora desperately pressed their services on the British. Since there was to be no Allied landing they simply wished to be conveyed to Cilicia themselves.<sup>38</sup> As it happened, a potential nucleus for an Armenian landing force was already under Allied control, composed of the male survivors of Musa Dagh who, contrary to earlier British wishes, were still in Port Said.

After the French shipped the survivors to Port Said, the leaders of the Musa Dagh resistance had placed the services of 500 fit men at the disposal of the Entente powers in Egypt for the purposes of incursions on the Ottoman coast. The French military attaché in Cairo considered that the Musa Dagh fighters might be used under French auspices for an attack on the Baghdad railway and other key points, with the ultimate aim of isolating Syria from Anatolia.<sup>39</sup> (In October 1915, the British recognized the exclusive French right to the utilization of the survivors.<sup>40</sup> The situation was actually advantageous for Britain, which could now capitalize on any potential contribution the Armenians could make without direct, detrimental political association with them vis-à-vis international Islamic sentiment, while gaining a small French contribution to the war effort as its own forces focused on Syria and Mesopotamia.<sup>41</sup>) Alongside Syrians from Egypt and the USA, the Légion also incorporated larger numbers of Armenian volunteers from the USA, as well as Ottoman Armenians who had served in labour battalions and then deserted or been captured by the British<sup>42</sup>—in fact, the same way that many of the officers leading the Arab revolt were recruited.<sup>43</sup>

From the Armenian side, the calculus for Nubar and the ARF was the same as it had been with the formation of volunteer battalions at the outbreak of war.<sup>44</sup> The creation of the force also promised to result in an official Armenian presence in the administration of Cilicia.<sup>45</sup> In fact Nubar only began formally to encourage volunteers for the Légion once he had been given direct and explicit assurance from Georges Picot that following an Entente victory France would grant autonomy to an entity comprising Cilicia and the three eastern Anatolian provinces scheduled to fall under French control.<sup>46</sup> With the granting of such an assurance, the representatives of France had moved from the realms of half-truth to outright falsehood, as the post-war arrangements would show.

Nubar's support of the Légion again emerged from weighing the potential cost in Turkish reprisals that the deployment of the unit might engender against the bargaining value it would later provide Armenian negotiators. His compromise was to urge that the Légion be established quietly, without the fanfare that had accompanied the Russian battalions, in order to keep its existence from the Ottomans and the Germans for as long as possible.<sup>47</sup> In fact the dangers of using Armenian forces were already well known to the Allies.

Pondering the renewed offer of volunteers by the Armenian Nation Defence Committee of America in August 1915, one British Foreign Office official suggested the problem of sponsoring any of the proposed action 'is that the Turks would immediately take reprisals on the Armenians actually in their power'.<sup>48</sup> In February 1916, the admiral commanding the third French squadron had explicitly acknowledged the possibility of 'acts of violence on the part of the Turks that may be regarded as reprisals for the employment of [any such] volunteers'. Cynically too, he had denied any material French interest in the project. 'The number of Armenians likely to serve', he had averred, was so small that 'the only object of their employment is to give to the Armenians some material claim to their re-instatement in their original country; it is therefore a matter of purely Armenian interest . . . and that being so, the Allied Governments are free of any moral responsibility for reprisals'.<sup>49</sup> The very next month the same French force had planned to land 100 Armenians, at British request and equipped by Britain, to destroy the Radjun viaduct north of Aleppo on the Osmaniye-Islahiye-Radju supply line in order to impede the passage of Ottoman troops to Mesopotamia and Syria. The plan had been cancelled in April on the protest of the Armenian patriarch of Istanbul, who observed that Ottoman knowledge of Armenians operating alone in irregular bands would lead to reprisals against Armenian survivors in Anatolia, and would, in the words of a French report, 'furnish Talaat Bey with a very welcome opportunity to further his scheme of extermination'.<sup>50</sup> Quite whether any other such operations had been conducted, and what knowledge the Ottomans did have of French-Armenian links in the years and months before the formal establishment of the Légion is not clear, but given that throughout the first half of 1916 Armenians were being murdered by the tens of thousands in the deserts, the potential human costs of this Allied whim were particularly high.

The deployment of the Légion was contingent on Franco-British plans for a landing in Cilicia. As it had been since the earliest months of the war, a landing was repeatedly considered but never enacted, as Britain concentrated its forces on the land assault through the Arab territories. This was a matter of considerable frustration to the Armenian volunteers.<sup>51</sup> The French, however, like the British, were satisfied by the very existence of the force, for it still served the purpose of a 'menacing gesture' to the Ottoman government since, in Sykes's words, 'the rumours and reports of its existence would always cause the enemy uneasiness as regards a vulnerable point'.<sup>52</sup> This was the logic behind the basing and training of the force on Cyprus in agreement with Britain, given its proximity to the Cilician coast.<sup>53</sup>

In the end, the only major military engagement in which the Légion engaged, against the wishes of most of the volunteers, was General Allenby's successful offensive through Palestine towards Damascus in September 1918,

which also involved an Arab force under Amir Faisal.<sup>54</sup> The successful execution of this thrust, alongside the defeat of Bulgaria at the end of September, brought the Ottoman empire to its knees, and resulted in the signing of the 30 October Mudros armistice. It provided some satisfaction to the Légion's Armenian and French supporters; the Armenian performance resulted in Allenby's famous endorsement of the troops.<sup>55</sup> This further encouraged the French government in its plans to expand the Légion for post-war military-policing operations in the French zone of interest,<sup>56</sup> a policy with adverse consequences during the coming occupation of Cilicia. Meanwhile, in eastern Anatolia during 1917 and 1918, the issue was less of negotiations over the precise distribution of power in the post-war Entente order than of a desperate attempt to prevent a significant Ottoman–German victory.

### **The Effects of the Russian Revolution**

The March 1917 revolution was a cause for brief exuberance in Armenian circles. Russia now disavowed imperialist ends, yet remained ostensibly committed to the continuance of the war. Contrary to the Tsarist policy of annexation and population resettlement in eastern Anatolia, Alexander Kerensky publicly supported Armenian calls for independence, though this masked the agenda of the provisional regime which still saw the eastern provinces as vital to Russia's interests.<sup>57</sup> Wanting to believe the best, Nubar returned to his original outline—devised before his discovery of the secret Entente wartime agreements—of a linked Armenian eastern Anatolia and Cilicia under an international protectorate,<sup>58</sup> and as the USA entered the war, he and the ARF sought to attract that influential source of support for the scheme. Accordingly, none other than Garegin Pasdermadjian was dispatched on a special mission to Washington.<sup>59</sup> But when the Bolshevik revolution took Russia out of the fray, nothing could be taken for granted.

The immediate military outcome of the Bolshevik revolution was the armistice of Brest-Litovsk in December between Russia and the central powers. Alongside the massive concession of formerly Tsarist territories in eastern Europe, the ensuing peace treaty, signed in March 1918, allocated to the Ottoman empire both the territories lost during the present war and the provinces ceded to Russia in 1878. Yet with the collapse of the Russian Caucasus front the CUP wanted to maximize gains in the Caucasus for its own ethnic and geopolitical ends, even exceeding the terms of the coming treaty. In January–February 1918 the Ottoman army and its irregulars broke the fragile peace that had existed with the Caucasus since December, disregarding German exhortations to concentrate on fighting Britain in Mesopotamia. Not only did this advance into the Caucasus present an immediate military

problem for Britain, but the disintegration of the Russian empire and its replacement first by chaos, and then by a communist regime anathema to the capitalist Europeans, presented a dilemma of imperial strategy that the defeat of the central powers alone would not solve.

Lacking men in the vicinity of the Caucasus, Britain's concern for Armenia and Armenians miraculously intensified. If Arab nationalism in the south and south-east was the antidote to pan-Islamism, lending support to Armenians to form a Christian barrier to the north-east was now seen as the antidote to pan-Turanianism. Mark Sykes himself would come to propound no less than the establishment of a belt of Jewish, Arab, and Armenian states, which in their new-found independence would be a pro-British cordon separating Turkey from Russia and any other objects of Ottoman propaganda.<sup>60</sup>

In response to Lenin's and Wilson's anti-imperialist rhetoric, on 6 November 1917 British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour announced to the House of Commons that Britain would liberate those peoples 'whose progress had been impeded by the Ottomans'. Talk of liberation was linked to older indictments of the 'terrible Turk' when on 20 December Prime Minister Lloyd George stated that Mesopotamia would 'never be restored to the blasting tyranny of the Turk' and that the 'same observation applies to Armenia'. Shortly afterwards he averred that 'Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine are in our judgment entitled to a recognition of their separate national condition', thereby continuing the British tradition of grand-sounding but ultimately vague non-commitments; indeed Lloyd George was explicitly to admit that this speech 'should be regarded as a war move [rather] than as a peace move', and later confirmed that 'nobody was bound by a speech'.<sup>61</sup> The British government actually contrived to turn the situation at least partially to its imperial advantage, for as Akaby Nassibian shows, British leaders could associate 'the liberation of Armenia, a desolated country where Britain had no [long-term] territorial interests... with the liberation of strategically important, oil-rich and fertile Mesopotamia'.<sup>62</sup>

Britain was now prepared to back regular and irregular Armenian forces against the Ottoman empire: the War Cabinet had pressed the Russian provisional government to transfer all Armenians under its command to the Caucasus to join the 35,000 Armenians already serving there, and requested that the US government enlist American Armenian volunteers for service as well.<sup>63</sup> Though these requests were partially fulfilled, the new, Bolshevik Russian regime was not overly enthusiastic to provide for the defence of Armenia for simple reasons of self-interest. Given prevailing anti-Bolshevism in the Ukraine, and anti-revolutionism throughout Russian territories, the revolutionaries saw it as imperative to maintain the loyalties of the thirty million Muslims in their southern territories. Nor were the Bolsheviks obliged to assist the British war effort.



The Caucasian Armenians were eager to accept any help they could get as the collapse of Russian authority ushered in three years of the most dire insecurity and privation, with perhaps 200,000 perishing from hunger and disease, over and above those massacred by Ottoman forces. In December 1917, after negotiations with the volunteer leader Andranik and Nubar, the British War Cabinet despatched a group of 200 officers and 200 other ranks under the command of Major-General L. C. Dunsterville to train the Christian forces in the Caucasus, just as Britain would appeal to Cossacks in the fight against the Bolsheviks.<sup>64</sup> From the beginning of August 1918 Dunsterville's forces occupied oil-rich Baku, diverted from their unsuccessful quest to reach Tiflis and organize general resistance to the Ottoman advance. With assistance from local Armenians, and other non-Muslim and anti-Bolshevik elements—for at the time the city was half Christian—Dunsterville held the position and resisted the much larger Ottoman army until his withdrawal to Persia on 14 September, leaving the Baku Armenians to the sword. These Armenians would not have been happy to know that the British government was simultaneously considering offering Istanbul peace terms and Caucasian territory to undermine the German alliance and allow Britain to focus on the fight with Germany. (Some Ottoman commanders had been considering making similar overtures since January.<sup>65</sup>) As in the following weeks the powers of the central alliance collapsed as a result of events elsewhere, the British army would briefly return in greater force to the vacuum left in the Caucasus by the German and Ottoman troops, its main goal to control the Caspian, Baku, and Batum and the oil line between.<sup>66</sup>

The Baku question highlights the way that the Russian revolution intensified internal debate in Britain over policy towards Russia and Ottomania. Lloyd George, Prime Minister from December 1916 onwards, tended, like Grey as Foreign Secretary before him, towards the Liberal line which increasingly over the early years of the twentieth century accepted that Russia did have some legitimate territorial aspirations in the Near East, of which control of Istanbul was one. After 1917, Lloyd George did not anticipate an overly threatening Soviet power. Moreover, the anti-Turkish rhetoric he employed from 1917 onwards was not just for effect. It fed into traditions of philhellenism and opposition to 'backward' Ottoman rule over subject peoples, though Lloyd George had more radical intentions of installing Britain as the regional hegemon in former Ottoman lands in a way that would require revision of the Sykes-Picot terms. The desire substantially to dissolve the Ottoman empire put him at odds with representatives of the traditional Conservative thinking that had dominated British policy towards the Near East until 1907.

With increasing intensity after 1917, anti-Bolshevism dovetailed in Conservative thinking with the wish to retain a significant Turkey as a bulwark against feared Russian expansionism. There was also the consideration that

post-war Britain simply would not have the resources to maintain Lloyd George's vision of the Near East. Some sort of accommodation with the Ottoman government was thus essential lest the worse-case scenario transpire and both Turkey and Russia develop a common enmity with Britain that would threaten India as never before. These views were propounded by the Imperial General Staff under Sir Henry Wilson, and various Conservative members of the coalition government. They were voiced vociferously by Winston Churchill, though it was not until January 1919 and his appointment as War Minister after the December 1918 general election—which increased the Conservative strength in Lloyd George's second coalition government—that Churchill was able to exert significant influence over policy.<sup>67</sup> Pressure would also grow swiftly in the post-war years from the India Office for concessions to Turkish and other Near Eastern Muslim nationalists to remove one of the grievances of Indian nationalists.<sup>68</sup> Naturally these objections were not in any sense anti-imperialist. They were simply based on different calculations of Britain's imperial role and capacity. Thus, for instance, when Churchill took over the reins of the Colonial Office in January 1921, his remit to minimize the costs of British control in Iraq could only be fulfilled given the reduced military outlay that would accompany improved relations with Turkey.<sup>69</sup>

The Bolsheviks did nothing to ease London's fears by ranging themselves squarely against the British empire. In November 1917 Lenin achieved some measure of stability amongst Russia's Muslim subjects by assuring them that they could live according to their own customs, while he simultaneously furthered the pan-Islamic aims of the CUP by calling on Muslims under British rule to liberate themselves.<sup>70</sup> Within a year of the revolution Russia had begun more or less overt military conflict with Britain in central Asia.<sup>71</sup>

The spectre of coinciding Soviet and Turkish interests would haunt the British Foreign and Colonial offices up to and beyond the final peace settlement of 1922–3. It would be fuelled from 1919 onwards by Bolshevik support for Enver and then Kemal.<sup>72</sup> Since Britain was by that time well on the way to securing its imperial ends in Iraq, and had no intention of making a substantial commitment of men or money to the Caucasus, one potential solution if the War Cabinet was not yet ready to compromise with Turkey was to be attempted at the forthcoming peace conferences. Lloyd George would try to create a barrier between Soviet Russia and the Arab territories sought by Britain by tempting another power—ideally the USA—to take guardianship of an Armenian state.<sup>73</sup> This would also have the benefit of enmeshing Woodrow Wilson directly in the territorial carve-up of the Ottoman empire and thereby deflecting potential criticism of Britain's imperial ends.

Yet despite the *de facto* recognition of Armenia alongside the other Transcaucasian states at the beginning of 1920, and despite forthright Allied



## THE ENGLISH OF IT.

BRITISH AMBASSADOR. "YOUR MAJESTY *MUST* REFORM!"

SULTAN. "'MUST'!!!—IS THERE, THEN, A NEW GRAND VIZIER IN ENGLAND?"

BRITISH AMBASSADOR. "NO. BUT THERE'S GOING TO BE A *GENERAL ELECTION*!"

1. Sir Henry Layard, British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, demands reforms for the Armenians. *Punch*, 15 November 1879



## “TURKEY LIMITED.”

SULTAN. “BISMILLIA! MAKE ME INTO A LIMITED COMPANY? M'M—AH—S'POSE THEY'LL ALLOW ME TO JOIN THE BOARD AFTER ALLOTMENT!”

[It is reported that “among the proposals” which the Powers have “under serious consideration,” is a scheme for raising a “new Turkish Loan of five millions sterling,” to be applied to the cost of the judiciary, revenue, and police service “under European control.”]



### THE NEW LEG.

DR. BENJAMIN. "ONLY MAKE AN EFFORT! YOU'LL FIND IT EVER SO MUCH BETTER THAN THE OLD ONE!"

3. The 1878 Treaty of Berlin removed many of the Ottoman Empire's most important Balkan provinces and resulted in a mass influx of Muslim refugees to Anatolia. Salisbury and Bismarck are pictured here helping the disconsolate Sultan to his feet while Prime Minister Disraeli offers helpful advice. *Punch*, 6 July 1878



“WAITING THE SIGNAL.”

4. Cartoon reflecting the popular British perception of malign German influence in the Ottoman Empire, as a Turkish 'gladiator' awaits the decision of the German emperor on the fate of the prostrate 'Armenia'. *Punch*, 17 October 1896



5. Talât Pasha. From Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (New York: Doubleday and Doran, 1918)



6. Enver Pasha. From the collection of Mark A. Momjian



7. Armenians are marched out of town under the guard of armed Turkish soldiers to prison in nearby Mezireh. Harput/Mamuret-ul-Asis, photographer unknown. Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, courtesy of an unknown donor





8. Armenian deportees resting along a desert deportation route. © Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen, Germany. Used by permission



### 9. Forging the evidence

#### *A note from the author*

This photograph purports to be an Ottoman official taunting starving Armenians with bread. It is a fake, combining elements of two (or more) separate photographs: a demonstration, were one needed of the propaganda stakes on both 'sides' of the genocide issue, with evidence of all sorts manipulated for latterday political purposes. The photograph was also included when this book was first published but was then believed to be genuine. It had previously been used in Gérard Chaliand and Yves Ternon's *Le Genocide des Armeniens* (1980), which shows that prior use is no substitute for rigorous investigation of a picture's provenance—and in the absence of clear provenance, for a minutely detailed examination of the picture itself. It is a cautionary tale for historians, many of whom are better trained in testing and using written sources than in evaluating photographic evidence. The publisher and author are grateful to have had the forgery drawn to their attention

pronouncements about the coming extension of Armenian territory into eastern Anatolia under the mandate of a Great Power, Armenian nationalist hopes were smothered. So too were the prospects of any extensive purge of the perpetrators of the Armenian genocide.<sup>74</sup> In the period of extended ethnic conflicts in Anatolia, Cilicia, and the Caucasus from 1919 to 1923, the bungled and selfish pursuit of British imperial ends contributed to the loss of innumerable lives on all sides. Under the force of Kemal's nationalist onslaught from the south and Bolshevik Russia from the north, Armenian resistance crumbled in the winter of 1920, and the great territorial losses to the Turks were rapidly compounded by incorporation of the remaining lands into the Soviet federation. For its part, Turkey became the first of the losing powers in the First World War to revise successfully the peace treaty imposed upon them by the victors.

### **From the Ottoman Defeat to the Nationalist Resurgence**

Three external factors permitted the consolidation of Kemal's nationalist movement. First, at no point did the Entente powers secure the Anatolian interior. Cilicia and Syria were occupied by British and French troops and their auxiliaries, Palestine and parts of Iraq by British troops and their auxiliaries. Such armed forces as there were in the Caucasus were organized under the small British force that had returned on the Ottoman defeat. Otherwise, the terms of the Mudros armistice were appropriate for the naval power that Britain was, with the straits held, and the country ruled in theory by a moderate Turkish government under Allied influence in Istanbul. British demobilization and cost-cutting required a minimum military commitment, while the French presence also strained French resources and public sentiment. Ineffective measures were undertaken for disarming the mass of brutalized soldiers in eastern Anatolia, who were effectively free to attack Christians at will, subject only to the resistance the latter could muster.<sup>75</sup> In the view of Britain, the Allied arbiter of Mudros, the Armenian question could be put on hold until the forthcoming peace conference, and this itself was an indication of the low priority attached to it.

The second factor in the nationalists' favour was the sheer length of time that elapsed between the armistice and the peace conference of Sèvres as Europe and the USA focused at Versailles in 1919 on the more pressing matters of settling with Germany. This delay was exaggerated by the need to wait on the US Congress's decision on ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and on the prospect that America would take one or more mandate, including Armenia, for the former Ottoman territories. The European diplomats were left in suspense from Woodrow Wilson's departure from Paris in June 1919 until

November when the Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>76</sup> Thereafter, Anglo-French negotiations culminated in the San Remo conference and agreement of 1920, which divided the Arab territories of Ottomanism, with their oil resources, broadly in line with the Sykes-Picot agreement but modified in Britain's favour.

The question of what if any territory would be detached from Turkey to be added to Transcaucasian Armenia was left to Wilson's arbitration; whether Armenia was to be given a great power protector was also left firmly to the USA. Only the Armenian leaders maintained that an extended Armenia could be defended without any third party, and this they had to do lest they risk losing the opportunity of expansion, falling again into the trap of having to be seen to be good nationalists.<sup>77</sup> In May 1920 the now-invalid Wilson finally got around to submitting the case to Congress for the Armenian mandate, and that was refused at the beginning of June. The President nevertheless pressed ahead with his map-making, and in November allocated substantial eastern Anatolian lands to Armenia (see below). The Sèvres treaty that emerged in August as a result of the San Remo and other deliberations was a dead letter as it was signed.

In the interim, in March 1920, in the light of the nationalist rising, the British High Commissioner in Istanbul, Admiral de Robeck, warned that any peace had to be imposed as soon as possible to forestall further consolidation of the rebels. In any case, he felt, force would have to be employed if terms as severe as those envisaged were to be applied. The crux of the matter was that British opposition to the nationalists and their demands was not counterbalanced by concessions to the more moderate Turkish elements in and beyond Istanbul, who might be brought around by the prospect of a less drastic settlement. A more conciliatory policy would also take the wind out of the extremists' sails.<sup>78</sup> De Robeck's line was consonant with the traditionally pro-Turkish line of the War Office, his arguments supported across the General Staff. Concerning the Armenian republic, the General Staff argued that since no allied forces could assist it, it was reliant on the shipment of armaments alone, which were unlikely to arrive before May:

Months must then elapse before the armament can be distributed and the personnel trained. During this period Armenia will be exposed to Turk and Tatar attack, while the Turks will remain in the territory which has been promised to her [Armenia]. Even after she has been armed, her power to establish or even to defend herself has yet to be demonstrated ...

It appears, therefore, to the General Staff that the best interests of Armenia demand that her representatives should be told frankly that her existence as a self-contained State, if she desires to absorb any territory formerly Turkish, can only be guaranteed under Turkish suzerainty.<sup>79</sup>

The third factor permitting the rise of Kemal was the in-fighting that developed between the powers, inhibiting expedition and preventing concerted action. Britain's greater material contribution to the war in the Ottoman empire meant that London predictably claimed the key Mosul province of Iraq, despite the fact that the secret agreements had allotted the same to France. Near Eastern disputes were only one feature of a wider, renascent rivalry between Britain and France, which partly derived from policy towards Germany. Not only would France retreat from Cilicia under the Turkish offensive in 1920–1 and reach an early understanding with Ankara, but an increasingly frustrated imperialist Italy would also seek early terms with Kemal. Before it came to that point, however, Rome wished to collect on the western Anatolian territory promised to it in 1915–17, but also claimed by Greece at Versailles. Coveting the rich port city of Smyrna/Izmir in particular, Italian forces landed at Adalia to the south in April–May 1919 and pressed northward by land. The desire to forestall this land grab led to the fateful decision by the peace conference to accept a Greek offer of pre-empting the Italians by themselves landing at Smyrna, as the Greek army did in May.

### **Britain and the Greek Landing**

The Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos had Lloyd George's support in Greece's claims on Smyrna and the Aidin province because the latter saw Greece as a regional power in the ascendant, a potentially significant pro-British ally in the eastern Mediterranean. In spring 1919 France, too, supported Greece against Italy. Wilson's endorsement of the Greek venture was a function of his fear of Italian ambition. Each justified their backing of Greece with the fiction that the landing was simply to prevent disorder and protect the local (Greek) population, and that it would not prejudice the decision of the peace conference. Later Venizelos would rightly point out that the Allies knew well what they were supporting, as the allocation of Aidin to Greece at Sèvres suggests.<sup>80</sup>

Lloyd George was not unopposed. The Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, was sceptical, not on humanitarian grounds but because of his lack of faith in Greek abilities. Sir Henry Wilson instantly observed that the Greek landing could lead to another war.<sup>81</sup> Indeed it is hard to imagine an action more likely to inflame Turkish sentiment, nationalist or non-nationalist, than the Entente support for an invasion of Anatolia by an 'infidel' people over whom until comparatively recently the Ottoman empire had suzerainty. Whether or not a subsequent forced Greek withdrawal might have undone some of the damage, there is a general scholarly consensus that the landing gave the decisive impetus to the nationalist movement by manifesting the threat of

the partition of Anatolia at the hands of an enemy defined in ethnic as well as political terms.<sup>82</sup>

Kemal arrived in eastern Anatolia on his 'disarmament' mission a matter of days after the Greek landing in Smyrna, and two months later the first nationalist conference was held at Erzurum. At the following Sivas conference in September 1919 the nationalists declared their opposition to the Entente occupation, to any potential division of Turkish territory, and specifically to the establishment of an independent Armenia, launching the League for the Defence of Rights in Anatolia and Rumelia. Kemal's headquarters were moved to Ankara in December. A month after the Sèvres treaty was signed, with its provisions combining Caucasian Armenia with substantial eastern Anatolian territory, the nationalists began their invasion of Caucasian Armenia, as Kemal gave in to Karabekir's repeated demands to secure Turkey's borders in the grand tradition of the *fait accompli*.<sup>83</sup>

The loss of the unwieldy Arab lands was not only accepted by the Kemalists but perhaps even welcomed as Islamism receded further with the advance of a secular Turkic nationalism. The loss of parts of Anatolia and the rest of Thrace was an entirely different matter. The two present threats to Turkish territorial integrity—by the Greeks and the French—and the one potential threat—an Armenian state—reproduced the proximate CUP 'rationale' for the 1915-16 genocide, and the forthcoming violence was sometimes of the same order. To convinced nationalists the sort of settlement now envisaged was simple proof that they had always been correct about the relationship between predatory imperialists and their local co-religionists. The Greek conduct upon landing made an already precarious situation even worse.

As the Greek troops disembarked at Smyrna/Izmir on 15 May they were blessed by the local orthodox archbishop Chrysostomos.<sup>84</sup> This was hardly an encouraging sign for local Muslims, but was as nothing compared with the humiliations imposed by some of the Greek soldiers, and the outbreak of inter-communal atrocities triggered by the Greek presence, in which the Greeks were the greater perpetrators, culminating in the destruction of the Muslim parts of the town of Adalia. The inter-Allied commission investigating these incidents concluded in its October report not only on Greek responsibility for the bloodshed but that there were no real grounds for a Greek occupation that had taken on all the features of an annexation. It recommended the occupation be conducted by Allied troops under a supreme Allied commander. The report provided one of those few occasions on which Britain and France could honourably have reversed the decision to back Greece, and though it is unclear what the Greek response to such a policy shift would have been, given the strength of pan-Hellenic sentiment in Athens, the withdrawal of Allied support would clearly have been significant in Greek thinking. In the event Venizelos played on the fact that Lloyd George

and Wilson had provided de facto approval of Greek claims on Smyrna. Ignoring advice to accept and publish the report by way of rehabilitating Britain's name in Turkey, Lloyd George opted to suppress it on the spurious basis that no Greek had been included on the commission.<sup>85</sup>

Within a little more than six weeks of the landing Admiral Calthorpe at the British High Commission in Istanbul was contrasting Venizelos' 'protection' of western Anatolian Greeks with the likely deleterious effect of the occupation on the Christian population elsewhere in Turkey, 'surrounded by increasingly exasperated Muslims'.<sup>86</sup> The whole situation had been worsened by the rumours emanating from Paris of a greater Armenia, strengthened by the 28 May declaration by the Erivan government of the annexation of Turkish Armenia.<sup>87</sup> In the ensuing months Calthorpe's fears began to be realized as Greeks and Armenians started leaving the interior for the coastal regions, accepting the squalor of refugee camps in exchange for the relative safety of proximity to the Allies and hopefully transport away from Turkey.<sup>88</sup>

The Turks and other Muslims in Cilicia were in a better position under French than Greek rule. Yet even there nationalistic agitation against external rule could feed off the inflammatory policies of the occupier, as manifested in the consolidation of imperial control and the development of the *Légion d'Orient*. More precisely, the *Légion* was subdivided at the beginning of 1919 into a *Légion Arménienne* and a *Légion Syrienne*, the result of pressure from Armenians keen now to emphasize their distinct ethnic contribution to the French war effort.<sup>89</sup>

### **The Occupation of Cilicia and the *Légion Arménienne***

As with the very formation of the *Légion* there was the risk of undesirable side effects to its deployment as an occupation force for garrisoning and other duties. From the very first days of its deployment in Alexandretta at the end of 1918, operating under immediate French control within the overall framework of the British military command in Syria, the Armenian volunteers exhibited considerable indiscipline.<sup>90</sup> This was partly due to the nature of the troops, partly due to the fact that some were under the influence of the local delegates of Armenian political organizations.<sup>91</sup> In this political relationship, the volunteers were only following the Armenian logic of the formation of the *Légion* as opposed to the French logic: just as France had been using them for its imperial ends, the volunteers and their supporters had been using France for their nationalist ends. The irregular character of the organization was enhanced when it was reinforced in October 1918 by recruits from Beirut and Damascus, from the ranks of Ottoman prisoners of war, who had not learnt any of the discipline of those trained in Cyprus.<sup>92</sup> Attempts to weed out

the more unruly elements included the dissolution of the Légion's fourth battalion in spring 1919. The Légion's indiscipline also provided one convenient rationale for disbanding it altogether, as was decided upon in the course of 1920 as France's relations with the Turkish nationalists improved.<sup>93</sup>

Relations between the Légion and its French commanders deteriorated as the Armenians increasingly appreciated the divergent interests of the parties. The real substance of French intentions towards Cilicia was illustrated by the changing designation of the French authorities in the region. In October 1919 a General Gouraud was named French High Commissioner for Syria and *Cilicia*, a post whose title had been pointedly altered from that of its previous incumbent; Georges Picot had been High Commissioner for Syria and *Armenia*.<sup>94</sup>

At a general level French sources testify to pillage by some of the legionnaires.<sup>95</sup> There were also instances of murder, as in the killing of seven Turks at Dörtyol at the beginning of 1919,<sup>96</sup> and the Légion was involved in Armenian-Muslim clashes in Beirut in November 1918.<sup>97</sup> Early in 1920, as Turkish nationalist resistance to French rule became more organized, some of the legionnaires did exactly what the Turkish opposition had been doing: they distributed weapons to members of the Armenian community who were prepared to use them.<sup>98</sup> The level of violence thus encouraged or permitted by the legionnaires, if not directly perpetrated by them, can only be a matter of speculation, but the nature and scale of the other incidents are by no means remarkable, given the wartime experiences of the Armenians in the Légion and attacks on individual legionnaires, and given too that assaults by Muslim irregulars on the Christian population had continued right up to the armistice and beyond.<sup>99</sup> Nor is the Armenian sequestration of property surprising, given the quest to reinstate dispossessed Armenian refugees over reluctant Muslim occupants and owners, some of whom had of course themselves been previously dispossessed by war or forced migration; the fact that ongoing Muslim administration in many of the occupied areas favoured Muslims; and the general lack of justice meted out to perpetrators of the crimes of 1915–16.<sup>100</sup>

The atrocities committed by the Armenians were dwarfed, for instance, by the January 1920 Marash massacre of thousands of Christians. We also need to distinguish carefully, as during 1915–16, between Turkish rationales for anti-Armenian measures and the real long- and short-term causes. As in 1915–16, the nationalists made a propagandistic play of the actions of the Armenian volunteers, exaggerating the incidents that had transpired.<sup>101</sup> Even before the formation of Kemal's nationalist resistance, as the French command and the Légion arrived in Cilicia at the end of 1918, a nucleus of CUP resistance played on Turkish and Muslim sentiment, spreading the rumour that the Allied arrival and attempts to disarm Muslims were a prelude to a massacre.<sup>102</sup> Most importantly, the actions of the Légion need to be seen in the context



of the wider regional changes affecting Muslim and nationalist sentiment, of which French manipulation of the general Cilician 'Armenian question' was a vital aspect, but was not the whole story. One contemporary observer rather elided the complexities when he suggested that 'the Armenian question was the immediate cause of the [Turkish] revolt in Cilicia, as the Turkish nationalist movement had its origins principally in the landing of the Greek forces at Smyrna'.<sup>103</sup>

The transfer from British to French control in the region saw not only the expansion of that control deeper into Cilicia, it also served as an indication to nationalists, would-be resisters, and locals alike that the occupation was going to be more permanent, since it was accompanied by the mass immigration of Christians from surrounding areas and investments in infrastructure.<sup>104</sup> The day that Marash was occupied by France, on 28 October 1919, for instance, the Representative Committee of the League for the Defence of Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia began making preparations for resistance.<sup>105</sup> The actions of French representatives on entry into the city may help to explain the harshness of the Muslim backlash, as we shall see shortly.

Given the preponderant British forces in Syria, overall command of the occupation was in the hands of the British commander-in-chief until the military handover to France in autumn 1919. During that period, three semi-civilian occupation zones were set up that sought to reconcile British imperial aims as they were by the end of 1918 with the Sykes–Picot agreement and with promises to the Hashemites. The British took Palestine, the French the coastal strip to the north up to and including Alexandretta, but not including substantial parts of Cilicia, and Faisal and his officers portions of Syria to the north and east of the British zone, including areas to which France laid claim. These arrangements fuelled French resentment of Britain and meant that when in autumn 1919 the weaker French forces replaced the British in Syria and Cilicia, France sought to create a territorial *fait accompli* for the peace conference, which involved staking claim to ownership of areas that had thereto remained under nominal Turkish sovereignty.<sup>106</sup> One such area was Marash.

The Mudros armistice had provided for the occupation of such key points as the British General Staff deemed necessary for military security. From the turn of 1918–19 the British accordingly garrisoned a belt of towns east of the French coastal zone into south-central Anatolia, including Aintab, Marash, and Urfa, without, however, ending Turkish rule therein.<sup>107</sup> With the hand-over of autumn 1919 in Marash, the French troops, including 400 Armenian volunteers, did what they had done in Adana in the first days after the armistice: they took down the Turkish flag and replaced it with the French flag. This signalled a fundamental change of sovereignty that was underlined by the inaugural assertion of the overall French Commander-in-Chief and

High Commissioner, General Gourard, that all French rights would be upheld.<sup>108</sup> It is surely no coincidence that the main armed conflicts between the French occupiers and the nationalists over the following spring, up to the first French-Turkish armistice of 30 May 1920, primarily concerned Marash, Urfa, and Aintab, alongside Bozanti to the extreme north-west of the French zone.<sup>109</sup>

The concern to limit the deployment of French troops was obviously a major factor in the use of the Légion, as the French authorities protested when in March 1919 Allenby pointed to the damage that their employment was doing to the occupation.<sup>110</sup> Yet the Légion, like all of the 'Troupes spéciales' employed by imperial France, was consciously intended as an instrument of ethnic divide and rule. The authorities, faced with controlling large territories with a small French military and administrative contingent, needed as a matter of imperial control to counterbalance the power of different components of the ethno-religious patchwork, in which no one group formed an outright majority.<sup>111</sup> This was achieved by an ever-adjusting mechanism that alternately promoted and demoted the influence of various ethnic groups against the others. This was all very well while French authority lasted, as it did over the medium term in Syria, but in Cilicia the inter-group rivalries that the French helped to exacerbate in their own interests could then be exploited in reverse in the much more ruthless hands of Kemal's nationalists when they took control of the region in 1920-1.

### **British Policy Decisions in 1920**

The Kemalist reaction continued to grow in strength, as illustrated by the first defeats of French forces in Cilicia from February 1920. The temper in Istanbul grew more pro-Kemalist, and on 28 January the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies confirmed the famous National Pact, aspiring to the creation of a nation state in Thrace and Anatolia, including the territories lost in 1878.<sup>112</sup> In March, British forces sought to wrest control of the situation by occupying Istanbul, arresting such pro-nationalist deputies as they could find and deporting them to Malta; a number of the remaining deputies joined Kemal. In response to British actions the nationalists jailed a number of British armistice control officers as hostages.

The occupation had two unforeseen consequences. The first was that France and Italy availed themselves of the opportunity to let Kemal know that they did not support it, giving him a wedge to drive between the Allies. The second was to increase the influence of the nationalists without Kemal having to launch a direct and divisive attack on the sultan. Kemal could now claim that the sultan was a prisoner of the Allies and that therefore his government was not competent to run the country. Accordingly an

alternative parliament, the Grand National Assembly, was opened in Ankara in April, and it swiftly sent a mission to the Bolsheviki, who had hinted late in 1919 that they would provide anti-British assistance to Turkish leaders.<sup>113</sup>

Thus we arrive at the context for Admiral de Robeck's recommendation of March 1920 to placate moderate Turks by moderating the terms of the settlement. The only alternative was to use force against the nationalists, and the only Allied force available for the purpose was the Greek army. Imposing British goals by proxy was a policy fraught with peril, primarily for the Anatolian Christians. De Robeck reiterated that should the Greeks advance further into the interior, the danger to Christians would be 'infinitely increased'.<sup>114</sup> The paradox of the situation therefore was that reinforcing by arms the sort of settlement the Allies had in mind, one which would ultimately benefit Armenia territorially, could only be achieved in the present circumstances by endangering Armenians and others in the short term. And in the longer term, if a future peace settlement dismembered primarily Muslim regions such as Aidin, not only would the possibility of enduring warfare, regular or irregular, have to be entertained, but even should such terms ultimately be imposed by force, 'a Turkey who [*sic*] genuinely feels that she has been treated contrary to the principles on which the Allies went to war, will remain disturbed, and will continue to foment trouble in the Moslem, particularly in the British Moslem, world'.<sup>115</sup>

These dilemmas were marginalized by Lloyd George, as Britain forged ahead with support for Greece, on the basis that Turkish opposition could be crushed militarily if need be. In May, Greece was given the most emphatic encouragement as the draft Sèvres terms were handed to the Istanbul government. Venizelos could not now pull back from the occupation without a huge loss of face at home. Nor did he wish to pull back.<sup>116</sup>

The trigger for an expansion of Greece's role came when in June 1920, in reaction to the Sèvres terms, nationalist forces alarmed Britain by attacking a battalion near Istanbul. The Cabinet requested that Greece supply a division to defend the capital, and Venizelos agreed, on the understanding that the Greek armies be allowed to advance outside Smyrna to occupy the larger area Greece proposed to annex. With continued if cautious French support—Paris was hedging its bets between Kemal and its wartime allies—the Greek army was now positioned to enforce Sèvres.<sup>117</sup> Britain, meanwhile, assisted by prevarication in Washington, was co-architect of a situation where whichever side prevailed in the coming struggle the outcome would be much uglier than had a swifter settlement been imposed on Turkey or agreed with more moderate Turks.

The Anglo-Greek policy was doomed to fail, at the cost of enormous misery and death for Christians and Muslims alike. Yet had it succeeded it

is not clear that the human tariff would have been smaller. If Turkish opposition in the short term might be overcome by force of arms, pacification over the longer term in which de Robeck was thinking meant extensive demographic redistribution in accordance with the Sèvres boundaries. According to the prevailing logic of ethnic nationalism, such was the only way to minimize instability and irredentism in the new polities proposed.<sup>118</sup> These 'relocations' would unavoidably have entailed misery on a massive scale, and probably bloodshed, as tempers flared and personal and collective scores were settled, just as did the later Greek-Turkish 'exchanges' and the Hindu-Muslim intermigration across the new India-Pakistan border during partition.

### **The Human Implications of Sèvres**

To the south of the Armenian state proposed by Wilson, Sèvres provided for an independent Kurdistan. To the west, Smyrna and its hinterland and the majority of eastern Thrace were allocated to Greece, with a plebiscite to be held in five years' time in Smyrna to determine ownership in the long term. With the exception of parts of the Kurdistan award, none of these made much demographic sense.

The pre-war population of the city of Smyrna was approximately half Greek, but the province of Aidin as a whole had a Muslim majority over the Christians in a ratio of around 3 to 2.<sup>119</sup> Venizelos based Greece's claim on the theory that most Anatolian Greeks outside the Greek zone would migrate into it, and Greek virility would ensure the successful consolidation of the state. He revived the stillborn pre-war scheme for mutual Greek-Turkish intermigration between Aidin and eastern Thrace by suggesting that the peace treaty should encourage voluntary exchange across the new national boundary.<sup>120</sup> Quite how voluntary this process would have been is, however, open to question, given the Greek need to gain a positive result in the plebiscite and the fact that any residual minority on either side of the border would have been seen as suspect. Finally, Venizelos came out in support of including the Trabzon province in a greater Armenia, seeing its incorporation into a Christian state as the most practical way of protecting the large Pontic Greek community.<sup>121</sup>

As for the 'Armenian' provinces of eastern Anatolia, whatever the reluctance of more sensitive souls to recognize the *fait accompli* of the genocide by redrawing the Near Eastern map on the basis of post-war ethnic distribution,<sup>122</sup> even the pre-war situation would not have provided a legitimate Armenian claim for separatism based on ethnic majoritarianism. In the post-genocidal state, given the decimation of the Armenian population,

substantial Armenian territory in eastern Anatolia would have been impossible to justify on demographic grounds alone. Nevertheless, in the immediate aftermath of war some European and American leaders tended to agree with Armenian leaders who invoked special considerations concerning an Armenian state, given Armenian suffering during the war, and the consensus that after all they had been through Armenians could not be returned to Turkish rule.<sup>123</sup> This was certainly the position of the King–Crane commission, established in 1919 under two trustees of the American charitable organization Near East Relief (NER), Henry C. King and Charles R. Crane. The NER was charged, along with the investigation of a number of other regional geopolitical issues, with advising on American acceptance of a mandate for Armenia when that was still a real possibility.

King–Crane recognized that a separate Armenia would be a punitive measure for the Turkish state, but that further Armenian existence under Turkish rule would be undesirable.<sup>124</sup> The Armenia that King–Crane envisaged included the territory of the Erivan republic and the north-eastern corner of Anatolia, recognizing that a sea-to-sea Armenia, incorporating the six eastern provinces and Cilicia, was utterly unjustified in terms of demographics and was but a manifestation of Armenian imperialism. Like the subsequent Wilson boundary award, the King–Crane arrangement gave many regions with strong Muslim majorities to Armenia in the interests of defensibility, communications, and resources. As with the establishment of the ‘Polish corridor’ at Versailles, this was one of the occasions in the post-war peace settlement where the needs for ethnic homogeneity and national viability conflicted.<sup>125</sup> The idea was that the state would become a focus of immigration for Armenians elsewhere in the region and the diaspora, so that with the passing of the years a larger minority would be created in the areas annexed from the Ottoman empire. The much denser Armenian population of the Transcaucasian republic would assure an Armenian–Muslim plurality in the combined Armenian territories as a whole, that strong minority hopefully increasing in succeeding months and years to an overall majority.<sup>126</sup>

Crucially, the King–Crane report drew attention to the problem of the treatment of non-Armenians in the new state, and the general unfitness at the time of Armenian nationalists to rule over Muslims, as for Turks to rule over Armenians.<sup>127</sup> This was one of the primary arguments in favour of the restraining presence of a mandatory power. Fear of simply fuelling internationalist violence was also one of the reasons why, as the prospects of a mandate for Armenia dimmed, American representatives argued against supplying military aid to a wholly independent Armenian state.<sup>128</sup>

With an eye to minimizing future conflict and ensuring regional stability over the medium term, King–Crane prescribed a series of very bold measures.

The report suggested that a single mandatory power should take overall control of separate mandates for Armenia, Anatolia, and Istanbul, on the grounds of the historical interconnectedness of the territories and the reasonable supposition that this would remove frictions between mandatories and facilitate peaceful population movement.<sup>129</sup> Variations on this theme had been suggested elsewhere, notably in December 1918 by former American ambassador Morgenthau<sup>130</sup> and in 1919 by the British Admiral Webb at the High Commission in Istanbul.<sup>131</sup> Shortly after King and Crane had begun their mission, General James G. Harbord was dispatched by the USA to the Near East to assess the likely cost and manpower commitments that the engagement would incur. When he reported back in October 1919, Harbord also suggested that 'from the standpoint of peace, order, efficiency and economy' the mandate should be for the whole of Anatolia. Similar ideas had been propounded since before the end of the war by NER chief James Barton, who envisaged an overall mandate with Armenia supervised as one of six contingent federated states.<sup>132</sup> Caleb Gates, President of Istanbul's Robert College and a former missionary, recommended early in 1919 that

The attentions of the Peace Conference should be centered upon giving the Turks a good government rather than delivering the Armenians and Greeks from Turkish government. Because it will be of little profit to establish an Armenia, more than half of whose people will be Turks, if alongside of this new state there remains a Turkey of the old type... To save the Armenians and Greeks you must save the Turks also.<sup>133</sup>

As to the question of who would take such a super-mandate in the unlikely event that it was decided to construct one, answers varied, but the USA was the most popular suggestion among supporters of the mandate idea.<sup>134</sup> At least one voice, however, recognized that even an American mandate might not be run in the best interests of the peoples of the Near East. That voice belonged to another former US ambassador, Oscar S. Straus, a vocal opponent of the pre-war American policy of 'dollar diplomacy'. He felt that while the USA should provide financial support, the mandate should be taken by the League of Nations itself, envisaging a sort of precursor of UN administrations established elsewhere in the latter part of the twentieth century.<sup>135</sup>

But self-evidently this wider vision came to naught. Wilson, isolated anyway, focused only on the possibility of a mandate for Armenia and possibly also the more strategically and commercially valuable areas of Istanbul and the straits.<sup>136</sup> For the Armenian state he mapped out—comprising Transcaucasian Armenia, large parts of Van, Erzurum, Bitlis, and Trabzon—he effectively approved the eviction of Turks from the proposed territory of the new Armenia in Anatolia, and did not dissent from the Allied plan to allow Greek forces forcibly to remove any recalcitrant Muslims.<sup>137</sup> There was also near-unanimous

Armenian opposition to the idea of a scheme that would leave Armenia in any sense associated with Turkey.<sup>138</sup>

By mid-1920 the moment had long passed when any mandated or independent Armenia could have been imposed on Turkey without another war. As for the other powers involved in the Near East, the prospect of any such radical departure from the existing calculus of buffer states and spheres of interest was non-existent. Any concern for the fate of minorities was marginalized as the continued success of the Turkish nationalist movement threatened core imperial interests of the Entente powers. Nowhere was this better illustrated than in the Caucasus.

### **The Caucasus, 1918–1920**

The Caucasus continued to play the role in British thinking that it had in the final war year. As one official put it, Britain desired 'a barrier against a possible Bolshevik military advance', not 'a free passage for communication between the Bolsheviks and Pan-Islamic forces'.<sup>139</sup> In late August 1919, however, British troops were withdrawn from the region, a result of demobilization and domestic austerity; there was not even provision to protect British concerns in Baku and the Caspian Sea as Mesopotamian interests were prioritized.<sup>140</sup>

Of the Caucasus states, Armenia was of least strategic importance against immediate encroachment by the Bolsheviks, since Georgia and Azerbaijan were in the front line and incorporated the route of the Baku–Batum oil line. Nevertheless Armenia remained of potential significance pending the outcome of attempts to persuade the USA to take its mandate. The Transcaucasian stability that Britain desired above all was inhibited by infighting between the states. While the British High Commissioner in Transcaucasia optimistically argued that the republics could defend themselves against north and south 'if we take a little trouble and show that we are behind them', the supply of arms to Armenia was initially hindered for fear of fuelling the border conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, while the ties of the latter to both Russia and Turkey made it appear distinctly suspect.<sup>141</sup>

In late 1918 tension arose between proponents of supporting Armenia and those favouring Azerbaijan out of concern for Islamic sentiment. The War Office was in the latter camp, and since the British presence in the Caucasus was almost entirely military, the War Office's view held sway. This strategic favouritism affected the provisional location of the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The contested region was, again, in the corridor that would connect Turkey to Azerbaijan, particularly Mountainous Karabakh, a region of the Elizavetpol province.

While Elizavetpol as a whole was predominantly Muslim, Armenians constituted approximately 70 per cent of the population of Karabakh. The adjoining Zangezur county of Elizavetpol province was also at issue. The Ottoman advance of 1918 had left parts of Karabakh under Azerbaijani control, but Armenian resistance involving Andranik's forces kept the remainder and Zangezur out of Azerbaijani hands. When, after the Mudros armistice, Andranik took the rest of Karabakh, he was ordered by the commander of the British expeditionary force to retreat to Zangezur. This was followed in January 1919 by a decision by the same Major-General William Thompson that both Zangezur and Karabakh would come under Azerbaijani rule until the peace conference had made its decisions. The Azerbaijani reoccupation of Karabakh brought with it renewed murder and destruction in Armenian settlements by regular and irregular forces, and the British proved unable or unwilling to intercede.<sup>142</sup>

Since the need to keep Azerbaijan on side was the primary motive for British actions, it was clear that the rhetoric of a provisional administrative arrangement pending the peace conference was once again a mask for more permanent intentions. Thompson and his successor planned a mini population exchange to remove the source of tension in Karabakh. They suggested transplanting the Armenians of Elizavetpol into Armenia and resettling in their stead Muslims from Armenia. One of their rationales for these drastic measures was that Armenia would be heavily territorially compensated in Asia Minor by the terms of the anticipated peace treaty.<sup>143</sup> If this was ostensibly reasonable, the settlement in Anatolia was outside of their control. Thus the British officers worked in Azerbaijan's long-term interest under the pretence of taking a provisional measure, while working to Armenia's detriment by the very act of predicting the peace settlement whose decisions they otherwise protested no inclination to pre-empt.<sup>144</sup>

The border arrangement would endure up to the Soviet takeover since Armenia lacked the forces to recover Karabakh. It was confirmed by the USSR in 1921.<sup>145</sup> The border dispute continues to the time of writing to simmer, having broken out into outright military conflict with attendant bi-partisan atrocities after the Soviet empire crumbled.<sup>146</sup> Having made such portentous decisions without regard to ethnic distribution, the British army withdrew in 1919 and left all of Transcaucasia to whatever fate was in store for it. One of the most reliable predictions for the future, given sentiment in the region, was the explicit recognition of 'all American and British authorities on the spot' that 'in the absence of external aid there will be an appalling massacre of Armenians' by Azerbaijanis or Turks advancing from Erzurum.<sup>147</sup>

Azerbaijan was incorporated as a Soviet Republic in April 1920 with Turkish acquiescence, though Turkish-Bolshevik collaboration was by no means smooth at this stage. The move brought the Bolsheviks, and thereby the



potential for aid to the nationalist cause, into closer proximity to Turkey.<sup>148</sup> The Armenians, now on the front line both to north and south, were promised arms by Britain subject to their showing that they would stand firm for their own independence.<sup>149</sup> Then, under Soviet pressure in August, the Armenian Government concluded a provisional agreement to allow Bolshevik troops to occupy key border areas. In a show of monumental self-righteousness, the new commander of the British naval forces in the region condemned the move 'which opened [the Soviet] road into Turkey and north-west Persia' as almost tantamount to 'an act of revolt against Great Britain'.<sup>150</sup> The situation would only deteriorate for the Armenians and for British imperial interests when the Turkish Caucasus offensive began in late September as Kemal tried to pre-empt both the Entente and the Bolsheviks.

The arms and munitions that had been provided by Britain, France, and Greece helped sustain some Armenian resistance against the Turks,<sup>151</sup> but the Armenian army was weak and disorganized. On 7 November Armenian leaders signed an armistice with Karabekir, followed on 2 December by the crippling treaty of Alexandropol by which Turkey substantially regained its pre-1878 borders and other territory besides.<sup>152</sup> The beginning of December also brought the declaration of establishment of the Armenian Socialist Republic by Bolshevik supporters in Armenia as the Turkish forces overran much of the western Armenian territory. On the sixth of the month, the remaining eastern territories were occupied by Bolshevik forces. After some delay the Turkish conquests would be recognized as annexations by the formal Kemalist-Bolshevik friendship agreement of 16 March 1921.<sup>153</sup> In the same month of March, Georgia, which had not been attacked by Turkey, succumbed to the Soviet Union as well.

For Britain, the only alternative left to settling with the nationalists and effectively abandoning Greece, to the great detriment of imperial prestige, was reluctantly advocated even by de Robeck: full resort to the Greek army.<sup>154</sup> Yet to further complicate matters, cracks were now developing in Entente-Greek relations, for in rapid succession in autumn 1920 the pro-Entente Greek King Alexander died—bizarrely, from a monkey bite—and Venizelos was defeated in a shock election result. The leaders who had urged Greek neutrality during the First World War were returned to power, and the pro-German Constantine I from exile to the throne. Though these changes made no difference to Greek intentions in Anatolia, they did provide a pretext for France in particular to renege on earlier support for the Anglo-Greek venture.<sup>155</sup>

A forum for addressing policy conflicts within and between the various governments was provided by the organization of a conference in London in February–March 1921 between representatives of Greece, Turkey, and the interested Great Powers. Its main outcome was to leave Britain and Greece alone in an uneasy alliance. *En passant*, on the eve of the meeting Eyre Crowe

of the Foreign Office mentioned to Curzon the consensus that there were sections of the Sèvres treaty 'such as Armenia, Kurdistan and Cilicia, which have already lapsed in practice owing to the progress of events'.<sup>156</sup>

### The London Conference

The London conference provided the initial platform for Franco-Turkish negotiations that concluded with the Franklin-Bouillon agreement of 20 October 1921, stipulating the French withdrawal from Cilicia and signalling reversion to the traditional policy of supporting Turkish integrity and pursuing economic penetration.<sup>157</sup> The French limply claimed to have fulfilled their moral obligations to the Cilician Christians by gaining Kemalist assurances that they would be treated equitably. Since losing out to Greece over Smyrna, Italy too had temporarily given up territorial ambitions in Anatolia in the hope thereby of securing economic advantages.<sup>158</sup> Another piece of the jigsaw was shortly to be put in place by Kemal with the March Bolshevik-Turkish agreement.

The Greek representatives, conversely, were no more prepared to compromise than the Turkish nationalists. They were still confident in the military situation and aware of the domestic costs of the full withdrawal Kemal demanded. In order to attract the continued Allied support they needed, Greek leaders even exaggerated the strength of their position in Anatolia. Lloyd George was only too keen to believe them, having committed himself thus far. At the same time he sought to reduce Britain's association with an increasingly controversial policy. Furthermore, the month after the conference, Churchill would convene a meeting of British military and civilian officials in Cairo to debate how Iraq could be run at minimum cost to an impoverished Exchequer.<sup>159</sup> Better relations with Turkey were vital immediately. Lloyd George tried to square the circle by making private hints to the Greeks that Britain would acquiesce in a Greek advance in Anatolia while Britain made no provision for continued financial assistance. Public Allied proclamations of neutrality in the ongoing conflict in April 1921 meant that arms would never be forthcoming. An Allied offer that June to mediate between the warring parties was turned down by a Greece that could not turn back.<sup>160</sup>

An area in which accommodation could more easily be reached with Turkey concerned the Turks imprisoned by Britain in Malta. This multifarious collection included some simple political prisoners, such as those arrested in March 1920, and others who had perpetrated crimes against British POWs or Armenians. The final category were held pursuant to the 24 May 1915 commitment to punish Ottoman leaders for crimes against humanity. Many had

been rounded up in the months immediately after the armistice; others had been incarcerated subsequently by a Britain unimpressed with the Istanbul government's efforts at imposing justice against its own citizens. While the series of courts martial conducted over the first half of 1919 produced significant evidence on the Armenian genocide, the few harsh sentences were in the main reserved for those culprits who had escaped and were tried in absentia. The rise of the nationalists spelled the end of even these proceedings.

Britain was the only one of the Entente powers that showed any sign of taking seriously the 1915 declaration, the subsequent provisions for trial of the Paris Peace Conference, and then articles 226–30 of Sèvres. France and Italy simply used the question as another bargaining counter. Yet British progress was impeded by the desire to amend relations with the nationalists and the fact that the nationalists themselves held a number of British armistice control officers as hostages. As far as prosecution of the murderers of the Armenians was concerned, there was also a legal problem. While crimes against POWs were indictable under the traditional rubric of the 'laws and customs of war', the prosecution of a state's mass murder of its own civilians had not yet found a legal name or been framed in appropriate legislation, and was arguably not subject to the jurisdiction of external powers. Sèvres was vague about both the law and the forum that would be used for such a trial, and the British law officers had always been reluctant to experiment, an approach that would be precisely duplicated in debates from 1944 about trying Germans for crimes against German Jews. Legally speaking, in the inter-war world, genocide, as long as it affected only the citizens of the perpetrator state, was simply seen as that state's 'internal affair'.

As early as spring 1920 Churchill had suggested the solution of releasing the Turkish political prisoners as a goodwill gesture. This was adopted during the London Conference when it was proposed to Ankara's foreign minister to swap all the prisoners from both camps except those accused of war crimes and massacres. Yet soon the nationalists began demanding the sovereign rights granted to Germany over its war crimes suspects: namely the power to try any criminals themselves. As it became clear that they were not prepared to surrender all of their prisoners before the British did likewise, an 'all for all' exchange was agreed on 1 November 1921. Parenthetically, it may be noted that the British had not actually managed to maintain all of their prisoners in custody anyway. The congenial circumstances of internment in Malta involved regular day releases that the inmates might wander around town, and had been abused by none other than Cevdet, the butcher of Van, who had escaped by boat to Italy in December 1920.<sup>161</sup>

In conclusion, therefore, rather than punish the perpetrators of wartime atrocities, British policy such as it could be determined from the London Conference entailed effectively sanctioning further inter-ethnic strife through

the medium of Lloyd George's semi-support of the Greek advance. Not only did the Prime Minister continue to try to coerce Turkey with a minimum of material expenditure, he now dressed up his 'consent' for Greece's invasion in such a way as to limit his official liability if the strategy backfired. We can only speculate as to how he rated his moral responsibility. In the event, all of his calculations failed, and his political fate was decided in tandem with the defeat of his Greek ally.

### The End of the Greek Policy

In May of the following year, 1922, a journalist observed that

For decades the Greek in Asia Minor had been comparatively safe. He may have been harried and hustled into abandoning his property to a good Turk; but he has not been massacred—as a rule ...

But the Western Powers ... changed all that when they allowed the ambitious Greek nation to act as the sword of Christian Europe for the punishment of the Anatolian Turk who stubbornly refused to bow his neck to the yoke which the more successfully cowed Sultan had accepted. This was fine policy if the Greeks won. Then the ultimate Turkish resistance would be broken, and the Turk would be afraid to touch even the hair of any Greek who dwelt within the confines of the trimmed and tamed Turkish state. The Allied program would be pushed to success with no cost to the Allies, and with the Greeks able to pay for themselves for their exertions out of conquered territory.

But the Greeks did not win ...

The Allies knew exactly what sort of an animal the Turk was when they permitted the Greeks to attack him. They knew that if the Greeks failed, the life of any Greek left within Turkish territory would not be worth a moment's purchase.<sup>162</sup>

In the 1921–2 'war of extermination', both sides far surpassed the atrocities committed by Greeks and Turks in 1919–20 as the conflict escalated into an outright battle for the future of Anatolia. The tide of war had begun to turn in April 1921, though the most significant Turkish victory was at the battle of the Sakarya river between 23 August and 13 September 1921 when the Greeks had advanced to within fifty miles of Ankara. Kemal's inspired military leadership was fundamental to the outcome of the conflict, but equally significant was the difficulty of supplying a Greek army deep in enemy territory and spread across a wide front, the lack of support forthcoming from Greece's erstwhile allies, and depressed morale among the long-suffering Greek troops. A lull in combat over the bitter Anatolian winter led to armistice negotiations brokered by the Entente governments in the spring, but the nationalists were keen to press home their advantage before the Greek forces could regroup, and they did so with a renewed offensive in late August 1922.<sup>163</sup>

As a microcosm of the violence visited on the Anatolian Christians as the Greek armies were literally driven back into the sea in September at Smyrna whence they had first disembarked, and much of the Christian and Armenian civilian population with them, we might pause to consider the fate of the orthodox archbishop Chrysostomos. Chrysostomos, it will be recalled, had blessed the disembarking Greek forces in May 1919. As Kemal's armies advanced he was turned over to a Turkish mob, which dragged him into a local barber's shop, dressed him in a white shirt as if for a shave, then before killing him proceeded to tear out his beard, gouge out his eyes and cut off his ears, his nose, and his hands.<sup>164</sup> Such was the outcome of Greco-British imperialism in Anatolia.

The powers of the former Entente were impotent to stop the orgy of rape, pillage, murder, and arson that engulfed the Christian quarters of Smyrna. Where they could intervene was in saving some of the mass of humanity that gathered on the waterfront, desperate to escape the blazing city and the tender mercies of the mob. Even in this, however, Britain was found lacking, since it was only after midnight of the day of the blaze—Wednesday, 13 September—that the British naval commander sitting in the harbour could be dissuaded from London's position of 'neutrality' to pick up some of the Christians. Italian ships had been doing the same for hours, and the French likewise; American vessels too played a significant role after initial delay.<sup>165</sup>

With the defeat of the Greek armies and the re-establishment of Turkish control in Anatolia right up to the barbed wire of the small British garrison policing the straits at Chanak, the need to make most of the concessions that the nationalists demanded was obvious to all in London who did not want another war. Such was the domestic outcry at the prospect of renewed fighting involving British troops (rather than their non-British proxies) that it provided the catalyst for Lloyd George's resignation the following month as the Conservative Party withdrew its support for the coalition government.<sup>166</sup> The ensuing election of the Conservatives under Bonar Law in November meant that there were no longer any domestic obstacles to the fullest necessary accommodation with Turkey. Now British diplomats, alongside those of France, finally and unsurprisingly confirmed that they did not support the establishment of 'small, segregated areas, autonomous or otherwise' that might have been introduced for Armenians, Kurds, or Greeks, as if they still had any choice in the matter.<sup>167</sup>

For the members of each minority group left in Turkey the future was black. For the Great Powers there was inevitably still much to play for, with little thought now for a Greece that was descending into internal turmoil because of its foreign-policy calamity, or for a shattered Armenia under Soviet control. The feelings stirred up by the Greco-Turkish war meant that any settlement along the lines of Sèvres would in any case have been very difficult

to sustain, and therefore might well have had to be revised at some point; Muslims in India could now not complain of infringements of Turkish sovereignty, while Kemal's rejection of irredentism alleviated the headache of pan-Turanianism; and finally a definitive peace would ease the strain on Britain's moral and material resources in the Near East, and allow it to consolidate its position. The great imponderable was to what extent Turkey could be persuaded to make things easier for the British empire by renegotiating its relationships with the Bolsheviks and the West.

### **Endings and Beginnings: Lausanne**

The venue selected for the definitive peace conference was Lausanne. The Swiss city would give its name to a treaty that alone of the post-First World War settlements has endured, with minor modifications, from its signing in July 1923 to the present day. The conference lacked any of the heady if compromised idealism of the Versailles conference and was predicated upon naked political realities and ruthless diplomacy.

For the Turkish delegation under Ismet 'Inönü', Lausanne was the forum to gain international recognition for Kemal's regime and territorial *fait accompli*, to complete by great power legitimation—through the Greek-Turkish population exchange—the process of ethnic homogenization begun by the CUP, and to assure the consolidation of Turkey's internal sovereignty, as through confirmation of the abrogation of the capitulations. The nationalists' preparedness to continue the fight if they were denied their goals gave them the strongest bargaining position, and most of their aims were consequently achieved.<sup>168</sup> The significant exception concerned sovereignty over the Mosul province, which was finally allocated by League of Nations arbitration to British-mandated Iraq in 1925.

Istanbul was also an issue, with its 1922 Greek population of some 300,000, and a smaller but significant Armenian population. Owing to the British occupation of the city it had not been possible to conduct the sort of 'cleansing' that had occurred elsewhere, and now Istanbul was exempted from the Greek-Turkish population transfer, despite Turkish desires to the contrary. The arguments successfully employed in opposition to expulsion had maintained that Greece could not absorb so many more immigrants and that the Istanbul economy would collapse without the Greek element. The Europeans also had significant economic interests in the arrangement, since many managerial and administrative posts in the major foreign concessionary companies were held by Greeks.<sup>169</sup>

As at Versailles, the bit-part players at Lausanne—the Armenian and Assyrian delegations, for instance, but not the Kurds, for whom the Turks

themselves purported to speak on grounds of spurious ethnic confraternity—were given no official voice, put once again in the position of powerless supplicants to the Great Powers. Yugoslavia and the Balkan states bordering the Black Sea were variously involved in negotiations on Turkey's European borders, the regime that would govern the straits, and the population transfers and protection of the remaining minorities in each country. France had effectively made its peace with Turkey through the 1921 Franklin–Bouillon agreement, while the disposition of most of the former Ottoman lands outside Anatolia had been determined between France and Britain at San Remo. Apart from the transfer of rule in Cilicia, those terms remained in force. The French mandate over Syria and Lebanon was officially approved by the League of Nations in July 1922. Britain, the main European arbiter of the peace, was ultimately prepared to acquiesce to Turkey's chief demands while securing its own interests in Mesopotamia, ensuring the freedom of the straits, driving a wedge between Turkey and the USSR—which was the final power participating in the conference, bar Japan and a delegation of American observers—and more generally restoring its battered prestige in the Near East.

Though Britain was not prepared to go to war to enforce its wishes, it had the weapon of imperial bluff at its disposal, and in a substantial Greek army standing in Thrace, a potential menace to Istanbul should Ankara prove completely intransigent. The British delegation also benefited from the regular intelligence interception of communications between the Turkish delegation and Ankara.<sup>170</sup> In Curzon, the leader of the delegation for the conference's first phase and a long-standing critic of Lloyd George's Near Eastern policy, Britain had an adroit tactician able to exploit these factors to the maximum.<sup>171</sup> Curzon also instrumentalized the factor of international opinion, whether expressed as the will of the non-Turkish powers at the conference or through the League of Nations. For its part, Turkey did not want to join the USSR in isolation within the international community. It was impossible for the Turkish nationalists, no matter how obsessed they were with remaining free of external entanglement, to ignore the reciprocal commercial and security benefits that would be foregone should Turkey fail to agree terms and enter into the comity of nations, not least given the history of Britain's nineteenth-century support for the Ottoman empire. And as Britain was one of the mainstays of the League of Nations and the most significant imperial power in the Near East, its interests had to a certain extent to be satisfied. The implicit threat of international opprobrium was first used by Curzon when engineering the break-up of the first session of the conference in February 1923 (see below), and subsequently to ensure peaceful Turkish acquiescence in the decision-making process on the Turkish–Iraqi border.<sup>172</sup>

It was doubly important for Curzon to play on Turkey's moral standing since British interests in Mesopotamia were the cause of much international

suspicion, and one of the greatest sticking points in negotiations with Ismet. Though the vast oil reserves thought to lie under the sands of Mosul were a significant factor in the British quest to retain the province contrary to the Sykes-Picot terms, they were by no means the only issue; Mosul was important strategically and its addition to Baghdad and Basra provinces essential to make Iraq geopolitically viable.<sup>173</sup> Conversely, Ismet claimed Mosul on dubious ethnic grounds—the fiction of Turkish-Kurdish co-identification—and more legitimate historical grounds. Curzon was justifiably worried lest the conference founder on the Mosul question and the Turks claim that 'we offered to make peace with [the] allies and notably with Great Britain, we were willing to meet them on every point provided only we recovered Mosul, but for the sake of Mosul and its oil Britain flouted us and refused peace to the world'.<sup>174</sup> Curzon's strategy, therefore, was to ensure that if a rupture did occur it should be seen to do so as a result of Turkey offending international sensibilities, and the minority question was an obvious instrument.<sup>175</sup>

Though the British government had long given up hope of or interest in carving an Armenia out of Turkish territory, Curzon's lip-service towards the formation of such a state was a useful smokescreen for his real goals. It also served the lesser purpose of placating pro-Armenian groups in Britain. Both ends were furthered by the more successful attempt to make Turkey undertake to protect its non-Muslim minorities and safeguard their communal rights by adherence to the so-called minorities clauses that had been foisted on various new eastern European countries in the 1919 Versailles peace. The clauses were an attempt to reconcile the call for self-determination with complex demographics, and were to be enforced by the League of Nations, to which all the signatory powers belonged. As in eastern Europe, the minorities clauses in Turkey would do little to help the minorities themselves, but for Britain the successful application of pressure for Turkey to subscribe to them was a means of leading Ankara away from Russia and towards the League.<sup>176</sup> Incidentally, Muslim minorities in Turkey were not included in the terms of the clauses at all, since as with the Greco-Turkish 'exchange' the primary basis for judging ethnicity was deemed to be religion.

As for the straits, the most important thing for Britain for established reasons was that they were not controlled according to Russian ambitions, by which they would be closed to warships of all nations and fortified by Turkey. By playing on the demands of the other states bordering the Black Sea, and employing all his rhetorical devices to depict the Bolsheviks as the regional threat he felt them to be, Curzon pushed the conference towards agreement on the freedom of the straits and the establishment of demilitarized zones on either side. Yet if this was a diplomatic triumph for Britain it would not have been achieved had Turkey not already had misgivings about Soviet intentions.<sup>177</sup>



Avoiding awkward foreign policy entanglements and unequal relationships was crucial to Kemal's continuing efforts to 'make a clean sweep of all contributory causes of the decay of the Turkish Empire'.<sup>178</sup> The attempt to match Turkey's military and diplomatic victories by modernizing internal reforms to keep the country strong and independent would henceforth preoccupy Kemal and his successors as they went about the consolidation of the nation state. In this internal process, the 'Kurdish question' would loom as large as had the Armenian question up to 1915.

## Interlude: New Minority Questions in the New Near East

Scant months after the signing of the Lausanne Treaty Kemal secured the assent of the Grand National Assembly to alter Turkey's status to that of a republic. In the spring of 1924 the caliphate was abolished, contrary to the terms of the National Pact, and a series of secularizing laws were enacted. With Kemal preaching the language of modernization, of scientific and economic advancement, the following years saw legislation encouraging Western costume, alphabet and calendar reform, and women's emancipation, the establishment of a central bank, the introduction of a civil code based on the Swiss model, railway and public works construction, and an attempt to build up import-replacement industries in vital areas. As we have seen, the new era also brought the intensification of Turkification campaigns affecting Kurds as well as the remnant of Christians. The one area in which Turkey notably failed to progress through its reform programme in the inter-war years was in the realm of democracy, with accountable institutions and cultural and political pluralism lacking, as a series of abortive experiments with freely elected governments illustrated.

The persecution and flight of the remaining Christians continued through the 1920s and even into the era of the Second World War, with Turkey's 1939 reacquisition of the district of Alexandretta. The outside world remained largely impassive, though there was some international agitation against the infamous discriminatory 'property tax' of 1942-4, another wartime measure aimed at acquiring non-Muslim capital.<sup>1</sup> Britain, so influential in the peace, and a kingpin of the League of Nations, even evinced tacit support for Turkey's policies.

### **Great Power Attitudes to the Persecution of Christians**

Turkey was by no means the only power to oppose the minorities treaty in the first place, then to disregard its treaty commitments, and finally to impede potential protests by its minorities.<sup>2</sup> If the treaties were in the medium term to provide a measure of cultural self-determination for minorities in states dominated by 'different' ethnic groups, ultimately, in the British view at

least, oriented as it was towards maintenance of the new status quo, they were only a transitional measure. The final result of their application was supposed to be the peaceful absorption of the minorities into majority culture, towards the wider end of ensuring the stability of the post-war territorial settlement. In effect, as empires collapsed, those ethnic groups which for whatever reason were not gifted independent statehood were expected first to sideline their nationalist aspirations by accepting their status as minorities, and then to conceal the fact that they ever had nationalist aspirations by forgetting their very minority identity.<sup>3</sup>

Since the minorities treaties were a means to an end, fractures of their terms were treated with a certain tolerance, and the more so as it appeared with the passing of the early post-war years that not only were minorities showing no sign of assimilating, but that their presence provided grounds for irredentist claims by neighbouring states pursuing revisionist territorial claims. This was the pragmatic, non-interventionist way in which Britain viewed forced assimilation in Poland, Greece, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, and the same went for different shades of minority unrest in the mandates, including Iraq.<sup>4</sup> Once the nationalists had forced their territorial claim, precisely the same was true of British views of Turkey and its minorities. Besides, there was no will or real way of enforcing implementation of the clauses on any sustained basis, though specific instances might occasionally stimulate protest to the League. Britain theoretically maintained a preparedness to try to enforce the minorities clauses should the ill-treatment of minorities 'become so scandalous as to force our hand'<sup>5</sup>—yet it seems that the terms of this rather elastic definition were never fulfilled, and the solution of minority questions was simply returned to the realm of Turkey's 'internal affairs'.<sup>6</sup>

Not without some justification, the British consul in Ankara, G. G. Knox, reported to the Foreign Office in March 1928 that he saw 'but little difference between the active nationalism of Turkey and that of most of the new-born or revolutionary states of Europe, when due allowance is made for complete inexperience, a very recent release from the fetters of the Capitulations and a particularly acute Minority problem'.<sup>7</sup> In this 'minority problem', Knox dismissed the Armenian question as of no real relevance, easily soluble by the sort of southward 'emigration' that had already transpired: 'in the small number that survives in Turkey [the Armenians] present no political menace, . . . and, with their tradition of successful emigration, if once they find that they can no longer make an adequate living in Turkey, they will without much difficulty uproot themselves and seek fortune elsewhere'. The comparatively large, 'un-assimilable' Greek population of Constantinople was a different matter, remaining, in Knox's view, the grounds for a 'Greek irredenta': 'the problem', he wrote, 'is comparable, in its minor sphere and minor reactions, to those of Upper Silesia, the Polish corridor and the Anschluss, which, I believe it to be

the view of His Majesty's Government, can only find an ultimate solution, if left, undisturbed, to the operation of time and natural forces'.<sup>8</sup>

The events in Upper Silesia that Knox euphemistically described as 'natural forces' had first entailed violent clashes between Polish and German inhabitants of this long-contested border region, and then, when the territory was assigned by the Versailles settlement to Poland, vigorous attempts at the 'Polonization' of the Germans who remained. In short, if assimilation failed, British policy accepted repression and even expulsion of state minorities in the interests of longer-term stability. As for ongoing discrimination within Turkey against non-Turks in the spheres of commerce and employment, Britain—and the League of Nations—was also prepared to give Turkey a certain amount of leeway based on analogous situations in the 'national' development of other European states such as the treatment of ethnic Hungarians in Romania.<sup>9</sup> This was the approach adopted as the Greek population of Constantinople dwindled in the face of Turkish animosity and discrimination from 300,000 in 1922 to 100,000 in 1927, and also as the Turks of western Thrace were squeezed out by the arrival of Greek refugees.<sup>10</sup>

If for Britain Turkey's disposition of its minorities was part of a general calculus of nation-state formation across eastern and south-eastern Europe, for France it had very specific ramifications since Syria and Lebanon were the first recipients of many of Turkey's Christian refugees.<sup>11</sup> This was a matter of concern for a mandatory power striving to maintain its rule over a variety of ethno-religious groups. Against the backdrop of earlier French use of the Armenians, the Arabs in particular feared the influx of thousands of refugees, suspecting an arrangement on Syrian soil of something parallel to that outlined in the Balfour declaration of 1917 regarding a Jewish national home in Palestine. Not wishing to upset the delicate ethnic balance, the French authorities first sought to bar the entry of Armenians and others, only acquiescing when it became clear that the refugees would be left in a border no-man's land, subject to inhumane conditions and continued harassment by the Turks: the Armenians were allotted farmlands beyond a distance, agreed with Turkey, from the Turkish border.

In 1924, when the forced emigration of remaining Christians from Anatolia was at its height, the French Foreign Office and High Commissioner in Beirut considered threatening Turkey to stop the process of forced emigration on pain of the French expulsion of an equivalent number of Turkish inhabitants from the district of Alexandretta. In the final analysis, Turkey was in the controlling position, however, with the French desire for good relations with Syria's northern neighbour much stronger than any inclination to fan the dying embers of the 'Armenian question'. The threat of the Alexandretta expulsions was never carried out for fear of reprisals against French nationals in Turkey.<sup>12</sup>

As of old, the only time now that the European powers considered serious measures on behalf of Turkish Christians was when the plight of the latter intersected with the interests of nationals of the former, and such occasions were increasingly rare. One transpired at the beginning of 1928, when a secretary at the British Constantinople embassy proposed petitioning the League of Nations over infringement of the minorities clauses arising from the forced dismissal by British firms of non-Muslim Turkish citizens.<sup>13</sup> The course of petition was finally rejected by the Foreign Office for a complex of reasons. First, as Knox admitted, the clauses had been invoked 'for no high humanitarian motive, but, as would inevitably transpire in debate, because we had reason to believe that our traders were suffering loss'. The British also rediscovered their pre-1917 scruples about raising the matter in the international forum lest this result in yet worse treatment for the remaining Christians.<sup>14</sup> But the nub of the matter was the fear that any protest would put Britain into disfavour with Turkey 'to the commercial and political advantage of our main rivals in either field, Germany and Russia'.<sup>15</sup>

Western attitudes to the developing persecution of the Kurds were still more detached, even as in 1926-7 British representatives made repeated analogies with the 1915 deportation of the Armenians.<sup>16</sup> The most obvious reason for the attitude was that the minorities clauses were exclusively concerned with Turkey's Christian minorities, perpetuating the tradition of occidental unconcern for the suffering of Muslims in and around the Ottoman empire. During the Sheikh Said revolt of 1925, France even went so far as to allow Ankara use of the railway across its mandated territory for the transport of troops to quell the rising. (This military concentration near the Iraq border would also conveniently serve to increase British security concerns.<sup>17</sup>) To many Western observers the moral worth of the Kurds was further diminished owing to the role some tribes and individuals had played historically in the repression of the Armenians. Yet the considerable obstacle to Britain washing its hands of the Kurdish question was the fact that it transcended Turkey's boundaries and was fundamental to Iraqi stability. In its policies towards Kurds and Kurdistan from 1919 to 1933, Britain actually helped to aggravate the Kurdish issue in Turkey while duplicating problems in the new state it had carved out of Ottoman territory. While helping to carry the coffin of the Armenian question, therefore, Britain was also midwife at the birth of the modern Kurdish question.

### **Britain and the Dynamics of the Regional Kurdish Question**

Sèvres had stipulated an autonomous Kurdistan, possibly including Mosul, to be given a later plebiscite to determine the matter of full independence. This

superseded a variety of alternatives for the disposition of predominantly Kurdish territories considered by the Foreign and Colonial offices since the final war year, yet naturally British support for the state was entirely dependent on its strategic value to the empire.<sup>18</sup> Though Sèvres provided for a Kurdish state, and therefore encouraged Kurdish nationalism, it did not provide for a unified country, for large territories of high Kurdish population density would still be in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. The question for the British in the year after Sèvres was to what extent they would support the demands they had endorsed earlier. The answer was that they would lend superficial support, but to the end of improving the British bargaining position with Turkey, particularly in the matter of the Turkish–Iraqi border and the disposition of the heavily Kurdish province of Mosul.<sup>19</sup>

As for Britain's plans for Mosul, by the end of 1921 the proposals of Sir Percy Cox of the Middle Eastern Department of the Foreign Office were adopted. Cox saw the incorporation of the province as essential to Iraq's economic viability, a question of particular importance given the premium on cost-cutting in London.<sup>20</sup> Direct control of oil certainly came into the equation, for the potential oil wealth of Mosul would enrich the Iraqi state.<sup>21</sup> Possession of Mosul was also important for the defence of the Iraqi plain by a northern mountain barrier. The region also contained much fertile land, irrigated by the Tigris and the Euphrates.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, many Iraqis would have been worried by the prospect of a separate Kurdish state that might possess irredentist ambitions, while even on demographic terms there was some advantage to the incorporation of a large number of Kurds: for the Sunni Iraqi elite under Amir Faisal that had been foisted onto a predominantly Shia population by the British, the presence of Sunni Kurds, while presenting other potential ethnic problems for the future, would help to even out the religious balance.<sup>23</sup> Finally, Cox contended inaccurately that most Kurds in most regions favoured incorporation into Iraq. While many Kurds may have viewed annexation to Iraq as preferable to continued Turkish rule, widespread discontent in Kurdistan from the end of 1919 suggests that British–Arab overlordship was not in itself appealing. Many if not most Kurds simply objected to any external rule.<sup>24</sup> (Parenthetically, no account was taken of the sensibilities of the Turcoman population of the Kirkuk district of Mosul, who were strongly anti-Arab.<sup>25</sup>)

With the coming League of Nations award of Mosul to Iraq, British policy towards the cross-border Kurdish question had to take into account the perspectives of three parties. The first was the Arab nationalist Iraqi leadership, which had no desire to render separate treatment to a potentially problematic Kurdish population, and sought ultimately to assimilate it; in this sense, Iraqi policy mirrored contemporary Turkish policy, the second determinant of the British position. The third perspective was that of the

League of Nations, which had entrusted Britain with the Iraq mandate conditional upon its ability to develop Iraq to the point where it could govern itself.

A key condition of the League's award was the institution of administrative measures for the protection of Kurdish identity, including the appointment of Kurdish administrators, judges, and teachers as well as the use of Kurdish as the official language of these services.<sup>26</sup> Britain's credibility with the League rested on its ability to fulfil these terms, and the League in turn was a valuable instrument of British foreign policy. So, though wary of upsetting their appointed Iraqi leaders, not to mention the Shia majority, and of perpetuating a social cleavage that might prevent the development of effective Iraqi nation statehood, and against received wisdom in London, the British 'advisers' in Iraq began to press their reluctant charges for concessions to Kurdish identity. The knock-on effect was the antagonizing of an already suspicious Turkey by promoting Kurdish rights in a region that had been the subject of talk of Kurdish autonomy, actions which Ankara feared would only encourage similar demands in Turkish Kurdistan. Some Turkish nationalists also subscribed to an unfounded, if understandable, belief that Britain was actively encouraging Kurdish unrest in eastern Anatolia—a factor that certainly influenced the paranoid viciousness with which any Kurdish uprisings were met.<sup>27</sup> These are the reasons the Kurdish question remained the chief obstacle to a Turco-British accommodation up to and beyond the Mosul settlement in 1926. How did Britain navigate the problem?

After the first Kurdish rebellion of 1925, the British Ambassador in Turkey, Sir R. C. Lindsay, criticized the relatively benevolent British policies towards the Iraqi Kurds and outlined why he felt Ankara was deserving of greater solicitousness. 'Turkey', he contended, in projection of established British convictions, 'finds that there is an unpleasant similarity between the policy of the Soviet Union and that of the old empire'. Consequently, he predicted, in line with British aspirations since around 1922, 'Great Britain's relationship to Turkey should revert to something like what it was in a past age'. It was in 'the Empire's interest to prop up a whole row of buffer states, and these States, of course with infinite tergiversations, blackmail, and playing off of north against south, will nevertheless come to recognise that on their national existence the British influence must exercise a preservative and the Russian a corrosive effect.'<sup>28</sup>

Despite himself, Lindsay was not entirely sanguine about Turkey's prospects, warning of the debilitating impact of inefficiency and corruption. He speculated prophetically that between Kurdish nationalism and Ankara 'there can be nothing but irreconcilable hostility'. 'The only question', he suggested, 'is whether, so long as the republic lasts, and until something radically different from it takes its place, we shall see a series of revolts followed by a

series of repressions, or whether the task will be too great for the Government's strength, and Kurdistan will be left severely [*sic*] alone with its own local administration'.<sup>29</sup> Other reservations developed over the following years, especially, and echoing contemporary American frustrations, over the Turkish reluctance 'to receive capital on reasonable terms and to accord it decent treatment'.<sup>30</sup> That, however, was the extent of Western reservations about Turkey's development. Sir Percy Lorraine, the British Ambassador to Turkey from 1934 to 1939, and the man credited most with advancing the Anglo-Turkish rapprochement, felt it 'un-English not to be liberal and magnanimous' when considering Turkish efforts at reform: 'we officials', he said, 'must make some allowances for the effect which the heady wine of independence produces'.<sup>31</sup>

One of the most enduring symbols of the thaw in Anglo-Turkish relations was a memorial ceremony on the Gallipoli peninsula in 1934. The wider context was the gathering power of the USSR and renewed (Nazi) German economic penetration of Turkey.<sup>32</sup> Both London and Ankara had an interest in balancing the picture by strengthening their mutual ties, and one way to do this was to emphasize their common wartime suffering. The Turkish representative at the ceremony read out a speech penned by Kemal:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives . . . are now lying in the soil of a friendly country; therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side here, in this country of ours . . . You, the mothers who sent their sons from far away countries; wipe away your tears.<sup>33</sup>

These powerful words won over many an allied ex-serviceman, and contributed in no small part to the happy Anglo-Saxon memory of the 'clean-fighting Turk'.<sup>34</sup> The Turkish speaker was the Minister of the Interior, Şükrü Kaya, former head of the CUP's directorate for the settlement of tribes and immigrants. In the same year as the ceremony, he signed the 'Resettlement Law' for the Kurdish provinces. Three years later, as the violence pursuant to that legislation was reaching its apogee in the assault on Kurdish Dersim, one of the Dersim leaders petitioned Britain, France, and the USA. The internal British response to the plea was 'that it would create a good impression if we could let the Turkish Government know, unofficially, that no notice has been taken of it'.<sup>35</sup>

In considerations of regional stability and Turkish modernization the *Turkish* Kurds were merely a problem after Lausanne, and it was simply in Britain's interests that the Turkish state win out. The ideal for Britain was Turkish-Iraqi accord, which, the Mosul issue aside, was also in Turkey's foreign policy interests. The most ambitious geopolitical vision at this time entailed a future bloc of pro-British states including Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan, banded together against Russian southward expansion,



protecting India, and securing a privileged position for British commerce, much as had been the Palmerstonian orthodoxy for most of the nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> In a very limited fashion until the Second World War this collaboration was achieved by the Saadabad Pact of 1937. (A scheme more fully resembling the British aspiration would be realized in later decades during the cold war proper, but with the USA the coordinating and benefiting great power, as Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan were grouped together as the 'northern tier' bulwark against the USSR.<sup>37</sup>) In the 1930s, however, in Turkish, Iraqi, and, therefore, British interests, the overriding need to 'solve' the *Iraqi* Kurdish problem to defuse Anglo-Turkish antagonism prompted a policy of effectively misrepresenting the true state of Iraqi ethnic affairs to the League of Nations.

With parallels to American intentions at the outset of the 2003 invasion, Britain sought as swift and cheap an exit as possible from Iraq after it had entrenched its economic interests. In 1932, having installed a dependent governing regime protected by a network of British air bases, and secured oil rights, Britain successfully presented the case for Iraqi 'independence' to the League. In order to maximize the chances of this success, Britain had continued to be seen to press for the proper implementation of concessions to the Iraqi Kurds right up to 1932. Naturally there was no longer any mention of conditional Kurdish autonomy, but there were a series of British assurances that safeguards for the Kurds were being considered—if not implemented—and the Iraqi government was happy to go along with the fiction in the short term in the knowledge that as soon as the watershed of independence had been achieved there was effectively nothing that could be done to enforce its promises of tolerance. British officials even appear to have withheld information from the League's mandates commission about the shooting of a number of Kurds in Suleymania.<sup>38</sup>

### Legacies

Having encouraged Kurdish nationalism as Armenian sentiment had been encouraged by Russia in the nineteenth century, Britain abandoned the Kurds to repression across the former Ottoman territories. An ethnic time bomb had been imported to Iraq in British interests, and passed down to progressively violent Iraqi governments. As, with the Saadabad Pact, the Turkish and Iraqi regimes drew towards the amity Britain sought, so too did they begin to collaborate against the Kurds, the most important of their mutual concerns. Over the succeeding decades, the two states developed their anti-Kurdish programmes to the point where each permitted the other the right of hot pursuit over the border.<sup>39</sup> The brutality of both states' policies, plus a history

of cross-border Kurdish terrorist activity, American manipulation of the Iraqi Kurds from the 1970s (see ch. 6), and recrudescing instability in Iraq as a result of the 2003 US–British invasion, have meant that this particular regional problem today remains a long way from any constructive solution.

Ethnic politics in Iraq were further poisoned by the imposition of a manipulable Sunni urban minority on a predominantly Shia state. This measure also helped entrench a tradition of clientelism that was utterly detrimental to the future formation of a stable democracy. Meanwhile the rejection of imperial or neo-imperial control in Iraq (as elsewhere) was a vital factor in the later nationalist revolution, as in the little-known ‘Assyrian affair’ of 1933.<sup>40</sup>

The history of the Assyrian affair bears some comparison with that of the French use of the *Légion arménienne*. In August 1933 some 550 former Ottoman and Persian Assyrians were massacred by the Iraqi army, and around fifty more by neighbouring Kurds, while sixty-four villages were pillaged by Kurds and Arabs with the tacit consent of the authorities. Why? Until *de jure* Iraqi independence was granted in 1932, the impoverished British authorities had employed Assyrians in a contingent of levies to execute policing and smaller-scale military tasks, including against the much larger Iraqi Muslim groups. As a small, isolated minority, whose leaders had thrown in their lot with the Entente during the First World War, the Assyrians were seen as a reliable auxiliary force, particularly since Britain had made vague noises to their community about future local autonomy in Iraqi territory. When Iraqi independence loomed and this autonomy was not forthcoming, the levies threatened revolt, but this had no result except to irritate the Iraqi leadership. Ultimately the Assyrians were left exposed to a government keen to make some gesture of its notional independence from British rule, and to a hitherto emasculated Iraqi army keen to prove its effectiveness and settle some old scores.<sup>41</sup>

A prime British military bequest to the region as a whole was the use of air power against Kurds, Turks, and Arabs in 1922–5. This not only helped to bring Turkey to the terms of the Turkey–Iraq border treaty of 1926 and recalcitrant Iraqis—both Kurds and Arabs—to heel, it also influenced Turkish and Iranian policy in the use of aerial bombardment and the terrorization of troublesome populations. By the end of 1926, Ankara had acquired from Europe 106 aeroplanes which were used regularly against the Kurds,<sup>42</sup> thus heralding the beginning of an ongoing practice of European arms exporters providing Turkey with the means for internal repression alongside national defence. A German businessman, incidentally, appears to have gained the dubious distinction of being the first arms dealer to suggest the use of poison gas in combating the Kurdish ‘problem’.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusions

From the perspective of the Ottoman Christians the wheel had turned again by 1923. Focusing on the plight of oppressed minorities was once again injurious to British interests, as it had been under Disraeli. For external observers what had changed more permanently, however, was Turkey's situation in the world. There was no longer any need to prop up a decrepit power against other imperial predators: none of the pre-1914 arbiters of the Ottoman future had any serious intention of dismembering Turkey, though an expansionist fascist Italy periodically rattled the sabre. While the Europeans would continue to barter for advantage with Ankara, they did so more as equals than masters, and the nationalists keenly policed their new international relationships.

Pro-Armenian interests notwithstanding, Republican Turkey was not short of at least grudging admirers on the international scene. In so far as it was due to the incredible hardships the Turkish people had undergone from 1912 to 1923 and the sheer drive and determination of Kemal and his followers in recovering an almost irrecoverable position from 1919 to 1923 and shedding the bonds of foreign control, this admiration was founded in something objectively meritorious. It was shared by observers from all countries, perhaps particularly the USSR, which saw Turkey, like Iran under Reza Shah, as an anti-imperialist power.<sup>44</sup> But there were more insidious aspects to appreciation of the nationalists. Right-wingers in inter-war Germany, opposed to the terms of the Versailles settlement, lauded Turkey as a fellow loser in the First World War that had overturned the peace settlement, and overthrown the Constantinople regime that had 'stabbed Turkey in the back' by signing the Sèvres treaty. Such views dovetailed with commendations of the removal by the CUP and Kemal of putative ethnic fifth columns, the Armenians and Greeks.<sup>45</sup>

On a more general level, Kemal and even his predecessors were viewed from many quarters through the lens of an ethnic nationalism that distrusted and stigmatized minorities. While extremist Germans, including Hitler, could admire Kemal, along with Reza Shah, as embodiments of the 'Führerprinzip', shaping the nation according to his will, there were ample non-Germans from the political mainstream who would do the same, including important American diplomats involved in inter-war Near Eastern affairs, who would extol the virtues of each of these leaders, and Mussolini and Metaxas besides.<sup>46</sup> In French literature of those inter-war years, alongside the continuation of a strand of anti-Turkish writing, two other trends emerged. One, in response to the Greek invasion, reversed the traditional stereotypes of Greece and Turkey as embodiments of civilization and barbarity respectively. The other dwelt on Kemal's reforms as the antidote to supposed Islamic indolence and backwardness.<sup>47</sup>

Lausanne entrenched Turkey within a burgeoning nation-state system. Turkey was to become a reliable part of the status quo calculus based on its strength and aspirations, for Kemal's reforms promised to complete the metamorphosis of Anatolia from the theocratic Ottoman order to a self-sustaining, secular, republican regime. Turkey's rejection of expansionism and of ethno-religious irredentism also meant that its neighbours, the British empire, and any future regional imperial hegemon need have no fear of it if it was not provoked. At the same time, Turkey's enduring strategic location and its resource and development potential ensured that it would continue to be fêted on the world scene. If these factors form the basis of Turkey's international importance to the present, they also provided the enduring guarantee that Ankara's minority problem would not be taken up by the 'international community', unlike that of its less reliable Iraqi neighbour. Indeed, as in the claims of the Turkish state itself, the assault on the Turkish Kurds would be dressed up in the rhetoric of modernization, the ongoing battle against the forces of 'feudalism' and 'reaction'. It was given a *de facto* legitimacy as part of Turkey's development struggle that western states had never quite felt able to give to the destruction of Ottoman Christians, even though both processes were related from the perspective of Turkish nationalism.<sup>48</sup>

Every power reached the same conclusions about Turkey's new status, and to all intents and purposes the attitudes of most of the Europeans towards Turkish minority questions were settled for at least half a century by the 1922-3 peace. If the harassment of remaining Christians was not worth the trouble of invoking, and no thought at all was given to protesting on behalf of the Kurds, then logically there was nothing to be gained by referring to the crimes of the First World War. Pro-Armenian and humanitarian groups and their parliamentary counterparts might periodically raise the question, but ultimately powers that had been happy to manipulate the Armenian question when there were lives at stake were entirely at ease with agreeing for posterity not to 'mention the war' when all that was now at issue was the integrity of the historical record. The record of one power in this connection is, however, of particular interest, given its traditional distance from the vicious game of intra-European diplomacy, its future dominance in the Near/Middle East, and its latterday prominence as arbiter of the 'recognition' of the Armenian genocide. It is, therefore, to the USA that we now turn, as we examine the development of US-Turkish relations in the inter-war years.

The inter-war era marked the beginning of a prolonged attempt to press US economic interests in the Near East, one that would bear some fruit in the exploitation of Saudi Arabian oil from the 1930s and Iraqi oil from the late 1920s, but would only be fully rewarded alongside the overt political interventions in the region accompanying the cold war proper. In terms of

American interests, it is wrong to establish too clear a dividing line between the inter-war and post-1945 periods. In the former, the assertion of American economic 'rights' inevitably entailed some political involvement in the region, whether or not US diplomats were prepared to admit it. In their manipulation of what remained of the 'Armenian question', American diplomats contrived to match their European rivals, entrenching for posterity a policy of distortion and denial of Turkish atrocities during the First World War that was as much self-imposed as dictated by Ankara.

## Part III

From Response to Recognition?

## The USA: From Non-intervention to Non-recognition

What we are doing today is counterproductive. . . . It is not in our best interests. It is not either strategically, militarily, or any other way. . . . To single out one segment of NATO, going back to an incident that occurred 70 years ago, what good does it do?<sup>1</sup>

The sentiments expressed by Texas Congressman James M. Leath, speaking against House Resolution 238, the Armenian Genocide Resolution, encapsulate some of the reasoning behind the enduring refusal of the US Congress to pass resolutions identifying as genocide the destruction of the Armenians. Leath's argument was in the context of the reinvigoration of the cold war in the 1980s, with Turkey a key NATO ally on the Soviet border. Clearly debates over formal 'recognition' have arisen only since the introduction of the legal term 'genocide' in 1948, and more particularly over recent decades of vocal Armenian activism. However, just as Turkish sensitivity about the events of 1915–16 developed almost simultaneously with the destruction of the Armenians, so too did external accommodation of that sensitivity. The US acquiescence in what is today called genocide denial stemmed from the priorities of establishing a redefined relationship with the Turkey in the aftermath of the First World War.

Most of the debate on inter-war American–Turkish relations and the Armenian question can be encapsulated in outdated assessments of one person: the High Commissioner to Turkey from 1919 to 1927, Admiral Mark L. Bristol. He is depicted by his detractors as an anti-Armenian opportunist, prepared to forward American economic ends at the expense of all else.<sup>2</sup> Bristol's admirers see him conversely as a realist who championed concrete American interests and was not prepared to offer Armenians false hope.<sup>3</sup> One indirect aim of this chapter is to critique and nuance both images, but its wider intention is to link Bristol's policies with the aspirations of an important echelon of diplomats and strategists on the role Turkey should play in the region and in America's future. This involved much more than the question of Near Eastern oil, the reductive interpretation that satisfied opponents of US policy at the time and has been restated in one recent bestseller.<sup>4</sup> It concerned anti-Bolshevism, the need to foster viable, defensible states, regional stability, and American economic penetration.

In pursuit of American geopolitical objectives, the question of Turkey's past and present treatment of its minorities, though forcibly maintained on the

American foreign policy agenda by US public opinion, was used as a bargaining counter. This chapter does not, however, focus on the Armenian mandate question, which has often, misleadingly, been used as an index of American 'betrayal' of Armenia.<sup>5</sup> Rather, it establishes the context in which American representatives reassessed the relationship between Turkey and minorities, and the way that this relationship was then re-presented in official American rhetoric. The result is to elucidate the creation of a tradition which politicians such as Leath could refuse to confront the past out of political expediency.

### The Diplomatic Background

Until the end of the First World War the US government was politically non-interventionist in the Ottoman empire, a tradition enduring through the Armenian massacres in 1894–6 and 1909. Diplomatic relations were primarily concerned with supporting the growing colony of American missionaries and educators in the region. The rise of US public opinion on Near Eastern questions was expressed by the collection of financial aid for 'suffering Christianity'.<sup>6</sup> The main bone of diplomatic contention concerned the stream of Armenians leaving the empire in the late nineteenth century, remaining just long enough in the USA to gain American citizenship, and then returning to live in their homelands with the capitulatory privileges accompanying that citizenship.

The 1890s saw an expansion of US external trading relations as the 'open door' doctrine was enunciated during the depression. Further opportunities were opened up for capital investment in the Ottoman empire by the Young Turk (CUP) coup. In the era now of Taft's dollar diplomacy, the USA sought to obtain some of the concessions made available for railroads and other projects.<sup>8</sup> In that quest some of the ground rules of political non-interventionism were broken.

The most important project supported by the State Department was the bid of the Ottoman-American Development Company for a railway concession in Asia Minor, and accompanying rights to exploit mineral resources in the vicinity of the track. This 'Chester concession', led by the eponymous Admiral Colby M. Chester, was doomed to fail when the board of directors withdrew their application because of internal financial difficulties. In reporting it, however, the State Department had effectively expressed favor for the project over and above others and had been prepared to cooperate with one or other European power in an attempt to overcome German opposition to the bid.<sup>9</sup>

Though the pursuit of 'concessions at any price' met with the opposition of Oscar S. Straus, ambassador to Istanbul in 1909–10, who attributed it to



influence of the newly established Near Eastern Affairs section (NEA) of the State Department,<sup>10</sup> the US government continued its search via his successors. One such was William Rockhill, author of the original open-door notes in China in 1899–1900.<sup>11</sup> This brief if unsuccessful period of overweening emphasis on business was a harbinger of things to come in the post-war years. With the accession of Woodrow Wilson in 1913, however, the USA reverted to non-interventionism, non-favoritism in the promotion of business concerns, and the protection of missionary interests, though Wilson maintained a close interest in trade expansion.<sup>12</sup> Rockhill was replaced by Henry Morgenthau.

The American response to the First World War deportation and murder of Armenians and Syrians built on the tradition of public charitable aid in the form of the relief organizations incorporated in 1919 as 'Near East Relief' (NER), which in different incarnations distributed 116 million dollars over the wartime and post-war years.<sup>13</sup> The State Department remained reluctant to be drawn into any form of official conflict with the Ottoman government. The sort of forceful protests to the Porte Morgenthau recommended in August 1915 were never administered.<sup>14</sup> Part of the American problem was that from the time the CUP abrogated the capitulations, American diplomats had to rely for the protection of American interests on maintaining good personal relations with Ottoman officials.<sup>15</sup> For its part, the Ottoman government tried to mollify the USA, as it did the central powers, with concessions that were as minor as the protests were low-key, as on the questions of Catholic and Protestant Armenians and Armenians associated directly with American institutions in Turkey.<sup>16</sup>

When the diplomatic break did occur in 1917, it did so at the behest of Germany, which pressured its Ottoman ally to terminate relations with the USA. American–Ottoman relations were severed on comparatively friendly terms.<sup>17</sup> The decision not to declare war on Turkey once the USA entered the world war in 1917 was based on a number of factors, not least the prospect of forfeiting decades worth of missionary and educational investment in the Ottoman empire.<sup>18</sup> The existing infrastructure was only estimated at perhaps 28 million dollars,<sup>19</sup> but it represented much more significant aspirations. According to the then Turkish secretary in the State Department, war would bring 'such a change in the attitude of the Ottoman Government that... our future position in any Ottoman state that may take the place of the present Ottoman Empire would be rendered much less favorable than it promises to be if there is no radical change in... existing relations'.<sup>20</sup> Whatever their views on the potential division of Turkey, American diplomats and missionaries were united in believing that 'American generosity and heroism' in standing by their 'investments regardless of the risk' deserved a post-war return.<sup>21</sup> As Thomas A. Bryson suggests, 'missionary interest coincided with strategic interest'.<sup>22</sup>

Overall, the pre-war American rejection of political involvement and protection of its missionary interests translated in wartime to a tacit dividing line between humanitarian assistance to the victims of the CUP and political action against the regime. After the partial resumption of diplomatic relations in 1919 the policy gradually metamorphosed such that solicitousness towards the erstwhile victims also came to be seen as injurious to American prospects in Turkey. Though this metamorphosis was highly significant it was a change of emphasis in US Near Eastern policy, not the radical change in direction that a number of studies have identified.<sup>23</sup>

### **The 1919 Policy Shift in Context**

The changing nature of US–Turkish relations derived in some measure from the subordination of the ‘missionary interest’, whose Ottoman Christian constituency was decimated. It was also due to the different outlook of the men who represented the USA in the Near East, and American adjustment to the changing reality and potential of the regional situation.

Into the maelstrom of fracturing alliances and soon to be redundant treaties, colossal destruction, and ongoing inter-ethnic violence, Admiral Bristol was appointed US high commissioner. He retained influence in Allied circles according to the logic used at Versailles that though the USA had not fought the Ottoman empire, it had been instrumental in bringing about its defeat by America’s military role in Europe.<sup>24</sup> According to Bristol, he was accorded the leeway simply to do what he might think best to protect American interests.<sup>25</sup> The existing scholarship indeed emphasizes the ‘personal factor’ of Bristol, then his successor, Ambassador Joseph Grew, and key members of their staff, in shaping US–Turkish relations in different directions, for instance, from those that would have been taken had men like Morgenthau and Straus returned to Istanbul.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, when Congress refused to ratify the Versailles treaty and the Covenant of the League of Nations in November 1919 the USA reverted to a more traditional ‘non-interventionist’ policy. American relations were put back onto a diplomatic footing, with the State Department divisions to the fore (in this case the NEA), rather than the broad strategic one centralized under Wilson’s direction. This shift was only reinforced with the accession of the Republicans under Harding in 1921.<sup>27</sup>

On his appointment, Bristol conferred in Paris with the American representatives assembled for the Versailles conference. Alongside Wilson, these included Herbert Hoover, then of the Food Administration.<sup>28</sup> As will become apparent, some of Bristol’s philosophies bear the hallmarks of the influential ideas espoused by Hoover then and during his time as Secretary of Commerce

under the Harding and Coolidge administrations.<sup>29</sup> Certainly, Bristol's policies engendered the support of the Republican Commerce and State Departments.<sup>30</sup> As regards the Armenian question, a study of one of his early dispatches to the State Department, in July 1919, in which he provided a general critique of the Turkish situation, encapsulates most of the thinking exhaustively related in his subsequent reporting.

Bristol's main contention was that Wilson was playing directly into the hands of the Allies in his contemplation of an Armenian mandate. A mandate would only legitimate British and French imperialism, he argued, and would further serve British ends by providing a buffer between Iraq and Bolshevik Russia.<sup>31</sup> Bristol was thus to be scathing about the territorial terms of the later Sèvres treaty and its restoration of European economic control of Turkey. He adjudged the settlement the embodiment of a European self-interest that might force the nationalists into the Bolshevik camp.<sup>32</sup>

What did Bristol himself want? More nuance than is provided in the existing studies of the man is required to ascertain exactly what he stood for. Given his own staunch nationalism,<sup>33</sup> the high incidence of economic considerations in his papers, his vigorous championing of the interests of American businessmen in Turkey,<sup>34</sup> and their reciprocal support for him, it seems that his direct emphasis was on commercial and investment possibilities for the USA. Moreover, as a naval man he was well aware of the navy's need for oil. Given, too, the earlier failure of dollar diplomacy, the 'open trade door' seemed a sensible alternative. Nevertheless, in theory, Bristol and others were not just railing against the Europeans because they were intent on perpetuating economic spheres of influence, but because this was seen as injurious to regional stability and thereby, in circular fashion, to the potential success of American economic relations with Turkey. Such was, indeed, the received wisdom of the open-door doctrine.

The Russian revolution affected negotiations on the post-war settlement from the Pacific to eastern Europe. Prominent American strategists, especially Hoover, opposed a harsh French-inspired peace for Germany, fearing that that country too might be driven into the communist camp. At the same time, the Wilson doctrine had set itself against the imperialist economic competition that had contributed to war in 1914. American proponents of free trade led by 'responsible' private interests rather than foreign offices (albeit perhaps with some cooperation between the two) argued that it would prevent economic competition translating into international competition and then war, the 'mother of revolution', and would simultaneously increase the universal prosperity needed to consolidate and expand the capitalist system.<sup>35</sup>

If this was the global theory, what was the reality on the ground in the Near East? Certain aspects of the theory, namely (American) economic goals and anti-Bolshevism, were emphasized more strongly than others, namely

genuinely equal commerce. By no means all of this was in Turkey's interests. The quest to foster the stability of Turkey as a potential part of the capitalist order under American influence was, however, actively pursued, and with full awareness of what this quest implied for 'suspect' Ottoman minorities putatively threatening the peace. Into the mix should also be added the obvious reluctance of Washington to commit substantial resources to the Near East, and the particular, personal preoccupations of American diplomats in Turkey, none of whom was more important than Bristol.

### **American and European Interests in the Near East**

Bristol's analysis of the malign role of external intervention in Ottoman affairs past and present had merit,<sup>36</sup> as did his assessment of British motives for propounding a US mandate for Armenia.<sup>37</sup> The historians Roger Trask, John DeNovo, Bryson, and Peter Buzanski have tended to replicate the views of Bristol and Grew themselves in emphasizing the divergence and conflict between British and American Near Eastern policies. Such conflicts there clearly were on the ground in Turkey over Allied intrigue, as a cursory glimpse at the Bristol and Grew diaries shows. These have been ignored by proponents of an 'informal entente' between British and American geopolitical interests in the inter-war period. Nevertheless, a convincing picture can be drawn of an overall confluence of US-British interests at the high policy level in the Near East in the 1920s, as most clearly manifested in the final disposition of oil rights in Iraq from 1922, and in the broader mandate question.<sup>38</sup>

The stability needed for full commercial relations with and penetration into new territories presupposed steady governmental control of the type which in 'immature' states only the tutelage of 'civilized' powers could assure.<sup>39</sup> The mandate system in the former Ottoman empire reconciled the ostensibly conflicting aims of Wilson's fourteen points by giving the Europeans colonial control of the territories in question while paying lip-service to their national development and placing a wedge firmly under the commercial door as stipulated in the Versailles treaty.<sup>40</sup> American economic goals were achieved through European imperialism, and in Iraq this meant that American oilmen moved in alongside their British counterparts to the virgin fields of Mosul after Britain had 'pacified' the province at no expense to the USA.<sup>41</sup>

The open door was certainly not sacrosanct if it seemed American interests would best be achieved by other means, as in American relations with the Caribbean, the Philippines, and Latin America.<sup>42</sup> The conditions of the concession within which the American oil companies worked in Iraq, under the umbrella of the British-dominated 'Turkish Petroleum Company', constituted a 'multinational monopoly', given an initial period of exclusive exploration

and drilling rights and the sheer scale of capital and technology required to exploit the oil resources.<sup>43</sup> Bristol also broke the rules of the open door by seeking to press the American Chamber of Commerce to prioritize the Chester Concession as a matter of 'American prestige'.<sup>44</sup> His preference was hard to square with the ideal of free and equal commercial competition devoid of antagonistic state influences. He expressed the desire for American companies in Turkey to 'combine for a common interest and not compete with each other'. He preferred fully American companies—that is firms not working with Europeans or Ottoman Christians—to act as a bloc against the firms of other states.<sup>45</sup> This ambition bore similarities to the nationalist approach taken by France in its Ottoman economic dealings in the later nineteenth century,<sup>46</sup> and undermines the vision of Bristol as a simple 'open door diplomat',<sup>47</sup> bringing him more into the realms of economic imperialism. However, there is little evidence that this specific policy was supported by the State Department.

More importantly, the USA was capable of showing as little respect for Turkish (or Iraqi) national sovereignty as the Europeans when those sovereign rights impinged on economic interests. US diplomats were not afraid to infringe the former to protect the latter, disproving the old 'isolationist' orthodoxy. The US delegation at Lausanne, composed of Bristol, Grew, and Richard W. Child, had express instructions to work as a first priority alongside the Allies for reinstatement of the capitulations.<sup>48</sup> As in the maintenance of extraterritorial privileges in China policy, American diplomats seemed to be making a convenient distinction between territorial integrity and administrative integrity.<sup>49</sup> They also aided the Allies in enforcing maintenance of low pre-war Turkish import tariffs until 1929, benefiting exporters to Turkey while threatening the development of the immature Turkish import-replacement industries that were supposed to provide the foundations of Turkey's post-war policy of economic self-reliance. This also restricted the government's revenue-raising ability.<sup>50</sup> If by Lausanne there was an indisputable coincidence of American goals with those of the Turkish nationalists, it was in rejecting political division of Anatolia.

### **Turkish National Viability and the Armenian Mandate Question**

Pursuant to Wilson's agreement at Versailles to consult on the mandate question, it will be recalled that the Allied Supreme Council requested in April 1920 that he adjudicate on the Turkish territory to be added to Caucasian Armenia in what was to become the Sèvres treaty. Among the many cautionary findings of the King-Crane and Harbord reports on the Near Eastern situation in 1919, the latter pointed to the difficulty of defending an

independent Armenia militarily.<sup>51</sup> The collapse of Caucasian Armenia in late 1920 only reinforced this conviction.<sup>52</sup> Wilson was unable to reverse the tide of political opinion towards non-interventionism, and, in mid-1921, the Democrats were swept from office. Besides, as the new president, Harding, later stated, there was nothing that could be done even with the best will in the world given that no one in the USA was prepared to go to war with Turkey.<sup>53</sup> Conversely, there were important reasons for the USA to oppose a mandate in any case.

The Wilsonian argument that the Armenians required a larger portion of eastern Anatolia than their numbers suggested because of the need for economic viability could work both ways.<sup>54</sup> In the earlier words of US Consul-General in Istanbul G. Bie Ravndal, the eastern Anatolian provinces should be incorporated in their entirety into the new Turkey for its 'moral and material' success.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, there was the question of Armenian defence highlighted by Harbord. Harbord had actually been dispatched by Hoover to assess such matters while the latter was leading the operations of the American Relief Administration in Istanbul and the Caucasus. Hoover's concern in 1919 was as much about defending a prospective state against Bolshevik penetration as Kemalist attack. If no Armenian state could function without external protection, the same was certainly not true of Turkey. This underlay Child's judgement that 'if every group in the world which desires independence were satisfied there would be thousands of peanut states and the map would look more like chickenpox than Wilson ever believed when he created the slogan of "self-determination"'.<sup>56</sup> And we know that at Lausanne the Allies also rejected establishing 'small, segregated areas, autonomous or otherwise'.<sup>57</sup> Whereas Lloyd George had earlier sought to entangle the USA in Armenia as a counterweight to the Bolsheviks and Turkish pan-Islamism, the USA, like Churchill and other 'pro-Turks' in London, saw that nationalist Turkey itself could be the regional stabilizer.

As with the rise of Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese nationalists in the 1920s, and like their own British Foreign Office counterparts studying the Near East, the State Department was concerned about Turkish nationalist links with communist forces, and took a little persuading that the marriages were only of convenience<sup>58</sup>—in Turkey's case, to maintain a supply of arms. Bristol was important in identifying earlier than most the independent agenda of the nationalists. The wish may have been father to the thought here, since it appealed to his aspirations for American-Turkish relations to have a viable Turkish power centre alternative to the Allied-influenced government in Istanbul.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, he was correct when he boasted in the preparations for the Lausanne conference that he had long maintained 'Turkey would never be bolshevik'.<sup>60</sup> All that was required, Bristol argued, was for the Allies to provide the aid necessary to 'get Turkey away from Russia and make her a

strong bulwark in the Near East against bolshevism';<sup>61</sup> the plea for a strategic use of aid was a distinctly Hooverian approach to the post-war settlement.<sup>62</sup> Importantly in this strategy, since in nationalist eyes the minorities were obstacles to the coherence and (therefore) stability of the new Turkish nation state, they would become obstacles in the eyes of key American observers too.

On 6 August 1923, after the main Lausanne negotiations in which the American diplomats were officially only observers, they concluded a separate treaty of amity and commerce with Ankara, the 'Turco-American treaty of Lausanne'. It gave the USA most of the terms already agreed between Turkey and the Europeans. American opponents of the treaty condemned it as a sell-out of Armenian hopes in furtherance of American economic advantage.<sup>63</sup> Yet apart from Wilson's pronouncements on Armenian independence, and the encouragement lent to the cause by American Christian interests,<sup>64</sup> America's historical responsibility for the Armenian plight was slight compared with that of Europe. The mandate issue, which took most of the energies of the anti-Lausanne lobbies in the USA and has occupied many Armenian scholars, is something of a red herring in any moral assessment of US policy. The real moral gravamen of America's role concerns the attitude of US representatives towards the treatment of minorities under Turkish rule at a time when they were otherwise prepared to exceed the boundaries of political non-intervention to forward material interests. That record is on a par with the behaviour of the European powers. Laurence Evans is utterly wrong in his assessment that the USA 'kept up a constant diplomatic pressure on Angora [Ankara] to follow a course of moderation in the treatment of minorities'.<sup>65</sup>

The lobbying of domestic opposition to ratification of the Turco-American treaty ultimately denied the Republicans the two-thirds Senate majority required to endorse the agreement. If part of this opposition, like that of the vocal American Committee for the Independence of Armenia, was based on the rationale of not wanting to supersede the Sèvres terms for an independent Armenia,<sup>66</sup> another part was based on a more nuanced and potentially realistic premiss. Opponents such as J. R. Veris of the Near East Relief wished to use the Senate's rejection to state that they were not prepared to deal with a regime that acted as the nationalists did. They sought to deny the American recognition that the nationalists desired if the latter did not treat the remaining Christians tolerantly.<sup>67</sup> As trading relations between the two countries stood at that point, and as, indeed, they had traditionally done, isolation from Turkey would not have been economically costly to the USA.<sup>68</sup>

Bristol's response to Veris was incoherent except in its self-interest. At the same time as arguing that 'if we did not ratify the Treaty it would make very little difference to the Turks, and... would only injure our own interests', he contended contradictorily that with the resumption of full diplomatic relations 'we would continue to occupy a very influential position towards the

Turks', influence which could be used 'for greater amelioration of the situation of the Christians'.<sup>69</sup> Bristol and Grew repeatedly trumpeted the moral capital the USA had accumulated in Turkey because of its self-confessed political disinterestedness.<sup>70</sup> The paradox was that this capital would only be invested in improving economic relations between the two countries, not 'wasted' on the very obvious ongoing ethical issues raised by Turkish ethnic policies.

### **Minority Protection and Turkification**

Any constructive solution to the minority question would be complicated, to say the least. Ismet told the Americans at Lausanne that 'we have fought with all our minds and bodies and property and souls for our independent sovereignty. We will not have Armenians and Greeks remain as the means of importing corruption and disloyalty into our country.'<sup>71</sup> The Ottoman Greeks, at least, could be 'exchanged' for Muslims in Greece. The remaining Armenians, like ethnic Macedonians in the Balkans, and like Jews throughout eastern Europe, had no independent state to go to.

An early indication of American priorities had come at the close of 1921. At that time the American consul in Aleppo, in Syria, Jesse B. Jackson, saw the clouds blackening for the Armenian population of Cilicia as the French occupying forces were in the final stage of withdrawal. Jackson could draw on the experiences of the previous year of massacres in the coastal areas of the region.<sup>72</sup> In invoking French responsibilities for protecting Christians in that area, the consul elicited the response from Bristol that 'our assertion of French responsibility... might be invoked as indirectly sanctioning political or commercial privileges already secured or to be secured by France in these same regions.'<sup>73</sup> Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes sided with Bristol, instructing Jackson to discontinue his correspondence with the French and assigning the High Commissioner greater responsibility for American interests in Cilicia. To Jackson, Hughes later observed that beyond the protection of American rights, he should 'exercise the greatest circumspection in discussing questions of more than local interest', and that 'American officials in the Ottoman Empire should usually find it possible to accommodate themselves to certain existing conditions without formally recognising them.'<sup>74</sup>

From his early days in Istanbul Bristol was also critical of the actions of American relief organizations, feeling, simplistically, that they were propagandists on behalf of 'suffering Christianity', inheritors of the mantle of American missionaries with their campaigning on behalf of 'suffering Christianity' in the east.<sup>75</sup> He disagreed, for instance, with every aspect of Near East Relief's policy towards Christian orphans. (NER was actually more of an



irritant to Bristol than it was to the Kemalist movement in its early phase: the latter gave the organization unique respect amongst non-Turks during the time of Greek war, and allowed privileged freedom of movement behind the Turkish lines.<sup>76</sup>) Even after the destruction of Smyrna in 1922, he was still advising NER not to bring orphans out of the interior since he 'knew well that they were perfectly safe in the interior',<sup>77</sup> and compounded this with the bizarre charge that the move 'could tend to put it into the heads of the Turks not only to get rid of the orphans but to get rid of all the Christians'.<sup>78</sup> While he claimed to be prepared to act should the orphans gathered in Istanbul be threatened by 'disturbances', he far preferred that the relief agencies did not put him in the position where he had to face 'this embarrassment':<sup>79</sup> the conclusion must be that he simply objected to whatever the NER did because its very presence invoked an awkward attitude towards an awkward past. NER representatives consequently began to see Bristol as an obstacle to the fulfillment of their function and at the end of 1921 petitioned the State Department for his ouster.<sup>80</sup> Washington again backed the High Commissioner's assessment of American interests and kept him on.<sup>81</sup> The logic of the American approach for the minorities, given the refusal to confront the dominant ethnic group, was full conformity with the nationalist agenda. In the new Turkey that meant ethnic assimilation, whether 'voluntary' or forced.

In opposition to the exodus of orphans from Cilicia in November 1921, Bristol had argued that rather than risk the panic among the rest of the population that the action might engender, it was 'better to sacrifice these orphans, if necessary, to establish confidence in the mass of the people.'<sup>82</sup> It is unlikely that he meant sacrifice unto death. Rather, it is probable that he meant sacrifice in ethnic terms, into the Muslim body, since such would certainly be the result if they were left behind. Thus he also tried to discourage the NER from liberating Armenian women forced into Muslim households during the genocide.<sup>83</sup> Two contexts need to be taken into consideration when assessing precisely how Bristol and other American diplomats understood the situation in which they were now endorsing assimilation of the Christians. The first was international in the sense that it was common to the status quo outlook of Britain on the desirability of assimilation for potentially troublesome minorities in the interests of stability.<sup>84</sup> The second context had more distinctly American colourings.

It has sometimes been suggested that American diplomats felt an affinity with another state trying to fashion a new start outside the constraints of the old world, and Bristol and Grew were certainly keen to propound such a vision of Turkey.<sup>85</sup> Yet a closer study of the record on the minority question suggests this rosy picture needs qualification by a value transposition, of a different sort. The USA itself had not been unaffected by the international rise

of chauvinist nationalism over the previous decades. American entry into the First World War intensified a growing domestic sense of xenophobia characterized by 'nativist' opposition to the mass immigration of the previous decades, suspicion of 'fifth column' minorities, with German Americans and then Jews as prime examples, and politically subversive elements. 'New' Americans and 'hyphenated Americans' were contrasted with 'one hundred percent Americans' who had thoroughly imbibed American values and patriotism. The great triumph of the nativists came in the year after the Lausanne conference, with the 'National Origins Act' of 1924.<sup>86</sup> This suspicion of fifth-column minorities in a country of varied origins was applied by Bristol and others to the Turkish situation.

The most powerfully resonant idea Bristol employed in Istanbul was the 'melting pot scheme', a metaphor borrowed directly from the prevailing American orthodoxy of boiling away immigrant culture, as one would remove impurities in the forging of steel.<sup>87</sup> As he put it, 'if the Armenians here were left alone they would work out their salvation and maybe in a generation or two... would become Turkish citizens like foreigners become citizens of the United States.'<sup>88</sup> According to this logic, Christians were no longer natives of the Near East but suspect aliens, and were to be treated as such. But a worldview shaped according to prevailing American paranoias could go yet further in the quest for organic wholeness.

In contrast to his opposition to NER's removal of Armenian children from the Turkish interior, Bristol was not always consistent on the question of Armenians remaining in Turkey. Briefly, in the aftermath of the Greek defeat and the massive violence that unleashed in 1922, and as population exchanges in the region became a *de facto* reality, he began to express openly the need for all Christians to leave Turkey and settle elsewhere.<sup>89</sup> Immediately before he departed for Lausanne, Bristol adjudged that he 'could see greater calamities to the world than for the Turks to come in here and clean out of Constantinople all of these Levantines of different nationalities, the Greeks and Armenians, and start to build up again without these people'. 'The Greeks and Armenian merchants', he wrote, 'have been the leeches in this part of the world sucking the life blood out of the country for centuries.' Unusually, each of these extracts was highlighted in the original documentation, and by the first the State Department reader noted 'this is one of the few passages where B. really says what he wants!'<sup>90</sup> Discounting for a moment the colour of the language, here was a prescription for Turkey's national development that explains Bristol's peculiar vitriol towards Istanbul.

What one British writer termed 'bastard levantine Constantinople' encapsulated something,<sup>91</sup> much as had 'gâvur Izmir' before its 'infidels' were burned out.<sup>92</sup> With its large European populations and great Christian quarters, the intimate connection seemingly laid bare between the Great Powers

and their capitulatory privileges on one hand and local Christians on the other, Istanbul represented all that was worst about the Ottoman past in Turkish nationalist eyes and those of Bristol too.<sup>93</sup> As Charles H. Sherrill, Grew's successor as ambassador, would write in a account of Kemal's revolution, 'no man, sick or well, could digest the hash of foreign elements that the earlier Ottoman empire had swallowed'. 'The Turks needed re-Turkification—a purification from all the base metals that made up the Ottoman amalgam.'<sup>94</sup>

All of this chimed perfectly with the Kemalists' and the CUP's own anti-Christian rhetoric, including their politico-economic assault on Christian merchants in the name of creating a Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie. Furthermore it bore clear similarities to the language employed by some of the theorists of German penetration in the Near East in the 1890s, and later used by proponents of the Christian comprador thesis in the ranks of world-systems analysts. Bristol's and Sherrill's sentiments belie the image of simple realists, resignedly acknowledging that temporary unpleasantness was a price worth paying for long-term stability. They reveal instead men actively endorsing a future in which the Ottoman Christians should be marginalized by any means necessary. The Christians of Istanbul were, in their eyes, not just a threat to Turkish stability by an accident of historical intermixing, they were a debilitating element, an alien parasite on a more intrinsically worthy host society. And though the NEA could not be seen to endorse further Christian expulsions, the acceptance of forced assimilation as a way to solve the Armenian question was effectively adopted in American policy, while such refugee exoduses as there were presented no grounds for action.

One problem still remained in the 'normalization' of US-Turkish relations. Irrespective of the dwindling numbers of Christians in Turkey as survivors fled the hostile interior, the Armenian question would remain an issue because of the ongoing activism of the anti-Lausanne campaigners and the deep impression atrocities had made on the American consciousness and view of 'the Turk'. The need to square American policy with American opinion resulted in what was effectively a public-relations campaign stemming from the US representation in Istanbul. This was based on the twin images of the minorities as a self-constituted problem and the righteous struggles of the new Turkey.

### Revising the 'Terrible Turk' Image

Most of the American educators and missionaries in Turkey came to accept the reality of the new Turkey. To make the best of their position they joined businessmen and diplomats in supporting ratification of the Turco-American treaty. Domestic opposition to ratification as a betrayal of the Armenian

national home was spearheaded by the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia. Opposition to the treaty was incorporated by the Democrats into their 1924 campaign platform. The treaty was blocked in 1927, even though its presentation to Congress had been delayed until the government thought it safe.<sup>95</sup> Bristol had defined his position against such opposition from the beginning of his Istanbul tenure; his avowed aim was to present 'both sides of the question' to rehabilitate Turkey's reputation, a portentous aspiration for anyone acquainted with latter-day techniques of genocide denial.<sup>96</sup>

While American missionary literature had employed positive stereotypes of Armenians and negative ones of Turks, and treaty opponents continued to use these, and while the Western publics remained uninformed about Muslim suffering, it was undeniable that Christians in the Ottoman empire had been subjected to atrocities that it was entirely legitimate to report and engender sympathy around. Furthermore, it would have been difficult to represent the events of 1915 in anything other than terms derogatory to Turkey. Bristol, however, used a number of tactics to 'balance' the picture. The most straightforward was outright denial or minimization of Christian suffering. Thus in February 1920 he deliberately misinformed the State Department about the massacre of Armenians in Cilicia, denying it contrary to the report of the Beirut consulate that 5,000 had been so killed. When Washington queried the inconsistency in the two reports, he simply asserted that Beirut had relied upon Armenian sources, which were, therefore, inherently untrustworthy.<sup>97</sup> Conversely, he was eager to give credence to Armenian sources that played down the news of atrocity, when Americans near the scene had already advised the State Department that such sources were writing under Turkish duress.<sup>98</sup>

Sophistry was a vital tool, and Bristol employed it liberally. On those occasions when he could bring himself to address mass murder, as to a correspondent of the *New York Times* in May 1922, he observed that 'all the races in this part of the world are given to committing atrocities and massacres'.<sup>99</sup> His most potent weapon in portraying a situation where everyone and therefore no one was responsible was the fact of the Greek invasion, where Christians had been clear aggressors. On this subject, he deployed some important truths about post-1918 Turkey in the pursuit of profound distortions about the pre-1918 Ottoman empire.

After the 1921–2 war Bristol told anyone who would listen that Christian refugees 'had themselves committed outrages upon the Turks', as in 1920 he had seized on the fighting on the Armenia–Azerbaijan border in which both sides had committed atrocities.<sup>100</sup> Other members of the High Commission staff could distinguish between the differing extents, organization, and chronology of atrocities since 1915.<sup>101</sup> In his focus upon Christian crimes, however, Bristol blurred past and present events—as well as conflating the actions of

the Greek invading army with those of the beleaguered Armenian state—for external consumption, as in September 1922 to allay the misgivings of the director of Standard Oil (an interesting twist on the caricature of the Harding administration being towed forward by oil interests).<sup>102</sup> Grew copied the technique. In 1928, he wrote of the book *The Turkish Ordeal* by the nationalist feminist Halidé Edib that 'It is a thoroughly *ex parte* statement of events from 1918 to 1923 and is excellent publicity for the Nationalist cause and their heroic deeds, painting the crimes of the British, Armenians and Greeks in most lurid colors.'<sup>103</sup> With the rhetoric of Turkey as the 'underdog',<sup>104</sup> Bristol and Grew were doing exactly what prominent Turkish nationalists, many of whom had been implicated in the massacres of 1915–16, were themselves beginning to do: using the history of the post-1918 war of independence to retrospectively present the prior world conflict as a defensive, anti-imperialist war, the killing of Armenians as an act of resistance against an internal aggressor.

Since 1919 Bristol had written to American senators, connecting 'Armenian propaganda' to European imperialism, as he had regularly repeated the Turkish line that Armenians were a fifth column of the former Allies.<sup>105</sup> He also lobbied pressmen with his views, as did the State Department,<sup>106</sup> the US consular representative at Ankara, and Bristol's naval subordinates, each always making sure to let Turkish representatives know how 'impartial' they were encouraging reporters to be. Thus after the *New York Herald* had commissioned a naval officer to report from the Turkish interior in summer 1922, the commander of the *USS Edsall* recounted to the district governor of Samsun how he had dispatched such an officer, purportedly to comment on conditions 'with complete justice and fairness to all sides'—but in fact to 'obtain first hand information of the conditions left after the retreat of the Greek army'. The commander concluded by noting with satisfaction the enormous circulation of the newspaper.<sup>107</sup> For their part, the newspapers were happy to begin revising the unequivocal opinions they had formed in 1915, first allowing the theory of 'two sides to everything, with the truth somewhere in between', then replacing this with the 'plague on both your houses' approach, as Marjorie Housepian Dobkin has illustrated.<sup>108</sup>

American businessmen anxious for the stability of full relations with Turkey were eager to endorse Bristol's depictions, with Colby M. Chester to the fore. Chester wrote one of the more remarkable apologies for the CUP, claiming in a 1922 article in *Current History* that the Armenians had been moved 'to the most delightful parts of Syria', where the climate resembled Florida, at great expense to the Ottoman government.<sup>109</sup> Overall, the complex of information and misinformation disseminated at this time contained most of the elements of later denial of the Armenian genocide: the minimizing of Armenian deaths, the denial of Ottoman intent to kill, the blaming of the victims and/or the Europeans, and the focus on Turkish casualties.<sup>110</sup>

Despite the State Department's awareness of Bristol's biases and its querying of some of his reports,<sup>111</sup> it would in the final analysis approve the sophistry of his analysis to legitimate the pursuit of American interests. In July 1925 the NEA was confronted with the collected grievances of the Greeks of Istanbul since Lausanne, particularly concerning property rights and religious freedom.<sup>112</sup> Its response was as follows:

These grievances would appear to be decidedly serious and if they are as well founded as they appear to be...one can hardly escape the conclusion that the Turks are evading some of their obligations under the minority clauses of the Treaty of Lausanne....I have no doubt we shall hear echoes of this memorandum in the Senate....Such an attack can probably best be met along the lines with which we are already familiar, including the emphasis of the confusion which still exists as a result of the efforts of the new regime to adjust itself to the new situation in Turkey.<sup>113</sup>

Beyond this deliberate misrepresentation there was a more positive side to the public-relations campaign. This emphasized the progressive nature of nationalist Turkey as the right kind of partner for the USA, especially from 1924 when the caliphate was abolished, and secularizing measures were adopted alongside moves towards women's emancipation. It was natural that a Western state should have some sympathy for a country seeking to emulate Western development, and against a backdrop of such massive destruction. Nevertheless, the same people who had been prominent playing down the destruction of the Armenians led the channeling of this acclaim. Grew and Sherrill were at the forefront in the late 1920s and early 1930s. (The latter even went so far as to write a laudatory biography of Kemal.<sup>114</sup>) They were aided in their work by the 'American Friends of Turkey', established in 1923, and involving a number of members of the NEA. Bristol was elected to its chair in 1932.<sup>115</sup> In the final analysis, the painful duality of Turkey's modernization was conveniently ignored by the American diplomats, just as by nationalist and pro-Turkish historians to this day.

We are by now well acquainted with the close relationship between the nationalist reformism of the CUP and the Kemalists and their assaults on non-Turkish populations. This duality could even be detected in a moderate character like Halidé Edib. Her feminism and nationalist intellectualism (and her American education) attracted her to the High Commission staff and later to American political experts when she visited the USA in 1928. Her nationalism also meant that during the First World War she had overseen the entrance into orphanages and accompanying Islamization of Armenian children.<sup>116</sup> Likewise the American-educated journalist Ahmed Emin Yalman, who also helped to promote Turkish-American business links, was at the same time a prominent critic of the pre-1908 Ottoman state for tolerating ethnic difference at all instead of forcing its peoples into the melting pot.<sup>117</sup>

The Christians were not the only groups to lose out in the selective American focus on Turkey. Inasmuch as the fate of Kurdish populations attracted any of their attention, Bristol and others were happy to accept Ankara's own definition of its brutality as an attack on 'feudal' or 'reactionary' religious forces.<sup>118</sup> Bristol played down the beginnings of the concerted Turkish drive against organized Kurdish existence in the country with sympathetic reference to the modernizing nationalism that drove it. In September 1925, in the aftermath of the first movements against the Kurdish rebellions in eastern Anatolia, he described to an American audience the summary executions and other 'stringent measures' for the 're-establishment of order', though he did not detail the mass deportations and destruction of settlements. In any case, to ensure that he was not seen to be 'advocating something contrary to our own form of government', Bristol simply cited a justification made by Ismet: this was just a stage of the ongoing nationalist revolution, and as such 'stringent measures [were] better than discussion'. In fact the efficient suppression of the 'rebellions' was proof for Bristol of the efficiency of the regime—they were 'put down in about six weeks in a country where there are practically no roads... a remarkable feat and typical of the Turkish army'. The result was 'not only the restoration of law and order and the execution of the leaders of the rebellion, but the abolition of the sheikhs, tribal leaders and the feudal system'.<sup>119</sup>

Two years later, in 1927, one of Bristol's officials forwarded to Washington without comment or explanation a report shedding light on one of the methods in use in this 'civilizing' and 'pacifying' process: 'some of the Kurdish elements are being distributed into other sections of the country for purposes of better assimilation'.<sup>120</sup> A few months later, Grew simply borrowed the Turkish label of the Kurds when he referred to 'certain reactionary elements which had been deported'.<sup>121</sup> Sherrill would go one step further, writing the Kurds out of existence as the nationalists would do with their euphemistic references to 'mountain Turks'. According to Sherrill, Turkey had become a 'homogeneous mass of 14,000,000 pure Turks'.<sup>122</sup>

Western onlookers from Bristol and his successors and their British counterparts onwards have often employed some of the chauvinist assumptions about Kurds used by the Turkish state to justify its policies. Like Bristol, Bernard Lewis, in his influential 1961 study *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, accepted the government's definition of the Shaikh Said revolt as a religious reaction, and repeated the summary assessment of the official Turkish history of the republic on the 'swift and efficient' repression of the phenomenon.<sup>123</sup> In 1951 the philo-Turkish scholar Lewis Thomas, professor of history at Princeton University, concluded that the 'impact of the Turkish Republic upon the Kurds must go down as preponderantly a labor of "civilization" in which Kurds were being 'peacefully absorbed'.<sup>124</sup>

In this sense, killing and forcibly assimilating Kurds in the 1920s was for the occidental observer almost the opposite of killing and forcibly converting Christians in the nineteenth century. Though both were attacks on human diversity, one was supposedly a retrogressive measure designed to hold back humanity in the region and to preserve a decaying hegemony over populations it had no moral right to dominate; the other a way of bolstering society in the name of 'progress' by the elimination of elements that had no place in the new order. The Armenian genocide stands somewhere in the middle of this continuum of perception both temporally and in terms of the nature of the perpetrator regime, and it has been responded to with corresponding ambivalence. (It may be speculated that the cultural assumptions explicit in Western responses to different episodes of Ottoman and Turkish atrocity explain why historians have had fewer qualms about addressing the massacres of 1894-6 under the autocratic Abdülhamid than the killings committed by the constitutionalist CUP.)

The combination of modernization rhetoric and obfuscation regarding the destruction of Armenians and Kurds left a significant legacy for posterity in the USA, though it was only gradually after 1927 that it would achieve concrete results in Congress. An equally enduring but more immediate effect of US policy was that the contortions the diplomats had adopted as a matter of choice would rapidly become a matter of Turkish expectation, nay insistence.

### **Legacies in Turkish-American Relations**

The American Lausanne policy of maintaining a façade of concern on minority questions for US public consumption while losing the minimum possible Turkish goodwill was continued into the Turkish-American treaty negotiations. When the content of the treaty was agreed, the State Department requested that Ismet make an accompanying public declaration along the lines of the minority clauses of the Lausanne treaty. Ismet refused since such a pronouncement would amount to a unilateral undertaking, whereas the Lausanne treaty bound Turkey and other states in the Balkans reciprocally, subject to the universal authority of the League of Nations. Grew resisted pushing the issue because of Ismet's clear warning that it would create a 'painful impression' in the nationalist camp.<sup>125</sup>

Five years later the need to placate anti-Turkish opinion in the USA in the interests of ratifying the Lausanne agreement meant that proposed treaties of arbitration and conciliation could not be concluded between the two countries, but this time the burden of expectation was on the other side. While the State Department was prepared to give the nationalists every



assurance asked for as to its disinterestedness in minority questions, for public-relations reasons it refused to insert an explicit formula disavowing interest in any question pertaining to the Armenians.<sup>126</sup> In the previous year, 1927, the Senate had refused to ratify the Turkish-American treaty as a whole because of the anti-Turkish opposition. Thus the US administration was in a peculiar predicament, being pulled in completely different directions by Ankara and Capitol Hill.

Bristol contrived to circumvent a potentially damaging rejection of Turkey in a way consistent with the history of unofficial American foreign relations since the rejection of the League of Nations Covenant. By drawing on the personal reservoir of goodwill he had established with the nationalists, he agreed diplomatic and commercial *modi vivendi* that adopted the treaty terms. At the behest of the State Department, he was acting as if the treaty had actually been passed.<sup>127</sup> Grew then went on to secure annual extensions of the *modi vivendi* in 1928 and 1929, until the groundwork was laid for another attempt at passing a formal treaty of commerce and navigation with Turkey, as was presented to Congress—with a minimum of forewarning and fanfare, as requested by the State Department—in 1929. In 1931, a treaty of establishment and residence governing personal and business rights was also passed, and these two treaties together incorporated most of the substance of the original failed Turkish-American treaty.<sup>128</sup>

The *modi vivendi* represent a triumph for Bristol and Grew in terms of immediate, material interest. They allowed businessmen to continue to operate in Turkey on some of the key terms secured by the European powers. However, there were costs to a provisional arrangement lacking the democratic domestic mandate that would have cast mutual obligations in mutually binding legal form over a defined longer term. The brand of semi-official diplomatic policy-making that had developed since 1919 could only operate successfully with continued Turkish approval of the course it was taking, and that approval needed regular explicit reaffirmation as the *modi vivendi* and other agreements were negotiated throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The element of control explains the avowal of the Turkish foreign minister in November 1927 that his government would be perfectly happy were the treaty never ratified.<sup>129</sup> It reproduced the situation of the American embassy in 1915–16, when protests against the deportations had to be muffled for fear of straining personal relations with the CUP leaders. Consequently, nationalist sensitivity about the issues of Turkey's present and recent past was transmitted with peculiar intensity back to Washington. Whether or not Bristol and Grew apprehended it as they repeatedly crowed about American moral credit in Turkey, every time Ankara praised the USA for its political neutrality it was also warning the State Department to keep things that way,

mindful of European interventions in the Ottoman empire and of popular American reactions to the wartime murder of the Armenians. Thus was entrenched a tradition of ultra-cautious American diplomacy towards Turkish regimes.

Accommodation of Turkish sensitivity even bled into American treatment of its own nationals. The matter of claims arising for wartime damage, theft, or requisition of American property was arbitrated in 1934. A stumbling block in the negotiations concerned the property of some 1900 of those naturalized Americans of Ottoman origin—Christians and particularly Armenians—who had gained American citizenship from the late nineteenth century onwards, returned to the Ottoman empire, and then lost property as a result either of the war or of specific CUP and Kemalist policies of expropriation. Though Washington recognized the citizenship status of these individuals, the nationalists, as their Ottoman predecessors had tried to do, refused to acknowledge the same on the basis that approval for the citizenship transfer had not been given by the Ottoman state. Thus, the nationalists contended, such claims as they sought to level as Americans were invalid. For the State Department, which was concerned about domestic American reactions should they not press the claims, the whole issue could be conveniently fudged during the negotiations. It opted for a lump sum Turkish payment representing a small percentage of the overall total of claims sought, rather than addressing individual claims on a case-by-case basis. It theoretically submitted all of its claims, including from nationals of Ottoman and non-Ottoman origin. In reality, however, the 1900 applications in question were held separate to the remainder by the US representatives and then explicitly ignored by both parties in the claim calculations: the legal issues involved would simply 'not be discussed'. The lump sum that was finally secured was quietly divided later on between only those applicants from acceptable categories.<sup>130</sup>

Another episode from around the same time illustrates above all others prior to the Congressional resolutions of the 1980s and 1990s the strength of the relationship pattern established between the USA and Turkey. This concerned Turkish reactions to the plans by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to film Franz Werfel's 1933 novel of resistance to the Armenian genocide, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*. Upon learning of the project in September 1935, the Turkish ambassador to Washington wrote to the State Department that the book 'is full of arbitrary calumnies and contempt against the Turkish people and... would certainly not be of a nature to promote the existing friendly relations between the two peoples'. After hearing from the NEA, the MGM president then conveyed to the Turkish embassy that the scheme would be dropped.<sup>131</sup> Similar pressures were revived when after Kemal's death at the end of 1938 rumours circulated that the project would be resurrected. The same course of action was pursued upon the publication of articles unfavourable to

Kemal's regime in the magazines *Ken* and *Life* and the *Washington Times* newspaper in 1938.<sup>132</sup> The established American policy of non-intervention over Turkey's treatment of its minorities was now extended to repression of internal American discussion of the matter.

The first important theme in the *Musa Dagh* saga was the Turkish threats about American interests in terms of relations between the two countries and specifically in terms of the distribution of US films in Turkey.<sup>133</sup> The second noteworthy aspect of the affair was its 'coincidence' with a Turkish drive to reconstitute the regime governing the straits in a way that would be beneficial to the USSR as well as itself,<sup>134</sup> an extension of the way that since 1919 the nationalists had strategically distributed their favours and debts amongst the key players on the international scene to keep free from over-reliance on or antagonism against any one power.<sup>135</sup>

The irony of the US position was that despite expectations there was little economic return. Turkish economic growth was slow. For their part, the nationalists, well aware of the political implications of foreign presence in their economy, used the ideology of economic nationalism in the 1930s to ensure that they would never again become overly dependent on other countries.<sup>136</sup> Trade with and investment from Europe remained much more important for Ankara. Indeed, if Turkey favoured any country as a trading partner, it was Weimar and then Hitlerian Germany—that other power that had undergone a wartime transformation to start 'anew', and that benefited from the cleaning of the economic slate in the Near East achieved at Lausanne.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, and again despite American geopolitical pretensions, Turkish politicians continued to keep the USSR on good terms as a counterweight to the other powers, thus keeping the USA and the Europeans guessing about its long-term allegiance. It was only with the influx of military and economic aid into Turkey at the end of the 1940s and the alignment of Turkey with the western bloc through NATO membership that American influence in Turkish politics and economics began to discernibly increase, not because—as Roger Trask has claimed—of the wisdom of American inter-war policies.<sup>138</sup>

Had the USA remained economically isolated and indifferent to Turkey during the inter-war years it is hard to think that this would have made any difference to the Turkish acceptance of aid and partnership from 1945. Besides, alongside the USA, Turkish membership of NATO brought the country into direct collaboration with the Europeans who had for so long interfered with its internal affairs. A more convincing explanation of the success of the US-Turkish alliance is the simple one of Turkey's vital strategic location, and preponderant American power vis-à-vis the Europeans. The one very clear continuity from the inter-war period through the cold war concerns the forthright and successful policing of Turkey's past against any revival of the Armenian question.

## Conclusions

The comparatively minor significance of Turkey in US economic policy, and the very limited inter-war success of American policy towards Ankara should not obscure the fact that Turkey formed an intrinsic part of grander American strategic designs in which anti-Bolshevism, concerns for regional stability, hopes for advantageous business relations, and prescriptions for a 'viable' and 'reliable' state all played related parts. An American desire to build up commercial relations with Turkey there certainly was from 1919. Equally strong was the wish to open up all the Near Eastern markets as an outlet for surplus American capital, and the 1922-3 settlement was a central bargaining arena for these rights. If a strong, independent, nationalist Turkey favourably disposed to the USA appealed at almost every level of strategic thinking, the Armenians were exposed by the same logic.

Despite the sense of Bristol, Child, and Grew that they were midwives to a new and more wholesome order in the Near East,<sup>139</sup> some of the problems they encountered, and the solutions they applied, were not new either historically or morally. The American diplomats embarked on the road that Imperial Germany had taken in the mid-1890s and that their own predecessors had considered in 1909. Both powers arrived in eras of Armenian massacre; both were seeking a foothold in an economy dominated by other powers, with Russia a looming political influence to the north-east; both used their indifference towards the fate of the Armenians as a bargaining tool to gain advantage with the Turkish government while other powers were proactively manipulating the Armenian question in their own interests; and neither shrank from misrepresenting the Armenian plight to their own ends.

The USA would have to wait until the 1970s to experience the full range of imperial interaction with subject peoples in the Near East, when it followed Russia and Britain down the road of deliberately manipulating Kurdish sentiment for its own ends.<sup>140</sup> As for the Armenians, up to the First World War they had looked fruitlessly to Russia or Britain to secure their *future* under or outside Ottoman rule. Thereafter, the Wilsonian peace and the possibility of a mandate meant that hopes for that future were invested for a time in the USA, only to be shattered once again. Latterly, as world hegemon and home to a large Armenian community, America has become an arbiter of the Armenian *past*. It remains to consider how the USA and other states have interacted with Turkey and the international Armenian community over the questions of genocide recognition and denial up to the present day.

## Epilogue: The Geopolitics of Memory

Thus far, the two occidental powers wielding successively the greatest influence in the Near East, Britain and the USA, and a number of others besides, have been prepared to collude in the Turkish denial process as far as it will go. They have worked on the principle that the fewer questions asked about how Turkey was pared down from a multi-ethnic empire to a self-confessed nation state the better. Nevertheless, owing to the temporal proximity of the violence of 1915–16, and the mark that it made at the time in the consciousness of the world, it has proved impossible fully to dissolve the memory of the Armenian genocide.

The taint of mass murder was an unpleasant one for the Ottoman successor state to have to bear, and the modernizing Kemalist regime was highly sensitive to slights invoking 'traditional' images of Turkish barbarity.' Denial has also grown to serve a vital function in the process of myth-making about the origins of modern Turkey, and therefore in the formation of Turkish national identity. Turkish elites inherited strong personal, material rationales for refusing to recognize the origin of stolen land and property, as by extension did the state. Likewise the strong cadre of former CUP perpetrators who retained influence in the republic had an obvious stake in distorting and playing down the past, as later would their Nazi equivalents in the Federal Republic of Germany. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the Second World War, with the development of consciousness of the Nazi murder of the Jews, particularly from the mid-1960s, when Armenian commemorative activism expanded, the public-image factor loomed larger for a state taking tentative steps towards democratization and having no desire for its history to be tainted by comparisons with Nazi Germany. Yet originally the desire to erase the moral stigma was not the primary motive for revision of the past. Genocide denial was entrenched before the word genocide was coined because initially denial of what had happened to the Armenians was directly related to the historical Armenian question at a political level. Denial was and is for Turkey the final phase of the Armenian question itself, and is intrinsically associated, as was the First World War murder process, with the simultaneous goals of securing Anatolian land and fighting off external intervention in Turkish affairs.

## The Origins and Aims of Denial

The invoking of Christian suffering by the powers was more often than not accompanied by calls for extended 'influence' in Ottoman affairs and on Ottoman soil, as with Armenia in 1878, 1894–6, and 1913–14. With Bulgaria in 1876 and Armenia again from 1917 the calls were for outright cession of territory. The Ottoman state was accustomed well before 1915 to meeting these intrusions with falsehood. We know that at the internationalization of the Armenian reform question in 1878 a statistical battle began between the Porte and the Armenian patriarchate over the very Armenian population of the eastern provinces. Likewise the official inquiry into the Sasun massacres of 1894 led to the publication of the *Yıldız* document series, which was really aimed at blaming Armenians for their own massacre.<sup>2</sup>

International accommodation of denial also dates back to the crime itself. Indeed the powers had long been prepared to distort the truth of Ottoman atrocities on their own initiative, so it is of little surprise that they were later prepared to concur with Ankara's denial agenda if their interests coincided with those of Turkey. In 1876 Disraeli sought to discredit the first news of the Bulgarian atrocities as 'coffee-house babble.'<sup>3</sup> The Salisbury government was reticent about revealing the extent of the 1894–6 massacres to an emotional public. Representatives of Imperial Germany actively blamed the victims of the same massacres while ingratiating themselves with the perpetrating regime; and in 1915 Germany engaged in great distortions to protect its own image and that of its ally.<sup>4</sup>

Denial of the Armenian genocide is often compared with denial of the Holocaust. Many of the techniques are the same: spurious equivalencies of the genocides with other episodes and types of human and wartime suffering in order to undermine evidence of state intent and phenomenological specificity; wilful misinterpretation of evidence; labelling the killings as wartime propaganda; minimization of the death tolls; and even blaming the victims for provocation and treachery.<sup>5</sup> Some of the ends are also identical, namely the validation or rehabilitation of the guiding genocidal ideology—whether Turkish nationalism or Nazi racism—by erasure of its most notorious crimes. Yet the phenomena differ in so far as Turkish nationalist denial has at its heart the agenda of Turkish territorial integrity and the spectre of some form of compensation to Armenians.

Turkish attempts to blame the victims for the deportations and to emphasize how well the deportees had been treated are a crude effort to make the CUP look like responsible rulers and the Armenians an undeserving and treacherous minority. Minimization of the Armenian death toll became part of the project of fraudulently minimizing the number of Armenians who had

ever lived in the Ottoman empire, thereby undermining Armenian claims for autonomy or independence; the Armenian population statistics on the eve of the genocide are still a focus of the most acute attention for defenders of the CUP.<sup>6</sup> Alongside misrepresentations of the proximate causes and effects of the deportation decisions of 1915, this agenda has led to a systematic, state-sponsored rewriting of Armenian and Turkish history. At the crudest points of this republican historiography, Kemalist myths about central Asian Turkic culture as the origin of all other Eurasian cultures, and the pre-dating by thousands of years of Turkish settlement in Anatolia, go hand in hand with other absurdities such as substantive denial of the existence of the medieval Armenian kingdom of Cilicia.<sup>7</sup>

The writings of Turkish nationalist and pro-Turkish Western historians on the genocide period itself have been analysed extensively elsewhere. It is unnecessary to rehash the comprehensive rebuttals of the array of spurious 'justifications' and obfuscations often still passing as orthodoxy in late Ottoman historiography.<sup>8</sup> Let us briefly consider two themes emerging from the pro-Turkish literature, however, first because of the prominence of their proponents and secondly because they concern some of the questions raised early in this book.

The first theme appears in the writing of, among others, Stanford Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, authors of the *History of the Ottoman Empire*, a standard work in the field. It is a version of the 'provocation thesis', focusing upon Armenian nationalist activism since the 1880s and specifically in the early months of the First World War to suggest the idea of a civil war fought between Armenians and the state, in which all deportations were a military necessity.<sup>9</sup> Discarding the demonstrably false claims that deportations were limited to the needs of military necessity, and that the CUP had no hand in the murdering of the deportees, the implication that the existence of an Armenian-Turkish political dynamic necessarily undermines the applicability of the epithet 'genocide' merits some attention.

The first response must be that a dynamic did exist, but it was vastly unequal, which is why, indeed, the genocide could be perpetrated. More importantly, many if not most recorded cases of inter-group slaughter emerge out of some sort of inter-group political dynamic, whether it be between Croats and Serbs in the Second World War, Poles and Ukrainians during and after the Second World War, Serbs and Bosnian Muslims during the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, or Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda. Even cases of imperial genocide and mass murder, such as the destruction of the Hereros and Nama by the Wilhelmine army in 1904, or the white settler slaughter of aboriginals in Queensland, though not a result of any political dispute as such, were not infrequently precipitated by violent victim resistance against their oppressors. Some of these instances comprise genocide, some do not, but the point is that

their qualification for the category rests upon the intent and extent of the killings, not upon the behaviour of some of the victim people, because genocide by its nature is indiscriminate within the victim group. The behaviour of some of the victims may help to explain genocidal explosions; it clearly does not justify them and certainly does not prohibit their legal and historical categorization as such.

Part of the problem seems to be that our understanding of the generic phenomenon of genocide is overly determined by the case with which most people are familiar, the Nazi murder of the Jews. In that case, unusually, there was no *interactive* dynamic between victim and perpetrator at the political level. Such a dynamic as existed did so only in Hitler's head. Since the term 'genocide' was invented during the Second World War and the genocide convention introduced in the light of Nazi atrocity, the preoccupation with the Holocaust as an 'ideal type' genocide against which others have to be measured is not surprising. Nevertheless the author of the term and inspiration behind the convention, the Polish-Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin, was clear that his thinking had a much wider relevance and had been particularly influenced by the Armenian case.<sup>10</sup>

The second theme worthy of address springs from the work of the Ottoman demographic historian Justin McCarthy, one of Shaw's students. Some of McCarthy's work considers the great population changes of the period, including extensive examination of the expulsion of Muslims from the new Balkan states and the overall demographic catastrophes of 1912–23. As a trope to characterize the evolving history of inter-migration and atrocity he employs the 'population exchange', as developed on either side of the First World War by international agreement. Thus the destruction of the Armenians is also described as 'a great population exchange of Muslims and Armenians', intimating that it too had the imprimatur of tacit international acceptance, and that Armenians in 1915 had a sovereign state to which to be 'exchanged'.<sup>11</sup>

McCarthy's work has something to offer in drawing attention to the oft-unheeded history of Muslim suffering and embattlement that shaped the mindset of the perpetrators of 1915. It also shows that vicious ethnic nationalism was by no means the sole preserve of the CUP and its successors.<sup>12</sup> But McCarthy goes much too far, eliding individual agency, specific ideology, historical contingency, the extremity of the Armenian fate compared with that of other groups, and the history of the massacre of Armenians in the Ottoman empire. He writes as if the CUP were just another government swept along powerlessly by an irresistible meta-historical force. At one point McCarthy suggests that 'imperialism and nationalism had created a state in which both Muslims and Armenians knew that they had the choice of killing or being killed. The only other option was flight.'<sup>13</sup>



McCarthy's argument is telling, incidentally, because its logic actually undermines the 'provocation thesis' by suggesting that whatever Armenians had or hadn't done they would have been disposed of anyway, for such was the spirit of the times. What Shaw's and McCarthy's positions do have in common is that both serve to muddy the waters for external observers, conflating war and one-sided murder with various discrete episodes of ethnic conflict. They provide a series of easy get-out clauses for Western politicians and non-specialist historians keen not to offend Turkish opinion. The death of a now-indeterminate number of Armenians in an era of mass death is seen as 'distressing', possibly, as 'unfortunate', certainly, but not as substantive grounds to criticize a state fighting for its survival in a dog-eat-dog world. Here we arrive at the mealy mouthed pronouncements by the German Foreign Office in 2000 on the 'tragic events of 1915',<sup>14</sup> or those of the British ambassador to Erivan in January 2004 that the events of 1915 constituted 'brutality... [that] shouldn't have taken place even in the course of war. But I do not think that recognizing the events as genocide would be of much use.'<sup>15</sup>

Denial is the one area in which the scholarship of the Armenian genocide is more developed than that of the Holocaust. It is more sophisticated and has much more academic respectability, aided by widespread ignorance of the events of 1915–16. Unlike the extreme right-wing fringe that almost alone propagates Holocaust denial with any seriousness, Armenian genocide denial is backed by the full force of a Turkish state machinery that has pumped substantial funding into public-relations firms and American university endowments to provide a slick and superficially plausible defence of its position. It has also had longer to develop, and was incubated in much more favourable circumstances than Holocaust denial.

The state's techniques of denial reached a peak of sophistication by the time of the US Congressional genocide resolutions of the 1980s. By that point there was no space at all, as there had been up to the 1960s, for Turkish historical accounts to include anything but the most biased accounts of the Armenian question.<sup>16</sup> The refinement of denial after the Second World War was related to the beginnings of Armenian assertiveness in the Soviet Armenian republic and the diaspora, and increasing attention in the outside world. Crucially, this assertiveness was associated in the first place with the reinvigorated threat of Soviet expansionism in the Turkish border areas immediately upon the conclusion of the war.

### **Early Echoes of the Past**

After the trauma of mass murder and displacement, starvation in the Erivan republic, and finally Sovietization, survival and consolidation replaced almost

everything else on the political agenda for the Armenians of the Caucasus. Those who had found refuge in Syria, Lebanon, France, and the USA were also primarily concerned with readjustment, judging by public and political discourses. In 1934 the editors of the moderate Ramgavar-oriented journal *Massis* even opposed the idea of translating *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* into Armenian lest it renew 'the bitter and terrible memories of the recent past among the masses of our people'.<sup>17</sup>

The majority of Ottoman-Armenian intellectuals had been killed, limiting the possibility for literary and historical working-through of the genocide. Vahé Oshagan has suggested that those writers and poets who survived were 'dazed by the catastrophe' until after the Second World War.<sup>18</sup> On the level of private, intra-communal discourse, however, and on the inevitable range of personal and cultural responses to the genocide refracted through different political and socio-economic situations across the diaspora, much more work remains to be conducted. Yet beyond the activities of the declining American political opposition to Lausanne, the Armenians and their causes were long off the international agenda by the 1930s. The *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* saga was a rare diplomatic furore on such an issue after the 1920s, and the last significant one of the inter-war era. The territorial issue achieved an urgent relevance from 1945, however, and for a brief moment it brought the Armenian question back to the forefront of international affairs.

Pursuant to his attempt to secure the Soviet zone of influence in eastern Europe and on the southern and south-western borders, Stalin reopened the straits question that had seemingly been settled by the Montreux Convention of 1936. Stalin also demanded the return of Kars and Ardahan, the majority of the territories gained from the Ottoman empire in 1878 and lost in 1920. Though the real Soviet interest was in improving the USSR's strategic position in the Near East, as part of the justification for retrocession, Georgian and Armenian territorial claims were deployed. At the same time, Armenia's borders were opened for a substantial immigration of Armenians from the Near East and France; in a reprehensible reenactment of events in 1917–18, tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis still living in Armenia were evicted. Soviet Armenian leaders and the major political parties in the diaspora backed Stalin's demands for their own nationalist reasons.<sup>19</sup>

Stalin failed in his demands because Turkey stood firm and swiftly acquired the backing of the USA, now under President Truman, who brought to the White House a much harder anti-communist line than his predecessor Roosevelt. Indeed, the fear of Soviet penetration of Turkey and Greece, as well as Iran and Afghanistan—the two states that, alongside Turkey, would form the 'northern tier' barrier against the USSR—was one of the most powerful immediate stimuli to the 'Truman doctrine' enunciated in 1947, as the USA formally stepped into Britain's imperial shoes in the eastern Medi-

terranean.<sup>20</sup> Thus, despite its ambivalent neutrality up to the final months of the Second World War, when it joined the Allied powers in order to gain a voice in the United Nations, Turkey was enmeshed as an integral part of the anti-communist alliance. It now formed the buffer between American and Soviet interests, just as it had served the same purpose between Britain and Tsarist Russia.

During these events, Esat Uras was in the process of writing what was to be published in 1950 as *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni meselesi* ('The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question').<sup>21</sup> This systematic extraction of Armenians from Ottoman history, accompanied by equally systematic misrepresentations and exaggerations of Armenian revolutionary activism, has become the canonical text of Turkish nationalist historiography on the Armenians.<sup>22</sup> If the content itself is insufficient to cast doubt on the author's objectivity, Turkish and later English-speaking audiences might benefit from the knowledge that Uras had himself been intimately involved with the machinery of destruction in 1915. He had been a senior official in the public security directorate of Talât's Interior Ministry.<sup>23</sup>

While Uras was inscribing his massive tome, as the lines of the cold war were being drawn, Professor Lewis Thomas was co-writing *The United States and Turkey and Iran* (1951) for the 'American Foreign Policy Library' series. The series was edited by Roosevelt's former Under-secretary of State, the post-war planning strategist and co-author of the Atlantic Charter, Sumner Welles. In the foreword Welles predicted that the reader would 'learn from these pages how fundamental is the opposition of the Turkish people to all that Soviet Communism implies. We can appreciate what real and rapid progress the Turkish people have been making along the road to an advanced democracy and representative government.' As for that other 'northern tier' buffer state Iran, Welles begged for American understanding of recent unrest in the country and of the economic remedies required to promote political stability in Tehran.<sup>24</sup>

Thomas fulfilled his political remit of placing Turkey in a positive light by arguing that the Ottomans had only 'moved to save themselves' by massacring and deporting the Armenians. 'What had happened to the Armenians', he went on, 'enables us better to understand what was now to happen to the Greeks, and why it was "bound to happen", for it reminds us that this struggle for Anatolia had become a fight which could have only one winner.' And 'had Turkification and Moslemization not been accelerated there by the use of force, there certainly would not today exist a Turkish Republic, a Republic owing its strength and stability in no small measure to the homogeneity of its population, a state which is now a valued associate of the United States'. Needless to say, Thomas was a firm admirer of Admiral Bristol's 'tact and vision' in fostering early Turkish goodwill towards the USA.<sup>25</sup>

Though *The United States and Turkey and Iran* is a particularly graphic example, most of the serious scholarly work on US–Turkish relations before and after the Second World War was inevitably written during the cold war era, and has in turn been coloured by that political context.<sup>26</sup> The personal connection is equally important. Lewis Thomas went on to teach Stanford Shaw at Princeton; Shaw supervised the doctorates of Justin McCarthy and Heath Lowry at UCLA. In 1994, Lowry completed the circle by taking up the Ankara-funded Atatürk Chair in Turkish Studies at Princeton University. Before that he had directed the Ankara-funded Institute for Turkish Studies in Washington, DC, an organization that had also received financial support from major US defence contractors. In 1983–4 the Institute declared as one of its avowed ends ‘furthering knowledge and understanding of a key NATO ally of the United States’.<sup>27</sup>

As well as stimulating politicized American scholarship, the development of the cold war in the late 1940s and 1950s polarized Armenian political opinion about relations with Hayastan, the homeland.<sup>28</sup> It contributed to violent partisan clashes in Lebanon, and to an effective schism in the Armenian Apostolic Church.<sup>29</sup> The brief prominence accorded to Armenian claims in the unfortunate context of Soviet expansionism 1945–7 led to a desire in the diaspora to acquaint the outside world more accurately with Armenian causes. For the ARF, this meant pre-empting any sense that it was sympathetic to Soviet aims per se, and emphasizing the Armenian desire for absolute independence.<sup>30</sup> For other factions, historical Armenian claims had been and remained equally important, if the attitude to Soviet dominance of Armenia was less antipathetic: the Ramgavars and some Hnchaks tended to concede that Sovietization may have saved Armenia in the short term, while outright leftists had an ideological sympathy for state socialism.<sup>31</sup> In March 1947 the Armenian National Council of America (ANCA) presented a memorandum to the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers—paradoxically at one of the very meetings that would entrench the early cold war divisions—calling for the restoration of the Sèvres terms.<sup>32</sup>

The year 1948 witnessed the introduction of the *Armenian Review*, a quarterly journal seeking to enlighten its primarily American audience, as well as increasingly Anglophone young Armenians, about Armenian history, culture, and politics. Its contents provide a valuable insight into the uses to which Armenian history was put for external consumption from the immediate post-war era by the most influential political body in the diaspora, the ARF. It was not for nearly two decades that the *Armenian Review* addressed the genocide with any consistency or frequency.<sup>33</sup> Predictably, given the history of the ARF and the political context in which the *Armenian Review* was launched, the emphasis was much more on the historical Armenian struggle for freedom against domination of all sorts,<sup>34</sup> from that of the sultans through the CUP to the USSR, and of course the ARF’s special role in this fight.<sup>35</sup> The events and episodes dominating the pages tended to be pre-1915

reform questions, the development of Armenian national consciousness and the 'Armenian question' in the nineteenth century, the post-First World War peace settlements and the broken promises of an independent Armenia, and the Soviet takeover.<sup>36</sup>

The question of territorial ownership constituted the prevailing discourse and the killing of 1915 was subsumed within it.<sup>37</sup> Even an extended consideration of the Van rising, appearing over eight issues in 1948–9, had a double message. The Van episode had obvious value as a story of heroism as well as persecution, but this could also be directed at the question of Soviet rule: the series concluded that the Van defence force 'succeeded in crushing our enemy, became master of its own land, wrested the right to govern itself from the mighty Russian army, and proved itself capable and worthy of free and independent life.'<sup>38</sup>

### **The Cause of Recognition in the Cold War World: Part I**

A key commemorative turning point across all factions came with the advent of 1965, the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide. A flurry of activity across the diaspora was complemented within Soviet Armenia itself by the greater scope for cultural self-expression that had developed up to 1963 under Nikita Khrushchev. Huge crowds gathered in Erivan on 24 April to mark the genocide and call for the return of western Armenian lands.<sup>39</sup> (In Soviet Armenia 24 April was formally adopted as a public day of commemoration in 1988.<sup>40</sup>) The first official governmental act of commemoration anywhere, though it did not include mention of the word genocide, came with a resolution in the same year in Uruguay, home to a sizeable Armenian community.<sup>41</sup>

The period saw a partial rapprochement between the major diaspora factions, with genocide recognition and the Armenian irredenta as important mobilizing, unifying factors. The ARF moderated its anti-Sovietism and turned increasingly to the theme of Turkey as the main enemy. But 'Armenian' territory in Turkey was not the only focus, for increasing national self-expression within Armenia and diaspora unity with the Republic also came to express itself in the first serious rumblings since the 1920s for 'return' of Karabakh.<sup>42</sup>

Vitaly, by the 1960s Armenians had a ready-made semantic framework in which to insert the experience of 1915–16. In 1948, the UN convention defining and officially outlawing genocide had been passed consequent to a 1946 resolution of the UN General Assembly. It defined genocide as

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

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.<sup>43</sup>

Defined in these terms, the epithet 'genocide' seemed clearly appropriate to describe the Armenian experience. It was seized on immediately, as for instance in ANCA's 1947 memorandum to the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers.<sup>44</sup> Thereafter, it was used frequently enough, if not dogmatically or systematically, before 1965.<sup>45</sup> Other epithets such as the 'great massacre' continued to be used even after 1965;<sup>46</sup> nevertheless the use of the term proliferated along with the fiftieth anniversary commemorations.<sup>47</sup> Since the Turkish apparatus of denial had not yet started loudly to contest the use of the nomenclature, it was at this stage applied simply, without convoluted justification.

Two aspects of the commemorative turn are particularly noteworthy. The first is that Armenian demands to the international community for 'justice' for the genocide spoke the language of resurrection of the Sèvres terms, reflecting, unmediated, the rhetoric of the resurgent Armenian nationalism of the time. In that sense, the recovery of the memory of 1915 simply added more force to pre-existing nationalist claims. Thus in March 1966 the ARF, under the guise of the 'Delegation of the Armenian Republic' established in 1918 to press the Armenian case at Versailles, presented the US State Department and the General Secretariat of the United Nations with a memorandum outlining the particulars of the genocide and requesting 'the possibility for Armenians to return to their homeland and to be allowed self-determination', as if the latter followed seamlessly from acknowledgement of the former, which it did not and does not.<sup>48</sup>

Implicit in the UN's framing genocide in international law was a particular determination to punish the crime. The form that punishment should take was clear to Armenians, and though there was no real possibility that Turkish territory would change hands in the prevailing international environment, this was obviously a matter that Ankara did not want aired at all. Equally, the new genocide accusations compounded the territorial question with an attempt to pigeon-hole the perpetrator regime in a select band of criminals. Previously, what was now known as genocide could only be prosecuted as one crime within the much broader and vaguer legal category of 'crimes against humanity', with which the records of most wars and most states, certainly the imperial ones, were stained. Outright genocide was a rarer crime, and the stigma attached to the genocide perpetrator concomitantly greater. This brings us to another noteworthy aspect of the revival of the past around 1965.

The proliferating Armenian discourses on 1915 were coloured by connections with the Jewish Holocaust. This was entirely natural, given the proximity of the 'final solution', the growing public awareness of it in the 1960s in the aftermath of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, and the fact that the Nazi campaigns of genocide had given decisive impetus to the establishment of the genocide convention. Yet the perceived connections between the episodes were not expressed through the sort of more or less convincing comparative historical scholarship that would emerge in later decades,<sup>49</sup> but instead through the notion that there was some form of organic, deterministic relationship bonding 1915–16 and 1941–5. The one piece of evidence adduced above all others to illustrate this connection was Hitler's August 1939 address to his military commanders at the Obersalzberg on the need for ruthlessness in the coming invasion of Poland, in which he assured the audience that they would not be held to account since no one now remembered what the Ottoman government had done to the Armenians. The tenuous moral widely inferred from this amongst Armenians, and repeated ad infinitum in lobbying campaigns and political declarations to this day, is that had the perpetrators of the Armenian genocide been punished, Hitler would have thought twice about embarking on mass murder in the Second World War.<sup>50</sup>

Two ostensibly contradictory yet linked rhetorical tendencies addressed the 'connections' embodied in Hitler's speech. The first, with its appeal up to the present and its pedigree from the propaganda battle of 1915 itself, invoked direct German responsibility in the crime.<sup>51</sup> The second suggested that the Armenian genocide was a sort of prototype or inspiration for the Holocaust, the CUP the original Nazis. Though the two strands differed on their allocation of blame for 1915, they concurred on the absolute relevance of the Armenian genocide to the crime that had led to the genocide convention. It was but a short step from here to contend, as the 'delegation of the Armenian Republic' did, that the Armenians were 'the first victims of genocide in this century', that 1915 was the first genocide of 'recent times',<sup>52</sup> both ignoring or unaware of, for instance, the fate of the Hereros and Nama in 1904. And from there it was an even shorter step to contend simply that Turkey was 'the first champion of the crime of genocide', the country that 'set the pace for Hitlerian Germany', and that 'the Armenian victims of genocide in 1915–1922 were inevitably followed by the Jewish and Slavic victims of genocide in 1939–1945'.<sup>53</sup> As early as 1947, in its March memorandum to the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers, ANCA had argued that the 'monstrous plan of genocide, that is, the plan to exterminate an entire nation, was... first conceived and executed by the Turks, with the connivance of Germans'.<sup>54</sup> Now, in 1967, another author observed of 1915 that 'in the struggle against fascism or for progress it emerges as the problem of problems, namely the problem of

genocide which has continued its spell from Ter-Zor to Buchenwald, from Taleat [*sic*] to Himler [*sic*].<sup>55</sup>

For Turkey, while the importance of the territorial question remained constant, the significance of the moral stigma of 1915 was on the increase, not least because of these comparisons of the Armenian genocide with the Holocaust.<sup>56</sup> The morality factor would increase yet further as the 1960s passed and, on the international scene, the social protest and civil rights movements of the second half of the decade promoted a new culture of awareness of state criminality and accountability.<sup>57</sup> All of this accounts for the single-minded determination of Turkey's politicians up to the present to combat the application of the label 'genocide' to the Armenian experience, and their preparedness to tolerate even American presidents talking of atrocities and massacres in 1915 as long as the magic word is avoided. 'Genocide', after all, implies a level of intent, extent, and direction that 'massacres' and 'atrocities' do not. A strand of the strategy of rejection has been to focus on differences real and imagined between the Armenian tragedy and the supposedly more 'authentic' Jewish genocide. Turkish diplomats have long been at pains to stress their condemnation of the Holocaust, and its 'unique' nature, while reiterating the 'controversial', 'civil war' circumstances of the Armenian deportations.<sup>58</sup>

For good measure, if utterly irrelevantly, except in so far as it is calculated to drive a wedge between pro-Israeli and pro-Armenian lobbies, Turkish diplomats and historians have also emphasized Turkey's relatively good historical relationship with its Jews.<sup>59</sup> One of the more bizarre manoeuvres in this direction was penned in 1993 by Stanford Shaw, who devoted a volume to 'proving' Turkey's role in rescuing Jews during the Holocaust. Not only did Shaw play down uncomfortable evidence undermining his supposed main thesis, but, in the most obvious subtext of the book, he sought to portray Armenians and Greeks as pro-Nazi, in stark contrast to the humanitarianism of the Turkish Republic.<sup>60</sup>

The most effective weapon at Turkey's disposal nevertheless remained its political leverage. This enabled it to quash the Armenian appeals of the late 1960s to the UN and the US government for the recognition of the genocide and the punishment of its perpetrators. In March 1974 the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities agreed, on the objection of the Turkish representative, effectively seconded by his US counterpart, to remove mention of the Armenian case from its report on genocide. The State Department itself helped to scupper a congressional proposal to make 24 April 1975 a 'National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man' with particular reference to the events of 1915-16.<sup>61</sup>



## The Cause of Recognition in the Cold War World: Part II

The next major phase of Armenian activism was the preserve of extremists left disaffected by traditional community politics.<sup>62</sup> In a campaign of terrorism lasting from 1973 sporadically up to 1985 some fifty Turkish diplomats were assassinated by ASALA—the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia—and other groups calling for genocide recognition and the revision of Turkey's borders. The media coverage was not everything that the terrorists would have wished for. Newspapers and press agencies having forgotten the certainties of their reporting in 1915, the discussion engendered in the USA and elsewhere tended to be phrased now in the language of disputed history, of 'Armenian claims' and 'Turkish claims' about an uncertain past. Nevertheless, the subject of the genocide was back on the agenda, with a marked increase in coverage of genocide-related issues over the terrorism period.<sup>63</sup>

Christopher Walker surmises that outraged violence was an easier outlet for Armenian frustrations at Turkish denial than was cool, systematic exposition of the genocide.<sup>64</sup> There is certainly a simultaneity in the winding down of the terrorist campaigning in the early 1980s and the beginning of more constructive memorial work, expressed through commemoration, scholarship, education, and political lobbying. To borrow from Marc Nichanian, Armenians realized ever more strongly that the foregoing international silence about the Armenian catastrophe was partly due to Armenians' own prior 'inability to speak' publicly about it.<sup>65</sup> With the development of scholarship and community activism, media discourse on the events of 1915–16 improved somewhat, as did public awareness.

At a general level, great strides were made to galvanize the Armenian community. Newspapers were established and university chairs endowed. In 1982 the Zoryan Institute was founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with a remit to document, study, and disseminate materials about the genocide, amongst many other things; in the following years various new journals on Armenian studies were established and some of the seminal analyses of issues surrounding the Armenian genocide published. Scholarly conferences in Europe and the USA proliferated.<sup>66</sup> Even one of the more notorious episodes of Turkish denial contributed effectively to public awareness.

In 1982 the Israeli Foreign Ministry succumbed to Turkish pressure and attempted to cancel a planned conference on the Holocaust and genocide. The Israeli Holocaust memorial and education centre Yad Vashem did indeed boycott the conference, which was moved to Tel Aviv, as did some of the scheduled Israeli and American speakers. The planned lectures on the Armenian genocide were nevertheless delivered and served only to draw attention to the recognition cause.<sup>67</sup>

But the Turkish machinery of denial grew in size and sophistication along with Armenian endeavour. The Turkish government hired a public-relations firm and a lobbying company to improve its image in the USA.<sup>68</sup> The Institute of Turkish Studies was founded in 1982, with three million dollars' worth of Turkish government funding. Heath Lowry, its then director, was discovered in 1990 to have been in a direct relationship with the Turkish embassy in Washington, which included drafting protest letters for the former to send to academics who referred to the Armenian genocide in their work.<sup>69</sup> In 1985, the year of the first failed Congressional genocide resolution of the decade, the Institute was pivotal in securing the signature of sixty-nine scholars involved in Ottoman and Turkish studies, many of whom had been allocated grants by the same body, on an open letter to Congress asserting that Armenians, like Muslims, had only been the victims of 'inter-communal warfare' in 1915, and that the label 'genocide' was therefore inappropriate.<sup>70</sup> As part of the intensified academic war, amongst other volumes,<sup>71</sup> a series of translated documents carefully selected from the Ottoman archives to 'justify' CUP policy with reference to Armenian insurgency were published in batches from 1982 to 1986;<sup>72</sup> Kamuran Gürün's *The Armenian File: The Myth of Innocence Exposed* also appeared in 1985, Salahi Sonyel's *The Ottoman Armenians: Victims of Great Power Diplomacy* in 1987, and the first English translation of Esat Uras's *The Armenians in History* in 1988. Finally, the international environment of the 1980s proved particularly conducive to the entrenchment of denial.

It seems paradoxical that 1980 marked the beginning of an improvement in US-Turkish relations after nearly two decades of strain, given that in that year Turkey experienced its third military takeover of the post-war era. The improvement was partly related to the temporary stability the military ensured after the political turmoil Ankara had experienced in previous years—and both the USA and the Turkish political elite were familiar with assigning stability a higher priority than democracy in Turkey.<sup>73</sup> The improvement was also related to a renewed polarization of superpower politics.

The years from 1962 had seen a thawing of the cold war, culminating in detente, and a reassessment of NATO strategy, meaning reduced US emphasis on Turkey and greater Turkish leeway in negotiating its foreign policy relations with the USSR. Closer economic and political relations with the Arab countries at this time also meant that from the 1960s through the first half of the 1980s Turkey pursued a policy of neutrality towards Israel, counter to American wishes.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, 1964 had brought the first rumblings of the enduring Cyprus issue. The famous Lyndon Johnson letter of that year, warning Turkey against military intervention, was interpreted in Ankara as an American rebuff in favour of Greece; Cyprus provided a convenient wedge for the Soviets to drive between Turkey and the Western international community.<sup>75</sup> The 1974 Turkish invasion of the island served to highlight the

relevance in the USA of ethnic politics, which for the first time in 1975 exerted a guiding influence on American foreign policy as a powerful pro-Greek lobby in Washington secured an arms and aid embargo on Turkey subject to improvements in the Cyprus situation.<sup>76</sup> American Armenians would follow the Greek lead, and with some Greek assistance, when in the 1980s they induced their political representatives to introduce successive Armenian genocide resolutions.

The 1980 Turkish coup met with a strong reaction from the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, and particularly a France which, under its then socialist government, was also starting to recall the 1915 genocide. Increasingly close, if erratic, attention would henceforth be drawn in Europe to Turkey's democratic deficit, its human rights record, its minority situation, and, of course, the Cyprus question. These were all cited as reasons for the rejection in 1989 of Turkey's first application to join the European Economic Community, now the European Union (EU).<sup>77</sup> (To the time of writing many of the same EU objections obtain, despite British and American support for Turkish membership.) Nevertheless, none of this should obscure the enduring draw of Turkey's strategic importance, nor the fact that Turkey was still committed to NATO during the 1960s and 1970s. And just when in the 1980s Western high-political discourse was starting to heed alternative voices, the interests of high strategy reasserted themselves in the most forthright fashion.

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Islamic revolution in Iran decisively removed the other two 'northern tier' states from the game and introduced another dangerous element in Islamic fundamentalism. The ascent to the US Presidency of Ronald Reagan in 1981 ensured that the increased tensions between NATO and the Warsaw Pact would escalate further. In 1982 the *Bulletin* of the State Department for the first time reproduced on paper the effective position of the US administration: 'because the historical record of the 1915 events in Asia Minor is ambiguous', it went, 'the Department of State does not endorse allegations that the Turkish Government committed genocide against the Armenian people'.<sup>78</sup> American military aid to Turkey was resumed, and ideological ties between Ankara, Washington, and London were strengthened by the election in 1983 of Turgut Özal's Motherland Party, which pursued Reaganite neo-liberal economic policies. Equally importantly for our purposes, in 1986 Turkey upgraded its diplomatic relations with Israel, as Ankara realized the importance of gaining the support of some pro-Israeli lobbies in Washington as a counterweight to the Greek and Armenian lobbies.<sup>79</sup> The ground was prepared for the self-serving American historical revisionism and naked self-interest in the face of Turkish threats that ensured the rejection of the 1985, 1987, and 1990 recognition bills.

## Recognition and the New World Order

For a brief moment at the end of the cold war, with the end of overarching superpower polarization, things looked more promising for Armenians and other peoples with past and present grievances. The idea of forceful 'humanitarian intervention' on behalf of benighted civilian populations was given some substance, as in the former Yugoslavia, while international gestures of remembrance such as a series of national Holocaust Memorial Days established the imperative of commemorating genocide. Yet the selective, politicized nature of both the intervention and the memorialization was such that the moral authority of each was radically reduced.<sup>80</sup>

Despite congressional rumblings about cutting military aid to Turkey as the USSR fell, Ankara has continued successfully to play on its character as a stable secular power in a region of Islamic powers.<sup>81</sup> Its cooperation in the first Gulf War emphasized its desire to maintain good relations with Washington by illustrating its ongoing regional significance.<sup>82</sup> In some European and particularly American strategic opinion, as also in the view of Turkish politicians with aspirations to greater regional influence, the collapse of the Soviet system opened up new opportunities for which Turkey's role would be vital. American penetration into the southern Caucasus and central Asia to prevent a Muscovite power again extending imperial control over these areas could dovetail with Turkish overtures to the Turkic peoples inhabiting them. (Owing to political differences between the states in question and within Turkey this policy has met with very limited success, as was the case in the First World War.<sup>83</sup>) It was certainly more desirable for Washington that Turkish influence be propagated ahead of Iranian,<sup>84</sup> and the fear of militant Islam has become magnified tenfold by the upsurge at the beginning of the twenty-first century of fundamentalist-informed terrorism.

The fall of the Soviet Union also brought the resurrection of full-scale ethnic conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis over the disposition of Karabakh, which inevitably affected Armenian-Turkish relations. At the time of writing the Karabakh struggle has simmered down to an insecure semi-peace, with Karabakh claiming *de jure* recognition of its *de facto* independent status. Having fermented since the 1960s, the conflict began in earnest after Gorbachev's announcement of Glasnost, Perestroika, and decentralization. In February 1988, the regional Soviet of Nagorno-Karabakh adopted a resolution to transfer its governance to the Soviet of Armenia from Azerbaijan, to which Moscow consigned it in 1921. In June 1988 the Armenian Soviet voted to accept Karabakh into Armenia. After recognizing all the Soviet successor states, in 1993 Turkey joined with Azerbaijan in an economic blockade of the Armenian republic, justifying its action on the basis of covert Armenian support for the Karabakh Armenians.

Bloody fighting was accompanied by extensive eviction of population groups on both sides, and each side has inappropriately accused the other of genocidal intent.<sup>85</sup> For the Turkish state, the demographic war in the Caucasus provided an opportunity to further its denial agenda when in 1995 the Prime Ministry's directorate of state archives published two volumes of carefully selected documents. One, *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Kafkaslar'da ve Anadolu'da Ermeni Mezâlimi*, 'Armenian atrocities in Anatolia and the Caucasus according to archival documents', simply sought to establish a link between past and present Armenian behaviour.<sup>86</sup> In furtherance of the memory battle, in 1998, the Azeri President Aliiev proclaimed 31 March as Azerbaijan's genocide day. He selected the anniversary of the 'March days' of 1918 to commemorate the slaughter of the Baku Azerbaijanis, and tied that in with the evictions of 1945–7 and 1988 onwards.<sup>87</sup>

Most of the international resolutions and declarations on the Armenian genocide came after 1991. Of the Latin American countries with relatively large Armenian populations, Argentina joined Uruguay in 1993, but it specifically used the word 'genocide'. In 1996 Greece joined Cyprus (1990), both happy to cause discomfort to Turkey, as was Bulgaria (1995). The Russian Duma passed a resolution in 1995 recognizing the genocide, undoubtedly to maintain its influence in independent Armenia, though it has failed to reconfirm this. Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, and Canada followed suit in 1998, 2000, 2003, and 2004 respectively, as did Italy (2000), a convinced opponent of Turkish entry into the EU, and Lebanon (2000), with its large Armenian colony. The European Parliament also passed a genocide declaration in 2000, and between 1998 and 2001 the murder of the Armenians was recognized as genocide by both branches of the French legislature.

The concentration of declarations around the year 2000 was the result of a change of stance by the government of the Armenian republic. Prior to the accession to the presidency of Robert Kocharian in 1998, the Levon Ter Petrossian government had de-emphasized the recognition issue in its 'step-by-step' policy of enhancing Armenian–Turkish relations. Most recognition pressure had hitherto come indirectly through the diaspora, which, particularly in the West, was overwhelmingly composed of direct descendants of victims and survivors of the genocide, had more resources to pursue its agenda, and could not be threatened directly by Ankara. As part of the project of working more closely with the diaspora, and a more generally assertive stance over Armenia's dealing with Turkey, Kocharian launched a reinvigorated international recognition offensive that the diaspora could support knowing that it was congruent with Erivan's wishes.<sup>88</sup> Joint Armenian and diaspora action very nearly succeeded in gaining the most highly prized recognition of Clinton's US government, as well, inevitably, as upsetting Ankara. One Turkish state response was the establishment of an Institute

for Armenian Research in the capital as a sort of scholarly 'headquarters' for marshalling the fight against Armenian 'propaganda'. Intellectuals, government officials, and foreign pro-Turkish scholars combined in the effort, and their arguments were channelled through a new journal of 'Armenian Studies', *Ermeni Araştırmaları*.<sup>89</sup>

On the high political level the usual array of Turkish threats against American trade interests should House Resolution 596 be passed were accompanied by intimations that US servicemen in Turkey would not be safe. There were also threats to break sanctions against Iraq, deny the USA the use of Incirlik, the airbase from which sorties enforcing the Iraqi no-fly zones were launched, increase punitive economic measures against the state of Armenia, and organize military manoeuvres near the Armenian border. This led to Clinton's successful last-minute pressure to withdraw the recognition bill on 19 October 2000.<sup>90</sup> In the light of the Turkish posture, what is perhaps more ostensibly surprising is the recognition by the French parliament, given the long history of Ottoman-French relations, the fact that France is still one of Turkey's largest commercial partners, and the fact that prior to the French resolutions Paris had been at the forefront of mediations between Ankara and the EU after Brussels's 1997 rejection of the latest Turkish application for membership.<sup>91</sup>

In January 2001 the French Parliament passed a law declaring simply that 'France recognizes the Armenian genocide of 1915', confirming the draft law passed by the French National Assembly in May 1998 and the Senate in November 2000.<sup>92</sup> On closer inspection, however, the move was not quite as bold a step as first appears. Unsurprisingly, the 1998 bill was most strongly supported by members of parliament with strong Armenian constituencies in a country with some 4-500,000 Armenians; the bill's passage was opposed on realpolitik grounds by the executive.<sup>93</sup> In 2000 the fear of a Turkish backlash may have been mitigated for some of the supporters of recognition by France's then presidency of the EU, as a Turkey still seeking membership would have to tread carefully. Further to this, the wording of the resolution was deliberately designed to remove any suggestion of the responsibility of the modern Turkish state for the genocide; indeed no perpetrator agency of any sort was recalled in the brief statement of recognition.<sup>94</sup>

Putting the French case to one side, with the possible exception of Belgium, Sweden, and the European Parliament, each of the countries that has recognized the genocide has had some material interest in so doing. We may expect a number of eastern European countries to follow the lead in recognition taken by Bulgaria and Poland, particularly those new entrants to the European Union who see a Turkey applying for admission to the EU as a potential competitor for development funds, and/or those whose histories have been most influenced by contact with the Ottoman empire.<sup>95</sup> Many of the US

Senators and Representatives involved in sponsoring or prominently supporting genocide resolutions have also hailed from constituencies with strong Armenian populations, suggesting that re-election rather than conscience or even partisan alignment is their key consideration.<sup>96</sup>

Germany's official stance, influenced by its three million-strong Turkish minority, and as distinct from a popular consensus favouring recognition, is that the genocide question is best sorted out between Turkey and Armenia.<sup>97</sup> Israel is the other state whose recognition is particularly sought by Armenian lobbies for obvious moral reasons. This has not been forthcoming owing to fears for the safety of the small Jewish community in Turkey, a cold war history of Turkey giving safe passage to Jewish migrants from the USSR, trade and intelligence links, the shared position of the two states as isolated secular democracies in the Near East, and, in some Israeli quarters, a misplaced desire to forestall devaluation of the international moral currency of the Holocaust by placing the Armenian case in the same category.<sup>98</sup>

It is impossible to predict the course of international affairs and I do not intend to try, though it is worth noting that as staunch a 'realist' as Henry Kissinger has suggested the USA will eventually accede to the calls for recognition.<sup>99</sup> This might in turn lead to some form of begrudging Turkish acceptance, particularly if the present more conciliatory and moderate (and Islamic-oriented) government remains in power in Ankara. Experience hitherto, however, suggests that one of the lessons for Turkey of its actions towards other states is that obdurate refusal accompanied by threats may continue to work if it touches strongly enough on material interests.

If there is a concrete policy implication from this book, it is not for Ankara but for the Armenian diaspora, whose lobbyists should stop putting hope in the agenda of the USA and the major European states. This is not an argument against continuing to raise public awareness through balanced educational programmes and the dissemination of scholarly research, nor against direct pressure on the Turkish government. Nor does it mean that lobbying of American and European political representatives should stop, but it does mean realism in the sense of not, in the words of the first Armenian premier, 'exaggerating our hopes and expectations' by implanting 'our desires into the minds of others'.<sup>100</sup> This is a historian's contention, drawn from the sorry history of the manipulated aspirations of supplicant peoples by the Great Powers.

It may be that the position of Turkey in America's firmament shifts in the longer-term aftermath of the invasion of Iraq and of possible reform in Iran, such that Congress will come to feel recognition is not as costly in terms of America's regional geopolitics as has traditionally been feared. But Armenian and non-Armenian supporters of recognition should always in that scenario bear in mind that recognition only came about as a result of a fortuitous

alignment of international forces, just as the accommodation of denial resulted from a different such alignment. No principled awakening would be involved in the change from one state of affairs to the other, no sense that the right path was being taken for its own sake. The American lawyer Alan Dershowitz once wrote, 'I don't want the government telling me that [the Holocaust] occurred because I don't want any government ever to tell me that it didn't occur.'<sup>101</sup> In terms of the moral argument with which the public case for recognition has frequently been made, such recognition as the USA and Britain are likely to accord would be in itself only an expression of capricious power politics, a mirror to Armenia's past.

The notion of states passing resolutions on the character of historical events is undoubtedly an odd one in any circumstances. Whether in something qualifies as an instance of genocide is a matter for scholars of history and the law, not politicians acting as politicians. The fact that genocide is the quintessential state crime only adds piquancy to the issue. There are considerable mitigating factors to official pronouncements adjudicating in the Armenian case, however. The Turkish state has sought to play the game of denial on the international political stage and has therefore invited a response in kind. Only an initiative from Ankara could alter Turkish state educational programmes and liberalize the sort of academic discussion of the past that is the real key to working through the historical record and raising awareness in a nuanced manner, yet it is improbable that Ankara will fully address the record of 1915-16 without external pressure. Political 'recognition' can therefore only be the first step, but it is no less important for that.

The political premium that the Turkish state has put on avoiding the 'genocide' word has also created a rod for its own back. If it were possible to generate Turkish awareness and acceptance that the Armenians were victims of a state-sponsored programme of mass murder, the use or otherwise of the 'g' word to describe that programme would, all things being equal, be a matter solely for good-faith academic and public debate. Yet so many misrepresentations and falsehoods are tied up with rejection of the applicability of the term that imposing it upon the debate is (unfortunately) probably the only way to create the environment for full Turkish confrontation with the past.

Official recognition from Turkey, but also from the USA and other states, would have a further significance. It would be important because the very act would contradict previous official utterances made in those states, and would stand as official testament to the fragility of the historical record when it is placed at the disposal of state interest. This is as great an issue for other would-be 'recognizers' as for Turkey, since Turkey is scarcely alone in failing to confront the unsavoury aspects of its past. The key European powers in the recognition game all have black records of imperialism that have yet to be



addressed, as many Turks observed during and after the First World War, and as was illustrated in a 'revenge' Turkish parliamentary resolution in 2001 to declare as genocide—inaccurately, as it happens—the actions of France in Algeria. The USA is some way from incorporating into its mainstream consciousness the horrors of slavery or of the displacement and decimation of the Native American population.<sup>102</sup>

For the USA, as for any other state caring to confront the events of 1915–16, one way to add genuine moral force to the act would be a global reassessment of the political priorities that induced it to refuse recognition previously. In terms of relations with Turkey this would mean pressure on behalf of Kurds and other minorities. This does not mean the sort of vested-interest pressure applied in the Armenian question by the Great Powers, but the application of the 'universal' norms that the USA purports to uphold, indeed, the sort of equitable standards by which nationalist Turkey felt itself entitled to be judged as it emancipated itself from the control of the European powers in 1922. In more concrete terms, it would entail lobbying in the vernacular of human rights rather than national rights, and lobbying every other abusive state with as much energy as Turkey would be pressurized, irrespective of the condition of those states' relations with the world hegemon.

The prospects of all this coming to pass are of course as dim as the prescribed ethical-political shift is massive. The cynicism was breathtaking when in 2002–3 American and British politicians invoked the Iraqi gawing of the Kurds at Halabja, years after the event, to justify an invasion that, had they had their way, would have been part-launched from the soil of a Turkish state with a comparable record on its Kurds to that of Iraq. Had they been alive to witness this hypocrisy, the Tsars might have had cause to ask just how far it differed from their instrumentalization of Ottoman Armenian suffering.

Moreover, for Armenian activists not enjoying Dershowitz's comfortable position where awareness of the Holocaust is nigh-universal, state recognition does matter, however it comes. For them, philosophizing about the propriety of political 'recognition' is an irrelevance. But other problems may yet be in store if the recognition drive is ultimately successful. The first such issue revolves around what precisely recognition by other states and then—possibly—Turkey would actually mean.

### **On the Other Side of Recognition?**

There is clear potential for an act of recognition that is in itself historically compromised by political desiderata. Part of the problem is that the word genocide has acquired such significance that its use in any given pronouncement may blind grateful lobbyists to other rhetorical pitfalls. The declarations

by the French parliament are perfectly illustrative, with perpetrators absent, and an accompanying flurry of assurances that the present Turkish state is in no way implicated. This sort of compromise recognition formula is the more significant given that it emerges from the European state that in recent years has acted as mediator between Turkey and the EU.

By the French logic a Turkish recognition putting the blame for genocide entirely and rather abstractly on the Ottoman predecessor regime would be sufficient. This is reminiscent of a State Department attempt in 1975 to remove the word 'Turkey' from (a failed) House Joint Resolution.<sup>103</sup> Yet it elides the fact that the founders of the modern Turkish state were implicated in extensive killing of Armenians just because of their group identity, and in conquering and ethnically cleansing territory in the Caucasus in which Christians had been in a majority. They also inherited the extreme nationalism of the CUP and incorporated not a few former CUP murderers in their ranks. After the formal establishment of the Turkish state the remaining Christians were deliberately marginalized and their emigration 'encouraged' in contravention of the minorities clauses of the Lausanne treaty. The expropriation process continued, and compensation for dispossessed Armenian survivors was refused. In terms of central control of the land and Turkey's ethnically defined 'national economy' the modern Turkish state benefited from genocide. Finally, Turkey has persistently lied about its past, bullied and threatened its own minorities and other states in furtherance of its falsehoods, written the Armenians out of its history books, and systematically destroyed Armenian architecture and monuments to erase any physical traces of an Armenian presence.<sup>104</sup> Against that backdrop a bland, politically 'acceptable', reversal of the Turkish state's established position on the proviso that the republic would be exonerated from any actual responsibility would be morally and historically untenable.

Recognizing that the genocide and the violent consolidation of post-genocidal Turkey do touch the legitimacy of the Turkish republic is a far cry from suggesting that the logic of recognition is the dismantling of the republic as a political unit. But it does imply the need for an extensive re-evaluation of the integral Turkish nationalism that has sought ethnic homogeneity in Anatolia, and has pursued the agenda by violence and persistent misrepresentation. Bona fide public education on the events of 1915 is required in place of the state programmes that have kept the Turkish population in ignorance.<sup>105</sup> Amongst other things, this could be encouraged by the opening of all Turkish archives to all scholars. Re-assessment is also required of the nationalist 'heroes' who led the republic to independence.

Turkey's treatment of its Kurds will serve as an index of the integrity with which these agendas are pursued. Up to the point of his writing in 1989, Robert Olson observed that 'of nineteen major military engagements in which

the Turkish armed forces participated from 1924–38, all but two were against or connected with efforts to suppress Kurdish rebellion and nationalism.' 'In the post-World War Two period, with the exception of Korea... and Cyprus... [and latterly Iraq] Turkish armed forces' actions have been solely against the Kurds.' He concluded that 'for historians of Turkey not to record or to recognize this fact is akin to studying the history of the United States without studying the history and impact of its black population'.<sup>106</sup> Kurds, like Armenians, have been written out of Ottoman and Turkish history. Only when the Kurdish question is resolved in a mutually satisfactory manner—and the signs are improving under the current regime and with the incentives provided by the possibility of EU membership—can we really put to the test the constant refrain of Turkey's leaders that their country is subject to inequitable treatment in its relations with Europe.<sup>107</sup> The fundamental import of the political issues at stake for Turkey can scarcely be exaggerated, but the burden of self-examination does not rest entirely with the Turkish state; serious questions would emerge on the other side of recognition for Armenians too.

What would recognition mean for Armenians? On one level the answer is straightforward: a certain closure on an agonizing past. But other answers remain to be provided. How would Armenian historians and politicians exploit the situation; to what uses would the history of the genocide be put? As the case of the Holocaust has shown, history can be appropriated for a host of political ends that have nothing but an emotive connection with the historical record.

Just as debates on Holocaust denial have focused on the authenticity of the historical record of the Nazi murder of some six million Jews, they have not properly addressed the question of what comparative contexts it is 'admissible' to apply. 'Relativization' has become a key pejorative, deployed sensibly to combat spurious equivalencies between, for example, Auschwitz and the Allied bombing of Dresden in 1945, but much more controversially in opposition to attempts to situate the Holocaust within, for instance, histories of twentieth-century genocide and ethnic cleansing, such that at its most extreme any comparison infringing the purported 'uniqueness' of the Holocaust is cast as anathema.<sup>108</sup> Assuming that we are interested not just in 'the truth' but 'the whole truth', it becomes a matter of nuanced historical judgement as to what comparative and circumstantial contexts are included in the examination and commemoration of the Armenian genocide, as in the Holocaust.

How, for instance, will a newly confident Armenian historiography approach some of the contexts examined in the first two chapters of this book? There will self-evidently be an enthusiasm for examining the Armenian genocide alongside the Holocaust, but how about the Tsarist assaults on Circassians and Kyrgyz, or in recent decades the Serbian attacks on Bosnian

and Kosovar Muslims? Even if the scope is limited to the crimes of ethnic nationalism in the Near East and the Balkans in the first half of the twentieth century, a full, contextualized examination of the genocide would have to take into account ethnic cleansing of Muslims from the new south-eastern European states since these not only suggest an international pattern but palpably influenced CUP thinking.

As to the popular comparison of the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide, this is perfectly acceptable on historical grounds. The episodes have important similarities and equally significant differences, and highlighting both is the aim of comparative study. Morally, too, comparisons are entirely appropriate. What is much more debatable is the notion that there was some sort of causal relationship between the two, with the (misunderstood) German role in the First World War and the Hitler quote of August 1939 the 'proof'. Full recognition of the Armenian genocide will hopefully mean it is possible to discard the historiographical and political tendency, at once understandable, imprecise, and unnecessary, towards complete co-identification of it with the Holocaust. With recognition and ever deeper scholarship the intrinsic importance of the events of 1915 could be brought out without the political need to hang onto the coat-tails of the Nazi genocide. But other less appealing possibilities remain.

It would be regrettable if the campaign for recognition, if ultimately satisfied, transformed itself into the sort of memorial exclusivism that we have sometimes seen in the Holocaust case. Might we find the Armenian genocide ring-fenced in a sort of select club of 'classic' genocides, along with the Holocaust and a few others that have passed the politically determined criteria for admission and thereby gained entry into an internationally approved memorial pantheon? Something similar is perhaps already coming to pass with the ignoring of the fate of the Herero and Nama in the rhetoric of the 'first genocide of the twentieth century'. Genocide resolutions passing through the Russian parliament in 1994 and the New South Wales parliament in 1997 both adopted this label, as did the preamble to a 2002 Canadian Senate resolution, and the abortive reference to the Armenian case in the 1973–5 draft UN report negotiations.<sup>109</sup> It is still widely used in campaigning by Armenian organizations and in some scholarly works, illustrating the tunnel vision often accompanying the pursuit of one cause in isolation from others.<sup>110</sup>

We should not lose sight of the fact that most cases of group slaughter in history have been marginalized outside of the collective memory of the victim community. The sort of semi-consciousness surrounding the Armenian genocide is a product of denial and of changing perceptions of the perpetrator state, but also of the special relations of Christian powers with Christian suffering in the Ottoman empire, as Turks are only too quick to point out. For advocates of genocide recognition there is a half-full cup as well as a half-

empty one here, as the dismissive Anglo-American response to the post-1925 plight of the Turkish Kurds shows.

In the wider Armenian community and beyond, simplistic understandings of the genocide still prevail. Denial has exaggerated this by focusing energies on the need to gain simple recognition of the basic facts of deportation and murder. Received wisdom rather than nuanced historical understanding will always dominate collective discourse, but historiography in the diaspora is often still a little too close to politics for comfort. 'Armenian' historiography as a whole can tend to perpetuate the contradictions of a nationalist mythology that on the one hand emphasizes the traditional Armenian struggle for freedom,<sup>111</sup> and on the other dismisses any notion that nationalist Armenians were anything but entirely reactive in their behaviour in 1914–15; that rightly focuses upon the murder of 1915 but expresses little concern for the Armenian crimes committed in Erivan or Zangezur from 1918; and that in its haste to 'prove' the Armenian genocide ignores uncomfortable facts and themes in the evolution of that genocide and accepts untrustworthy evidence to satisfy the need for an unequivocal statement of Ottoman genocidal intent before the Van rising of April 1915. The understandable tendency towards history-as-advocacy has done much to marshal Armenian public opinion and has therefore fulfilled its political function, its contribution to *hay tad*, and must now be set aside, following the example that has been established by the very best Armenian and Turkish scholarship.

*Hay tad*, according to Susan Paul Pattie, means approximately 'the Armenian cause'. It implies 'working towards the politicization of Armenians, the rebuttal of Turkey's denial of the Armenian massacres, and, for some, the return to an independent Armenia'.<sup>112</sup> Neither the first nor the second of these is in itself problematic, but the third may well be. The ARF, for instance, still cites as its prime goals recognition of the Armenian genocide and a return to the terms of the Sèvres treaty. The Ramgavars call for 'restoration of the integral territory of Armenia under its full control after the liberation of the usurped lands'. Recognition of the genocide is tied in with reparations from Turkey for stolen properties and lands.<sup>113</sup>

There is certainly no uniform position on these vexed issues in the diaspora, which has prioritized achieving recognition over questions of its concrete ramifications, probably in part to prevent the reopening of partisan divisions.<sup>114</sup> Hovannisian suggests that many Armenians regard the ARF's demands as maximalist, and occupy a variety of intermediate positions.<sup>115</sup> In 2000, Kocharian declared that the Armenian Republic did not seek reparations of any sort; it was impolitic, however, that on his visit to Paris shortly after the French recognition law was passed in 2001 a monument was erected to the genocide in the grounds of the building where the Sèvres treaty was signed. Just before the eightieth anniversary of the March 1921 Soviet–Turkish

agreement on Turkey's Caucasus border the chairman of Armenia's Human Rights Commission requested that Turkey retreat to its pre-1920 borders, though the Armenian government was quick to point out that this did not represent its position.<sup>116</sup> Armenians, Turks, and the outside world need to know for certain whether recognition is really going to open the door to healing wounds and reconciliation, as we are often told, or whether it is a means of redressing nationalist grievances. Is it an issue of historical truth, morality, and responsibility, or of unresolved political and material claims?

Some form of financial compensation may well be justified, though this can only work in a selective fashion, favouring the few who can adduce documentary evidence of their loss, or the relatives of the fewer, usually those with wealth in the first place, who thought to insure their own lives. As for the Sèvres claims, even putting aside questions of their justness in 1920, they would be patently inequitable today, with almost no Armenians living in the eastern provinces, and a present-day population—composed of Turks, Kurds, and others—there that cannot be considered fair game to suffer personal punishment for past acts of state. Demands such as these, however improbable their fulfilment, can only reinforce Turkey's resolve since the 'Sèvres syndrome' is still nourished in the republic.<sup>117</sup> Equally importantly, just as in the late nineteenth century Armenian grievances did not have to be expressed through demands for independence or autonomy, there is no logical connection between the cause of genocide recognition and that of retrieving land from Turkey.

In an ideal world the memory of the Armenian genocide would be divorced from the politics of the historical Armenian question. The genocide will inevitably always be an Armenian *national* concern, but this does not mean it has to be a *nationalist* concern. Armenian attachment to the lost homelands of eastern Anatolia is understandable in a historical, emotional sense, but if it forms the basis of a political platform then this starts to resemble the sort of integral nationalism—built on the link between blood and soil rather than shared values—that has brought nothing but misery to the region. Nowhere is the danger of this world-view more evident than in the ongoing conflict over the territory of mountainous Karabakh.

In 1997 the State Assembly of California, home to a quarter of a million Armenians, declared 24 April as a 'Day of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923, and for the victims of the Sumgait Pogroms of 1988 and Baku Riots of 1990'. It also pronounced that 'Armenians in the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh remain at risk of yet another genocide until the time a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is reached'.<sup>118</sup> Yet it is as inaccurate for Armenians to conflate the Karabakh situation or either of the Sumgait and Baku episodes with the events of 1915 as it is for Azerbaijan to

claim that the Armenian massacre of at least 200 Azeris at Khojaly in 1992 was an act of genocide.<sup>119</sup> Periodic pogroms on either side, and more systematic evictions, do not constitute genocide, yet both sides have succumbed to the temptation of the misleading deployment of the term in pursuit of nationalist goals.

As in 1918–20, much blood has been shed on both Armenian and Azeri sides over Karabakh. Indeed the most reliable statistics suggest that almost twice as many Azeris have died in the fighting as Armenians, and hundreds of thousands more have been expelled and 'ethnically cleansed' from Armenia proper and Karabakh than Armenians from Azeri territory. Both Armenians and Azeris, predictably, 'carefully document the destruction and damage they suffered, but ignore the damage they inflicted'.<sup>120</sup> Both see the other side as the aggressor and their own claims as self-evident—Armenians in terms of the large Armenian demographic majority in Karabakh, Azeris on grounds of territorial integrity and the Azeri majority in the surrounding regions. While the demographic argument in support of an independent Karabakh is a very powerful one, it should not be overlooked that the Armenian forces currently controlling the vast majority of Karabakh control even more territory around it, particularly those Azeri areas linking Karabakh to Armenia proper.<sup>121</sup>

As also in 1918–20, despite cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey, the interests of the two states are not identical, and charges to the contrary tend to emerge from the simple stereotype that both are states with Muslim, Turkic populations. Not only does Azerbaijan have a much greater Shia constituency than Turkey, the majority of its territory was never under Ottoman control, and it has very definite separate nationalist aspirations that continue to make it wary of the Ankara regime. Armenians point to the collaboration of the other two states in the economic blockade of Armenia since 1993. Azerbaijanis look at Moscow's revived ambitions in the Caucasus and (cynical and erratic) Russian support for Armenia as evidence that Armenia and the former imperial power are in cahoots.<sup>122</sup>

Poverty is rife in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and there is no guarantee that the oil revenues from Baku that give the region such disproportionate international significance will trickle down to the majority of the Azeri people. The closed borders between the combatants and between Armenia and Turkey have hit Armenia hardest, but Azerbaijan has suffered too, particularly the isolated province of Nakhichevan, part of that land bridge between Turkey and Azerbaijan which the CUP tried to open up in 1918. Russia, Turkey, and the USA—the latter torn between the demands of its Armenian constituency on one hand and foreign policy 'realists' and pro-Azeri oil interests on the other<sup>123</sup>—continue to find it difficult to suggest mutually acceptable terms for enduring peace, if indeed any exist.

### Concluding Thoughts

In an interesting counterpoint to the boundary-making in the Near East after the First World War, the international community is reluctant to recognize the *de facto* separate status of much of Karabakh from Azerbaijan for reasons that are in principle praiseworthy, if in practice inequitable (and if oil interests will always be suspected of colouring any settlement in the region). The international community fears setting a new precedent endorsing a territorial *fait accompli* achieved by war and forced population movement.<sup>124</sup> Armenians will feel justifiably aggrieved that no one was concerned to apply the same principle when the Republic's boundaries were set by Britain, Turkey, and the USSR respectively after 1918.

One thing is certain. For the sake of the region's future prosperity, particularly that of Armenia, but also of Azerbaijan and north-eastern Anatolia, it is essential that borders are reopened.<sup>125</sup> Before the advent of the nation state the economies of these imperial peripheries were linked by commerce and seasonal labour migrations. The trade stimulated by resurrection of such ties would also be vital in the 'normalization' of political relations and, therefore, stability and security. In this matter, genocide denial remains a key factor, as is evidenced by the downturn in Turkish-Armenian relations in 2000 amid the European debates on recognition.

Turkish elites can play cynically on domestic fears of Armenian territorial ambitions in Anatolia. They can also associate these fears with the Azeri experience in Karabakh.<sup>126</sup> That way, every Armenian call for recognition is translated into an act of Armenian aggression.<sup>127</sup> Conversely, Armenians need recognition for very tangible security reasons as well as in the interests of historical justice. Any reconciliation is impossible without acknowledgement of the wrong done and the establishment, thereby, of common ground for dialogue.

The massive trauma inflicted on the collective consciousness of the Armenian people is an open wound, continually aggravated by the refusal to acknowledge its infliction. Since denial has always been accompanied by rhetoric of Armenian treachery, aggression, criminality, and territorial ambition, it actually enunciates an ongoing if latent threat of Turkish 'revenge'. It would be difficult to imagine the Armenian state feeling safe in its relations with a Turkish state that continued to subscribe to some of the canards used to rationalize the destruction of 1915-16. The future of the past remains uncertain.



## NOTES

### Introduction

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### Chapter 1

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167. On the wartime and post-1918 measures against the Greeks, see the first interlude.
168. Johannes Lepsius, *Der Todesgang des armenischen Völkes: Bericht über das Schicksal des armenischen Völkes in der Türkei während des Weltkrieges* (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919), pp. xiv–xv, 225.
169. Roderic Davison, 'The Armenian Crisis, 1912–1914', *American Historical Review*, 53 (1948), 481–505. On the London conference, Michel Pavlovitch, 'La Russie et les Arméniens', *La Revue politique internationale*, 1 (May 1914), 463–79 at 470–1.
170. On Armenian nationalist support for Russian policies, Victor Bérard, 'Le Choix arménien', *Pro Armenia/Pour les Peuples d'Orient*, no. 3 (Dec. 1912).
171. Davison, 'The Armenian Crisis', 481–2; Heller, 'Britain and the Armenian Question'. On Russian activities, Pavlovitch, 'La Russie', 470–1, 478–9.
172. Tessa Hofmann (ed.), 'Verfolgung und Völkermord: Armenien zwischen 1877 und 1922', in ead. (ed.), *Armenien und Armenien—Heimat und Exil* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1994), 15–32 at 22–3.
173. Heinrich Vierbücher, *Armenien 1915* (Hamburg-Bergedorf: Fackelreiter-Verlag, 1930), 50–1.
174. Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide*, 97–8.
175. Davison, 'The Armenian Crisis', 499.
176. US National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md. (hereafter 'NARA'), Record Group ('RG') 59, 867.00/606, Horton to Bryan, 21 Feb. 1914.
177. Cited in Christopher J. Walker, 'The End of Armenian Taron and Baghesh, 1914–1916', in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *Armenian Baghesh/Bitlis and Taron/Mush* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: MAZDA, 2001), 191–206 at 192.
178. Ulrich Trampener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire 1914–1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 17–61.
179. NARA, RG 59, 867.00/791, Elkus to Lansing, 14 Oct. 1916.
180. Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman 1913–1919* (London, [1922]), 276.

## Chapter 2

1. On the involvement of the Ottoman Third Army, see *Revidierte Ausgabe der von Johannes Lepsius unter dem Titel 'Deutschland und Armenien 1914–1918' herausgegebenen Sammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke*, Version 2.10, ed. Wolfgang Gust (1999, Internet address: <http://home.t-online.de/home/wolfgang.gust>), hereafter 'DA', no. 149.
2. Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 396.
3. Akçam, *Armenien*, 43, and see below. Generally on the Special Organization, though with little on eastern Anatolia, Philip H. Stoddard, 'The Ottoman Government and the Arabs 1911 to 1918: A Preliminary Study of the Teshkilat Mahsusa' (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1963).

4. Cf. Vahakn Dadrian, 'The Role of the Special Organisation in the Armenian Genocide during the First World War', in Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Minorities in Wartime* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 50–82.
5. Akçam, *Armenien*, 54–8. For the Ottoman tradition of irregular warfare, see Reid, 'Militarism', 6–11.
6. Dadrian, 'Special Organisation', 64; H. Pasdermajian, *Histoire de l'Arménie* (Paris: Librairie orientale H. Samuelian, 1971), 408–9.
7. For variations on the pretext theme, Yves Ternon, *Les Arméniens: Histoire d'un génocide* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), 211–12; id., 'Le Génocide de Turquie et la guerre (1914–1923)', in Gérard Dédéyan (ed.), *Histoire des arméniens* (Toulouse: Éditions Privat, 1982), 483–524 at 489; Arthur Beylerian, 'L'Échec d'une percée internationale: Le mouvement national arménien (1914–1923)', *Relations internationales*, no. 31 (1982), 351–71 at 356; G. S. Graber, *Caravans to Oblivion* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1996), 117; Richard Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 42.
8. Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna (hereafter 'HHSa'), Politisches Archiv (hereafter 'PA') I, Karton 943, Madrid, 22 Apr. 1915: 'Landing of the French-English expeditionary corps in Asia Minor anticipated'; Taner Timur, *Türkler ve Ermeniler* (Ankara: Imge, 2000), 35.
9. *Affaires arméniennes: Les 'Telegrammes' de Talât Pacha. Fait historique ou fiction?*, ed. Şinasi Orel and Süreyya Yuca (France: Triangle, 1983), 111–12, no. 22.
10. Erik Jan Zürcher, 'Ottoman Labour Battalions in World War I', in Kieser and Schaller (eds.), *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern*, 187–98.
11. Reid, 'Militarism', 5.
12. Ernst Jäckh papers, Yale University Library, file 13, 'Mitteilungen von Enver Pascha', 13 Oct. 1914.
13. On the consequences, Jäckh papers, file 23, 'Sehr vertraulich! Besprechung mit Enver Pasha am 11. April', fos. 4–5.
14. HHSa, PL 245, Constantinople, 29 Apr. 1915.
15. Arshavir Shiragian, *The Legacy: Memoirs of an Armenian Patriot* (Boston, Mass.: Hairenik Press, 1974), 8.
16. Maurice Larcher, *La Guerre turque dans la guerre mondiale* (Paris: Chiron, 1925), 393.
17. For a more detailed account, see Donald Bloxham, 'The Armenian Genocide of 1915–16: Cumulative Radicalisation and the Development of a Destruction Policy', *Past and Present*, no. 181 (2003), 141–91.
18. Artem Ohandjanian, *Der verschwiegene Völkermord* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1989), 81–2.
19. Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute 2000), 96, 125; HHSa, PA I, 942, Damascus, 10 Nov. 1914 and 12 Nov. 1914.
20. HHSa, PA I, 944, Pallavicini to Burian, 6 May 1915; PA I, 942, Damascus, 10 Nov. 1914.
21. HHSa, PA I, 944, Constantinople, 3 Apr. 1915.
22. NARA, RG 59, 867.4016/123, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, 10 Aug. 1915.
23. HHSa, PA I, 944, Chief of Austrian General Staff, 14 May 1915, with report of 6 May; Morgenthau papers, container 7, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, 18 May, 13 July 1915.

24. K. S. Papazian, *Patriotism Perverted: A Discussion of the Deeds and the Misdeeds of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation* (Boston, Mass.: Baikar Press, 1934), 31, 37–8.
25. Dadrian, 'Special Organisation', 66.
26. *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus: Dokumente aus den Archiven der zarischen und der provisorischen Regierung*, ed. M. Pokrovski (Berlin: Deutsche Gesellschaft zum Studium Osteuropas, 1931–6) (hereafter 'Zdl'), series II, vol. 6, part 1, no. 191.
27. W. E. D. Allen and Paul Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 231–2, 287.
28. Youri Danilov, *La Russie dans la Guerre Mondiale* (Paris: Payot, 1927), 141, 339–40.
29. *Zdl*, series II, vol. 7, part 2, no. 765.
30. *Ibid.*; *Les Grandes Puissances, l'empire ottoman et les arméniens dans les archives françaises*, ed. Arthur Beylerian (Paris: Panthéon Sorbonne, 1983) (hereafter 'Grandes Puissances'), no. 2.
31. *Boghos Nubar's Papers and the Armenian Question 1915–1918*, ed. Vatche Ghazarian (Waltham, Mass.: Mayreni, 1996) (hereafter 'BNP'), no. 2.
32. Alan Bodger, 'Russia and the End of the Ottoman Empire', in Marian Kent (ed.), *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), 76–110 at 99.
33. *Zdl*, series I, vol. 6, part 1, no. 298, esp. note 1 on p. 228. On Persia as an ARF base, Manuel Sarkisyanz, *A Modern History of Transcaucasian Armenia* (Nagpur: Udyama Commercial Press, 1975), 134.
34. *Zdl*, series I, vol. 6, part 1, nos. 298, esp. note 3 on p. 228, and 400.
35. G. Korganoff, *La Participation des arméniens à la guerre mondiale sur le front du Caucase* (Paris: Massis, 1927), 20–1; Hratch Daşnabedian, *History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Dashnaksutiun* (Milan: OEMME, 1989), 117.
36. Antranig Chalabian, *General Andranik and the Armenian Revolutionary Movement* (Southfield, Mich.: A. Chalabian, 1988), 220; H. Pasdermajian, *Histoire*, 413.
37. Auswärtiges Amt-Politisches Archiv, Bonn (Political Archives of the German Foreign Office; hereafter 'AAPA'), Abteilung 1A—Weltkrieg, WK 11d geheim, vol. 4, Pera, 26 Mar. 1915.
38. Korganoff, *La Participation*, 9–10.
39. Bibliothèque Nubar, Paris, Archives de la délégation nationale arménienne (hereafter 'ADNA'), Correspondence Arménie 1915, I, Nubar to Kouchakian, 26 Oct.
40. G. Pasdermajian, *Why Armenia Should be Free: Armenia's Role in the Present War* (Boston, Mass.: Hairenik, 1918), 9.
41. On the Muslim 'self-defence' units, AAPA, Abt 1A, Aktenzeichen, 135/1, geheim, vol. 10, Pera, 8 Feb. 1915.
42. *Grandes Puissances*, no. 21; *BNP*, nos. 1, 3.
43. AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Pera, 9 Mar. 1915. On Van, see below.
44. McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 99–102. For recent Russian–Kurdish relations, see Pavlovitch, 'La Russie', 478, and Rasoul, *Großmachtpolitik*, 73–6. On the Kurds with whom the Russian authorities were in contact, particularly Sheikhs

- Barzan and Abdürrezak, the latter a descendant of Bedr Khan, see *Zdl*, series I, vol. 6, part 1, nos. 40, 298, esp. note 1 on p. 228. On Abdürrezak's subsequent wartime activity against the Ottoman empire, *DA*, nos. 124, 126.
45. Leo Kuper and Gary Remer, 'The Religious Element in Genocide', *Journal of Armenian Studies*, 4 (1992), 307–30.
  46. *Zdl*, series I, vol. 6, part 1, no. 409.
  47. *Ibid.*, nos. 400, 298, esp. note 3 on p. 228; *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1916: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce*, ed. James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee; *Uncensored Edition*, ed. Ara Sarafian (Princeton: Gomidas Institute, 2000), no. 27.
  48. Gabriele Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust: Die Vernichtung der christlicher Assyrer in der Türkei* (Göttingen: Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, 1989), 111–12; Sarkisyanz, *Transcaucasian Armenia*, 192. Gotthard Jäschke, *Der Turanismus der Jungtürken* (Leipzig: Otto Harrasowitz, 1941), 14, suggests 60,000 Muslims. Wangenheim estimated 50,000: HHS PA I, 942, Berlin, 7 Dec. 1915.
  49. John Buchan, *A History of the Great War*, i (London, 1921), 173–4, euphemistically on Russian ferocity and chasing insurgents into 'the snowy hills'. Larcher, *La Guerre turque*, 393, on expulsions. *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1915–1920)*, ed. Prime Ministry, General Directorate of the State Archives of the Turkish Republic (Ankara: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1995) (hereafter '*Osmanlı Belgeler*'), 21–2, Foreign Ministry to Interior Ministry, 6 Mar. 1915; Supreme military command memo, 21 Mar. 1915, claiming that up to that point 300,000 Muslims in Kars and Ardahan, primarily men, had been killed.
  50. *Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, 3 vols., ed. Prime Ministry Directorate General of Press and Information (Ankara: Prime Ministry, Directorate General of Press and Information, 1982–6; first volume simply entitled *Documents*; hereafter all three volumes will be denoted '*Documents*'), i, nos. 11, 17, 21; ii, no. 1903 (undated); iii, no. 2001.
  51. *Documents*, iii, no. 2001; i, no. 18.
  52. *Affaires arméniens: Les 'Telegrammes'*, ed. Orel and Yuca, 105, no. 11.
  53. *Ibid.*
  54. *Van Tosp* (Tiflis), 9 Jan. 1915, cited in *The Economist*, 29 Apr. 1916; *Matin*, 23 Feb. 1915; Hovhannes Katchaznouni, *The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnagtzoutium) Has Nothing to Do Any More* (New York: Armenian Information Service, 1955), 5.
  55. AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Berlin, 24 Feb. 1915.
  56. AAPA, Abt. 1A—Weltkrieg, WK 11d geheim, vol. 4, Pera, 26 Mar. 1915.
  57. *Documents*, ii, nos. 1894, 1899, 1903; also i, nos. 4, 6, 8.
  58. For example, AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Pera, 15 Apr. 1915; AAPA, Abt. 1A—Weltkrieg, WK 11d geheim, vol. 4, Pera, 26 Mar. 1915; *DA*, no. 51. Also Raphael de Nogales, *Four Years beneath the Crescent* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 27–8; HHS PA XL 272, Constantinople, 23 Feb. 1915; Henry Morgenthau papers, Library of Congress, container 15, Morgenthau to Wise, 19 Oct. 1915; *BNP*.

- no. 1; Larcher, *La Guerre turque*, 395, also mentions Erzurum 'Christians' crossing over in Dec. 1914.
59. *Documents*, ii, no. 1893; also nos. 1894, 1903 and the interview of Talât, *Berliner Tageblatt*, 4 May 1916. For concurrence in German sources, AAPA, Abt 1A—Weltkrieg, WK 11d geheim, vol. 4, Pera, 26 Mar. 1915.
  60. Pasdermajian, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, 21; Herbert Adams Gibbons, 'Armenia in the World War', in *The Lausanne Treaty: Turkey and Armenia* (New York [American Committee opposed to the Lausanne Treaty], 1926), 125–43 at 131–2.
  61. Somakian, *Empires in Conflict*, 77; *The Economist*, 29 Apr. 1916; Pasdermajian, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, 9.
  62. Imperial War Museum (ed.), *Operations in Persia* (London: HMSO, 1987), 48; Buchan, *History*, 506–7.
  63. Lepsius, *Todesgang*, 77–82, 186–8.
  64. Dadrian, 'Special Organisation', 62–3.
  65. Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 446–7.
  66. Generally for Turkish evidence, *Arşiv Belgelerine Gore Kafkaslar'da ve Anadolu'da Ermeni Mezâlimi*, i: 1906–1918, ed. Prime Ministry, General Directorate of the State Archives of the Turkish Republic (Ankara: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1995); Rustem, *La Guerre mondiale*, 173–202. On Kars and Ardahan, *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 21–2, Foreign Ministry to Interior Ministry, 6 Mar. 1915; Supreme military command memo, 21 Mar. 1915.
  67. Reid, 'Total War', on the tendency of irregulars to atrocity.
  68. Rustem, *La Guerre mondiale*, 192–3, 200. On the Russian use of Cossacks to reinforce their Caucasus army, see Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust*, 111.
  69. Onnig Mekhitarian, 'The Defense of Van', AR 1 (1948), 121–9 at 123.
  70. Jäck papers, file 47, 'Revolutionierung', fos. 39–40; *Zdl*, series I, vol. 6, part 1, no. 400.
  71. Public Record Office, Kew, London (hereafter 'PRO'), Foreign Office Records (hereafter 'FO'), 371/2130, 15028, Smith to Mallett, 10 Jan. 1914; also AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Pera, 30 Apr. 1915; *DA*, no. 51.
  72. PRO, FO 371/2130, 23197, Smith, 25 May 1914, 18246, Bullard to Mallett, 27 Apr. 1914; likewise AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Constantinople embassy, 11 Aug. 1914.
  73. *The Economist*, 29 Apr. 1916. Mekhitarian, 'Defense', 122–3, on effects of the Russian November advance.
  74. Anahide Ter Minassian, 'Van 1915', in Richard Hovannisian (ed.), *Armenian Van/ Vaspurakan* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: MAZDA, 2000), 209–44 at 215.
  75. *Documents*, i, nos. 9, 10.
  76. On supply lines, Daşnabedian, 'The ARF Record', 120.
  77. Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 446.
  78. Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, 298.
  79. Christopher Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation* (London: Routledge, 1980), 205–9; Ter Minassian, 'Van', 217.
  80. Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 449.
  81. Ter Minassian, 'Van', 223–4. On Shatakh, *Grandes Puissances*, no. 31.

82. A point Ter Minassian does not emphasize, but which was vital in the radicalization process.
83. Ter Minassian, 'Van', 223.
84. AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Pera, 27 Apr. 1915.
85. AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Pera, 10 May 1915. On the Kurdish rising, Pera, 27 Apr. 1915.
86. HHSA, PA I, 947, folder 21c, Pera, 21 Dec. 1914.
87. Dadrian, *History*, 236.
88. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 4 May 1916. Interview with Talât.
89. By 6 Mar. the administration's archives were taken to the interior, the population was scheduled for evacuation on any Entente forcing of the harbour, and a number of families had already been ordered to leave: Jäckh papers, file 22, Humbert to Smyrna consulate, 6 Mar. 1915. On bombardment and fears it was intended to inspire unrest among local Greeks, see HHSA, PA I, 943, Smyrna, 8 Mar. 1915.
90. Akçam, *Armenien*, 59.
91. *Ibid.*, 59, 64–5.
92. Vahakn N. Dadrian, 'The Complicity of the Party, the Government and the Military: Select Parliamentary and Judicial Documents', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 22 (1994), 29–96 at 59–60. On Himmler, Peter Witte et al. (eds.), *Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers 1941/1942* (Hamburg: Christians, 1999).
93. HHSA, PA I, 942, Pera, 24, 28 Mar. 1915; Constantinople, 15, 22 Apr. 1915; Otto Liman von Sanders, *Fünf Jahre Türkei* (Berlin, 1920), 137.
94. HHSA, PA I, 942, Pera, 24 Mar. 1915; *Treatment of Armenians*, ed. Sarafian, nos. 56, 57.
95. Kieser, 'Reshid'.
96. Akçam, *Armenien*, 59.
97. Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, 231–2. Somakian, *Empires in Conflict*, 47–8, on earlier Russian designs.
98. For example, *Arşiv Belgelerine Gore Kafkaslar'da ve Anadolu'da Ermeni Mezâlimi*, i, p. xxxvii; *Documents*, i, p. xv. On fears of a landing at Alexandretta in April, see HHSA PA I, 943, Pallavicini to Burian, 22 Apr. 1915.
99. HHSA, Konsulatsarchiv, Konsulat Aleppo, Karton 2, Aleppo, 18 Jan. 1914.
100. PRO, FO 424/184, no. 872/1 (enclosure), Langley to Culme-Seymour, 10 Dec. 1895; Douglas, 'Britain and the Armenian Question', 122–3.
101. PRO, FO 371/1773/16941, 25 Mar. 1913, 10 Apr. 1914; no. 16736, 5 Apr. 1913; FO 371/1775/17825, 15 Apr. 1913.
102. Eberhard Count Wolffskeel von Reichenberg, *Zeitoun, Mousa Dagh, Ourfa: Letters on the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Hilmar Kaiser (Princeton: Gomidas Institute, 2001), Wolffskeel letters of 28 Feb., 30 Mar. 1915.
103. DA, no. 18.
104. *Journal de Genève, Supplement*, 4–5 July 1915; *Djernal, Memories*, 299. Cf. *Treatment of Armenians*, ed. Sarafian, p. 628; Lepsius, *Todesgang*, 204–5.



105. ADNA, Correspondence Arménie 1915, i, Nubar to Aivazian, 22 Aug.; Aivazian to Nubar, 15 July.
106. *Zdl*, series II, vol. 7, part 1, no. 765; *BNP*, nos. 9, 16, 26, and 35; *Grandes Puissances*, nos. 46, 47.
107. *Zdl*, series II, vol. 7, part 1, no. 231, note 1 on p. 216; PRO FO 371/2484, 37609, Varandian to Grey, 20 Feb. 1915. For a similar argument from Nubar, ADNA, Correspondence Arménie 1915, i, Nubar to Sahag, Catholicos of Cilicia, 30 Apr. 1915.
108. Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911–1918*, i (New York: Odhams Press, 1929), 486–7, 529–31, 549–53.
109. PRO, FO 371/2484, 25073, War Office, 4 Mar. 1915.
110. *Zdl*, series II, vol. 7, part 1, no. 231; *Grandes Puissances*, no. 10.
111. AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Aleppo, 16 Oct. 1914; *Eberhard Count Wolffskeel*, ed. Kaiser, Adana, 24 Apr. 1915; *Treatment of Armenians*, ed. Sarafian, no. 122.
112. *Zdl*, series II, vol. 7, part 2, no. 507.
113. PRO, FO 371/2485, 41444, Armenian National Defence Committee of America to Grey, 23 Mar. 1915.
114. *Zdl*, series II, vol. 7, part 2, no. 507.
115. PRO, FO 371/2485, 115866, Sykes to Maxwell, 3 Aug. 1915; 106769, 4 Aug. 1915.
116. *BNP*, nos. 1, 3. On 'liberation', PRO, FO 371/2485, 41444, 23 Mar. 1915.
117. Service historique de l'armée de Terre, Vincennes, Paris, records of the État-Major de l'armée de Terre (hereafter 'ÉM'), 7N 2150, folder 'Utilisation de Contingents irréguliers en Turquie', Athens, 4 Mar. 1915.
118. See above, n. 104.
119. NARA, RG 59, 867.4016/80, Aintab, 14 June 1915; Jäckh papers, file 50, Bericht von Beatrice Rohner, 9 Sept. 1915 (the German missionary claimed that other villages were 'innocent', but Zeytun was 'guilty'—'schuldig').
120. To borrow Lepsius's term: *Todesgang*, 5.
121. According to the Armenian patriarch of Cilicia: *DA*, no. 34, enclosure. For the Ottoman documentation, *Affaires arméniens: Les 'Telegrammes'*, ed. Orel and Yuca, 108–9, nos. 17, 20.
122. See above, n. 119.
123. See above, n. 119.
124. *DA*, no. 34, enclosure.
125. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 23, Interior Ministry to Fourth Army, 20 Apr. 1915.
126. Lepsius, *Todesgang*, 11; *Treatment of Armenians*, ed. Sarafian, no. 123. The first deportation order: *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 20, Interior Ministry to Adana, 2 Mar. 1915.
127. Lepsius, *Todesgang*, 11.
128. According to an Armenian connected with the local German consulate: *DA*, no. 19, enclosure of 12 Mar.
129. W. Stanley Macbean Knight, *The History of the Great European War: Its Causes and Effects*, iv (London: Caxton Publishing, n.d.), 116–17.
130. *Treatment of Armenians*, ed. Sarafian, no. 123; *DA*, nos. 18 and 19, enclosure of 12 Mar.
131. *Documents*, iii, no. 2000; AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Pera, 15 Apr. 1915.

132. *Zdl*, series II, vol. 7, part 2, no. 507; NARA, RG 59, 867.4016/80, Aintab, 14 June 1915; 867.00/761, Aleppo, 20 Apr. 1915.
133. Eberhard Count Wolffskeel, ed. Kaiser, Adana, 24 Apr. 1915; Hilmar Kaiser, *At the Crossroads of Der Zor: Death, Survival and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915–1917* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute, 2001), 10.
134. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 24, Interior Ministry to Fourth Army, 24 Apr. 1915, ending deportations to Konia and redirecting further deportations from Cilicia southwards.
135. NARA, RG 59, 867.4016/97, Beirut to Secretary of State, 6 July 1915.
136. Morgenthau papers, container 7, Morgenthau to Secretary of State, 25 May 1915.
137. As Akçam implies in *Armenien*, 60.
138. *Treatment of Armenians*, ed. Sarafian, no. 55. On Diyarbakır, Kieser, 'Dr Mehmed Reshid'.
139. Lepsius, *Todesgang*, 27–8, 35–7.
140. *DA*, no. 31.
141. *Treatment of Armenians*, ed. Sarafian, no. 56.
142. HHSA, PA I, 943, Constantinople, 15 Apr. 1915; and Constantinople, 22 Apr. 1915 for the passage of irregulars from Trebizond to the zones of combat.
143. *Treatment of Armenians*, ed. Sarafian, no. 56.
144. Cited in Timur, *Türkler ve Ermeniler*, 33. On Muslim refugees, n. 49 above. On military pressure for deportations, Mehmet Kasim, *Talat Paşa'nın Anıları* (Istanbul: Say, 1986), 82, cited in Fatma Müge Göçek, 'Reading Genocide: Turkish Historiography on the Armenian Massacres and Deportations of 1915', unpublished manuscript.
145. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 28–9, Interior Ministry to Van and Bitlis, 9 May 1915. For earlier Muslim resettlements, AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Pera, 15 Apr. 1915.
146. AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Pera, 6 May 1915.
147. Larcher, *La Guerre turque*, 394; Ternon, *Les Arméniens*, 230; Joseph Pomiankowski, *Der Zusammenbruch des osmanischen Reiches: Erinnerungen an die Türkei aus der Zeit des Weltkrieges* (Zurich: Amalthea-Verlag, 1928), 147; Padermadjian, *Histoire*, 458.
148. Walker, *Armenia*, 208. Many defenceless Muslims did remain in the city: Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 451.
149. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 54, Interior Ministry to Erzurum, 27 June 1915; *DA*, nos. 52, 53, 59, 63; Lepsius, *Todesgang*, 42–3. On 'inappropriate' deportations to the west, *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 32–3, Interior Ministry to Erzurum, 18 May 1915.
150. *Grandes Puissances*, no. 27; Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, 299. *DA*, no. 44, for German knowledge of Armenians escaping from Van 'to unite with the Russians'. For the Turkish view, Çavdar, *Talât Paşa*, 344–5.
151. Horst Günther Linke, *Das zarische Russland und der erste Weltkrieg* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1982), 215; cf. Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, 299.
152. Pomiankowski, *Zusammenbruch*, 147; Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide*, 115.
153. *Grandes Puissances*, no. 26; BNP, doc. 58; AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Pera, 18 May 1915.
154. *DA*, lxxiv.

155. AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/36, Wangenheim to Foreign Office, 18 May 1915.
156. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 32–3, Interior Ministry to Erzurum, 18 May 1915. On Khyss, *Treatment of Armenians*, ed. Sarafian, nos. 53, 57.
157. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 33–4, Interior Ministry to Erzurum, Van, and Bitlis, 23 May 1915; *Affaires arméniens: Les 'Telegrammes'*, ed. Orel and Yuca, 116, no. 27.
158. On Bitlis, Mush, and Sasun, Walker, 'The End of Armenian Taron and Baghesh'.
159. Walker, *Armenia*, 211–12, 222. Mush and Sasun had been specified for the earlier, targeted deportations conceived early in May: see above, n. 145.
160. Kasim, *Talat Paşa'nın Anıları*, 82, cited in Goçek, 'Reading Genocide'.
161. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24 July 1921, suggesting the CUP knew deportations would be used as propaganda, and the German embassy had long counselled the CUP leaders that this would be the case.
162. Dadrian, *History*, 239.
163. ADNA, Correspondence Arménie 1915, i, Aivazian to Nubar 8/15 July; Nubar to Moutafoff, 4 Aug. 1915.
164. Reproduced in Gürün, *The Armenian File*, 206.
165. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 30–2, 30 May 1915; Dadrian, *History*, 221.
166. As revealed in Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Facts on the Relocation of Armenians 1914–1918* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2002), 71.
167. AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/37, Agence Havas release, 5 June 1915.
168. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 43, Interior Ministry to Erzurum, 14 June 1915.
169. Raymond H. Kévorkian, 'Le Sort des déportés arméniens ottomans dans les camps de concentration de Syrie-Mésopotamie', in id. (ed.), *L'Extermination des déportés arméniens ottomans dans les camps de concentration de Syrie-Mésopotamie (1915–1916): La deuxième phase du génocide* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nubar, 1998), 7–61 at 11–12, 16; Kaiser, *Der Zor*, 10.
170. Ioannis K. Hassiotis, 'The Armenian Genocide and the Greeks: Response and Records (1915–23)', in Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, 129–51 at 146–7.
171. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 44, Interior Ministry to Diyarbakır, Mamuret-ul-Asis and Bitlis, 14 June 1915.
172. On these protests see Chs. 3 and 5.
173. On the camps, Kévorkian, 'Le Sort des déportés'; Kaiser, *Der Zor*.
174. For Lepsius's list of the major round-ups, see Graber, *Caravans to Oblivion*, 120. On the origins of the revolt as Armenians discovered the aftermath of a massacre in the Shabin-Karahissar prison, Vahakn N. Dadrian, 'Ottoman Archives and Denial of the Armenian Genocide', in Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, 280–310 at 289.
175. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 62, Interior Ministry to provincial leaderships, 5 July 1915. On instructions for the resettlement of Bosnian and Albanian Muslims, see Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki*, 126–7.
176. Akçam, 'Rethinking the Ottoman Archival Material'.
177. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 68, Directorate of Settlement of Tribes and Refugees communiqué, 12 July 1915. On subsequent deportations to Der Zor, see pp. 124–6. On the

- district governor of Der Zor redirecting deportees to Mosul because they exceeded the quota, *DA*, no. 260.
178. Kévorkian, 'Le Sort des déportés', esp. 60–1. For German sources on Circassians attacking the Armenians at Ras ul-Ain, see *DA*, no. 260; on Der Zor, *DA*, nos. 297, 298. On Beduins attacking Armenian convoys on the road to Mosul and Der Zor, *DA*, no. 275, enclosure of 30 May. On Halil's statement of murderous intent as he arrived in Mosul in Nov. 1915, *DA*, no. 190.
179. Mark Levene, 'The Experience of Genocide: Armenia 1915–16 and Romania 1941–42', in Kieser and Schaller (eds.), *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah*, 423–62 at 436; *DA*, no. 235. On disease and genocide in the Second World War, see Donald Bloxham and Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust: Critical Historical Approaches* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 78–9.
180. Kévorkian, 'Le Sort des déportés', 60–1. On inconsistent and utterly inadequate provision, *DA*, no. 263, fourth annexe.
181. *DA*, no. 256. On the obstruction of aid, Kaiser, *Der Zor*, *passim*.
182. *Affaires arméniens: Les 'Telegrammes'*, ed. Orel and Yuca, 117, no. 29; *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 118, Interior Ministry to Urfa, 27 Oct. 1915. On specific examples of refugee settlement beyond the aforementioned Zeytun case, see for the cases of Harput and Van *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 54, Interior Ministry to Mamuret-ul-Asis, 27 June 1915; Interior Ministry to Erzurum, 27 June 1915. Generally on the theft and appropriation of Armenian property, see Comité Central des Réfugiés Arméniens, *Confiscation des biens des réfugiés arméniens par le Gouvernement turc* (Paris: Imprimerie Massis, 1929).
183. *DA*, no. 246. On Protestants as well as Catholics, *DA*, no. 264.
184. On specific pressure on behalf of these minority Armenian communities, *DA*, no. 246. On the embassy's planned intervention on behalf of the Protestants, *DA*, no. 134, Mordtmann's addendum to Rößler to Constantinople, 12 Aug. 1915. For exemption orders for Protestants and Catholics, *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 72, 77–8, respectively: Interior Ministry orders, 4 and 15 Aug. 1915.
185. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 58, Interior Ministry to provincial leaderships, 1 July 1915.
186. Ara Sarafian, 'The Absorption of Armenian Women and Children into Muslim Households as a Structural Component of the Armenian Genocide', in Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack (eds.), *In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn, 2001), 209–21. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 85, Interior Ministry to Niğde, 18 Aug. 1915, stating it was legitimate for Muslims to 'marry' Armenians who had converted to Islam.
187. *DA*, nos. 287, 289.
188. Alice Odian Kasparian, 'The 1915 Massacres of the Armenians in the State of Angora, Turkey', *Journal of Armenian Studies*, 4 (1992), 119–36 at 124–5.
189. *DA*, no. 84.
190. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 43, Interior Ministry to Erzurum, 14 June 1915.
191. AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei 183/37, Pera, 17 June 1915.
192. *Affaires arméniens: Les 'Telegrammes'*, ed. Orel and Yuca, 117, no. 29.
193. As implicit in Akçam, *Armenien*, 63; Cf. Ternon, 'Le Génocide de Turquie', 489.
194. Immortalized in Franz Werfel's fact-based novel of the same name (1933).

195. Sarkisyanz, *Transcaucasian Armenia*, 133–4.
196. PRO, FO 371 2488, 61815, 18 May 1915.
197. *Documents*, ii, no. 1903 (pp. 49, 52).
198. Sarkisyanz, *Transcaucasian Armenia*, 119.
199. Opinion of Varandian in Pavlovitch, 'La Russie', 479.
200. Katchaznouni, *Armenian Revolutionary Federation*, 6–7.
201. *Zdl*, series II, vol. 7, part 1, no. 765. In Apr. 1915 too, Nubar had been assigned with 'la mission délicate de défendre les intérêts arméniens auprès des Puissances alliées': 'Boghos Nubar Pacha', *Revue des études arméniennes*, 10 (1930), 213–16 at 213.
202. Chalabian, *Andranik*, 218–19.
203. ADNA, Correspondence Arménie 1915, i, Nubar to Sahag, 30 Apr.
204. ADNA, Correspondence Arménie 1915, i, Nubar to Moutafoff, 4 Aug., Arakélian to Nubar, 29 June; ii, Tiflis, 20 Oct.
205. ADNA, Correspondence Arménie 1915, i, Nubar to Arakélian, 21 Dec., replying to the former, 9 Nov.; also Nubar to Kouchakian, 26 Oct.
206. *BNP*, no. 9.
207. Annette Höss, 'Die türkischen Kriegsgerichtsverhandlungen 1919–1921' (Ph.D. diss., Vienna, 1991), on the post-war trial of these 'responsible secretaries'. Also Vahakn N. Dadrian, 'The Documentation of the World War I Armenian Massacres in the Proceedings of the Turkish Military Tribunal', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 22 (1994), 97–132, and id., 'The Complicity of the Party'; *DA*, no. 282.
208. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 140, Interior Ministry to Cemal, 26 Apr. 1916, on the dispatch of an inspector to Marash owing to the leniency shown towards Armenians by the district governor; also Kaiser, *Der Zor*, 15–16.
209. Dadrian, 'Documentation', 98.
210. Dadrian, 'The Complicity of the Party', 87; Höss, 'Die türkischen Kriegsgerichtsverhandlungen', 76, 78, 81, 82–3, 96, 130.
211. Reid, 'Militarism', 6–11; Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilizations* (London: Constable and Co., 1923), 278–80.
212. On these massacres, Walker, *Armenia*, 211–12, 222.
213. C. Sorabji, 'A Very Modern War: Terror and Territory in Bosnia-Herzegovina', in R. Hinde and H. E. Watson (eds.), *War: A Cruel Necessity? The Bases of Institutionalised Violence* (London: Tauris, 1995), 80–99. Thanks to Mark Levene for this reference.
214. *Osmanlı Belgeler*, 68–9, Interior Ministry to Diyarbakır, 12 July 1915. On Reşid's actions, *DA*, no. 126.
215. HHS A PA I, 944, Pallavicini to Burian, 7 Nov. 1915.
216. Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, 230–1.
217. *Berliner Tageblatt*, 4 May 1916. Interview with Talât. Emphasis added.
218. See Ch. 6 for the definition.
219. Peter Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung: Eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung* (Munich: Piper, 1998).

## Interlude: The Genocide in Context

1. Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust*, 48.
2. *Ibid.*, 117, 213, 218–22; R. S. Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1935), 26–30; statistics and overall interpretation from David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006).
3. Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 397; *DA*, no. 303; Hassiotis, 'The Armenian Genocide and the Greeks', 138–9.
4. Hassiotis, 'The Armenian Genocide and the Greeks', 139–40.
5. HNSA, PA I, 944, Yeniköy, 3 Aug. 1915; Jäckh papers, file 17, 'Vertrauliche Mitteilungen vom 17. Nov. 1914'; *DA*, no. 282.
6. Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision: Greece in Asia Minor 1919–1922* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 34.
7. Cited in Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 586.
8. Dündar, *İttihat ve Terraki*, 137–55, 272–3; Hans-Lukas Kieser, 'Zwischen Ararat und Euphrat: Abendländische Missionen im spätoomanischen Kurdistan', in *id.* (ed.), *Kurdistan und Europa* (Zurich: Chronos, 1997), 113–51 at 135–6. For differences between CUP treatment of Kurds and Armenians, see Hamit Bozarslan, 'Der Kemalismus und das Kurdenproblem', in Kieser (ed.), *Kurdistan und Europa*, 217–36 at 221.
9. On continuities, Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1905–1926* (Leiden: Brill, 1984); Richard G. Hovannisian, 'Armenia and the Caucasus in the Genesis of the Soviet-Turkish Entente', *IJMES* 4 (1973), 129–47 at 134.
10. Mark Levene, 'The Changing Face of Mass Murder: Massacre, Genocide, and Post-genocide', *International Social Science Journal*, 54 (2002), 443–52 at 450 and notes thereto.
11. For example, Kenneth Mason, 'Central Kurdistan', *Geographical Journal*, 54 (1919), 329–47 at 331; W. R. Hay, *Two Years in Kurdistan: Experiences of a Political Officer* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd, 1921), 192; Joseph, *The Nestorians*, 136.
12. Joseph, *The Nestorians*, 136.
13. e.g. *Osmanlı ve Sovyet belgeleriyle Ermeni mezâlimi*, ed. Halil Kemal Türköz (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1982); *Arşiv Belgelerine Gore Kafkaslar'da ve Anadolu'da Ermeni Mezâlimi*, i; Lt. Col. Twerdo Khlebof, *War Journal of the Second Russian Fortress Artillery Regiment of Erzeroum from its Formation until the Recapture of Erzeroum by the Ottoman Army* (1919).
14. Dadrian, *History*, 347–51.
15. For the complex history of Armenia and the Caucasus at this time, see Richard G. Hovannisian's definitive *The Republic of Armenia*, 4 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971–96), i, ch. 1.
16. On the actions of Armenian forces, *Grandes Puissances*, no. 757, annexe. On the Greeks and Georgians, J. K. Hassiotis, 'Shared Illusions: Greek-Armenian Cooperation in Asia Minor and the Caucasus (1917–1922)', in Institute for Balkan Studies (ed.), *Greece and Britain during World War I* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1985), 139–92 at 162.
17. Dadrian, *History*, 349–52.

18. Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, i. 79–88. On the legacy of the March massacres, see Ch. 6.
19. On the ongoing chaos in Anatolia, see Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, ii: *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 352–3.
20. On Armenia, Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, iv, chs. 7–9; Walker, *Armenia*, 306–30.
21. É. Brémond, *La Cilicie en 1919–1920* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1921), 40; Stanley E. Kerr, *The Lions of Marash: Personal Experiences with American Near East Relief, 1919–1922* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973), 195–6. For Turkish atrocities generally, Pierre Redou, *La Cilicie et le problème ottoman* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars and Co., 1921), ch. 5.
22. Dadrian, *History*, 356–70.
23. Walker, *Armenia*, 310–11, 320.
24. Dadrian, *History*, 360.
25. For extensive coverage of key disputes and atrocities, Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, i, chs. 6, 7, 8; ii, chs. 4, 7, 8; iii, ch. 4.
26. *Ibid.*, iii. 113.
27. *Ibid.*, 92.
28. *Ibid.*, 87.
29. Cited in James G. Mandalian, 'The Transcaucasian Armenian Irredenta', *AR* 14/2 (1961), 3–28 at 11–12. See also pp. 13–14 on Zangezur.
30. On the disposition of Karabakh, see Chs. 4 and 6.
31. Anahide Ter Minassian, 'The Role of the Individual: The Case of Rouben Ter Minassian', *AR* 46/1–4 (1993), 183–204 at 191; *id.*, *La République d'Arménie* (Brussels: ATM, 1989), 83–6, 217; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, i. 229.
32. Lambeth Palace Library, Davidson papers, vol. 294, fos. 325–31, Khoren to Archbishop of Canterbury, 30 Apr. 1920, at 329–30. For British discussion of Armenian atrocities, *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, ed. W. N. Medlicott and Douglas Dakin (London: HMSO, 1968–86) (hereafter 'DBFP'), 1st ser., xii. 573–4, 577–80, 589–90. See also Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire* (London: Arnold, 2001), 143.
33. Ter Minassian, 'The Role of the Individual', 193–6; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, iii. 290.
34. Ter Minassian, 'The Role of the Individual', 197; Artaches Tchilingarian, 'On Whose Side are the Armenian People?', *AR* 11/2 (1958), 59–68 at 64; Yervand Khatanasian, 'The Mission of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation', *AR* 13/3 (1960), 7–17 at 10.
35. McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples*, 143–4; Haigaz K. Kazarian, 'The Turco-Soviet Conspiracy to Overthrow the Independent Republic of Armenia', *AR* 19/1 (1966), 17–47 at 22; Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, iii. 122–3, 301–6.
36. Toynbee, *The Western Question*, ch. 7.
37. Smith, *Ionian Vision*, 296.

38. Renée Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2003).
39. Vahram L. Shemmassian, 'The Exodus of Armenian Remnants from the Interior Provinces of Turkey, 1922–1930', in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: MAZDA, 2002), 389–413 at 397–8.
40. On this process, and the response of the world powers to it, see Ch. 4.
41. Bozarслан, 'Der Kemalismus und den Kurdenproblem', 222; Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1989), 38–41.
42. Martin van Bruinessen, 'Genocide in Kurdistan?', in George J. Andreopoulos (ed.), *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 141–70 at 150.
43. Mesut Yeğen, 'The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34 (1999), 555–68 at 555.
44. Reproduced in NARA, RG 59, 867.00/1985, Grew to Secretary of State, 16 Dec. 1927.
45. Bozarслан, 'Der Kemalismus und den Kurdenproblem', 218–19.
46. Philip Robbins, 'The Overlord State: Turkish Policy and the Kurdish Issue', *International Affairs*, 69 (1993), 657–76 at 661.
47. Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 405.
48. *Ibid.*, 399; Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, 33–4.
49. Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 397–402.
50. Bruinessen, 'Genocide in Kurdistan?', 145–7; Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 408–12.
51. Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, 153 and ch. 2 generally; Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, State and Sheikh: On the Social and Political Organisation of Kurdistan* (Utrecht: Rijksuniversiteit, 1978), 405.
52. Martin van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism versus Nation-Building States* (Istanbul: Isis, 2000), 35.
53. Arnold J. Toynbee and Kenneth P. Kirkwood, *Turkey* (London: Ernest Benn, 1926), 274.
54. Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, 157–60; Bruinessen, 'Genocide in Kurdistan?', 151.
55. Bozarслан, 'Der Kemalismus und den Kurdenproblem', 228–9; Bruinessen, 'Genocide in Kurdistan?', 152–3.
56. Kieser, *Der verpasste Friede*, 410–11; Bruinessen, 'Genocide in Kurdistan?', 148–50.
57. NARA, RG 59, 867.00/1613, Engert to Secretary of State, 11 Jan. 1922.
58. NARA, RG 59, 867.00/883, Ravndal to Lansing, 3 June 1919.
59. Michael Barutciski, 'Lausanne Revisited: Population Exchanges in International Law and Policy', in Hirschon (ed.), *Crossing the Aegean*, 23–37 at 27.
60. For a somewhat polemical account of this episode, see A. M. de Zayas, *The German Expellees* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993).
61. Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
62. Uwe Dietrich Adam, *Judenpolitik im dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1972), 303–13.



63. Levene, 'The Limits of Tolerance', 32.
64. On the uses of this quote, see Ch. 6.
65. On the continuities in the development of Nazi policy from 1939 to 1941, Long-erich, *Politik der Vernichtung*.

### Chapter 3

1. Trumpener, *Germany*, 200–270; Frank Weber, *Eagles on the Crescent: Germany, Austria and the Diplomacy of the Turkish Alliance, 1914–1918* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 144–59; Bihl, *Kaukasus-Politik*, 166–72.
2. Dadrian, *History*, 248–300; id., *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide: A Review of the Historical Evidence of German Complicity* (Watertown, Mass.: Blue Crane, 1996); Ohandjanian, *Der verschwiegene Völkermord*, 202–21; Christoph Dinkel, 'German Officers and the Armenian Genocide', *AR* 44/1 (1991), 77–133; Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust*, 95–112, 263–5.
3. Gust, *Der Völkermord*.
4. Paul Leverkuehn, *Posten auf ewiger Wache: Aus dem abenteuerreichen Leben des Max von Scheubner-Richter* (Essen: Essener Verlagsanstalt, 1938), 32–73; on Rößler, Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust*, 265. Cf. the reactions from a consul of the Dual Monarchy, HHSA, PA XXXVIII 366, Aleppo, 8 Aug. 1915.
5. On Humann, Souchon, and also Admiral Guido von Usedom, see Dinkel, 'German Officers', 110–17, and Dadrian, *History*, 263, 271–3.
6. Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, *Mit den Türken zum Suezkanal* (Berlin: O. Schlegel [1938]), 126–42; von der Goltz to his wife, 22 Nov. 1915, in *General-feldmarschall Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz: Denkwürdigkeiten*, ed. Friedrich von der Goltz and Wolfgang Foerster (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1929), 428.
7. Dinkel, *German Responsibility*, 117–19 on other officers who objected.
8. Eberhard Count Wolffskeel, ed. Kaiser, p. xii.
9. Nogales, *Four Years*, 59–61.
10. *DA*, pp. lxxii–lxxv; de Nogales, *Four Years*, 45; Pominankowski, *Zusammenbruch*, 159.
11. Djemal, *Memories*, 299; Pomiankowski, *Zusammenbruch*, 147; Felix Guse, *Die Kaukasusfront im Weltkrieg bis zum Frieden von Brest* (Leipzig: Koehler and Amelang, 1940), 61–3; *DA*, no. 38.
12. For example, Karl Roth, *Armenien und Deutschland* (Leipzig: Deutsches Vorderasienkomitee, 1915); Emil Daniels, 'England und Rußland in Armenien und Persien', in *Preussische Jahrbücher*, no. 169 (1917), 237–67.
13. Dinkel, 'German Officers', 118.
14. Holger Herwig, *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary* (London: Arnold 1997), 127–8.
15. *Ibid.*, 140–1, 169.
16. Mark Levene, 'The Balfour Declaration: A Case of Mistaken Identity', *English Historical Review*, 107 (1992), 54–77.

17. AAPA, Abt 1A — Weltkrieg (1914–1920), WK 11d geheim, vol. 10, fo. 19, A43616, 29 Nov. 1915; vol. 12, fo. 74, A13191, 10 Apr. 1916.
18. Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide*, 49–54.
19. Dadrian, *German Responsibility*, 65–81, fails to adduce any solid evidence that Oppenheim was in any way implicated in the massacres—as opposed to vilifying the Armenians. On his activities concerning the jihad, etc., see the Jäckh papers, box 2, folders 46 and especially 47, Oppenheim's 'Die Revolutionierung der islamischen Gebiete unserer Feinde' (Oct.?) 1914.
20. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/37, Wangenheim to Bethmann, 7 July 1915; vol. 38, German Embassy to Porte, 9 Aug. 1915, referring to the 4 July note.
21. Dadrian, *German Responsibility*.
22. Levene, 'Creating a Modern "Zone of Genocide"', 397.
23. Dadrian, *History*, 254; Ohandjanian, *Der verschwiegene Völkermord*, 208. My point here is also made by Kaiser in *Eberhard Count Wolffskeel*, ed. Kaiser, pp. xxi–xxii n. 24.
24. René Pinon, *La Suppression des arméniens: Méthode allemande—travail turc* (Paris: Perrin and Cie 1916), 11–13.
25. Pasdermajian, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, 33–4.
26. *Große Politik*, 38, no. 15, 287.
27. Ohandjanian, *Der verschwiegene Völkermord*, 213; Dinkel, 'German Officers', 79; Dadrian, *History*, 283. On Russian propaganda, DA, no. 266, annexe. For Turkish and Armenian mention of Rohrbach, DA, no. 129.
28. Hilmar Kaiser, 'The Baghdad Railway 1915–1916: A Case Study in German Resistance and Complicity', in Richard Hovannisian (ed.), *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 67–112. On Falkenhayn, DA, no. 189.
29. Trumpener, *Germany*, 244; AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 139/48, Liman to Swiss govt., Malta, 22 Mar. 1919; on the British exculpation of Liman, Swiss embassy Berlin to German Foreign Office, 26 June 1919.
30. *Eberhard Count Wolffskeel*, ed. Kaiser, pp. xiii–xvi; Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust*, 263, making similar claims.
31. *Eberhard Count Wolffskeel*, ed. Kaiser, Wolffskeel letters of 19, 1 and 16 Oct. 1915 respectively.
32. *Ibid.*, Wolffskeel letter of 15 Sept. 1915.
33. See Guse, *Kaukasusfront*, 61–3; Felix Guse, 'Der Armenieraufstand 1915 und seine Folgen', *Wissen und Wehr*, 10 (1925), 609–21; Dinkel, 'German Officers', 95–109. On German propaganda, see below.
34. Dadrian, *German Responsibility*, 182, 186.
35. Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, 254, 285; Bihl, *Kaukasus-Politik*, 220–4.
36. Pasdermajian, *Why Armenia Should Be Free*, 21.
37. e.g. DA, nos. 215, 218, 219; also *La Verité sur le mouvement révolutionnaire arménien et les mesures gouvernementales* (Istanbul: Imprimerie Tanine 1916), 11.
38. Ohandjanian, *Der verschwiegene Völkermord*, 208–9, 217; Dadrian, *History*, 268–71; Dinkel, 'German Officers', 105–7.

39. Ohandjanian, *Der verschwiegene Völkermord*, 209, claims that the persecution process reached its 'climax' before the end of April. Dinkel, 'German Officers', 122 n. 4; 124 n. 38, explicitly does not consider the case of the German military attaché, Otto von Lossow, because he arrived in Istanbul 'only' in July 1915.
40. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/36, Wangenheim to Bethmann, 15 Apr. 1915.
41. DA, nos. 17, 29, 51.
42. DA, no. 25.
43. AAPA, Abt 1A—Weltkrieg (1914–1920), WK 11d geheim, vol. 4, A10339, 'Die armenische Bewegung', 22 Mar. 1915; DA, no. 31.
44. DA, no. 44; cf. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/36, Wangenheim to Bethmann, 15 Apr. 1915. On Wangenheim's earlier distinction between Armenian revolutionaries and the mass of peaceful Armenians, *Große Politik*, 38, no. 15, 287.
45. DA, no. 72.
46. DA, nos. 53, 56, 58.
47. Graber, *Caravans to Oblivion*, 126–9.
48. Dinkel, 'German Officers', 107.
49. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/37, Wangenheim to Bethmann Hollweg, 7 July 1915; for vice-consul Kuckhoff's report, which appears to have influenced Wangenheim, see vol. 37, Wangenheim to Bethmann, 16/18 July 1915.
50. DA, nos. 78, 79, 81, 84.
51. DA, nos. 78, 84.
52. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/37, Wangenheim to Bethmann, 17 June 1915.
53. AAPA, Türkei 183/37, Pera, 17 June 1915.
54. DA, nos. 100, 102, 104.
55. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/37, Wangenheim to Foreign Office, 2 July 1915; cf. Wangenheim to Bethmann, 7, 9 July 1915.
56. Yonan, *Ein vergessener Holocaust*, 98–9; Dadrian, *German Responsibility*, 184.
57. Kaiser, 'Baghdad Railway', 93; Trumpener, *Germany*, 213–33.
58. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/37, Wangenheim to Foreign Office, 2 July 1915 on his objections to the interventions of Johannes Lepsius; also vol. 37, Wangenheim to Bethmann, 15 Apr. 1915.
59. HHSa, PA XII 209, Pallavicini to Burian, 20 May 1915.
60. Trumpener, *Germany*, 96, 127–8.
61. HHSa, PA XII 209, Pallavicini, 1 May 1915; HHSa, PA XII 209, Pallavicini to Burian, 24 Jun. 1915; HHSa, PA XII 209, Pallavicini to Burian, 1 July 1915; HHSa, PA XII 209, Pallavicini to Burian, 13 Aug. 1915.
62. HHSa, PL 245, Istanbul, 24 Aug. 1915, part IV. Also Dinkel, 'German Officers', 113, quote of Humann, and 114.
63. Bihl, *Kaukasus-Politik*, 207, on the greater Turkish sympathy for the Austrians by 1917 than for Germany.
64. HHSa, PA XII 209, Pallavicini, 2 May 1915; DA, no. 69.
65. See previous note. Also HHSa, PA XXXVIII 368, Trabzon consulate to Burian, 20 July 1915.
66. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/38, Hohenlohe to Bethmann, 4 Sept. 1915.
67. Leverkus, *Posten auf ewiger Wache*, 64.

68. See Kaiser, 'Baghdad Railway', 76–7, and Trumpener, *Germany*, 232, to the effect that such ruses temporarily fooled the German embassy in autumn and winter 1915.
69. DA, no. 72.
70. Djemal, *Memories*, 276; de Nogales, *Four Years*, 13–14; Mardin, *Continuity and Change*, 8–10; Ernst Jäckh, *The Rising Crescent: Turkey Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1944), 131–45; Feigl, *Das evangelische Deutschland*, 211–12.
71. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei I 34/38, 40120, Bernstorff to Hertling, 22 Nov. 1917; vol. 39, A20364, 'Liquidation des feindlichen Eigentums in der Türkei' (1918), and throughout this volume. See also AAPA Abt 1A, Türkei I 55/5, Bernstorff, 6 Dec. 1917, on fears of the Turks 'playing off' German banks against each other and the Austrian banks, and also reference to the same vis-à-vis the Entente powers.
72. Bihl, *Kaukasus-Politik*, 207. See generally pp. 207–10 on the state of the alliance.
73. Pomiankowski, *Zusammenbruch*, 163.
74. Erich Ludendorff, *My War Memories 1914–1918*, 2 vols. (London: Hutchinson and Co., n.d.), ii. 619.
75. *Ibid.*; Carl Mühlmann, *Das deutsch-türkische Waffenbündnis im Weltkrieg* (Leipzig: Koehler and Amelang, 1940), 197–201: on 9 June Hindenburg fruitlessly demanded ('verlangen') of Enver the cessation of the 'disturbance of the population of the Baku district by Turkish troops or Turco-Tatar irregulars'.
76. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/39, A29675, Zimmermann to Faber, 4 Oct. 1915; also DA, no. 300, notes of Zimmermann.
77. DA, pp. lxi–lxii; AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/37, Lepsius to Rosenberg, 23 June 1915; vol. 39, Scheubner-Richter to Bethmann, 10 Aug. 1915, Anlage 1; vol. 37, Wangenheim to Bethmann, 7 July 1915. For the Dual Monarchy's response, HHSA, PA XII 463, Pallavicini to Burian, 2 Nov. 1915.
78. Ludendorff, *My War Memories*, i. 175–6; Allen and Muratoff, *Caucasian Battlefields*, 227–8, 232, on logistical problems for the Ottoman army.
79. Kaiser, 'Baghdad Railway'.
80. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/39, 'Zur inneren Lage in der Türkei', 7 Oct. 1915, fos. 3, 5; Scheubner-Richter to Bethmann, 10 Aug. 1915, Anlage 1.
81. *United States Official Documents on the Armenian Genocide*, i, ed. Ara Sarafian (Watertown, Mass.: Armenian Review, 1994), 41, report by Consul Jackson, 3 Aug. 1915.
82. HHSA, PA XII 463, Beilage, Nadamlenzki to Pallavicini, 2 Nov. 1915.
83. HHSA, PA XL 272, Istanbul, 2 Dec. 1915, 'Aus der Türkei'. The notion is said to have been spread systematically ('planmässig') by the Turkish authorities; also DA, nos. 133, 205.
84. Dadrian, *German Responsibility*, 148.
85. Ohandjanian, *Der verschwiegene Völkermord*, 213. Ohandjanian actually reproduces the entire document in a series of volumes of edited documents from the archives of the Dual Monarchy. See *Österreich-Armenien 1872–1936: Faksimiliesammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke*, ed. Artem Ohandjanian, 12 vols. (Vienna: Ohandjanian Eigenverlag, 1995), vi. 4831.

86. On the German protest and Talât's assurances that a corrective Ottoman pronouncement would be forthcoming, see *DA*, no. 215. For the declaration, see *La Verité*, 11.
87. See Pinon, *La Suppression*, 59; *The Times*, 25 Nov. 1914, 'German domination of Turkey'; *Daily Chronicle*, 6, 15 Aug. 1915.
88. Levene, 'The Balfour Declaration', 60–1.
89. Pinon, *La Suppression*, 74. For similar arguments from various perspectives at the same time, see Herbert Adams Gibbons, *Blackest Page of Modern History* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1916), 62–3; D. A. Apcar, *On the Cross of Europe's Imperialism: Armenia Crucified* (Yokohama: Fukuin Printing Co., 1918), 33. For latter-day repetition of the theme, Rita Jerrekian, 'Metamorphosis of the Armenian Question', *AR* 9/1 (1956), 110–29 at 117–19; Sarkis Atamian, *The Armenian Community: The Historical Development of a Social and Ideological Conflict* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 180–1.
90. Akaby Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question 1915–1923* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 73–5.
91. *Manitoba Free Press*, 6 Oct. 1915; report from *Le Matin*, referred to in the Canadian *L'Action Catholique*, 13 Jan 1916.
92. *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 16 Oct. 1915; *The Times*, 18 Oct. 1915.
93. See also *Le Matin* of the same day.
94. Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 69–91.
95. Pinon, *La Suppression*, 11–13. For Nubar's comments, *BNP*, 308–9, Nubar to Kevork V, 4 Feb. 1916.
96. For example, AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei, 183/38, Hohenlohe to Bethmann, 18 Aug. 1915, and the accompanying text of Hohenlohe's note to the Porte of 9 Aug. 1915.
97. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/37, Zimmermann to Wangenheim, 4 July 1915.
98. On Lepsius, AAPA, Abt. 1A, Türkei, 183/38, A29234 (Sept.).
99. For example, in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27, 28 Oct. 1915.
100. Ohandjianian, *Der verschwiegene Völkermord*, 221.
101. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/39, A29675, Zimmermann to Faber, 4 Oct. 1915; 'Zur inneren Lage in der Türkei', fo. 7. Cf. Freiherr von Bissing, 'Ein neuer Bundesgenosse der Entente', *Süddeutschen Monatsheften* (Sept. 1915), 31–2. See also *DA*, no. 300.
102. See also AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/39, Berlin to German Embassy, 8 Oct. 1915 for reactions to the *Westminster Gazette* article and the Cromer speech.
103. Heinz-Dietrich Fischer (ed.), *Pressekonzentration und Zensurpraxis im Ersten Weltkrieg: Texte und Quellen* (Berlin: V. Spiess, 1973), 162–3.
104. AAPA, Abt 1A, Türkei 183/39, 'Zur inneren Lage in der Türkei', 7 Oct. 1915, fo. 4.
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#### Chapter 4

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3. Richard Hovannisian, 'The Allies and Armenia, 1915–18', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 3 (1968), 145–68 at 165.
4. Somakian, *Empires in Conflict*, 102.
5. FO 371/2485, 32321, 19 Mar. 1915.
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8. Nubar's meeting with Izvolski, 19 July 1916, *BNP*, 352; Walker, 'The End of Armenian Taron and Baghesh', 206.
9. For simultaneous French communications to the Foreign Office during the Van episode and concerning the potential Entente declaration, see FO 371/2488, 58956, 10 May 1915; 58350, 10 May 1915.
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13. *Grandes Puissances*, no. 33; Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 70–1.
14. *Grandes Puissances*, nos. 36, 37; FO 371/2488, 65759, 25 May 1915; Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 70–1. On the French position, *Zdl*, series II, vol. 7, part 1, no. 724, note on p. 710.
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16. See William A. Schabas, *Genocide in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16–17.
17. e.g. FO 371/2484, 46942, 20 Apr. 1915; FO 371/2485, 41444, minute, 10 Apr. 1915; 101144, 26 July 1915; 196024, 21 Dec. 1915; 136059, 22 Sept. 1915; 115866, 20 Aug. 1915.
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27. Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question*, 72–7.
28. Roosevelt on the Armenians: *New York Times*, 1 Dec. 1915.
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33. Raymond H. Kévorkian, 'Ahmed Djémal pacha et le sort des déportés arméniens de Syrie-Palestine', in Kieser and Schaller (eds.), *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah*, 197–212. For Cemal's memoirs see his *Memories*; for contemporary accounts of some of the ameliorative measures he undertook for Armenians in Cilicia in 1916, see HNSA, PA XII 463, Damascus, 15 Feb. 1916, Istanbul, 10 Mar. 1916, in *Österreich-Armenien*, ed. Ohandjanian, vii. 5018, 5076.
34. ÉM, 7N 2150, folder 'Projet de réunion à Chypre', file no. 4293, Foreign Minister to War Minister, 19 July 1916.
35. ÉM, 7N 2148, folder 'Organisation', file no. 7966–9/II, Paris, 26 Nov. 1916.
36. N. E. Bou-Nacklie, 'Les Troupes spéciales: Religious and Ethnic Recruitment, 1916–46', *IJMES* 25 (1993), 645–60 at 647.
37. *Ibid.*; ÉM, 7N 2148, folder 'Légion d'Orient. Tableau Effectif'.
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39. ÉM, 7N 2150, folder 'Projet de réunion à Chypre', file unnumbered, Saint Quentin to Minister of War, 18 Sept. 1915.
40. *Ibid.*, 8 Apr. 1916.
41. For Mark Sykes's favourable view on Entente use of Armenians, FO 371/2485, 115866, 20 Aug. 1915; also Gotikian, 'La Légion d'Orient', 254. On the specific introduction of the qualifying adjective 'direct' into discussion of refusing encouragement to the Armenians, FO 371/2485, 115866/15, draft of letter to Director of Military Operations, 24 Aug. 1915.

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54. On the Arabs, Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism*, 154.
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90. Stephen H. Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 75, 78; Paul Du Véou, *La Passion de la Cilicie 1919-1922* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1937), 24-5.
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104. Sina Aksin, 'Franco-Turkish Relations at the End of 1919', in Batu and Bacqué-Grammont (eds.), *L'Empire Ottoman*, 437-46; on the repatriation of Armenians, see Du Véou, *La Passion*, 49-50.
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111. Bou-Nackdie, 'Les Troupes spéciales', which convincingly contradicts the portrayal of the Troupes in Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon*.
112. William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774-2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 47; Walker, *Armenia*, 289.
113. Davison, 'Turkish Diplomacy', 179-82; Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 427-9; James F. Willis, *Prologue to Nuremberg: The Politics and Diplomacy of Punishing*

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  115. *Ibid.*, iv. 895–6.
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  117. Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*, 430–1; Willis, *Prologue to Nuremberg*, 159.
  118. On the attitudes of the Allied powers to these questions across the whole of the post-First World War peace, see the following 'interlude'.
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  120. Smith, *Ionian Vision*, 32–4, 71–3; Clogg, *Modern Greece*, 111–16.
  121. Hassiotis, 'Shared Illusions', 139–51.
  122. NARA, RG 59, 867.00/1613, Engert to Secretary of State, 11 Jan. 1922.
  123. Hovannisian, 'The Allies and Armenia', 152–5.
  124. The report has been published in whole or in part in various locations. The relevant section 'Report upon Non-Arabic Speaking Portions of Former Ottoman Empire' is available on the internet at <http://www.hri.org/docs/king-crane>: the sub-section referred to here is the 'Consideration looking to a proper division of the Turkish Empire'.
  125. *FRUS*, 1920, iii. 789–804, Secretary of State to Wallace, 24 Nov. 1920. Also DeNovo, *American Interests*, 127 n. 90.
  126. As well as in the King–Crane report (sections 'The problem of a separate Armenia' and 'Estimates of the population of an Armenian state'), the statistical question is addressed in Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, iv. 37.
  127. Report section 'The problem of a separate Armenia'.
  128. Hovannisian, *Republic of Armenia*, iv. 1–4.
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### Chapter 5

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130. On the issue of adopted nationality, see above, n. 7. On the claim negotiations, see *FRUS*, 1934, ii. 894–935, particularly 901–2, 911–18, 918–23 (quote in text from enclosure 1), 929–30 ('Future proceedings with many cases of various kinds would be embarrassing'), 931 ('the [claims] agreement should show categories or specific cases that were eliminated from consideration in arriving at lump sum, since otherwise all original claimants will seek to participate in distribution').
131. *FRUS*, 1935, i. 1053–6.
132. Trask, *United States Response*, 90–2.
133. Hovannisian, 'Denial of the Armenian Genocide', 201–36.
134. *FRUS*, 1935, i. 1026–42.
135. On the 'constructive tension' thus engendered at Lausanne, see *FRUS*, 1923, ii. 935–6. On Turkish policy generally, Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, chs. 2–5.
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138. Trask, *United States Response*, 246.
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## Chapter 6

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3. Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation*, 40, 45.
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8. For example, Hovannisian, 'Denial of the Armenian Genocide'.
9. Shaw and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, 315–17.
10. On Lemkin, see A. Dirk Moses, 'The Holocaust and Genocide', in Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (London: Palgrave, 2004), 533–55 at 542.
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12. Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995).
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29. Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, 226–7.
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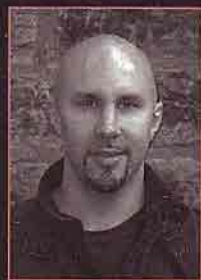
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