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# A responsibility to protest? The public, the Powers and the Armenians in the era of Abdülhamit II

MARGARET LAVINIA ANDERSON

The famous trial of the Kurdish chieftain Musa Bey, whose crimes and acquittal in 1889 embodied for many the insecurities and inequities faced daily by Armenians in eastern Anatolia, opened a period of crisis between the Armenian population and the Ottoman Muslim majority, one culminating in massacres over the next decade that took some 200,000 lives. Contrary to those who believe that Armenians were victims of Great Power diplomacy, or that Western public outrage, by encouraging Armenian militants to provoke massacres in hopes of intervention, was at least co-responsible for the horrors, the article argues that the massacres were an outgrowth of Abdülhamit's insecurities, driven by a deepening crisis of Ottoman legitimacy and identity, and spurred in part by previous reforms proclaiming civic equality. The interactions between public opinion, European diplomacy and the Ottomans, as well as comparisons from across the Atlantic, reveal real dilemmas of humanitarian conscience too often ignored by works such as Samantha Power's influential '*A problem from hell*'. Some problems, they suggest, are beyond intervention.

## Introduction

On 27 August 1889, the *Daily News* published a letter from William E. Gladstone, former Liberal prime minister and now leader of the opposition, under the headline 'The Turkish cruelties in Armenia'. The *News* had recently carried several atrocity reports, and Gladstone wanted to remind readers that 'we are entitled by Treaty to demand from the Sultan the suppression of all such outrages and the condign punishment of the miscreants concerned'. Gladstone's more important point, however, was not a legal one: 'It has not yet been forgotten that *The Daily News* was mainly instrumental in bringing to light thirteen years ago the atrocities in Bulgaria, which had for their result the destruction of Turkish rule in that province'.<sup>1</sup>

Forgotten it was not, least of all by the Ottomans, nor was Gladstone's own role in that debacle. His 1876 pamphlet, *Bulgarian Horrors*, had given anti-Ottoman interventionism its battle cry, calling on the states of Europe to 'obtain the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying off themselves.

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Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage'.<sup>2</sup> And now here was the Grand Old Man again, demanding that his government 'freely avail themselves ... of the power of public opinion in the cause of humanity and justice'.<sup>3</sup>

As a tool of humanitarian goals, Gladstone's confidence in the power of public opinion has retained its popularity on into the present. In 2003 Samantha Power won a Pulitzer Prize by making that case, albeit negatively: ethnic cleansing and genocides are stopped, she averred, only when large constituencies demand intervention. Unfortunately, however, vulnerable peoples are too often sacrificed by bystanders following their perceived national interest.<sup>4</sup> The Ottoman Armenians provide her Exhibit A.

The narrative of vulnerable peoples sacrificed to the national interests of outsiders is a popular one, and perhaps nowhere more so than in studies of the Armenian question, where Turks and Armenians have agreed at least on one thing: that Ottoman Armenians were 'victims of Great Power diplomacy'.<sup>5</sup> The problem for humanitarians, and for vulnerable peoples, is that only states have power. The problem for states, great *and* small, is that they have important interests that are not necessarily reinforcing.

In what follows I will examine a moment when the kinds of constituencies for intervention that both Gladstone and Power demanded did form—on behalf of Ottoman Armenians. I begin with a famous trial in 1889 that may have been an unnoticed turning point in European awareness of the oppression of Armenians, and perhaps in Sultan Abdülhamit II's own view of his Armenian subjects. I will then move on to the massacres of the mid 1890s, paying attention to what we might call the anti-Gladstone position, articulated by some contemporaries and influentially by one of America's most distinguished historians. The thrust of my argument is pessimistic. Armenians could not thrive without significant reforms, especially in the administration of justice. But demanding such reforms in any conspicuous way put their communities in danger. And Europe's efforts to encourage reform, or even to halt the massacres that ensued, demonstrate the real limits of coercive diplomacy.

### **The bandit Musa Bey**

In fact, Britain's prime minister, the Marquis of Salisbury, had anticipated Gladstone's complaint. Following interpellations in May and June in both houses of parliament, and another by Gladstone in August, the government had that very month published a blue book, containing the correspondence of its consular officials in eastern Anatolia and between its ambassador to Constantinople and London. This wasn't the first blue book revealing the 'conditions of the populations in Asiatic Turkey', nor would it be the last. Nine more were published over the next eight years. The correspondence provided opinion-makers with a window onto the eastern reaches of the sultan's domains. The landscape that window revealed was grim.<sup>6</sup>

The problems confronting Anatolian Armenians were varied and long-standing, as earlier blue books, travellers' reports and the petitions of Armenians testified. Chief among them were the depredations of Kurdish tribes, who were allowed to have things pretty much their own way. In a scandal in 1889, however, they were embodied in a single figure, the handsome young Kurdish chieftain, Musa Bey, a poster boy for what was wrong in Turkey's anarchic East. In addition to traditional sheep-stealing, caravan-jacking and bride-snatching in villages on the Muş plain, Musa Bey's merry men had taken to female dress in order to enter unprotected villages and rape the women.<sup>7</sup> A few villages with weapons fought back, but the Kurd could bring other resources to bear. He had purchased the tax farm for the district, thus making himself useful to the Porte (which otherwise might have collected no revenues at all) while acquiring the legal authority to extract taxes from the same people his raids had rendered incapable of paying. In the manner of a Colombian drug cartel, his bands controlled the roads between Muş and Bitlis, preventing farmers from taking their grain to the mills and bringing business to a standstill. When an Armenian complained to civil authorities, he was roasted to death, and a young bride was boiled, her grandfather slain and her village sacked—or so it was said; boiling may have been an exaggeration. But the British consul was convinced that Musa Bey had burned a protester alive 'with his own hand'. Feuding with the *mutesarif*, whom he claimed had taken 1,200 animals from his Kurds, Musa Bey had vowed to kill an Armenian for every animal lost.<sup>8</sup>

'The purest *Indianerbücherromantik*' was how a German press officer in 1915 would characterize similar reports about the atrocities then visited on Armenians.<sup>9</sup> Abdülhamit had his own term for tall tales: 'Bulgarian horrors', a sarcastic reference to Gladstone's pamphlet. Yet even as the sultan brushed off the representations of Western diplomats, assuring them that his own sources convinced him that Musa Bey was innocent of all charges, the Bulgarian precedent hovered in the background of every conversation.

Having bribed the pasha roughly 1,000 Turkish pounds to preclude arrest, Musa Bey was nonetheless finally taken into custody. Demanding his bribe back, and threatening otherwise to take it out in noses and ears of slaughtered Christians, within days he had 'escaped' and was soon seen sauntering down the streets of Bitlis, surrounded by his retinue. (The *mutessarif*, on the other hand, was arrested, although whether for Musa Bey's escape or for his detention in the first place was unclear.)

Then, in early May 1889, something happened that made European governments, and the Porte, sit up. Some five hundred Armenians, most of whom had journeyed from Muş to Stamboul (more than a thousand kilometres as the crow flies, but in a world where railroads were non-existent and good roads few, considerably further for human beings) stood in front of the grand vizier's windows waving petitions and howling for justice. Although they eventually withdrew in an orderly fashion, their daring example and their petition enumerating the acts of violence inflicted daily on their communities, coupled with 'truly terrifying' reports coming out of Muş, roused the indignation of fellow Armenians in the

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capital—some 200,000 strong. They also had a profound effect on Porte and palace. The protesters were explicit: if they failed to get redress, they would pursue another option—annexation by Russia.<sup>10</sup>

Musa Bey disappeared from Bitlis, but speculations about his plans proliferated, as did the sightings: a regular Musa Bey Watch. The new celebrity was spotted processing like royalty from Bitlis up to Trabzon. A Constantinople paper, *Tarik*, published a petition to the sultan, signed by 150 Armenian notables from Van—merchants, bankers, members of courts. It denounced as ‘slandorous and hostile’ the stories in foreign newspapers about the alleged oppression of Armenians in their province. The sole aim of such reports, they claimed, was ‘to alienate from Turkey those European governments and peoples that are friendly to her’, when in fact, ‘under Your Majesty’s shadow, tranquillity is perfect’. The Van Armenians ended with a shout-out to their own vali: so great was his zeal in rectifying the least wrong that, as long as *he* remained, they could endure any of the acts of tyranny enumerated in the papers! Circulated in translation throughout the rest of the press, the petition gathered another 250 signatures. Two days later, all Armenian political prisoners in the Muş–Bitlis–Van triangle were released. The empire’s entire Armenian community celebrated. Sometimes their government kept its bargains.<sup>11</sup>

After nearly a month on the road, in late June 1889, Musa Bey arrived in Constantinople, where he had many influential relatives, declaring that he had come voluntarily to seek his day in court. *Tarik* immediately published his self-defence. Throughout the summer, as people waited for a trial, official proclamations invited anyone with a complaint against the Kurd to appear in court. The defendant himself announced that he would cover the travel expenses of any witness.

The trial, in November, lasted a week, in a courtroom packed with the palace’s secret police.<sup>12</sup> The public prosecutor behaved ‘in an almost incredible way’, diplomatic observers thought; like an attorney for the defence, whose sole aim was to discredit witnesses against the accused, commented a staff member of the German embassy. Musa Bey was acquitted of all charges, on grounds that the witnesses—who was surprised?—contradicted each other.<sup>13</sup> The British ambassador was shaken. His German counterpart, no bleeding heart, found the outcome ‘scandalous’, a ‘blatant mockery of the law’. Austria chimed in. Privately the grand vizier made his own consternation plain, urging the ambassadors to keep up their pressure for justice, perhaps because he agreed with them that reform was in the empire’s own best interest, or perhaps as ammunition in his power struggle with the justice minister.<sup>14</sup>

Although the Powers espoused nothing like the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P) that was adopted by the UN in 2005, their response to Musa Bey’s acquittal reveals an unwritten R2P of their own: a *Responsibility to Protest*. The cooperation among the always-edgy Powers on this issue is remarkable. Already rumoured to have made representations in September, Germany now joined Britain, with strong expressions of disapproval.<sup>15</sup> Bismarck instructed his ambassador to inform the sultan that the Kurdish chieftain’s acquittal created a

disposition in Christian Europe prejudicial to Turkey, making things difficult even for Germany. It had to be made clear to the sultan that if Salisbury resigned, Gladstone would take the helm, and would without a doubt pursue an anti-Turkish policy. Lest sultan and Porte miss the strength of Bismarck's displeasure, he leaked his instructions to the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, known to be his mouthpiece. The item was immediately picked up in other German papers, and then by the British press, which spread the word.<sup>16</sup>

Abdülhamit's efforts to get the German ambassador, Joseph Maria von Radowitz, to intervene to stop the publication of a new English blue book were in vain. Radowitz dismissed the request out of hand, with Bismarck's approval.<sup>17</sup> Bismarck even agreed to include a summary of Germany's protests, along with those of Austria and Italy, in the British publication.<sup>18</sup> Only Russia's ambassador, Alexander Ivanovich Nélidov, who had initially led the diplomats urging that the 'Kurdish bandit' be brought to justice, unexpectedly refrained from subscribing to the united views of the foreign representatives. Some suspected that he had succumbed to pressures from Russia's jingoist press, which had taken to prophesying darkly that the Armenian cause was a tool of the Triple Alliance.<sup>19</sup> (Radowitz's own hypothesis was that, given the rivalry between the grand vizier, urging the Europeans to keep up the pressure, and the justice minister, known for his hostility to the Armenians, Nélidov was simply hedging his bets. He had never advocated acquittal to the sultan, had condemned it when it came, and in private continued to support a retrial.<sup>20</sup>) Some weeks later the United States would also protest, but separately. It was a potentially awkward situation, given the United States' conspicuous Failure to Protect the coloured population in its own Armenias.<sup>21</sup>

Bismarck's role may surprise. His indifference to the East, except in so far as it might become the object of destabilizing competition among the Powers, was proverbial. When asked at a parliamentary dinner what Germany desired in the Orient, he had sighed that he could only say what he told his wife, when she asked what he wanted for Christmas: 'Can't think of anything'.<sup>22</sup> Bismarck did not think much of the Turkish Empire, convinced that it had no future unless it reformed. 'This is your last chance', he had told General Mehmed Ali Pasha, as participants at the 1878 Congress of Berlin were making their departures, 'and if I know you, you won't take it'.<sup>23</sup>

The Powers' near-unanimous protests to the sultan about anarchy in the East and injustice in the capital were not quite a testimony to the 'power of public opinion' so beloved by Gladstone. His own two-inch letter to the editor, although it put foreign offices on the alert, had been swamped that summer by headlines on the great Docker's Strike. And for every item on the Armenians in the *Liberal Daily Mail*, there was a pro-Ottoman piece in the *Daily Telegraph*. The *Times* had begun to report on the tribulations inflicted on Armenians, publishing several articles on a girl burned to death and eight on Musa Bey, but even there, among the paper's forays into sensationalist journalism, entries under 'Accidents' overwhelmed those under 'Armenians'. Whatever the Porte may have thought, the cause of the Armenians was still a relatively small item on the humanitarian agenda.



In spite of the severe strain it put on Britain's relations with Turkey, Salisbury continued to insist, after Musa Bey's acquittal, that the sultan bring him to justice. Neither the organized humanitarian 'interest' at home nor the imperatives of domestic politics drove him, for Gladstone had lately indicated that he would not make the Armenians a party issue. Any danger to the Conservative cabinet fell away. Still, Salisbury gave the House of Commons his promise that he would continue to seek a retrial. It was 'a matter of honour', his ambassador explained to Radowitz.<sup>24</sup> Like other European leaders, he was convinced that reform was in the Turkish Empire's interest, and that the survival and stability of that empire was in Europe's.

No one needed to remind Abdülhamit of the danger of hostile public opinion. One of the chief tasks of his ambassadors was to send clippings home from even minor newspapers. They make up a significant collection in the Yildiz archives.<sup>25</sup> It is no accident that he cultivated personal relations with reporters, like the New York Herald's Sydney Whitman, and bestowed largesse where charm did not suffice.<sup>26</sup> But the public that mattered most, he knew, was not in Europe. The multi-cultural Ottoman Empire was no longer immune to identity politics, and there is every indication that Ottoman Muslims welcomed Musa Bey's acquittal as a stick in the eye of Turkey's critics—as famous acquittals of guilty parties have done even in our own day. The sultan was convinced that a retrial would only encourage Armenian machinations, while creating the worst possible impression in the Muslim world, and incite acts of revenge against his own person. With a conviction so firm, no appeal to what *Europe* conceived as his interest, and certainly no consideration for the durability of Salisbury's cabinet (Bismarck's argument) would move him to hand over the Kurd, much less monkey with customary relationships ('reform'), which would be seen as a concession to the very Armenians who were Europe's *protégés*.<sup>27</sup>

Could the Powers have forced him to do otherwise? The history of the past decade had demonstrated both a paucity of choices and their futility. Working in concert, with *two* collective notes in 1880, the Powers had pressured the sultan to honour his obligation, under the Treaty of Berlin, to reform these customary relationships. Acting independently, Britain had threatened force, deployed its fleet near Constantinople and, with frequent minatory references to 'Bulgaria', raised the prospect that it would rescind its guarantee, in the Cyprus Convention, to defend Turkey's Asian provinces. These measures angered Abdülhamit. They did not lead him to adopt any of the desired reforms.<sup>28</sup>

As 1889 turned into 1890, an observer might be forgiven for thinking: same old, same old. In fact, things were taking a turn for the worse. Religious hostility, with mullahs making themselves heard against Armenians, intensified, as Islam, encouraged by Abdülhamit, became increasingly a matter of identity—and Ottoman legitimacy.<sup>29</sup> And an ominous development arose in the East. Committees of self-declared Armenian revolutionaries called the Hunchaks had begun to form in the late 1880s.<sup>30</sup> Alarmed, Abdülhamit created cavalry regiments among the Kurds, bearing his own name—the Hamidiye—and enrolled the most powerful tribes. Some became the personal armies of their chiefs, who discovered that land

theft, as well every exercise of arbitrary rule, including requiring the dismissal of civil officials who got in their way, would enjoy impunity. Recognizing the direct relationship between their own power and the sultan's panic about the Armenians, leaders such as Zeki Pasha and Mustafa Agha did their best to blow up the Armenian peril, such as telegraphing the sultan with 'the wildly improbable story that 10,000 Armenian revolutionaries had collected round Jéziré', planning a rebellion in league with a son of the late emir, Bedir Khan Pasha, and the Shammars, a powerful Arab tribe.<sup>31</sup>

Suddenly the British press began to devote significantly more space to the Armenians. The *Times*, which had published only seven such items in the first quarter of 1890, doubled that number during the second, and during the third, increased it by a factor of ten. Perhaps more significantly, at least from Abdülhamit's point of view, over the course of the summer the paper began increasingly to refer to 'the Armenian *Question*'. Public opinion was coalescing, at least in England. The spotlight was initially on Erzurum. The decision of local officials to search the city's principal Armenian church for a non-existent weapons foundry (believed by the consul to have been a provocation) triggered a predictable affray with some loss of life. Hard on its heels, a protest by Hunchak militants in Stamboul's Kum Kapi cathedral against their too-compliant patriarch ended in a dangerous riot.<sup>32</sup> The sultan, who according to Muslim complaints spent his time poring over the international press for commentary about his empire while state papers accumulated unnoticed, responded to the Kum Kapi fracas with a communications shut-down. No newspaper was to mention it, no telegram to report it abroad. Neither Turk nor Armenian dared speak of it, lest he be denounced.<sup>33</sup> From Erzurum the news grew worse: a 'general, systematic [*planmäßig*] persecution of an entire ethnic group, carried out with the most reprehensible means' followed the church dustup, reported the British consul in a dispatch shared with the German ambassador. 'The sultan', the latter told Bismarck's successor, '[ . . . ] is increasingly agitated by the perception that the Armenian bugbear he has always feared is coming close. For the time being, he can think of nothing else but securing himself now against the presumed threat to his person'.<sup>34</sup> Having treated his Armenian subjects as enemies for the last dozen years, Abdülhamit was now about to treat them as hostages.

#### **Abdülhamit's massacres: 1894–96**

Colonel W. L. Colmar von der Goltz, seconded from the Prussian General Staff to the Ottoman Empire in 1878 to advise its army, has left a vivid picture of the bubble in which a nervous and sycophantic entourage, supported by a supine press, had isolated Abdülhamit. But those who blamed manipulative advisors for his government's weakness and indecision, depicting him as 'well-meaning, but vacillating', 'groping clueless for advice, and grasping every foreign hand that offered help', with an 'almost undignified inclination to avoid conflict', had no real conception of the man. Behind the sultan's 'skill at playing the modest man' lay 'a contempt for those around him, a strong streak of self-importance,

even megalomania (*Cäsarenwahn*)'. Far from being the pawn of his courtiers, he played them, nosing out their weaknesses, exploiting the egoism and greed he believed characteristic of human nature. While not arguing against the diplomats' impression of a man in the grip of paranoia, Goltz warned against underestimating his ruthlessness. Abdülhamit's 'weakness was only in affairs of state, for him a secondary matter. Where his *personal* interests were at stake—where he felt personally threatened—he was an entirely different person. At that moment he develops an energy, a toughness, and an implacability to which certainly no one who only saw him from a distance would impute to him'. Goltz's conclusion? 'For anyone who once excites his suspicion, no merit will protect; the most faithful servant will be ruthlessly tossed overboard the moment his [the sultan's] attention has been drawn, however accidentally, to even the semblance of a threat. Those whom Abdülhamit sees as his enemies, he persecutes to the point of annihilation.'<sup>35</sup>

Goltz was too categorical. As Şükrü Hanioglu has demonstrated, when it came to the networks of opposition intellectuals loosely known as 'Young Turks', who began organizing around 1889, the sultan's policy was to kill them with kindness; with pardons and amnesties; stipends to return from abroad; well-salaried posts to keep them away from the capital. He bribed the Geneva chapter to shut down its paper, bought its unsold issues and bestowed pensions for life on its three leaders—who used the money to establish new chapters, buy new presses and begin the next round of extortion.<sup>36</sup> The sultan exercised similar forbearance, as Selim Deringil has shown, towards lower-placed elements of his people. 'When it was a matter of this or that element of the Muslim population misbehaving', winning them over was always preferred to the military option. Thus, when troops were requested to stop a Kurdish tribe from ransacking the country around Mosul, 'the instructions from Istanbul were quite explicit'. Moderate methods were to be tried before military ones "'in order to avoid spilling Muslim blood'". The Kurds particularly had long exercised a veritable right to revolt 'whenever they felt they had a chance for success', says Justin McCarthy, especially in 'major wars' (1834, 1836, 1847, during the Crimean War of 1856 while Ottoman troops were at the front, and even after the devastating conflict with Russia, in 1879).<sup>37</sup> Those powerful tribes now organized as Hamidiye recognized their leverage in an increasingly insecure international environment and were not shy about making it clear that they could at any time, if not indulged, 'unite and rise against the government'.<sup>38</sup>

For the Armenians, however, Goltz's observations proved a prophecy. Violence against them was increasing, and then, responding to localized acts of resistance and a tax rebellion in Sasun, the sultan made it programmatic. In 1894 through 1896, in the vilayets of Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, Marmuretülaziz, Diyarbekir, Sivas, Aleppo, Adana, Trabzon and Ankara, Armenians were massacred, their homes burned down, their farms and shops plundered.<sup>39</sup> Although numbers naturally differ, these bloodbaths, followed by homelessness and starvation among many of the widows and orphans left behind, probably cost at least 200,000 Armenian lives.<sup>40</sup> Most of the immediate victims were men, but the women and children

who survived them, left without seed, animals, tools, workshops and often without homes, faced a slower version of the same fate.

We have become so jaded by the horrors of the last century that we need to put these numbers in contemporary perspective. They dwarf the toll of Russian violence against Jews. During the famous pogroms of 1881, when nearly a thousand Jewish homes were destroyed, only several dozen people were killed. Even the Odessa pogrom of 1905, perhaps the worst collective violence against Jews during the entire pre-war period, seems to have produced fewer than a thousand fatalities.<sup>41</sup> The huge disparity in Jewish and Armenian loss of life is explained not least by the fact that unlike Russia's pogroms, the Ottoman slaughter was largely instigated by the throne.<sup>42</sup> Although the wave of massacres ended in 1896, smaller ones occurred in 1900, 1901, 1902 and 1905. In 1909, another 20,000 Armenians in Adana vilayet fell to province-wide pogroms.

### How can we explain such violence?

Beginning with the Ottoman leadership itself, then in Turkish nationalist historiography, and given academic legitimacy among Ottomanists of the 1980s and 1990s, a popular explanation has seen the massacres as the intended result of the strategy of the new Armenian parties, revolutionaries who practised 'terror [...] to stimulate Muslims to the kind of reprisals that would force the governments of Britain and Russia to intervene'.<sup>43</sup> The premise of this provocation thesis is that Armenian militants, like Gladstone (and indeed like Samantha Power), had confidence in the power of Western public opinion, a power that, if outrage were organized and strong enough, would force a Victorian version of the 'Responsibility to Protect' on their governments. The revolutionaries thus intended to help it along. It is not unusual to read contemporaries also blaming public opinion, with the German Kaiser in the lead. 'At bottom the cause of all this mischief is to be found purely in the accursed campaign of [the Dukes of] Westminster, Argyll, and Gladstone in favour of the Armenians. Whose blood lies on England's head', William II exploded. And a few days later: 'We can thank none other than the English press and the public opinion dominated by it for this whole useless scandal of the Armenian question. Which is very awkward, especially for the Russians. *Hinc illae lacrimae!*' [Hence all these tears!]<sup>44</sup>

How useful is the provocation thesis in explaining the massacres? Provocation's most influential exponent has undoubtedly been William L. Langer, the most eminent American historian of his day. Although Langer was a Europeanist, he taught a popular course on the Ottoman Empire for generations of Harvard students—American's future leaders; and scholars applauded his massive *Diplomacy of imperialism: 1890–1902*, which analysed the relations between the European powers as they affected, and were affected by, their non-continental aspirations. Published in 1935 and re-issued three more times over the next thirty years, it won rave reviews, most of them singling out for special praise his chapters on the Armenian question, one of the first scholarly treatments.<sup>45</sup> Langer was no

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turcophile. But as a Rankean and therefore (he thought) impartial, it was a point of pride to resist sympathizing with the underdog.<sup>46</sup> As a realist, he was contemptuous of Gladstone precisely because of the latter's confidence in public opinion—that is, of the views of amateurs and humanitarians ('atrocitarians')—and sceptical of its intrusion into international politics.<sup>47</sup> Langer based his account on diplomatic and popular sources in five European languages, and cited an equally cosmopolitan list of Armenia's advocates: men such as James Bryce, Victor Bérard, Edwin Bliss, André Mandelstam and Johannes Lepsius. What lent his revisionist position on the massacres credibility, however, was Langer's use of the pamphlets of Hunchaks and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), as well as articles, memoirs and histories by Ruben Khan-Azad, Archag Tchobanian, E. Akournie and especially Mikael Varandian—many of them written in Armenian.<sup>48</sup>

In fact, eyewitness testimony was nearly unanimous in reporting that the massacres, in all but a few instances, were both unprovoked and centrally organized. Agents were sent out to provincial towns where they gathered Muslim men into the largest mosques and told them that the Armenians were rebelling, attacking Muslim women, burning mosques and defaming Islam. Sacred law allowed believers to take the property of such people.<sup>49</sup> The Austrian consul-general at Trabzon described the massacre there as:

proceeding without any kind of immediate cause by the Armenians but, rather, prepared and according to program, so that neighbouring storerooms of Greeks, Catholics and Turks remained as unmolested as their owners [...]. In contrast, all Armenians who didn't succeed in escaping the cordoned-off streets, or in hiding themselves, were ruthlessly shot or stabbed to death; women and children were spared. After two hours, a signal was given and firing ceased; and while part of the mob busied themselves with plundering the storerooms, the crowd dispersed as quickly as they had previously filled the streets.<sup>50</sup>

In Diyarbekir, nearly six hundred kilometres due south, the German ambassador found the events 'simply hair-raising'. It was 'pitiful', he said, 'to see how the Armenians, [cowering] in the crannies and corners of the streets, let themselves be dispatched like sheep, with no resistance at all'. After initial doubts, the baron was convinced that Abdülhamit was responsible. All it would have taken was a clear, public command, and at least his own troops and *zaptiye* would have desisted.<sup>51</sup>

Two massacres in the Ottoman capital, however, provided a case for the provocation thesis, and Langer treated them both. The better known occurred in late August 1896, following the seizure of the Ottoman Bank by members of the ARF who threatened to blow up themselves and everyone else if a laundry list of demands were not met. European dignitaries (the bank, after all, was theirs) negotiated with the Porte, and the would-be terrorists were allowed to depart for other shores.<sup>52</sup> But not, unfortunately, the Armenian population of Constantinople.

Langer's pages on the massacre that followed are studded with statements from Western residents of Constantinople who damned the ARF for the bloodshed. But

buried in the middle of one of these dense paragraphs, Langer remarks that ‘it is fairly certain that the government had learned of the revolutionaries’ plans some days before they were put into execution, and that these Turk bands had been organized and armed. The clubs were mostly of one design and the men who wielded them were rarely residents of the neighbourhood in which they operated’. Government troops, on the other hand, ‘conducted themselves well [ . . . ] and merely looked on while the carnage took place’.<sup>53</sup> As the bank seizure occurred in late August 1896, after more than a year of systematic massacres throughout the country, one might ask: who was provoking whom?

Constantinople had already been ravaged by violence the year before, occasioned by a protest demonstration in late September 1895, also organized by Armenian militants. Citing Haverhilltzi Garo’s essay ‘Bab Alii Tzoiitze’ (1932), Langer describes this massacre too as provoked. The demonstration’s organizers had arranged for participants to come heavily armed, and even as they notified Western ambassadors that their protest would be peaceful, they disclaimed responsibility in advance, should any intervention by police or military have ‘regrettable consequences’. ‘All of which’, Langer concluded, ‘indicates that the leaders had a definite result in view. They wanted disorders and massacres, and they got them’.<sup>54</sup>

But why did they get them? Citizens hold demonstrations every day without being massacred. Even Manchester’s iconic ‘Battle of Peterloo’, more than seventy-five years earlier, where the cavalry charged into a crowd estimated as at least sixty thousand people, fatalities were probably fewer than a score. Peterloo triggered riots by those indignant at the assault, but no dragnets or pogroms from the other side, much less massacres. Similarly, banks and other targets have been held for ransom without resulting in homicide. Demonstrating that the ARF and similar radicals *wanted* a massacre does not come close to explaining why they got one. Implicit in the provocation thesis is the premise that the society concerned is *able* to be provoked, that it is what some medievalists have deemed Europe, beginning in the eleventh century: ‘a persecuting society’.<sup>55</sup>

This is not to say that everyone wanted to persecute. The classicist Victor Bérard interviewed a number of witnesses after the massacres, among them an embassy dragoman, Armenians and some Albanian officials he had known since 1890. They told him of Muslims who had warned Armenians not to go home, and of one pious old man who turned the courtyard of the Eyüb Sultan mosque into a sanctuary for more than a hundred Armenians. ‘They brought us mats and jugs, and we stayed four days and they fed us.’ When police tried to break in, the softas (theology students) and the ‘clergy’ talked them out of it; in the end, even the Armenian shops in the neighbourhood were spared. Sir Edwin Pears, a long-time resident of the capital, had similar stories. The sultan’s ministers had personally ‘opposed’ the massacres, although they could do nothing, he reported. But Pears also related instances where Muslims of high rank actively resisted: Marshal Fuat Pasha forbade those in his neighbourhood to obey the sultan’s decree; an imam preached against it; a kaimakan of Birecik tried to suppress the orders, only to find the mob turn against him; a Kurdish village did not



participate in the massacres, and was burned down; a Turkish bey in Malatya had a house full of Armenian refugees, with Turkish ladies dressing their wounds. While such cases were ‘probably not numerous, . . . there was hardly a town in which pious Muslims did not shelter, or seek to shelter, Armenians during the massacres which commenced in 1894’.<sup>56</sup>

Had Langer given less weight to the proclamations of aspiring revolutionaries, and more to the observations of contemporaries, and especially of foreign service professionals, men who had not won their positions by being soft-hearted, his picture would have looked different. Describing the aftermath of what he deemed a ‘silly demonstration’ in Stamboul in September 1895, Germany’s man in Constantinople reported in shock how the Muslim population pursued its participants, hammering them to death with iron bars and metal-studded truncheons. Little by little the attack on demonstrators became hunting season for Armenians in general, with mobs breaking into houses, beating out any and every Armenian and dispatching them. Through two days of mayhem, the streets were thick with mullahs and softas, but not a soldier in sight—an absence that the ambassador could only believe was intentional. Foreign residents were scared out of their wits and let their embassies know it, but Baron Anton von Saurma assured Berlin that while the revolutionaries would probably continue to raise a little revolt [*putsch*] ‘here and there, as called for in their program’, the authorities were ‘very well able to master any such thing’. Troops now occupied Stamboul, so the population would no longer be allowed to participate.<sup>57</sup> This was a damning statement about what the authorities had failed to do so far.

Like Langer, Saurma endeavoured to be even-handed. He even employed the word ‘terror’ in connection with the *soi-disant* revolutionaries. But we should not imagine that ‘terror’ meant to the baron what it means to us. Among Germans of that era, terror denoted pressure from one’s associates or community; most commonly, publicly expressed disapproval or social exclusion.<sup>58</sup> Thus, while reporting that most of the capital’s Armenians had kept their distance from the militants, the baron conceded that some had participated in the demonstration, ‘terrorized by the revolutionary committee’ who gave them money and weapons. When the attacks began, the leaders exploited the panic, Saurma said, ‘to keep up the excitement and invite new excesses’. But the ambassador left one thing clear: ‘The Turkish authorities themselves bear the responsibility for the bloody rioting of the Stamboul Muslim population, in that, having been informed of the intended Armenian demonstration, [they] allowed it to take place and incited the mob, to whom the police had secretly issued weapons, especially thick cudgels, to descend upon the procession and break it up’.<sup>59</sup>

In fact, Langer expressed the same judgement of the state’s role when he dealt with the renewed Constantinople massacres the following year. And in assigning final responsibility for the violence in the provinces during the autumn and winter of 1895–96, he did not flinch: ‘It became increasingly plain that the outbreaks were part of a definite policy and that they were ordered and directed from above. The opinion was widespread in Europe that the Sultan was taking his revenge for having been forced by the powers to grant reforms’. Langer’s own

view? ‘It was perfectly obvious that the sultan was determined to end the Armenian question by exterminating the Armenians’.<sup>60</sup>

Proponents on each side of the Armenian–Ottoman story are thus able to quote the scholar who would become president of the American Historical Association to their own purpose. Even-handedness undigested ends in incoherence.<sup>61</sup>

### **The limits of coercive diplomacy**

The actor on whom public opinion worked most powerfully was neither the Armenians nor Europe’s statesmen, but Abdülhamit II. He remembered Bulgaria, but he also remembered Abdülaziz and Murad V, his two immediate predecessors, both deposed, one murdered.

The massacres grew out of the conjunction of slow seismic shifts in the social-structural landscape of the Ottoman East, recently given trenchant analyses by Stephan Astourian and Janet Klein, with a crisis in the sultanate, formulated eloquently by Selim Deringil: ‘How were the Ottoman sultans to sustain legitimacy in a world context where their position was under threat not only from the outside, but also from their own Muslim population?’ It was not easy. Some of Abdülhamit’s solutions were common among other European regimes: education, the invention of tradition, the instrumentalization of religion.<sup>62</sup> One was not: the mobilization of solidarity, with the sultan and with each other, through the massacre of a despised group.<sup>63</sup> Such solidarity also brought, through plunder, material rewards to many participants in the massacres. Ambassadors marvelled to see police and soldiers looting so vigorously. But this was in a state whose employees might wait a very long time to get paid.<sup>64</sup>

In the autumn of 1895, Constantinople’s diplomatic community believed that discontent among Muslims was greater now than even prior to Abdülaziz’s removal; and now it penetrated all strata: military, clergy and civil servants down to workers and load bearers. Everyone, apparently, wanted Abdülhamit gone, but no one knew how to do it.<sup>65</sup> Muslim committees abroad, including those we have come to call Young Turks, had long appealed to the Great Powers to reform or overthrow him, and were happy to refer to the massacres as yet another good reason for the Powers to take a hand.<sup>66</sup> The violation of Ottoman sovereignty seems not to have been an issue. Likewise, within the sultan’s government, within the palace itself, high officials approached British diplomats, one requesting naval help for a coup.<sup>67</sup> Abdülhamit found a letter on his desk, giving him six days to decide to abdicate or introduce reforms for the whole empire—or die. No one suggested that it was an Armenian who had left it. Not surprisingly, fourteen members of the court were said to have been executed and 25,000 troops were called in to fortify the capital. Yet manifestos kept appearing, some soldiers were disobeying, the loyalty of Arab subjects was reported to be shaky, and disorders in Yemen were now chronic.<sup>68</sup>

It would be foolish to point to a single source for all this anger: some came from progressives, who longed for a secular society, some came from the devout; some from those who saw a better future with centralization, some from others who



wanted more local autonomy. But if we consider the timing of the popular anger at the regime, we see that it had been rising in tandem with violence against the Armenians, but also with the perceived possibility of 'reform'. Beginning with the Tanzimat, reform, whatever its shape, especially when pressed by Europeans, was understood to mean some form of juridical and social equality between Muslims and Christians.

Yet the climate for collective European action on behalf of reform had changed since 1890. Most crucially, Bismarck was gone, and those who succeeded him were overshadowed by their emperor. William II ran hot and cold, almost by the hour, on the Armenian question. Dispatches from the Bosphorus left him outraged at Europe's failure to protect. 'And here we Europeans and Christians must look on calmly and still offer fine words to the sultan! Shame! on us all!' he scribbled on a report. Having heard that the Porte had referred to the Great Powers as '*les sex Impuissances*', he burned at hearing of his ambassador's 'friendly' representations. 'For my part, the patience of the Great Powers [ . . . ] is long gone. His Noble Lordship should be made aware that he can disappear just like Abdülaziz. Perhaps that will get his attention'. And later: 'The poor beggars are dead and Abdülhamit wanted it. Depose him!'<sup>69</sup>

Dispatches from the *Thames*, on the other hand, reporting the rallies, petitions and letters to the editor of the humanitarians, left the Kaiser no less incensed. All humbug, he thought, especially when Salisbury urged collective action by referring to the demands of public opinion.<sup>70</sup> Quick to smell a manoeuvre to expand British power in the Mediterranean, William felt that, as someone once said of an earlier foreign secretary, 'He always has excellent motives for doing himself a good turn'.<sup>71</sup> The result was that, even as it signed on with the other Powers in various *démarches*, including a collective telegram in August 1896, Germany came to define the Armenian issue as a British one. Although Berlin would not prevent London from acting on the Armenians' behalf, it was determined not to be gulled into carrying Britain's water, and had little trouble convincing its allies, in Vienna and Rome, to do the same.<sup>72</sup> Russia, said to support William's interpretation of Salisbury's moves, had its own reasons to be wary.<sup>73</sup> Under intensified Russification measures, its relationship with its own Armenians had been deteriorating.<sup>74</sup> Any reform proposal, such as Salisbury's, that entailed creating a single administrative unit to encompass the vilayets inhabited by the Armenian masses, conjured up the nightmare of a Piedmont of the Caucasus.

Europe ended up leaving Armenians to the mercies of the Turks—but not, *pace* Samantha Power, for lack of an aroused public. The drumbeat of agitation in England, popular and elite, is well known, and perhaps goes without saying, given England's imperial interests. Less familiar is the broad-based movement in Switzerland, whose 'interest' in the Orient, imperialist or otherwise, was so slender that until 1927 it had not even opened formal diplomatic relations with Turkey.<sup>75</sup> In the United States, the Protestant churches campaigned loudly for aid to the Armenians. In Germany, the government did its best to push the churches' agitation out of the public square, fearful that an aroused public would—just as Gladstonians wished—try to force its choices. But the government

did not prevent church groups from establishing German orphanages, clinics and schools in Anatolia to save the widows and orphans left destitute by the massacres. In France, Radical and Catholic MPs crossed party lines to champion the Armenians. In Russia, Gladstone's picture was featured in a money-raising publication, and unlike the movement for Bulgaria in 1877, this one 'moved beyond the great communion of Orthodoxy', formulating its mission in broader, humanistic Christian terms, a step, argues Rebecca Manley, towards 'reconceptualizing the Russian empire itself in civic terms'.<sup>76</sup> Armenophil sentiment was publicized in the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden; among poets, pacifists, Quakers, and (in 1909) the Central Conference of American Rabbis.<sup>77</sup> An aroused public, however, did not stop the massacres, nor improve the security of Armenians in the years before their genocide. To the Powers' protests, commission delegates, memoranda and notes, and open telegrams (warning the sultan that he who tolerates a mob might one day find himself its target), Abdülhamit had responded in his customary fashion: diversion, delay and (after ostensible submission) defiance, in the form of renewed massacres.<sup>78</sup> The dogs bark, but the caravan moves on.

### Remedies?

We have attributed too much agency, in my view, to the Powers (and their publics) in the Armenians' weal or woe. When it came to Armenians, it proved easier to pass resolutions than to produce solutions.<sup>79</sup> 'Bulgaria', as then defined, had won its autonomy, but without demographic mass, autonomy could not help Armenians. An American traveller reported that '[i]n Kurdistan, you will find for every Armenian village a half dozen or more Kurdish or Circassian villages'. Those numbers were of course mere 'eyeballing', but more reliable statistics would still have left Armenians outnumbered. Moreover, the Yankee traveller continued, the Kurds were 'fighting men, each one armed to the teeth', while the Armenians were not only unarmed, but unfamiliar with the use of weapons.<sup>80</sup> In the words of an earlier British ambassador: 'An autonomous Armenia could not hold its own against the Kurds for a month'.<sup>81</sup> Abdülhamit knew it, and the Powers knew it too.

If it were not possible to cajole the sultan and his public into granting equality and justice to the Armenians, it was even less possible to coerce them into doing so. In Britain, force was considered by successive foreign secretaries, Liberal and Conservative, to 'make the sultan mend his ways'.<sup>82</sup> But advice from the government's military and naval experts raised doubt that coercive action could help the land-locked Armenians. The empire was too big and too dangerous to occupy. As wise men have said: you can do anything with bayonets except sit on them. Violence, even for the purpose of pacification, introduces its own unpredictable dynamic. In the back of everyone's mind was the fear that rather than reforming the Ottoman Empire, military action would lead to its collapse.<sup>83</sup>

And partition? Many thought of it. A resolution submitted to the House of Commons demanded it. In Germany the editor of the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, normally a sober man, but believing that Turkey was disintegrating, announced

that it was time to think seriously about partition and its implications. Restoring the disrupted balance of power would require a reconfiguration of Europe. Metz should probably go back to France. Russia's capital must move to Moscow. Numerous other complicated territorial swaps, within and outside Europe, which he outlined, would also be necessary—a prospect that set other sober heads spinning.<sup>84</sup> 'Vir pacificus', as the author signed himself, had at least brought out into the open what diplomats knew: partitioning the empire would only have compounded the dangers of occupation by superimposing (in this age of imperialism) international competition on local ethnic conflict. No Power could imagine a post-Ottoman future it could live with; what they could imagine, however, was the nightmare of a war of all against all.<sup>85</sup>

Salisbury indeed had floated the idea of partition, but the truth was, nobody wanted a piece of Anatolia.<sup>86</sup> When in September 1896 he suggested to the tsar that if Abdülhamit continued to block reform, the Powers should depose him, Nicholas II dismissed the notion out of hand. Any successor put in by the Christian Powers would himself be deposed, and perhaps murdered, by the Turks. And 'in that case', Nicholas concluded, 'the intolerable burden of pacifying or governing the Turkish empire would be thrown upon the Russians'.<sup>87</sup>

What the Powers wanted in the Ottoman Empire was not territory, but stability, and stability, they believed, required 'good government'. And so they had insisted, and so (thanks to public opinion) they would keep on insisting, continuing to submit proposals they believed would put the empire on a firmer basis. But they were bound to fail. For it is a truth universally acknowledged that a single ruler (or politician) in possession of a proposal asks first what he has to lose, and only then what he has to gain.<sup>88</sup> Abdülhamit saw that the Powers' idea of good government ('reform') was precisely what would anger Muslim opinion to the breaking point. And if more massacres ensued, what would an outraged European public require then? 'Are we then', Germany's chancellor, Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe, wearily asked his sister in 1896, 'on account of the Armenian horrors, to wage war against the sultan? I wouldn't like to see the faces in the Reichstag when I announced: we're mobilizing against Turkey'.<sup>89</sup>

Yet if one recoiled from even the prospect of military intervention, what was the point of alienating a friendly power by mass rallies, censures and sanctions? Indeed, the argument has been made that such protests and threats only bred Ottoman contempt for Europeans and the norms they were touting, angered the Muslim population and encouraged Armenians in false hopes. In short: it made things worse. Lord Salisbury, who demonstrably cared about the Armenians, was in the end haunted by such rueful reflections. Two decades later, Henry Morgenthau, the US ambassador to Constantinople during World War I and Samantha Power's showpiece for someone who 'stood out by standing up', made the same argument to the State Department in July 1915, at the height of what he recognized as 'race extermination'. 'Protests as well as threats are unavailing and probably incite the Ottoman government to more drastic measures [ . . . ]', he telegraphed. 'Suggest that you inform belligerent nations and mission boards of this.'<sup>90</sup> It is a position with which at least one heroic aid worker on the spot agreed.<sup>91</sup>

Bismarck's reputedly cynical dismissal of the Orient as not worth a Pomeranian musketeer was made (in a Reichstag debate over Russian tariffs) to correct an opponent who claimed that the chancellor had described the *entire Orient* as not worth the yield of an acre of land in Pomerania—a famously infertile region. In fact, Bismarck made no such comparison. Rather, he explained, 'we have in Turkey itself, yes, the interest that I previously characterized as general sympathy with our fellow Christians'. But he would 'advise against active participation' in the Orient so long as he saw no clear 'German interest there, which—forgive the blunt expression—would be worth more than the uninjured bones of a single Pomeranian musketeer'. Bismarck was not talking about economics: 'I wanted to express that we must be more sparing with the blood of our countrymen, and our soldiers'.<sup>92</sup> Force is an option whose costs in flesh and blood are rarely paid by those deciding it, Bismarck knew, and are too easily hidden behind the decent draperies of the oppression that military action is invoked to eliminate.

So much for the Powers and the public; what about the Armenians? The gaze of an innocent abroad may offer some perspective. When, after the first major massacres, in Sasun in 1894, the Powers began pressing the sultan for an investigation, his first response was to suggest that the United States be put in charge.<sup>93</sup> Abdülhamit may have been mad north-north-west, but he could still tell a hawk from a handsaw. America, since 1893, had been represented by the bumptious Texan, Alexander Watkins Terrell, an amateur in foreign affairs, but proud, when it came to things Ottoman, to bring his own experiences to the table, which gave him, he was sure, special insight. And perhaps they did. 'The sultan has the sulks about the Armenian question', he wrote to his wife. But Terrell felt his pain. In post-Tanzimat Turkey, he saw his own South under Reconstruction. And as a Texan, he identified with the Turks, disliked the Armenians (Negro freedmen) and resented the Europeans (Radical Republicans) with their incessant demands for reform. These were the very sort of men who, having first deprived the South of its hard-earned property, had 'declared their intention to reduce us to a condition of territorial vassalage, and to place us below the level of those who were once our slaves'. Terrell had opposed giving the freedmen the vote, and judicial equality he found insufferable: 'I found it more congenial to my nature to direct negroes in the fields than to bow before them and call them "gentlemen of the jury"'. Thus, the Armenian deaths that, by late 1895, Terrell calculated at 50,000–100,000, he regretted, but they did not much surprise him. He understood 'the resentful violence of a proud and dominant race, caused by enforced reforms of a subject race, which', as he saw in his own country, 'was increased by the arrogance of the enfranchised negroes, and which resulted in Kuklux outrages'. Abdülhamit was revolted by Minister Terrell's practice of spitting chewing tobacco all over the palace's carpets, but he cultivated the Texan, as he did other Americans. Soon Terrell was considering giving up his embassy post. The sultan had asked him to recommend someone who could tour the country 'to write up truthfully his observations of men, customs, freedom of conscience, protection of *all* religions, and the progress in civilization now being made'. Terrell wrote to his wife that 'I think without telling any lies I can do a great good—shed

new light upon the Empire of Islam, have a trip that will be a memory and make perhaps 5, or \$10,000'. (In the end, though, Terrell stayed at the embassy, until eventually indignation at home about his views on the Armenians forced his recall.)<sup>94</sup>

Terrell's response to the massacres suggests the bleak future that awaited the Armenians. The violence in the 1890s was the outcome of the ethnic hostilities triggered by the social revolution promised in the Tanzimat and guaranteed in Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin. The controversial centre of this revolution, which the prospective reforms were to implement, was equality for non-Muslims.<sup>95</sup> But civic equality has ever been hard to establish. It prevailed in France only after violent revolution, civil war and international wars that lasted, on and off, from 1792 to 1815. In the United States, equality-on-the-books required military victory in a conflict (1861–65) whose death toll exceeded that of any in American history, just falling short of its combined figures for both World Wars. But political and civic equality in *reality* took another hundred years—amid considerable violence against the Black minority. As for equality in justice and policing, they have yet to come. These comparisons suggest how very difficult it is to impose a profound social revolution on any society, even one where equality, not hierarchy, is inscribed in its birth certificate and celebrated in its national myths.<sup>96</sup>

But let us not stop there. A thought experiment will reveal an ominous difference between the US and Ottoman situations. Let us imagine that, instead of being protected by oceans east and west, and weak states to the north and south, America had a large, threatening and much more powerful neighbour to its north-east—which was Black; that its territorial waters, in which its own navy was insignificant, were patrolled by the fleets of two other Great Powers—which were Black; that to its north-west sat a number of states, commanding territory recently its own, but now in the hands of extremely hostile Black governments, spoiling for more; and finally, that it had been a long time since the United States had won a war on its own. One would, I think, predict a far worse future for African-Americans than even they have suffered.

The (refugee) economist Albert O. Hirschman described the choices that confront 'consumers', whether customers or citizens, when the quality of a particular 'good' they desire deteriorates, as exit, voice and loyalty.<sup>97</sup> The Armenians had tried 'loyalty', and while some would continue to see this as the safest option right up to the point when no options remained, loyalty neither ended the deterioration nor protected against its consequences. In the 1890s and beyond, some Armenians chose 'voice', a more optimistic but ultimately dangerous decision. It would be foolhardy for a historian (and would risk 'expulsion' from her guild) to read a known future back into a contingent past.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, it is difficult for this writer to see an alternative to the decisions that Armenians, singly or collectively, made that would have averted the fate they suffered. 'Exit' was the best choice, and probably the only one. Between 1878 and 1912, an estimated 150,000 emigrated to the Caucasus, and another 150,000–200,000 to Egypt, the Balkans and the United States.<sup>99</sup>

The massacres of the 1890s, whose potential was certainly ‘genocidal’, suggest that it does not take the cover of world war for a large and important state to eradicate a significant part of its population. Europe cried, but stood aside. The massacres were halted only by Abdülhamit himself, who had made his point. That precedent suggests that the price of saving Ottoman Armenians, if his or another regime should choose to go even further, would be one that the West would have found too high.

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### Endnotes

- 1 ‘The Turkish cruelties in Armenia’, *Daily News*, 27 August 1889.
- 2 R. W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the eastern question* (London: Macmillan, 1935), p. 75.
- 3 Gladstone, ‘Turkish cruelties’. Gladstone’s letter had touched the sultan to the quick, Ambassador Joseph Maria von Radowitz reported to Otto von Bismarck, 12 September 1889, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amt (hereafter: AA), Türkei 183, Vol. 1, R14050. Hereafter for this signature, Türkei 183 will be assumed, unless otherwise given, and only AA and the respective volume and R numbers will be cited.
- 4 Samantha Power, *A problem from hell: America and the age of genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), pp. 508–509, describes these constituencies as domestic. Others refer to the ‘international community’.
- 5 E.g. Aram Turabian, *L’eternelle victime de la diplomatie européenne* (Marseilles: Impr. nouvelle de Marseille, 1929); Salahi R. Sonyel, *The Ottoman Armenians: victims of Great Power diplomacy* (London: K. Rustem & Brother, 1987); Aram Kirakossian, *British diplomacy and the Armenian question from the 1830s to 1914* (Princeton, NJ and London: Gomidas Institute Books, 2003), pp. xi, 114. Surveying recent work on the tension between humanitarianism and *Realpolitik*: Michelle Tusan, ‘Humanitarianism, genocide and liberalism’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2015, pp. 83–106.
- 6 One might argue that the view of an outsider was necessarily partial (and one might say the same of insiders). The shortcomings of blue books and other records of European foreign offices have not dissuaded Ottomanists from relying on them for much of their material. E.g. Musa Şaşmaz, *British policy and the application of reforms for the Armenians in eastern Anatolia 1877–1897* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2000), pp. xv–xvii.
- 7 In his study of the sultan’s own reforms, Şaşmaz remarks that he had ‘not taken into consideration [ . . . ] individual acts of theft, abducting girls and so on. We believe that these were a part of life prevailing in the country for centuries. So we disregarded such things in examining the changes in the eastern provinces’. *British policy*, p. 129 n. 385. For how one of those abducted girls felt about it, see the memoir: Arménouhie Kévonian, *Les noces noires de Gulizar* (Marseille: Éditions parentheses, 1993).
- 8 My account of the Musa Bey affair, here and elsewhere, comes from *Turkey, No. 1. Correspondence respecting the condition of the populations in Asiatic Turkey 1888–89: presented to the Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty. August 1889* (London: [ . . . ] Her Majesty’s Stationery [ . . . ] August 1889). Subsequent blue books are cited as *Turkey*, followed by the relevant number and date.
- 9 Roughly: Western penny dreadful. Johannes Lepsius, ‘Vorwort’, in *Der Todesgang des armenischen Volkes* (Potsdam: Tempelverlag, 1919), p. xxiv. The scepticism evinced by Britain’s hard-nosed civil servants towards some of the more sensational accounts by Armenians and the press inspires confidence in the credibility of their own (often equally sensational) reports. E.g. *Turkey, No. 1* (1890) and *Turkey, No. 1* (1891).
- 10 Untitled report in Vienna’s *Neue Freie Presse*, 9 May 1889, p. 5. A garbled summary by Winckler, German chargé d’affaires, Pera, to Bismarck, 7 December 1889, AA Vol. 1, R14050.
- 11 *Turkey, No. 1* (1889), pp. 78–79, 84.

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- 12 For a narrative of the trial and the judgement on each charge, with an appendix including a transcript and several reports from the London *Times*, see Musa Şaşmaz, *Kürt Musa Bey Olayı 1883–1890* [The Musa Bey incident: 1883–1890] (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2004).
- 13 For reactions to the trial, see Winckler to Bismarck, 7 December 1889, AA Vol. 1, R14050. The Turkish version, from *Turquie*, 26 November 1889, in Bilal N. Şimşir (ed.), *British documents on Ottoman Armenians*, 4 Vols. (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1982–94), 2: pp. 667–670. Readers should be aware that Şimşir’s volume is tendentiously edited. One example: although he reprints many documents on a Nestorian-Kurdish fracas in 1888–89, during which the Porte demanded that two British missionaries be removed, saying that the Nestorian patriarch agreed, the independent reports of Mr. Athelstan and Dr. H. P. Chomondeley (misspelled in the index as Cholmely), confirming the missionaries’ account and disproving the Porte’s, are omitted without remark, although both appear in the blue book that is Şimşir’s source.
- 14 Radowitz to Bismarck, 26 December 1889, and 9 January 1890, AA Vol. 1, R14050. The Justice Minister, Cevdet Pasha, did fall that spring, but by summer he was back as minister without portfolio. Radowitz to Chancellor Leo von Caprivi, 5 August 1890, AA Vol. 2, R14051.
- 15 *Le Temps*, 12 September 1889, supplied by sources apparently within the Porte. For Austria’s participation, and Russia’s declining to do so, see Radowitz to Bismarck, 1 January 1890; for Italy’s participation, see Radowitz to Bismarck, 9 January 1890, AA Vol. 1, R14050.
- 16 Bismarck to Radowitz, 12 December 1889; Bernhard Bülow to Radowitz, 13 December 1889; ‘Mussa Bey. A German Warning to the Porte’, *Daily News*, 30 December 1889. AA Vol. I, R14050.
- 17 Radowitz to Bismarck, 19 February 1890, AA Vol. 2, R14051.
- 18 Sir Edward Malet to Bismarck, 5 February 1890, followed by Notiz, AA Vol. 2, R14051.
- 19 And some of the French press as well: *Les Temps*, 12 September 1889, fed, apparently, by Porte sources. French actions do not appear in these documents, but it had already started allowing Russia to take the lead in Armenian matters.
- 20 Radowitz to Bismarck (whose marginalia concurred), 9 January 1890, AA Vol. 1, R14050, noting Austria’s participation in the protests along with Russia’s unwillingness to do so. Radowitz was convinced, however, that Russia had taken no steps *on behalf of* Musa Bey with the Porte. Radowitz to Bismarck, 14 February 1890, AA Vol. 2, R14051.
- 21 Radowitz to Bismarck, 28 February 1890, AA Vol. 2, R14051.
- 22 Quoted in the third person (*Es fiel ihm nichts ein*). Seton-Watson, *Disraeli*, p. 120.
- 23 Paul Schroeder, private communication, and his ‘Does Murphy’s Law apply to history?’ *Wilson Quarterly*, New Years 1985, pp. 84–93.
- 24 Radowitz to Bismarck, 19 February 1890, AA Vol. 2, R14051.
- 25 Selim Deringil, *The well-protected domains: ideology and the legitimation of power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), pp. 136–141. The sultan’s demand to read even insignificant ‘rags’ bemused the German foreign office. Foreign Minister Adolf Freiherr Marschall von Bieberstein [hereafter: Marschall] to Constantinople embassy, 17 April; Ambassador Hugo Prince Radolin to Caprivi, 7 June 1893, AA Vol. 5, R7024.
- 26 Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The history of the Armenian genocide: ethnic conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1995), pp. 97, 100 n. 38. It is clear from George H. Hepworth’s *Through Anatolia on horseback* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1898) that Whitman-as-keeper was Abdülhamit’s requirement for allowing even the *New York Herald*, a paper regarded as pro-Ottoman, to send Hepworth to the East.
- 27 Radowitz to Bismarck, 14 February 1890, AA Vol. 2, R14051. Although it did not satisfy Britain, ultimately the sultan did agree to a transfer to Yemen. R to B, 28 February 1890, 18 June 1890, both in AA Vol. 2, R14051. Nevertheless, the *Times* continued to report his presence in Turkey long thereafter.
- 28 For fleet movements, collective notes, threats to revoke the Cyprus Convention, bringing Balkan-like consequences, see Kirakossian, *British diplomacy*, pp. 96–142. Kirakossian offers a week-by-week account. His conclusion (p. 144), that all these efforts ‘did not help the Armenian community but [ . . . ] seemed to have had the opposite effect’, ill fits his governing assumption that the Powers should, and could, have prevented the Armenians’ terrible fate.
- 29 Deringil notes that in the absence of any ‘supra-ethnic concept of nation or empire to which diverse peoples could be attracted with a modicum of voluntarism [ . . . ] the gap was filled by a recharged conceptualization of religion’. *Well-protected domains*, p. 108. More investigation of the role of clerics, Muslim and Armenian, is needed before we can assess with any security the role of this ‘recharging’ in spurring hostility.
- 30 Outside of Armenia there has been almost no scholarship on Armenian revolutionaries. But see Anahide Ter Minassian, *Nationalism and socialism in the Armenian revolutionary movement (1887–1912)* (Cambridge, MA: Zoryan Institute, 1984).



- 31 Abdullah Cevdet, a Kurd and a Young Turk, thought the Hamidiye had been created for the express purpose of exacerbating relations between Kurds and Armenians, and charged the sultan with spreading wild rumours of his own—e.g. ‘that the Armenians, in cahoots with the Russians, were planning to massacre the Kurds’—before sending an order to attack. Janet Klein, *The margins of empire: Kurdish militias in the Ottoman tribal zone* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), pp. 15, 77, 81, 83; Cevdet quotation: 89.
- 32 Radowitz to Caprivi, 26 June 1890, enclosing a sixteen-page account from an Armenian resident; and 28 July 1890, AA Vol. 2, R14051.
- 33 *The Armenian question and the rule of Abdul Hamid: respectfully dedicated to the members of parliament by the Ottoman Committee of Europe*, twenty-page pamphlet, enclosure in Radowitz to Caprivi, 21 July 1890; R to C, 29 July 1890, AA Vol. 2, R 14051.
- 34 Radowitz to Caprivi, 1 August 1890, enclosing eleven-page report, AA Vol. 2, R14051. For confirming evidence, see Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in opposition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 25.
- 35 Colmar von der Goltz, private letter of 31 August 1890, excerpted by the General Staff for the AA, 13 September 1890, AA Türkei 159, Nr. 1. secr. R13785. Radowitz also observed a ‘pathological disposition’ disabling the sultan, but unlike Goltz, also saw him as exploited unconscionably by others. R to Bismarck, Pera, 14 and 19 February 1890, AA Vol. 2, R14051.
- 36 Hanioglu, *Young Turks*, pp. 114, 126, 133, 154; for other examples of leniency, see p. 67.
- 37 Deringil, *Well-protected domains*, pp. 100–101. Justin McCarthy, *Death and exile: the ethnic cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin, 1995), p. 42.
- 38 Klein, *Margins of empire*, p. 82.
- 39 For the chain of events, see Jelle Verheij, ‘Die armenischen Massaker von 1894–1896. Anatomie und Hintergründe einer Krise’, in Hans-Lukas Kieser (ed.), *Die armenische Frage und die Schweiz (1896–1923)* (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 1999), pp. 69–132. For sources, primary and secondary, in six languages including Turkish, see George N. Shirinian, ‘The Armenian massacres of 1894–1897: a bibliography’, *Armenian Review*, Vol. 47, No. 1, 2001, pp. 113–164.
- 40 For the most recent mortality estimate, see Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered dreams of revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014), p. 14. Raymond Kévorkian estimates ‘nearly 200,000’, in *The Armenian genocide* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), p. 11. The Patriarchate’s figure was 300,000, according to Taner Akçam, *A shameful act* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004), p. 42. Some contemporaries put the number at half a million, e.g. Émile Antoine, in *Les massacres d’Arménie* (Brussels: Société Belge de Librairie, 1897), p. 97; Sir William Mitchell Ramsey, cited by Sir Edwin Pears, *Life of Abdul Hamid* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1917), p. 247. The most careful contemporary estimate is that of Lepsius, who initially counted 88,243, but in ‘A later note’ appended to the same edition, put the number at 100,000, a figure accepted by many contemporaries and later scholars. *Armenia and Europe: an indictment* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), pp. xviii–xix, 330.
- 41 And yet William L. Langer could write: ‘After all, if the Turks were massacring the Armenians, so were the Russians massacring the Jews’. *The diplomacy of Imperialism: 1890–1902* (New York: Alfred J. Knopf, 1935), p. 163. For Odessa, as well as the Bialystok pogrom, considered ‘exceptionally severe’ at eighty-two Jewish lives, see David Vital, *A people apart: the Jews in Europe, 1789–1939* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 283, 509–510, 569–571, 589. Robert Weinberg gives a lower estimate for Odessa and notes widespread violence against other minorities, especially Armenians: *The revolution of 1905 in Odessa: blood on the steps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 164.
- 42 Very diverse sources assured Ambassador Anton Freiherr von Saurma that most of the massacres could be ‘traced back to secret orders from the palace’. Those near the sultan reported outbreaks of ‘wild fury’. They consider him certifiably insane and tremble at his bloody orders. No one considers his life safe for a single day’. Later Saurma would report that the ‘highest quarters’ hold the ‘firm, preconceived belief’ that the Armenians ‘must be disposed of [*unschädlich gemacht*] for all time’. S to the AA, 10 November 1895 and 29 July 1896, *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette 1871–1914*, 40 Vols., ed. Johannes Lepsius et al., Vol. 10, p. 101; Vol. 12/1, p. 18. Hereafter: GP.
- 43 Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey*, Vol. 2. *The rise of modern Turkey 1808–1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 203–205. Foreign Minister Said Pasha’s similar view of the massacre of Trabzon (Saurma to Chancellor Chlodwig Prince zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, 12 October 1895, GP Vol. 10, pp. 73–74), was, as we shall see, directly contradicted by the testimony of the Austrian consul-general there. Zagorski to Ambassador Heinrich von Calice (Vienna), 10 October 1895, GP Vol. 10, p. 86. For critiques, see Robert Melson, ‘A theoretical inquiry into the Armenian massacres of 1894–1896’, *Comparative Studies of Society and History*, Vol. 24, No. 3, July 1982, pp. 481–589; Ronald Grigor Suny, ‘Rethinking the unthinkable: toward an understanding of the Armenian genocide’, in Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in modern history* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 98–100. ‘Varying notions of provocation’ are analysed in Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Warrant*



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- for genocide: key elements of Turko-Armenian conflict (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1999), pp. 69–70.
- 44 Marginalia on Telegram of Foreign Minister Adolf Freiherr Marschall von Bieberstein [hereafter: Marschall], 9 October 1895, GP Vol. 10, p. 71.
- 45 E.g. ‘the best discussion which this reviewer has yet seen on the Armenian question. Considerable light is thrown on the relation of the Armenian revolutionary activities to imperial diplomacy’ (Luther H. Evans, in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3, June 1936, p. 538); ‘nowhere else is revealed so clearly the connection between the revolutionary tactics of the Armenians and the massacres of infamous memory’ (E. Malcolm Carroll, in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 184, March 1936, p. 232); R. W. Seton-Watson noted that ‘it is made clear that the Armenian revolutionaries “were quite prepared to have thousands of their countrymen massacred in order to force intervention by the European powers”’, and even while expressing some scepticism about details, concludes: ‘but his balanced verdict on the Armenian question has found almost universal acceptance’. In *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 15, No. 45, 1937, p. 713. Raymond Sontag left his opinion ambiguous: ‘On the Near East Mr. Langer offers two very different contributions. His account of the Armenian massacres is based on Armenian sources, and his whole treatment of Near Eastern problems breaks sharply with the traditional liberal sympathy for the Christian populations’. In *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1936, p. 223.
- 46 ‘Nothing is further removed from my intention than to condone the Constantinople massacre or any other. At the same time it is the duty of the historian to look at the facts from all possible angles, and to avoid being carried away by the tidal wave of uncritical emotionalism.’ Langer, *Diplomacy*, p. 325.
- 47 ‘Atrocitarian’ originated with the *Saturday Review*. The English and Americans, Langer found, were ‘the most thirsty for stories of blood-curdling atrocities’, and the most gullible. He quoted, approvingly, Gabriel Hanoutoux’s mockery of Britain’s evangelical activists as ‘committees, sects, and clubs’ always trying to modify or ameliorate everything ‘and to while away weary afternoons of foggy Sundays’. *Diplomacy*, pp. 196, 325 and 162, respectively.
- 48 Langer cited no Turkish sources except, once, *Aspirations et Agissements Révolutionnaires des Comités Arméniens* (Constantinople, 1917), describing it as ‘the official Turkish publication’. *Diplomacy* treats Armenians on pp. viii, 145–166, 196–205, 209, 303–304, 321–330, 335–350.
- 49 Sir Edward Pears describes this as an ‘official report’. *Life of Abdul Hamid*, pp. 233, 238.
- 50 Zagorski to Ambassador Heinrich von Calice (Vienna), 10 October 1895, GP Vol. 10, p. 86.
- 51 Saurma to Hohenlohe, 26 October, 11 November, 13 November, 14 November 1895, GP Vol. 10, pp. 84, 102, 103, 106. Saurma conveyed both palace opinion and reports of the French, who ran the only consulate there.
- 52 For a vivid description, see Peter Balakian, *The burning Tigris: the Armenian Genocide and America’s response* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), pp. 103–110.
- 53 Langer’s account of the massacre in Van also offers evidence of provocation. *Diplomacy*, pp. 323–326; quotation on p. 324.
- 54 Langer, *Diplomacy*, p. 203.
- 55 Defined as ‘deliberate and socially sanctioned violence [...] directed, through established governmental, judicial and social institutions, against groups of people defined by general characteristics such as race, religion, or way of life; [...] membership in such groups in itself came to be regarded as justifying these attacks’. R. I. Moore, *The formation of a persecuting society: power and deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp. 5, 106–113. Moore sees persecution’s purpose as ‘reinforcing the unity of the rest’, and as both a goal and a technique of state-making. Christopher J. Walker notes that the Armenians of Constantinople were made to expiate ‘the “crime” of terrorism in a terrorist society’. *Armenia: the survival of a nation* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1980), p. 168.
- 56 Bérard’s preface is dated February 1897. *La politique de sultan* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1897), pp. 8–11, 25–30. Pears, *Life of Abdul Hamid*, 238–239, 248–249, 255–256, 262, 265, 267.
- 57 Saurma to Hohenlohe, 30 September 1895, GP Vol. 10, pp. 66–67, 70.
- 58 I examine usages of the word ‘terror’ in my book *Practicing democracy: elections and political culture in Imperial Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 317–318.
- 59 Saurma to Hohenlohe, 30 September 1895, GP Vol. 10, pp. 66–67, 70.
- 60 Langer, *Diplomacy*, p. 203.
- 61 More recently social scientists, using the concept of ‘moral hazard’ borrowed from the insurance industry, have given the provocation thesis a new twist, leading some to examine R2P with a critical eye. See Alan J. Kuperman, ‘Suicidal rebellions and the moral hazard of humanitarian intervention’, pp. 149–173, and a trenchant critique (among several) by Armen Grigorian, ‘Third-party intervention and escalation in Kosovo: does moral hazard explain it?’, pp. 195–213, both in an issue devoted to moral hazard in *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 4, No. 2, June 2006. Moral hazard departs from the provocation thesis in shifting the blame from the victims to third parties; that is, to the states and/or international bodies whose threats to brutal

- governments aim at preventing bloodshed, but which, like fire insurance, offer 'perverse incentives' to those they are trying to protect.
- 62 Stephan Astourian, 'On the genealogy of the Armenian-Turkish conflict, Sultan Abdülhamid, and the Armenian massacres', *Journal for the Society of Armenian Studies*, Vol. 21, 2012, pp. 167–207. Klein, *Margins of empire*, pp. 43–62, treats in depth the impact of the destruction of the Kurdish emirates on East Anatolian society and Ottoman rule. Deringil, *Well-protected domains*, p. 47.
- 63 A view offered also by Abdullah Cevdet, a Young Turk. Klein, *Margins of empire*, p. 89. It is also R. I. Moore's explanation for his *Formation of a persecuting society*. See note 55, above.
- 64 For the embarrassing case of the ambassador to Berlin who left abruptly, rent and telegrams in arrears, because his salary was never paid, see Saurma to AA, 8 and 10 November; Marschall to Hohenlohe, 24 November 1897, AA Deutschland 127 No. 6, Vol. 2, R1734.
- 65 Saurma to AA, 19 October 1895, GP Vol. 10, p. 75.
- 66 *The Armenian question and the rule of Abdul Hamid. Respectfully dedicated to the members of parliament by the Ottoman Committee of Europe*, enclosure, Radowitz to Caprivi, 21 July 1890, AA Vol. 2, R14051; a thin pamphlet: *Comité des patriotes musulmans de Constantinople à sa Seigneurie Le Marquis de Salisbury Premier Ministre et Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de sa Très Gracieuse Majesté la Reine Victoria. Lettre Ouverte*. No date, no publisher; the last page is 'signed' Comité des patriotes musulmans, Stamboul, le 4 Moharem 1314 [15 May 1896]. In the Dagdeviren Collection, Hoover Library, Stanford University.
- 67 Haniöğlu, *Young Turks*, ch. 3, esp. pp. 58–67. Haniöğlu bases his story on the statements and memoirs of Ottomans, but found no confirmation in British archives.
- 68 'Zur Lage in der Türkei', and 'In der Türkei ist alles beim Alten', *Germania*, 29 October 1895, No. 250/1, and 3 November 1895, No. 255/3; and 'A threatening letter to the sultan', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 November 1895, the latter quoted in Haniöğlu, *Young Turks*, p. 257 n. 353.
- 69 Outrage at the Turks, in 1895: William's marginalia on: Saurma to AA, 1 November; Saurma to Hohenlohe, 11 November, GP Vol. 10, pp. 96, 102; in 1896: William II to Hohenlohe, 29 July; Marschall to W, 29 August, GP Vol. 12, pp. 18, n. 2, 20, n. 1.
- 70 For his outrage at public opinion, see Paul Count von Hatzfeldt, ambassador to London, to Hohenlohe, 10 July 1895, GP Vol. 10, p. 41. Salisbury always put his greatest weight, however, in the argument that without reform, Ottoman independence and sovereignty could not last.
- 71 The remark was made of Lord John Russell. L. C. B. Seaman, *From Vienna to Versailles* (London: Routledge, 1964), p. 7. William's suspicions are clear in his marginalia: e.g. to reports from Vienna, 18 August 1895, p. 33n; memorandum by Marschall, 9 October 1895, p. 71n; his own telegram to Hohenlohe, 21 October 1895, pp. 76–78; Hatzfeldt to AA, 25 October 1895, quoting William, p. 82n. Similar blame for 'English intrigue', from Prince Alexey Borisovich Lobanov-Rostovsky, 19 October 1895, p. 75. Radolin, now at St. Petersburg, to Hohenlohe, 24 October 1895, p. 84, ascribed the current Armenian troubles to the English ambassador (William: *ja*), just as a previous one had brought the fall of Abdülaziz, and said that Prince Lobanov and others express themselves similarly (William: *richtig*). All in GP Vol. 10.
- 72 Marschall to the German ambassador to Vienna, Philip zu Eulenburg, 16 December 1895; and to Saurma, 17 December 1895; Eulenburg to Hohenlohe, 17 December 1896; Bernhard von Bülow, ambassador to Rome, to AA, 20 December 1896, GP Vol. 10, pp. 121–124.
- 73 Radolin to Hohenlohe, 19 October 1895, GP Vol. 10, p. 75.
- 74 Ronald Grigor Suny, 'Images of the Armenians in the Russian Empire', in Suny, *Looking toward Ararat*, pp. 45–48.
- 75 Hans-Lukas Kieser, 'Einleitung: die Armenische Frage im Osmanischen Reich und die Schweiz'; 'Die Schweiz des Fin de Siècle und "Armenien": Patriotische Identifikation, Weltbürgertum und Protestantismus in der Schweizerischen Philarmenischen Bewegung', in Kieser, *Die Armenische Frage*, pp. 9–25, 133–157.
- 76 Rebecca Manley, 'Between orthodoxy and humanity: responses of the Russian public to the Bulgarian and Armenian massacres', unpublished paper, 1999.
- 77 Göran Gunner, *Genocide of the Armenians through Swedish eyes* (Yerevan: The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, 2013), pp. 52–103. Other sources, primary and secondary, for the European public's response are in my "'Down in Turkey far away": human rights, the Armenian massacres, and orientalism in Wilhelmine Germany', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 79, No. 1, March 2007, pp. 80–113.
- 78 Among the contemporaries who believed that the massacres in the autumn of 1895 were the sultan's *real* response to the reform proposals to which he had acceded on 20 October was the later German consul in Aleppo, Walter Rößler. Ferdinand Winfrid [pseud. for Rößler], 'Armenier und Türken', *Preußischen Jahrbüchern*, Vol. 176, June 1919, pp. 373–392, at p. 376. AA Rößler Nachlass, Vol. 1. Similarly: the British Foreign Secretary Kimberley, in Kimberley to Rosebery, 3 January 1895. Kimberley papers cited in Roy Douglas, 'Britain and the Armenian question', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1976, p. 118.

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- 79 Accusing France of pursuing a '*politique d'effacement*' in the Ottoman Empire, Lucien Millevoye demanded action in the Chamber of Deputies: 'It is not a question again of dismembering the Ottoman Empire, but it is a question of not letting it consume what remains of the authority and the influence of our country in the rest of the Orient'. Transcript in Victor Bérard, *Pour l'Arménie et la Macédoine* (Paris: Société Nouvelle de Librairie, 1904), p. 65. The massive Swiss petition lacked any concrete political proposal. Christoph Dinkel, 'Die Schweizerliche Armenierhilfe: Chronik von 1896 bis in die Zwischenkriegszeit', in Kieser, *Die Armenische Frage*, pp. 187–210. Davide Rodogno has been one of the few treating the advocates of intervention who acknowledges this issue. *Against massacre: humanitarian interventions in the Ottoman Empire 1815–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 185–211.
- 80 Hepworth, *Through Anatolia*, p. 161.
- 81 Henry Austen Layard, quoted in Seton-Watson, *Disraeli*, p. 424.
- 82 Peter Marsh, 'Lord Salisbury and the Ottoman Massacres', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2, May 1972, p. 74; Douglas, 'Britain', p. 121.
- 83 Marsh, 'Lord Salisbury', pp. 77, 79. Cf. a scathing critique of the one-eyed vision of those calling for intervention in Dafur: Mahmood Mamdani, 'The politics of naming: genocide, civil war, and insurgency', *London Review of Books*, Vol. 29, No. 5, 8 March 2008, pp. 5–8; and a trenchant analysis of the worm at the heart of remedies for 'genocide prevention' by the 'international community'—i.e., their faith in a 'quick fix' and the often unequal body counts between those 'saved' by interventions and those killed in the process of carrying them out: Mark Levene, 'A dissenting voice: or how current assumptions of deterring and preventing genocide may be looking at the problem through the wrong end of the telescope', *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2004, pp. 153–166.
- 84 Vir pacificus [pseud. for Hans Delbrück], 'Politischer Träumereien' and, reflecting on readers' responses, 'Politischer Ernst', *Preußische Jahrbücher*, Vol. 83, 1896, pp. 1–14, 409–411. Quoted in Uwe Feigel, *Das evangelische Deutschland und Armenien: die Armenierhilfe deutscher evangelischer Christen seit dem Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts im Kontext der deutsch-türkischen Beziehungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), pp. 45–46. House of Commons resolution, 3 March 1896: *Schulthess' Europäischer Geschichtskalender* (Munich: C.H. Beck'sche Verlag, 1896), p. 192.
- 85 Salisbury was relieved in mid October that, with the sultan's signature to the Powers' reform plan, he need no longer worry about the collapse of the Turkish Empire, and emphasized that what he wanted above all was the preservation of European peace. Four days later, Prince Lobanov said Russia must insist forcefully on the preservation of Turkey, 'if only because of world peace'. Hatzfeldt to AA, 15 October; Radolin to Hohenlohe, 29 October 1895, GP Vol. 10, pp. 82, 93. Three days later, massacres began in Diyarbekir and Sivas.
- 86 Pace Ronald Suny (among many others), 'The Sassoun massacre: a hundred year perspective', *Armenian Review*, Vol. 47, Nos. 1–2, 2001, p. 3.
- 87 Quoted in Douglas, 'Britain', p. 129. Cf. also Manoug Joseph Somakian, *Empires in conflict: Armenia and the Great Powers, 1895–1920* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1995), pp. 24–31. Arguing that after 1878 Russia sought to contain Slav and Armenian movements and to preserve the Ottoman status quo: 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: Frank Cass, [1984], 1996), pp. 76–110, esp. pp. 76–77, 101, 328.
- 88 Şaşmaz, *British policy*, demonstrates the truth of this axiom in his sympathetic treatment of Abdülhamit, what he faced and what he tried, but how ultimately he repeatedly and deliberately undercut his own reformers, for he was unwilling to get rid of eastern Anatolia's lords of misrule if it risked loss of the support of the whole train of clans and relatives attached to them.
- 89 Quoted in Wilhelm van Kampen, 'Studien zur Deutsche Türkeipolitik in der Zeit Wilhelms II' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Kiel, 1968), p. 117.
- 90 Morgenthau to State Department, 16 July 1915, No. 858, US National Archives and Records Administration. Record Group 59. Power, 'A problem from hell', p. xviii. The *Kölnische Zeitung*, *Hamburger Nachrichten* and *Norddeutsche Allgemeine* thought popular agitation only incited the Turks. Lord Curzon told the House of Commons on 3 March 1896 that intervention would do the same. Both in *Schulthess'* (1896), pp. 185, 188. For Salisbury's ruefulness, see Marsh, 'Lord Salisbury', p. 83.
- 91 Beatrice Rohner to Dr. E. Rippenbach, 24 November 1916, encl. in Rößler to Theobald Bethmann Hollweg, 25 November 1916, AA R14094, online at armenocide.net, 1916-11-25-DE-003.
- 92 Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des deutschen Reichstags, 2. Legislatur-Period, IV. Session, Zweiter Band 1876, 5 December 1876, p. 585.
- 93 Douglas, 'Britain', pp. 117, 119.
- 94 Terrell to Anna Terrell, 24 January 1894; to Lilla Terrell, 12 April 1895, quoted in Lewis L. Gould, *Alexander Watkins Terrell: civil war soldier, Texas lawmaker, American diplomat* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), pp. 133, 139; also 52–53, 130–131, 137.
- 95 Deringil, *Well-protected domains*, p. 48.

- 96 Sceptical of America's myth of equality was an Ottoman ambassador to the US, Achmet Rustem Bey, who became *persona non grata* for reminding reporters of America's 'daily lynching' and its 'water cure' in the Philippines. 'Turks' envoy talks war with the US.[...] Discusses our lynchings'; 'Wilson rebukes Turkish envoy', *New York Times*, 8 and 12 September 1914, p. 5 and pp. 1, 4. Djava Ejou of Columbia University recalled the rebuke in a letter to the *Times* when the US protested Turkey's treatment of the Armenians. 'Turkey's business', *New York Times*, 22 February 1916, p. 10. As *chargé d'affaires*, Rustem Bey had already raised eyebrows by criticizing the director of the US Division of Naturalization for excluding Turks, Armenians, Syrians and Arabs from US citizenship because they failed to meet his criteria of 'free white persons'. 'Free white persons', *New York Times*, 7 November 1909, p. 12.
- 97 Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, voice, and loyalty: responses to the decline in firms, organizations and states* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).
- 98 For a persuasive case for optimism, see Yektan Turkyilmaz, 'Rethinking "the path" to the Armenian Genocide, June 1913–August 1914', paper presented at 'The Origins of the Armenian Genocide: The Crucial Years, 1912–1915'. Dr. Stephan Astourian, Director of the Armenian Studies Program at the University of California-Berkeley, 18 April 2015.
- 99 Estimates are from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In 1877–78, the Catholicosate of Echmiadzin estimated that 87,760 Armenians immigrated to the Russian Caucasus. Raymond H. Kévorkian and Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les arméniens dans l'empire ottoman à la veille du génocide* (Paris: Editions d'art et d'histoire, 1992), p. 24.

### Notes on contributor

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