

# BRITISH REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE 1915-1923

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## **British Representations of the Armenian Genocide 1915-23.**

### **Abstract**

During the First World War the authorities of the Ottoman Empire headed by the Committee of Union and Progress (hereafter the CUP) carried out a policy of genocide against the empire's Armenian minority population. This thesis will examine the interaction between British politicians, writers and national and local newspapers as they dealt with this subject. This was a period when the divisions between the civilian and military spheres during 'Total War' were being eroded. There was also a growing acceptance of this at the same time as a mounting condemnation of the process. The main thrust of the argument is that a polemical and listing 'literature of denunciation'<sup>1</sup> of carefully described acts of atrocity ('atrocitarian'<sup>2</sup>), often on an individual level, underwent significant change. It was supplemented with one involving criterion-driven descriptions of staged and facilitating acts of the mass killing of civilians as groups rather than individuals. In short these are descriptions of a process of systematic extermination. These representations demonstrated a growing awareness of how an ethnic or religious group could be taken to pieces and partially or completely destroyed. This was also closely linked to an apparent understanding of how geographical areas could be statistically altered in terms of population and homogenised. Key to my argument is the tropes mobilised in these representations and the biomedical language and concepts with a rural idyll involved. Moreover, I demonstrate how these tropes

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<sup>1</sup> Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism 1918-24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 303.

<sup>2</sup> Gary Bass refers to Victorian 'atrocitarian' writers. Gary Bass, *Freedoms Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), Especially 235-312. It was a contemporary term in the British Victorian press, for example, "An Atrocitarian Meeting by An Old Fogie," *The City Jackdaw. Manchester*, Volume 1, Issue 44. September 15, 1876, 375. The Liberal politician and Prime Minister William Gladstone penned a fierce and florid condemnation of Turkish violence against Christian civilians in 1878 during the Bulgarian atrocities. It was very evident during the 1894-6 Hamidian massacres (so called after the Sultan Abdul Hamid) of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire when up to 200,000 were killed. Except for a few isolated voices, this largely ignored the manner in which thousands of Muslims were also massacred and hundreds of thousands were forcibly displaced from the Balkans during the same period. This culminated in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and the resulting humiliation and presence of huge numbers of Muhacir (refugees) in the Ottoman homelands by 1914 was a huge factor in the Armenian genocide of World War 1.

often mirrored to an extent the language and rationales of the perpetrators themselves.

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Declaration

*I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated*

*within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.*

*Signed Peter Morgan*

*Dated 19/2/22*

## Introduction

In terms of the Armenian genocide the ‘gap’ in the scholarship that this thesis will attempt to fill is the one occluded by academic attention concentrating on attempts to ‘identify intent and ascribe responsibility.’<sup>3</sup> Further, how these events were part of a long-term context of the ‘the great game’ of European diplomacy, ethnic conflict in the Balkans and the Near East and the development of policies of homogenisation there. This interest in intent is the concern of important scholars such as Bloxham, Reynolds, Rogan and Laycock to whom this thesis is indebted.<sup>4</sup> However, my study, in contrast will concentrate on the moments of the mass killing of civilians<sup>5</sup> and their deportation and *how* they were represented (visualised, conceptualised and described) on a more microscopic level in the contemporary discourse. Whilst much of the existing scholarship argues that there was an awareness of a policy and process of an extermination of a people as it was happening, it does not concentrate on how this description of process was arrived at and what it consisted of. The research questions which emanated from my engagement with the body of scholarship reviewed immediately below were the following. What was the ‘style’ and what were the words and phrases used in the British descriptions and representations of the CUP’s massacres and deportations of the Armenians? How did the discourse compare to previous British representations

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<sup>3</sup> Sadia McAvoy, *The Construction of Ottoman Asia and its Muslim Peoples in Wellington House’s Propaganda and Associated Literature, 1914-1918* (PhD diss., Kings College London, 2016), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. P. 10. Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Joanne Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009). Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East, 1914-1920* (London: Allen Lane, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Alex Kay has made a recent invaluable contribution with regard to the issue of definition of genocide and mass killing which this thesis seeks to use and reinforce whilst maintaining that what happened to the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire was a genocide and that British representations of it add to the arguments for that. Kay describes his approach as ‘mass killing and genocide are not regarded as mutually exclusive. Genocide is a very specific type of mass killing. The intention “destroy a group” is the crucial ingredient that sets genocide apart from other forms of mass killing. At its core, genocide is a historical process that is about group reproduction. Gender, therefore, is vital to our understanding of the crime, as the process of destruction permanently undermines the future survival of the victim group...The concept of mass killing is employed here as a means to augment and complement rather than supplant the concept of genocide’. Alex J. Kay, *Empire of Destruction: A History of Nazi Mass Killing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 5-6.

of the mass killing and violence in general and that exerted against Ottoman Armenians in particular? In addition, how were the foreign reports from the area concerned paraphrased, edited, headlined and subtitled particularly in the British press and how were the pieces structured? What was the historical context of the change and continuity involved in the representations and what was its influence? Though not a research question as such another issue increasingly pressed itself on the analysis of the sources involved: What do these representations tell us about the contemporary 'British self?'

These research questions begin to show how this thesis fills a gap in the existing scholarship and relates to it. My work goes into greater detail, with a more thorough comparison between traditional representations of mass killing and more modern ones. I pay greater attention to the way the moments of massacre and the violence involved were described. As such, I go further than the existing scholarship which has, nevertheless, firmly established that a contemporary understanding of genocide existed before the word did so. This scholarship has shown that people during the First World War clearly understood what had happened to the Armenians. They called it 'extermination' and the 'murder of a nation' which, left a 'remnant' that needed to be saved.

My work has described how these general tropes were constructed and the details involved. This amounted to a description of a process of extermination. The gap in the scholarship this thesis fills in part, is how these representations became increasingly concise and succinct. Further, that they were informed by a clear comprehension of a criteria, relating to how an ethnic group is sociologically constructed. Further, how it can be taken apart and partially or completely destroyed. This also involved descriptions of centrally organised and facilitating stages of persecution that transformed the ethnic composition of given geographical areas. Another gap in the scholarship that this thesis fills is the way the language involved was of a biomedical nature that also utilised a trope of a rural

idyll (that included a concept of purity in terms geographical areas and the people who populated them.

Another feature that adds to the scholarship is the way British representations condemned the perpetrators using language and rationales that the latter also articulated. This thesis argues that an orientalist process of projection on the part of the British taking place was at work here. This process and the details involved in the relevant representations has not previously been analysed to the extent that this thesis does so. Neither also, has the way that post-war understandings of a process of extermination were used as a diagnosis of the mass killing of civilians both in the present and in 1915. Indeed, this thesis argues that these conceptualisations had become so concretised, that sometimes they were sometimes used to make points on completely unrelated subjects. Moreover, the coherence of these representations is demonstrated to an extent and in a manner not previously shown in the scholarship.

Finally, this thesis adds to the existing scholarship by showing the centrality within British political and popular culture of the representations of the Armenian genocide to a greater degree than previously. It demonstrates its importance in the daily newspaper reporting of both the national and provincial press and its presence in political speeches and tracts. Further, how it was a subject of a novel by one reasonably popular author as well as another hugely influential one, and how it found its way into areas of unrelated discourse. One way that this centrality is demonstrated is the way the Armenian genocide was often viewed through a prism of German 'frightfulness.'<sup>6</sup> The comparison of the Belgian atrocities with the persecution of the Armenians, this thesis argues, may well have obscured and arrested the development of a new more modern trope describing a process of

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<sup>6</sup> The word 'frightfulness' was used extensively in Britain to describe German atrocities and associated military methods in the First World War. Chapter 1 concentrates on this issue and how atrocities perpetrated against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were often seen and described through a 'prism' of German 'frightfulness'.

extermination. However, my work shows it did not and that the Armenian genocide took its place, by the end of the war, as a paradigm of atrocity alongside German ‘frightfulness’ in Belgium. Indeed, it became a key feature in a canon of atrocity and ‘frightfulness’ that also included unrestricted submarine warfare, the shelling and bombing of British towns and cities, the executions of Edith Cavell and Captain Fryatt, and the first use of poison gas.

There is a recent body of work that analyses contemporary political, diplomatic, media and literary responses to the First World War massacres and deportations of the Ottoman Armenians in different parts of the world. Vicken Babkenian has studied Australian responses to the events and noted a similar effect in terms of a large volume of newspaper articles to the situation in Britain.<sup>7</sup> However, this work largely concentrates on narrative descriptions of Australian prisoners of war and the Australian relief movement. Reference is made to how a number of Australians referred to a Turkish goal of exterminating the Armenians<sup>8</sup> but keeps its focus limited to a description of the methods and personnel involved in the relief movement.<sup>9</sup> In her work on Italian representations Andrea Annese concentrates on the manner in which Italian Protestants responded to the reports of the mass killing and deportations of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and how this was influenced by their own status as a religious minority. She gives examples of criticism of the Vatican for its silence on the matter and references to descriptions involving the language of inhuman massacre. However, her work is less concerned with discourses on the mechanics or process of destruction.<sup>10</sup> Annese though, does pay significant attention to an article from March 1916 by a Waldensian lawyer Giovanni E. Meille. In recounting the historical context and

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<sup>7</sup> Vicken Babkenian, “Australian Responses to the Armenian Genocide, 1915-30,” in ed. Colin Tatz *Genocide Studies IV: Essays on Holocaust and Genocide* (The Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies: UTSe Press, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> For example, *Ibid.* 389.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 389-406.

<sup>10</sup> Andrea Annese, “The Armenian Genocide in the Italian Protestant Press (1915-1918): The Distinctive Viewpoint of a Minority,” *Studi E Materiali Di Storia Delle Religioni; Fondata nel 1925 da Raffaele Pettazzoni. Defining Religious Minorities* 83, no. 2 (2017).

background to the events of 1915 he referred to the rationales behind the apparent homogenisation policies of Sultan Abdul Hamid. She goes on to conclude that he at least was aware of a systematic method with an aim of complete extermination in 1915-16 though the significance of this is not the main emphasis of her article.<sup>11</sup> That emphasis revolves around the Italian Protestant experience producing a 'distinctive viewpoint.' She does not mention the issue of a contemporary awareness of a policy of homogenisation based on ethnicity or religion in her conclusion.

Vahagn Avedian in an instructive paper on Swedish responses cites an ambassador's (Per Gustaf August Cosswa Anckarsvard) observations of a Turkish plan to destroy the Armenian people in a systematic and planned manner in the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, he directly quotes him where he talks of the problem presented to the Turks of 'heterogeneous elements.'<sup>12</sup> He goes on to give examples of Swedish politicians and diplomats referring to Turkish plans to homogenise the empire although the study is less of an analysis of the process involved and how it was represented.<sup>13</sup> The emphasis of the article is on the Swedish diplomatic and political response rather than the actual and detailed discourse on the events. Avedian mentions the abundance of reports in the Swedish press but does not discuss its detail.<sup>14</sup> These examples demonstrate how widespread contemporary engagement with, and representations of the Armenian genocide were. They also show the rich trans-national context the research and findings of this thesis can be placed in. The work of this thesis in concentrating more specifically on British representations delves deeper into the dynamics of those representations.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 445-7.

<sup>12</sup> Vahagn Avedian, "The Armenian Genocide of 1915 From a Small Neutral State's Perspective: Sweden," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 5, no. 3 (Winter 2010): 329.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 331-2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 336.

## **The Historical Context**

The Armenian people living in the Anatolian regions of the Ottoman Empire had by the 19<sup>th</sup> century come to represent a highly significant body amongst informed and religious opinion in Western Europe and the USA. The Kingdom of Armenia had been the first ethnic entity to convert wholesale to Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD and the mythical presence of the last resting place of Noah's Ark atop Mount Ararat emphasised for many this importance.<sup>15</sup> Under Ottoman rule, the Armenians had been the so-called 'favoured millet' (religious minority) and the empire's record in terms of toleration was relatively good. Under pressure from social, economic and military decline in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Sultanate introduced the Tanzimat reforms. This gave greater equality to Armenian Christians in relation to the Muslim majority. However, for many Turkish Muslims in the Ottoman Empire this increased suspicion of them, and this grew worse following defeat in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8. The ensuing Treaty of Berlin resulted in an Article 61 that sought to impose on the Sultanate the obligation to ensure Armenian rights in the empire.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For example, Emily J. Robinson commented thus when describing how and why the Armenians were persecuted: Their country is the cradle of the human race. Armenians were one of the earliest nations to embrace Christianity. Emily J. Robinson, *The Truth About Armenia* (1913), 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> For the literature on the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the British response to developments see for example: Taner Akcam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed, 2004). Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Ray Douglas, "Britain and the Armenian Question 1894-7," *Historical Journal* 19, no. 2 (March 1976): 113-33. Joseph Heller, "Crimes against Humanity": Britain and the Armenian Question, 1912-14: A Study in Realpolitik," *Middle East Studies* 16, no. 1 (January 1980): 3-26. Arman J. Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy and the Armenian Question, from the 1830s to 1914* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute, 2003). Peter Marsh, "Lord Salisbury and the Ottoman Massacres," *Journal of British Studies* 11, no. 2. (May 1972): 63-83. Arkady Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question 1915-23* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984). David Rodogno, *Against Massacre. Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire 1815-1914* (Princeton University Press, 2011). Jeremy Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians 1878-1896* (London: Frank Cass, 1993). "Britain, the Armenian Question and the Cause of Ottoman Reform 1894-6," *Middle East Studies* 26, no. 3. (July 1990): 308-28. Michelle Tusan, *Smyrna's Ashes: Humanitarianism, Genocide, and the Birth of the Middle East* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2012). *Human Rights, the British Empire, and the Origins of the Response to the Armenian Genocide* (London & New York: I. B. Taurus, 2017).

This foreign interference exacerbated resentment and suspicion of the Armenians, and this was accentuated when some became increasingly radicalised in the Hnchak and Dashnak political and nationalist movements. Their activity also involved violent methods, which in turn led to state reprisals. It was a common belief that this was intended on the part of these groups who hoped to provoke foreign military intervention.<sup>17</sup> This situation culminated tragically in the Hamidian massacres (so named after the Sultan Abdul Hamid) of 1894-6, which left up to between 100,000 and 200,000 Armenians dead.<sup>18</sup> Like the Bulgarian massacres of the 1870s these events produced outrage in Britain. The aforementioned 'atrocitarian' 'literature of denunciation' involving what this thesis defines as a method of polemical, repetitive, outraged and sometimes hysterical listing of atrocity featured strongly. Except for a few isolated voices, this narrative largely ignored the way thousands of Muslims were also massacred and hundreds of thousands were forcibly displaced from the Balkans during the same period. This process reached its climax during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. The resulting humiliation and presence of huge numbers of Muhacir (refugees) in the Ottoman homelands by 1914 was a huge factor in the Armenian genocide of the First World War.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 50-1.

<sup>18</sup> Taner Akcam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (London: Constable, 2007), 30. Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 11. Ronald Grigor Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert But Nowhere Else": A History of the Armenian Genocide* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), 129. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 51.

<sup>19</sup> Taner Akcam states that Arnold Toynbee gave a figure of 413,922 Muslims expelled during the Balkan Wars and that Turkish sources give almost the same number, Akcam, *A Shameful Act*, 110. Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilisations* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), 138. Alongside the extent of Tutsi resistance and violence before the Rwandan genocide, it could be argued that the Armenian genocide highlights the major aspect of the singularity of the Holocaust. The recent historiography would suggest that the Jewish 'Final Solution' was a lot more amorphous, contingent and circumstantial than previously thought. Despite the fact that during the genocide of Polish Jewry in 1942 standard operating procedure was to kill every Jewish person possible, events from 1943 make the totality of the Jewish genocide more comparable with the Armenians and Rwandan Tutsis. The chief singularity of the Holocaust therefore, may well be the gulf between the perpetrators fantasies of the threat represented by the victims and the reality.

This period saw the rise of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the 'Young Turks,' who were initially apparently sympathetic to the Armenian cause. These Ittihadists as they were also referred to took power in a 1908 coup centred on the Ottoman army. However, thousands of Armenians were massacred in Adana in 1908. Up to the beginning of the First World War, the movement became increasingly nationalist and Pan-Turanian ideas grew in importance. These revolved around the necessity of an ethnically and religiously homogenous state and its expansion into all territory inhabited by Turkish speaking peoples. After 1913, a triumvirate increasingly dominated the state manned by the Minister of the Interior, Talaat Pasha, the Minister of Defence, Enver Pasha and the Naval Minister Cjema Bey. On the outbreak of the First World War the CUP saw an alliance with Germany as a perfect opportunity to further advance their goals and appealed to a Dashnak conference asking for help in appealing to the Armenian population in the Russian Empire to revolt. The Dashnaks refused to give this guarantee stating that Armenians on both sides of the border should stay loyal and fight for their respective nation states.<sup>20</sup> This wider historical context is important in relation to the more short-term historical context of 'Total War' during 1914-1918 to which this introduction now turns. It does so by mapping out a series of chronological stages to act as framework for analysis.

Chapter 2 of this thesis concentrates on the role of a trope of German 'frightfulness' in British representations of the Armenian genocide. It has been organised on the basis of six historical phases identified using the events that took place. Further, the way the massacres and deportations of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were represented. It is necessary to first explain these phases in order to better understand the significance of the short-term historical context of 'Total War' in the First World War. The first what could be called pre-genocide phase takes place from January to April 1915 following the disastrous Turkish

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<sup>20</sup> Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 72. Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert"*, 223. A Special Organisation leader, Dr Sakir apparently led the Dashnaks to understand that the Sublime Porte would back an autonomous Armenian state on both sides of the Ottoman and Russian border. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 175.

winter campaign against the Russian army that ended in the defeat at Sarikamis. This led to increasing hostility on the part of the CUP government against the Armenian minority of the Ottoman Empire due to the apparently significant role of Russian Armenians in the Russian military's response.<sup>21</sup> There was corresponding Armenian resistance, principally in Van and acts of persecution and violence ensued.<sup>22</sup> British representations of these events largely followed a traditional orientalist and 'atrocitarian' pattern redolent of the discourse involved in the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s and those centered on Adana in 1909.

The second phase relates to the beginning of the genocide in April and May 1915. The Allied landings at Gallipoli toward the end of April apparently triggered a more substantive anti-Armenian response on the part of the Ottoman authorities.<sup>23</sup> Thousands of Armenian men in the Turkish army who had previously been disarmed and placed in 'labour battalions'<sup>24</sup> were murdered whilst hundreds of Armenian 'notables' in Constantinople were arrested and deported.<sup>25</sup> The ensuing British response echoed an Allied declaration of May 24, 1915, stating that these were crimes against humanity and that the perpetrators would be held to account accordingly.<sup>26</sup> As will be analysed in the following chapter these representations involved a significant degree of discussion of the role of the German government and military in the methods concerned.

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<sup>21</sup> On the role of Armenians in the Russian war effort see for example, Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 73, 75-6.

<sup>22</sup> Candan Badem has argued that genocidal massacres began on the Caucasus front as early as December 1914. Candan Badem, "The War at the Caucasus Front: A Matrix for Genocide," in *The End of the Ottomans: The Genocide of 1915 and the Politics of Turkish Nationalism*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser, Margeret Lavinia Anderson, Seyhan Bayraktar, Thomas Schmutz (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2019), 47-66.

<sup>23</sup> Akcam, *A Shameful Act*, 130-1. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 70-1. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 252.

<sup>24</sup> Akcam, *A Shameful Act*, 149-53. Bloxham, *The Great game of genocide*, 70-1. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 240-2. Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 239, 248. Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert", 248-9.

<sup>25</sup> Akcam, *A Shameful Act*, 172. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 70. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 251-4. Kieser, *Talaat*, 237. Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert*", 270-80.

<sup>26</sup> Akcam, *A Shameful Act*, 235. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 85, 136-7. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 767.

The reporting of the events in the summer, autumn and winter of 1915 covered a third phase as entire Armenian communities were deported throughout the empire. Their homes and possessions were confiscated, and the former were redistributed to the Muslim Muhacirs (refugees). Columns of the deported were driven savagely to camps in the Syrian Desert and huge numbers were murdered en route. Thousands of women were raped and or forcibly converted to be placed in Turkish homes, as were huge numbers of children.<sup>27</sup> British representations of these events rose markedly in the national and provincial press. These demonstrated strong orientalist and 'atrocitarian' features of a polemical listing nature. However, it is during this phase that a newer, more modern trope arose. This involved a growing discernment of the rationales and criteria involved regarding the nature of an ethnic group and how it could be taken to pieces and partly or completely dissolved. It also demonstrated an appreciation of how the ethnic and cultural composition of a given geographical area could be permanently altered by the movement and displacement of peoples. Traditional discourse was still very evident, but we also start to see concise and succinct summaries of what was represented as a governmental and military process of an extermination of a people. One aspect of the modernity involved was the growing use of biomedical language using the imagery of a more traditional rural idyll.

The fourth phase unfolded in 1916 and principally involved in terms of the historical event the continued incarceration of Armenian deportees in what have largely been named in the historiography as concentration camps.<sup>28</sup> These were chiefly located in the Syrian Desert particularly around Deir-el-Zor. In the summer and autumn huge massacres took place within these camps taking the death toll to between 600,000 and 1.5 million people.<sup>29</sup> This happened during a significant falling

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<sup>27</sup> Akcam, *A Shameful Act*, 155, 198-9, 204-5. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 81-90. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 289. Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert", 309-18.

<sup>28</sup> Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 88. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 629-72. Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert", 309-18.

<sup>29</sup> Akcam, *A Shameful Act*, 199-200. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 142. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 693, 808-9. Geoffrey Robertson, *An Inconvenient Genocide: Who Now Remembers the Armenians* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2014), 13. Suny, *They Can Live in the*

off in terms of British representations of the genocide (see table below showing the volume of newspaper articles) as these atrocities took place in remote regions and very little news of them made its way to Europe and the United States. The British response largely revolved around the growing humanitarian effort to save what was increasingly referred to as 'The Remnant' of the Armenian nation and people.<sup>30</sup> However, the winter of 1916 saw a huge upsurge in Britain in the re-reporting of the events of 1915 when the parliamentary Blue Book of James, Lord Bryce, edited by the Oxford historian Arnold J. Toynbee was published.<sup>31</sup> The British representations involved a considerable degree of orientalist and 'atrocitarian' polemical listing. The newer, more modern trope describing a process of systematic extermination was there but in abeyance.

1917 to 1918 can be described as a fifth phase where the representations of the genocide in the British press declined in number reflecting the fact that it had largely been completed within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>32</sup> The humanitarian response and the discourse revolving around it continued as did the traditional and the more modern tropes but to a much smaller degree. Several writers though, produced monographs and pamphlets on the subject and a novel *Paths of Glory* by the then quite popular writer Joseph Hocking was published in 1917. The idealisation of the Armenian peasant village and the destruction of a rural idyll had been part of the discourse from the outset. However, the biomedical language became a stronger feature, particularly in the monographs and pamphlets published in this period.

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*Desert*", 326, 354-5. Eugene Rogan states that even those that deny a genocide took place 'acknowledge that between 600,000 and 850,000 Armenian civilians perished as a result of wartime measures.' Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East, 1914-1920* (London, Allen Lane, 2015), 183. Donald Bloxham gives the figures of between 800,000 and 1.5 million and states that Mustafa Kemal accepted the lower figure, 'with a more precise probable range lying between one million and twelve hundred thousand (albeit that tens of thousands of more died at the hands of the Turks and others in the more complicated circumstances of 1917-23). Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 10.

<sup>30</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 155-6. Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee ed. *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce, James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916).

<sup>32</sup> Akcam, *A Shameful Act*, 193. Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert*, 327. There were hugely significant massacres during this period, for example, in September 1918 in Baku where 30,000 Armenians were murdered by Azeris and the Ottoman army. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 101.

The sixth and final phase from 1919 to 1923 consisted of genocidal violence involving Armenians, Greeks and Turks breaking out significantly again. This occurred as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Nationalist forces fought both the first post war Ottoman government and Greece. This led to the punitive 1920 Treaty of Sevres being largely overturned by Kemal's victorious Nationalists and replaced by the far more favourable (for the Turks) 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. A Soviet Armenian republic remained in existence. A larger Armenia based on its historical borders stretching into Ottoman Anatolia was abandoned by the Allies. The new Nationalist Turkey remained in control of Constantinople and the Dardanelles Strait.<sup>33</sup> After an upsurge of the trope involving German 'frightfulness' during the Versailles negotiations and the Turkish trials of the genocide's perpetrators in 1919, representations involving a Turkish singularity became more common. There was also a significant concretisation of representations of the events as a governmental and military process involving stages of persecution, each one leading to and facilitating the next. They also involved a more fully realised awareness of the rationales and criteria involved in what today is described as genocide and ethnic cleansing. Further, of how a given geographical area could be homogenised by the manipulation of the population there. These representations also became more succinct and concise and to be found in summaries at the end of newspaper articles.

The table below demonstrates to an extent<sup>34</sup> the way the reporting of the Armenian genocide increased and decreased in terms of volume. The numbers relate to articles in the British provincial press and does not include *The Manchester Guardian* as this publication is not available from the source, the British Newspaper Archive. The headings are those put into the sites search engine as an exact term.

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<sup>33</sup> Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 166-9. Sean McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame* (London, Allen Lane, 2015), 413, 422, 442-6, 478-81, 486. Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert", 340-2.

<sup>34</sup> Many of the articles under the search term Armenians will not be about the massacres.

Year	Armenian Massacres	Armenians
1914	18	569
1915	487	3,239
1916	175	1,808
1917	124	1,041
1918	99	1,732
1919	236	1,547
1920	196	2,335
1921	30	652
1922	27	1,311
1923	11	499

Returning to the short-term historical context and the development of increasingly modern policies of violence and displacement concerning ethnic groups, the British discourse on the Armenian massacres presents us with an apparent paradox. Alan Kramer has argued that a 'Dynamic of Destruction' within militaries and indeed civilian populations was a logical outcome of the industrialised mass killing, which began in 1914.<sup>35</sup> Jay Winter has noted that the implication of this concerning the targeting of civilians was, 'that such acts were not unfortunate by products of war but were built in to the nature of the conflict itself.' Furthermore, that 'Total War' entailed the brutalisation of millions and thereby raised radically the tolerance of state sponsored cruelty and violence in societies caught up in armed conflict.' Moreover, Winter suggests that the war 'changed what was thinkable, what was imaginable, about human brutality and violence. It

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<sup>35</sup> Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 31-68.

opened a door through which others passed a brief two decades later.<sup>36</sup> Yet this new situation of 'Total War' also encouraged the appalled denunciation of this cruelty, sometimes to the point of exaggerated excess. This is the aforementioned paradox. The context of the discourse on the Armenian genocide therefore, was a process of accepting the dissolution of the boundaries between the military and civilian spheres and being simultaneously repulsed by it. Acceptance (for example of the British naval blockade of Germany) required propaganda, which also encouraged and emphasised repulsion (for example of the Belgian atrocities and submarine warfare) and the rejection of this development. At the same time this process facilitated the acceptance or ignoring of appalling acts, sometimes equally appalling (if only qualitatively) by one's own side and its allies. I will argue this heightened the inner compulsion to project onto the enemy, the Allies own genocidal attitudes and practices.

Before a more in-depth review of some of the recent scholarship on the development of 'Total War' and genocide during the First World War a clarification of the argument in the previous paragraph is required. Namely that British representations of the Armenian genocide are a clear product of a particular context. The context in question is that during this period there was a huge erosion of the boundaries between the civilian and military spheres. A brief look at the relevant scholarship will enable this. One aspect of the fundamental changes that took place during the First World War which will be explored more thoroughly later in this introduction is that they were very much a product of modernity. One aspect of this is a self-propelling process that Alan Kramer describes as 'dynamic of destruction.' He denies this was a 'law of nature' and suggests that 'despite the tremendous pressure of nature, technology, and mentalities, it was man-made, capable of infinite variation, and...capable of being stopped before ultimate self-destruction.' However, he argues that 'the era of the First World War nevertheless witnessed a decisive step towards total war, as the tendency towards the erosion of

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<sup>36</sup> Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006), 82-3.

the distinction between combatants and civilians...became more visible.<sup>37</sup>This bears out the thoughts of the German Helmuth von Moltke the Elder reflecting in retirement on the Franco Prussian War of 1870-1 and how a future war between European powers could no longer be fought, as it would be a *Volkskrieg*, a people's war that no nation could win.<sup>38</sup> It is the contention of this thesis that this was simultaneously accepted and condemned. Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau and Heather Jones have described this as an intermediary or "grey zone," and that 'between the world of the combatants and that of the civilians; there was no clear home front/front line divide.' They describe 'a series of ubiquitous vectors' that 'linked the two worlds' and that 'there was constant connection between the armed forces and the civilian realm through logistics, morale issues and troops on leave.' They argue that 'certain wartime populations specifically existed within' this "grey zone" and were 'culturally suspended between the front line and the home front spheres.'<sup>39</sup>This cultural suspension to an extent describes the ambiguity involved in reactions to wartime atrocities and how they were condemned if perpetrated by the enemy and accepted after relevant reinterpretation if perpetrated by one's own side. Indeed, John Horne and Alan Kramer have concluded that the controversy over the Belgian atrocities 'was about the boundaries between soldiers and civilians and about the norms and purpose of military force in a rapidly changing world-in short about the moral yardsticks of atrocity itself.'<sup>40</sup> This thesis concentrates on the events of 1915 (and the succeeding years until 1923) in the Ottoman Empire and 'the moral yardsticks of atrocity' involved in events that Jay Winter has described in terms of the whole war where what took place involved 'the collapse of the distinction between civilian and military targets, reaching its nadir in genocide.'<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, 329.

<sup>38</sup> Volker R. Berghahn, "Origins," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War. Volume I: Global War*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 37.

<sup>39</sup> Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau & Heather Jones, "Introduction to Part II," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War. Volume II: The State*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 149.

<sup>40</sup> John Horne & Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2001), 431.

<sup>41</sup> Jay Winter, "Introduction to Volume I," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume I*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 12.

Moving on, a summary of some of the most recent scholarship concerning ‘Total War’ and genocide in the First World War is necessary here. This is to further contextualise this historical moment and its significance for the representations at the centre of my study. It illuminates how a new discourse on the mass killing of civilians in British representations of the Armenian genocide may well have been reflecting new quite widespread techniques and rationales that emerged in the First World War. It also adds weight to a contention that in part these British representations may have been a projection onto the enemy of British involvement in systemic colonial violence as well as wartime activities. Heather Jones and Laurence Van Ypersale have argued that, ‘state-sanctioned deportations, forced labour, ruthlessly exploitative and bureaucratically modern occupation regimes, internment camps and genocide ‘...were key structural innovations that dominated the civilian experience’ of the First World War as well as the Second.<sup>42</sup> They suggest further that ‘specific civilian populations’ were ‘more at risk than others of physical violence, pillage and exile,’ due to ‘the rise of the “nation state ideal”.’ Hence, ‘The nationalist fever unleashed by the war narrowed understandings of who could be a ‘loyal’ citizen.’ Further, ‘the sacralisation of the nation at war led in many cases to extreme violence by the nation against its own minority citizens.’<sup>43</sup>

In the same vein Panikos Panayi has asserted that the ‘ “victory of nationalism” made persecution and marginalisation increasingly normal’ as did the fact in his view that ‘the First World War also legalised mass killing.’<sup>44</sup> He goes on to argue that internment was ‘part of a process of forced migration and ethnic cleansing which would become mainstream policy. He continues; ‘Britain played a leading role in legitimising internment as London became the centre of a global system of mass incarceration.’<sup>45</sup> Annette Becker has argued that ‘the zones of

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<sup>42</sup> Heather Jones & Laurence Van Ypersale, “Introduction to Part III,” in *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume III Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 182.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* 183.

<sup>44</sup> Panikos Panayi, “Minorities,” in *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume III Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 216-7.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 224.

invasion and military occupations provided a full-scale testing ground for population displacement and repression.’ She adds that ‘to some extent these zones became the laboratories of an atypical front whose “artillery” and “gas” took the form of exodus, deportation, forced labour or the concentration camp.’<sup>46</sup>

Likewise, Hans-Lukas Kieser and Donald Bloxham have suggested that the various consequences of Total war explain ‘the extremity of policies’ against civilian populations. However, they contend that ‘it was the *conjunction* of war and pre-existing ethno-political ‘problems’ that produced genocide and other extensive crimes against population groups.’<sup>47</sup> They identify ‘A landscape of sub-genocidal and pre-genocidal violence’<sup>48</sup> in the First World War and cite French behaviour in the Upper Volta and the Russian deportation of ‘not only of up to one million Jews, but hundreds of thousands of Volhynian and other ethnic Germans.’<sup>49</sup> Further they draw attention to the ‘extremity of violence...of the campaign of murder and dispersal against the Kyrgyz and Kazakh Dungan populations of the Semireche region’ of the Russian Empire.<sup>50</sup> Mark Levene has also drawn attention to British policy in Nyasaland in Africa in this regard.<sup>51</sup> Annette Becker has noted the internment of the ‘Alsace Lorraine Gypsies’ by the French<sup>52</sup> as well as ‘hundreds of thousands, of Belgians, French, Russians, Serbs, Albanians, Slovenes, Romanians, Italians and Germans’ deported to concentration camps and forced labour.<sup>53</sup> Many of these Germans were interned in the United Kingdom.

Germany’s increasing criticism of the naval blockade and Imperial Russia’s deportation policies in occupied East Prussia and Poland as well as those of France

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<sup>46</sup> Annette Becker, “Captive Civilians,” in *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume III Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 257.

<sup>47</sup> Hans-Lukas Kieser & Donald Bloxham, “Genocide,” in *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume I Global War*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014), 585.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 593.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 594.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 596.

<sup>51</sup> Levene, *The Crisis of Genocide, Devastation*, 69.

<sup>52</sup> Becker, *Captive Civilians*, 278.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 272.

in Alsace Lorraine is a vital context in which to view British representations of the Armenian genocide. Alexander Watson has described the German reaction to the naval blockade as 'apoplectic' and that the 'British were denounced for waging a "starvation war".' He cites a report written by German scientists headed by the nutrition expert Paul Eltzbacher, *The German People's Food Supply and the English Starvation Plan*. This also made much of the British use of concentration camps in the Boer war. The intention he said was to turn Germany into one large camp of that nature.<sup>54</sup> In response to the Allied furore concerning unrestricted submarine warfare the Germans countered with enraged accounts of the sinking of the submarine *U27* by the British Q-Ship *Baralong* (a controversial method whereby the British disguised heavily armed ships as harmless merchantmen) on August 19, 1915. German survivors were allegedly shot dead in the sea (reported by American witnesses) including the U-Boat's Lieutenant Commander Bernd Wegener as he was trying to surrender.<sup>55</sup>

In terms of the 'frightfulness' experienced by Germans in East Prussia during the Russian invasion of 1914 and the ensuing deportation policies, this contributed massively to feelings of solidarity in Germany and determination to win the war. Just as German actions in Belgium seemed to threaten the hearths and homes of Britain in 1914 the same could be said of events in East Prussia. A huge charity movement to aid Belgian refugees and later Armenians grew quickly in Britain. Likewise, so too did it in Germany for East Prussian refugees. Social Democrats were united with right wing nationalists in condemning barbaric forms of warfare by the Russians and by May 1916 twelve million marks had been raised for its victims.<sup>56</sup> In the French occupied zone of Alsace-Lorraine officials and teachers were held hostage. Hundreds of 'lower state, community and Church officials' were deported and imprisoned in France whilst 8,000 military aged Alsatian men were interned. Further, over 3,000 'women, children, youths and pensioners' endured 'forced removal.' Indeed, Watson suggests that Germany accused the Allies of ethnic

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<sup>54</sup> Watson, *Ring of Steel*, 232-3.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 236.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. 179-181.

cleansing in the form of 'a campaign to weed out pro-Reich elements from an indigenous population assumed to be naturally Francophile.'<sup>57</sup> This is a highly relevant contemporary historical context to view the condemnation of the Turks and their German allies in the British representations of the Armenian genocide.

This wider context of such policies perpetrated by forces other than those of Ottoman Turkey is vital to a proper understanding of British representations of the Armenian massacres and deportations. The fact that knowledge of other such crimes and their growing normality was relatively widespread, and the fact that they were sometimes perpetrated by Britain's allies was part of the environment which produced this discourse and could well have influenced it. Indeed, this is one of the arguments of the thesis and it will be supported with evidence. It will be argued that as well as the Blue Book being influenced by events on the Eastern Front the argument will be made that the orientalist othering of the 'terrible Turk' involved a degree of projection as a result of knowledge of and unease about the potential war crimes of the Allies.

This context is also important for understanding the degrees of change and continuity involved in the discourse surrounding Armenia in the British context. The changed nature of warfare and the dissolution of the boundary between civilian and military accounts in part for the changing attitudes evidenced in the discourse. It will be argued that, to an extent, Stefan Ihrig's contention that in Germany at least a realisation of genocide before genocide,<sup>58</sup> can be also detected in Britain. The changing attitudes involved an acceptance of developments in 'Total War.' This can be demonstrated to an extent by the increasing use of a trope of describing facilitating genocidal processes in a succinct and perceptive manner. This trope also involved the use of criteria, which suggests knowledge and to a degree acceptance of these processes. The continuity involved the use of traditional tropes of atrocity

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 124-5.

<sup>58</sup> Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide*, 296-7.

to articulate repulsion of the changes in warfare and the dissolution of boundaries between civilian and military spheres. It could also be said to be evidence for a degree of repulsion and anxiety about the 'Total War' practices of one's own side. Further, the fact that the newer descriptions of atrocity were emerging from a position of knowledge and approval when carried out by one's own side. Not least as throughout this period systematic colonial violence was essential to the maintenance of the British Empire.

### **Modernity and the First World War**

To demonstrate that British representations of the Armenian genocide during the First World War became more modern it is necessary to briefly introduce the concept of modernity and some of the scholarship regarding it. Particularly the scholarship concerning modernity and the First World War and how a greater contemporary understanding of it reached its apogee during it. Marshall Berman proposes that the age of modernity has been present for close to five hundred years and argues that that consists of industrialisation which has transformed scientific knowledge into technology. Further, changes in terms of 'immense demographic upheavals,' 'systems of mass communications,' 'increasingly powerful national states, bureaucratically structured and operated,' 'mass social movements of people, and peoples' and 'an ever expanding, drastically fluctuating capitalist world market.'<sup>59</sup>

John Terraine refers to these changes in the context of warfare and states that 'the "natural laws" that govern us are the laws of Industrial society. They certainly govern war. They 'supply the sinews.' Moreover, that the First World War was the 'greatest *First* Industrial Revolution War.' By this he means 'the

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<sup>59</sup> Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London: Penguin, 1988), 16.

introduction of steam-power – i.e., the transition from horses to horse-power, and the virtually simultaneous introduction of steel as a prime material.’ He also cites a ‘second Industrial Revolution’ which ‘added the internal combustion engine...along with electricity and light metals. A third Revolution contributed nuclear energy, plastics and electronics.’ These revolutions (minus nuclear energy in the case of 1914-18) transformed war qualitatively and quantitatively. The first feature involving the inventions, developments and techniques, the second going ‘far beyond the matter of productive capacities’ having a ‘profound social significance.’ Huge increases in population led to mass conscript and volunteer armies, and industrialisation provided the huge amounts of equipment and supplies involved. The powerful national state, bureaucratically structured and operated, organised the production and distribution of these. This meant the ‘mass armies drawn from the world’s mass populations could only be equipped and maintained by mass production and mass logistics.’ This ‘apparatus of the war made it an astonishingly different experience from all its forerunners...it was in fact a novelty from the first, a novelty breeding novelties to the very end.’<sup>60</sup>

Eric Hobsbawm echoes these points very strongly by stating that, ‘in the most general terms, total war was the largest enterprise hitherto known to man, which had to be consciously organized and managed.’ The scale of ‘Total War’ for Hobsbawm means that in contrast to Jane Austen it ‘is inconceivable that any novelist could write about Britain in the twentieth century wars in this manner.’<sup>61</sup> Austen does not mention the Napoleonic wars in her novels. The changes and modernity of ‘Total War’ for Hobsbawm led to ‘growing brutality and inhumanity.’ One reason was the ‘democratisation’ of war, where ‘because civilians and civilian life became the proper, and sometimes the main targets of strategy, and because in democratic wars...adversaries are naturally demonized in order to make them properly hateful or at least despicable.’ Another reason for Hobsbawm was ‘the

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<sup>60</sup> John Terraine, “The Substance of the War,” in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced*, ed. Hugh Cecil & Peter Liddle (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), 3-5.

<sup>61</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994), 44-5.

new impersonality of warfare, which turned killing and maiming into the remote consequence of pushing a button or moving a lever.’ He also associates this with bureaucratic violence suggesting that the ‘greatest cruelties of our century have been the impersonal cruelties of remote decision, of system and routine, especially when they could be justified as regrettable operational necessities.’ Into this framework of modernity in terms of warfare, ‘compulsory expulsion and killing on an astronomic scale,’ Hobsbawm places the Armenian genocide at the forefront of examples to demonstrate this new state of affairs.<sup>62</sup>

Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau and Heather Jones comment on the continuity from the past involved giving the examples of the American Civil War, the Boer War, the Russo-Japanese War and the Balkan wars of 1912 to 1913. However, they emphasise that the ‘Great War had a dramatic, permanent impact on the nature of combat.’ For them the unleashing of technological potential is central to this, and advances were ‘complex and highly interactive, linking scientists, soldier-experts, the state and industrialists.’ Another fundamental factor was logistics and morale and how this ‘was also key to how armed forces functioned.’ As a ‘result, the First World War marked the beginning of the era of psychological warfare.’<sup>63</sup> Alan Kramer could be said to add to this by arguing that aerial warfare had ‘an impact also on the civilian population, as German bombers and airships attacked civilian targets, killing 1,400 civilians in Britain.’<sup>64</sup> Kramer also stresses the manner in which the ‘losses affected all sections of society’ not just the urban and peasant masses making up the majority of the huge conscript armies involved. After detailing the extent of the casualties amongst teachers, university professors and teachers he argues that; ‘The losses among Europe’s future political and economic elite were thus even more catastrophic than among the working classes and peasantry.’<sup>65</sup> The completeness of these changes is perhaps summed up effectively by Stephane

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. 49-51.

<sup>63</sup> Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau & Heather Jones, “Introduction to Part II,” in *The Cambridge History of the First World War. Volume II: The State*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2014), 148-9.

<sup>64</sup> Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, 40.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 41.

Audoin-Rouzeau's judgment that during 1915 European societies became 'societies-for-war.'<sup>66</sup> This was commented on as early as 1881 by the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche who stated in that year that; 'We have entered the classical age of war on the largest scale, the age of scientific war with popular support-there will be wars such as never have been seen on Earth.'<sup>67</sup>

Returning to the argument in the section above concerning the short-term historical context and the erosion of the division between the civilian and military spheres Kramer attests to this in terms of the modernity involved. For example, he describes the way Germany needed the population of the occupied territories and how it kept it there with a huge electrified barbed wire fence. He describes this as Europe's first 'iron curtain' and 'an extraordinary harbinger of later totalitarian methods.'<sup>68</sup> Giving details of Russian 'scorched earth policy' and deportations Kramer introduces the concept of, 'Civilians as expendable beings'<sup>69</sup> and concludes that, 'we can identify a radicalisation of war with a tendency towards systematic, total exploitation of enemy civilians and the resources of conquered territory.'<sup>70</sup> These points would suggest that Berman's criteria regarding modernity described at the head of this section did indeed reach a type of apogee during the First World War.

As suggested by Kramer (see above) it would seem that the essence of modernism, particularly regarding 'Total War' and the First World War is a self-propelling dynamic process. Indeed, his colleague at the University of Dublin and co-writer John Horne has said that in 1915 the First World War became 'a world in itself.'<sup>71</sup> This suggests it was a complete entity producing everything it needed to sustain it. This 'dynamic of destruction' could be said to have had a profound effect

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<sup>66</sup> Audoin-Rouzeau, "1915: Stalemate," 65.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Richard Overy, *Blood and Ruins: The Great Imperial War 1939-1945* (London, Allen Lane, 2021), v.

<sup>68</sup> Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, 42-3.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* 151.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* 68.

<sup>71</sup> John Horne, "Introduction," in *Vers la guerre totale: le tournant de 1914-1915*, ed. John Horne (Paris: Tallandier, 2010), 24.

on how people articulated their responses to what they were seeing and reading about. In this respect scholars such as Matthew Farish have associated modernism with a 'crisis of representation' and 'visual powerlessness and confusion.' With the First World War he suggests that 'a process began to become apparent which has not halted since then. Was it not noticeable at the end of the war that men returned from the battlefield grown silent-not richer but poorer in communicable experience?'<sup>72</sup> Modris Ecksteins argues that a common observation in the literature emanating from the war was that 'men no longer made war; war was made on men.' Further, that the 'overpowering technology of warfare' meant the 'individual soldier was overwhelmed by a sense of vulnerability and helplessness.'<sup>73</sup> Moreover, Huppaufl states that the war 'dissolved subjectivity' and 'transformed perception' destroying both the landscape and 'experienced time and space.'<sup>74</sup> This surely adds to the points made earlier in this introduction of a 'grey zone' in relation to the situation of the large erosion of the boundaries between the civilian and military spheres. The fact that it was apparently simultaneously tolerated and sometimes welcomed as well as denounced speaks to observations concerning a 'crisis of representation.'

Nevertheless, out of this confusion a considerable degree of clarity can be found. We shall see that particularly in the chapter on German 'frightfulness' individuals did have real problems in understanding just what they were reading about. However, Chapter 4 will show that there are numerous examples of a very clear understanding of a process of extermination. This suggests to an extent that an argument that Britain in the Second World War could not adequately respond to the Holocaust because they could not comprehend it<sup>75</sup> has to be made more

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<sup>72</sup> Matthew Farish, "Modern Witnesses: War Correspondents, Geopolitical Vision and the First World War," *Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)*, (2001), 276-7.

<sup>73</sup> Modris Ecksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 184.

<sup>74</sup> Bernd Huppaufl, "Experiences of Modern Warfare and the Crisis of Representation," *New German Critique* no. 59, (1993), 62.

<sup>75</sup> Bernard Wasserstein argued that an 'imaginative failure' led officials to not 'grasp the full meaning of consequences and decisions'. Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (London: Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1979), 356. Walter Laqueur asserted that for the British the 'evil nature of Nazism was beyond their comprehension'. Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler's 'Final Solution'*. (London: Harmondsworth, 1980), 203. Tony

complex and or undermined. For example, Russell Wallis suggests that the idea that the British could not empathise adequately because they could not comprehend what was happening to the Jews is misplaced. He argues that they had done so before the Second World War and ‘a succession of horrifying examples of man’s inhumanity to man had been observed, dissected, and absorbed into national thought.’ Further, that a process of systematic extermination where ‘particular victims could be isolated, persecuted and killed’ was fully comprehended long before the Nazi persecution of minorities.<sup>76</sup> It is the argument of this thesis that the Armenian genocide was one of those examples which had been ‘observed, dissected and absorbed into national thought’ in Britain. Moreover, Tom Lawson further amplifies this approach and uses the example of representations of the genocide of Tasmanian peoples in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to do so.<sup>77</sup> It is the argument of this thesis that those of the Armenian genocide during the First World War do likewise.

However, this is not to say that a degree of clarity did not emerge alongside and out of a ‘crisis of representation’ or as Berman puts it a ‘maelstrom’ that was also a defining feature of modernism. He writes of modernity that people experiencing it find themselves in a situation that promises ‘adventure, power, joy, growth’ and ‘transformation of ourselves and the world.’ However, simultaneously it also ‘threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are.’ This, in his words, represents ‘a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish.’<sup>78</sup> The world historical processes identified by Berman and detailed at the outset of this section he argues ‘have nourished an amazing variety of visions and ideas that aim to make men and women the subjects as well as the objects of modernization.’ This he

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Kushner said that the British ‘liberal imagination’ could not comprehend the ‘*illiberal* phenomenon’ of Nazi policies. Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1994), 18-20. References taken from Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 242-3.

<sup>76</sup> Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 7-8.

<sup>77</sup> Tom Lawson, *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014), xv-xvi.

<sup>78</sup> Berman, *All That is. Solid Melts Into Air*, 15.

suggests gives them 'the power to change the world that is changing them, to make their way through the maelstrom and make it their own.'<sup>79</sup> What is now called genocide and ethnic cleansing can be described as part of this modernism in that it consists of actions, 'visions and ideas' that are an attempt to change a world that is changing its perpetrators and a 'maelstrom' as described immediately above. Homogenisation of given geographical areas is an act of fulfilling a vision based on values as its condemnation.

British representations of the Armenian genocide involved huge disillusionment in terms of humanity. They also involve a degree of orientalist projection in terms of self-knowledge and an understanding of the criteria involved. The language of condemnation describing the Turks for example as a cancer which needs to be removed reflects this maelstrom of modernity and how this threatens to destroy everything. An understanding of the criteria involved in carefully written representations of a process of extermination could be said to be a rational response reflecting growing modernity. The continuation of 'atrocitarian' and polemical listing alongside more modern biomedical language talking of cancers needing to be removed within an older orientalist and othering discourse could, on the other hand, be said to be irrational. This again bears out Berman's points concerning modernity as a maelstrom and those of others referring to a crisis of representation. In their writing on the German atrocities in Belgium during 1914 John Horne and Alan Kramer add to this argument using the specific historical examples of those events. They describe the contemporary reaction as a 'complex of irrational responses-fear, hatred, myth, hysteria-which played a central role on both sides.' In addressing the issue that this was not modern as it were, they suggest that in terms of pre-1914 bourgeois culture which is often associated with modernity that; 'Faith in rationality may not have been so characteristic a feature...as is sometimes supposed.' Echoing the arguments of their work in relation to Belgium (and this thesis in terms of the Armenian genocide) they argue that; 'Fascination with violence and irrationality was increasingly insistent in art,

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 16.

thought and politics.’ Moreover, that despite the apparent rationality and bureaucratic organisation of the Total War efforts the war ‘conjured up collective passions and irrationality on a devastating scale. The fixation with atrocities by both sides was part of this development.’<sup>80</sup>

This therefore reflects the maelstrom of modernity and in turn British representations of the Armenian genocide could be said to reflect a growing understanding of the role of ‘the norms of modern bureaucratic rationality’ in it, whilst also containing much that was irrational. That irrationality, the scholarship analysed here suggests was also a part of modernity and Horne and Kramer argue tellingly that during the process whereby ‘national and ideological beliefs’ and the relevant ‘collective imaginings’ made the world wars ‘total’; ‘...collective hysteria, rumour, and mythic fantasy’ were normal. Indeed, within ‘the organisational rationality of the military or the state...they were part of the bureaucratic process and integral to the propaganda.’<sup>81</sup>

By way of conclusion to this section it is the argument of this thesis that contemporary British representations of the Armenian genocide fit squarely into the context of modernity reaching an apogee during the First World War. They are reactions to events that resulted from the ‘dynamic of destruction’ involved in the technological, logistical and bureaucratic developments involved in modern ‘Total War.’ Reactions to how societies had become ‘societies-for-war’ with a huge erosion of the division between the civilian and military spheres and where both civilians and soldiers had become ‘expendable human beings.’ They demonstrate both confusion and clarity during a ‘maelstrom.’

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<sup>80</sup> Horne & Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914*, 426-7.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* 427-8.

## The Primary Sources

This thesis draws on newspaper reports, many of which eventually made their way into the aforementioned Parliamentary Blue Book of 1916. This and the ensuing reportage and commentary upon it is a key primary source and some attention to its production and the issues surrounding it is necessary. The Blue Book has become a central source and evidence for the charge of genocide using the United Nations 1948 definition and many historians working in the field affirm the veracity of most of the information.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, the modern Turkish government and historians following its line have condemned the Blue Book as a piece of wildly exaggerated propaganda.<sup>83</sup> Primarily this is due to its relationship with an earlier Blue Book produced, like it, by Viscount Bryce a noted Armenophile, on the German atrocities in Belgium and France.<sup>84</sup> Bryce was a long established advocate of the Armenian cause with a long record of writing on the subject and the Near East. He established the Anglo-Armenian Association in 1890 'with the explicit purpose of enforcing Article 61'<sup>85</sup> of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin. This called on the Ottoman government to impose reforms that would protect their Armenian minorities. However, his employment of the historian Arnold J. Toynbee to edit the testimonies used in the production of the Blue Book during 1915 and 1916 was a conscious response to the criticism directed against the very hastily produced Blue Book concerning the alleged German atrocities in Belgium. This reflected a strong desire to avoid allegations of non-objective bias on Bryce's part.<sup>86</sup> Great effort was taken to

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<sup>82</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee ed. *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce, James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916).

<sup>83</sup> M. Hakan Yavuz, "Orientalism, 'the Terrible Turk' and Genocide," *Middle East Critique* 23 no. 2 (May 2014): 117 (this refers to the 'World War 1 reports' of Bryce and Toynbee). Justin McCarthy, *The Turk in America* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010), 235-41.

<sup>84</sup> For the controversies concerning the writing of the first Bryce Report see Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), 182-191. He argues that it was very much an important act of propaganda where the 'truth' had to be suborned to the greater good during a national emergency, which relied to a great extent for its justification on events in Belgium.

<sup>85</sup> Tusan, *Smyrna's Ashes*, 29.

<sup>86</sup> 'Toynbee spent months cross-checking reports and obtaining details of place names, dates and events in order to separate facts from rumour, exaggeration and confusion'. Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 106. Geoffrey Robertson has said that 'he declined to consult it' initially, 'because of the

corroborate the evidence concerning the Armenians as a result. Nevertheless, Toynbee later reflected that he was conscious at the time of this work that he and his colleagues were producing a piece of propaganda. He believed it would divert attention from German claims concerning the Russian deportation of hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews away from the front.<sup>87</sup> William H. McNeil in his 1989 biography of Toynbee asserts 'British propagandists decided that efforts to publicise Armenian sufferings would help counteract German news reports from the eastern front describing Russian atrocities against the Jews in Poland.'<sup>88</sup> It would also simultaneously act as a powerful tool in the ongoing campaign to win neutral American opinion around to joining the war on the Allied side. Sadia McAvoy has argued that Toynbee's 1915 text *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation* was 'unequivocally' aimed at the American audience. Further, that it was heavily influenced by American missionary sources, which tended to emphasise the religious context of Muslim versus Christian.<sup>89</sup> It has been suggested by Rebecca Gill that Toynbee's apparent volte-face in the early 1920s regarding his opinion of the Turks was part of an intellectual process. This involved his bitter regret regarding his work for the British Government and as he saw it as crude propaganda and wished to compensate and atone for this.<sup>90</sup>

Therefore, we do need to take into account Toynbee's feelings of guilt regarding his role as propagandist during the First World War and how this may have influenced a turnaround regarding communal violence between Muslims and Christians, Turks and Greeks (and Armenians). Another aspect of this was his attitude towards the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George who was responsible more than anyone else in terms of encouragement and support from Western Europe for the Greek invasion of Ottoman territories in 1919. Not only did Toynbee subsequently blame Lloyd George for meddling in Near Eastern affairs for

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intensity of the Turkish belief that it was fraudulent. But denialists have failed to prove the fabrication of a single document'. Robertson, *An Inconvenient Genocide*, 12.

<sup>87</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *Acquaintances* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 149-53.

<sup>88</sup> William H. McNeill, *Arnold J. Toynbee: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 73.

<sup>89</sup> McAvoy, *The Construction of Ottoman Asia*, 77-8.

<sup>90</sup> Gill, "Now I have seen evil, and cannot be silent about it," 185.

self-serving interests he already held a huge grudge against him from the time of the Versailles deliberations in 1919. McNeil puts this down to Lloyd George's ignoring of Foreign Office views and therefore of Toynbee's ideas at Versailles. 'Therefore, he lent a willing hand to post-war newspaper campaigns against the Prime Minister's Near Eastern policies.'<sup>91</sup> Indeed, he was generally frustrated with the lack of progress in this area at Versailles and this contributed to a physical and moral collapse.<sup>92</sup> Thus, as Gill comments; 'Outraged by Greek attacks on Muslim civilians, Toynbee took up his pen, dipped it frequently in a well of righteous anger, and commenced a press campaign against Allied intrigue in the region.' In short it obligated him to challenge traditional Orientalist conventions of understanding and the whole notion of a Great power sponsored peace based on a 'superior civilisation.'<sup>93</sup>

Gill also suggests that his journalistic output for *The Manchester Guardian* on the subject and his subsequent book, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilisations*, became wrapped up in 'the resolution of an intellectual puzzle with which he had grappled for many years; 'the key to unlocking the history of civilisations.' These she argues asserted the view that it was an interaction between Lloyd George's foreign policy and It was in the interaction between 'deeper historical forces' that accounted for both Greek and Turkish atrocities.<sup>94</sup> However, although this steered him away from crude attempts to explain the mass killing of civilians in the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire in terms of racial and national characteristics it also 'blinded him to the possibility of a consistent and pro-active ideology of Turkish nationalism with older political roots.'<sup>95</sup>

Returning to the Blue Books it has now been established by historians that much of the material in the volume regarding Belgium was based on second or third

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 80.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 81-2.

<sup>93</sup> Gill, "Now I have seen evil, and cannot be silent about it," 173.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. 175.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

hand hearsay and that it reproduced accounts of mass rape and severed children's hands with no attempt to verify the information.<sup>96</sup> There is little doubt now that the more lurid examples of atrocity, solemnly presented as truth in this Blue Book have very little if any relationship to it. Therefore, as much of the information in the Blue Book on the Armenian massacres is similarly lurid it is argued by some that it is just as unreliable.<sup>97</sup> However, it would be wrong to make too direct a comparison between the two Blue Books precisely because of Toynbee's involvement. As alluded to above it seems that Bryce was only too aware of the vulnerability of the first and being mindful of repetition actively sought out Toynbee to guard against it in the second. In direct contrast to the piece on German atrocities which was published within a few months of the events themselves the Blue Book on the Armenian massacres only saw the light of day a full year after they had taken place. Indeed, concern was expressed by the British government that Toynbee was taking too long within a context of mounting pressure to use the information to persuade the USA to enter the war.<sup>98</sup> Although this represents an issue in terms of its reliability it does seem that Toynbee was determined that all the accounts published could be properly verified and corroborated. In his foreword, Bryce goes to some lengths to emphasise this (again in contrast to his work on the German atrocities) and he highlights the importance, as do modern historians, of the German testimony involved.<sup>99</sup> As stated before in this thesis there is a strong consensus amongst the international genocide scholarship community that the historical sources investigated since the Blue Book have largely corroborated the genocidal violence it portrays despite the lurid representation within it.<sup>100</sup>

Although Toynbee '...systematically tried to evaluate the reliability of any given piece of information,' McNeill argues that he consciously left out why the

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<sup>96</sup> Horne & Kramer, *German Atrocities*, 223.

<sup>97</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 110-12. Robertson, *An Inconvenient Genocide*, 67.

<sup>98</sup> Michelle Tusan, "James Bryce's Blue Book as Evidence," *Journal of Levantine Studies* 5, no. 2, (Winter 2015): 43-4.

<sup>99</sup> *The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, xxv

<sup>100</sup> Robertson, *An Inconvenient Genocide*, 12, 68-76.

Turks distrusted and disliked the Armenians so much.<sup>101</sup> This would seem to apply to a number of tracts separate from the Blue Book and firmly associated with his official government role after its publication. Like the Armenophile discourse more generally, I will argue that the Blue Book does show aspects of the systematic criterion-driven approach as well as, and more notably, the biomedical discourse using a rural idyll. There may very well be issues in terms of the wider context of Turkish-Armenian relations and the decline of Ottoman power in the Balkans. This involved massacres and forced migrations of many Muslims. However, much of the Blue Book has withstood a considerable amount of close historical scrutiny. There is certainly nothing to compare to the repetition in the German atrocity publication of stories of hundreds of Belgian children having their hands cut off by German soldiers with no verification whatsoever. In relation to these stories not one living victim was identified and it seems to have been the product of hysterical mass suggestion utilising a well-worn trope from before the war. This was established with photographic evidence from the Belgian Congo. In the main therefore, this thesis has used the Blue Book to demonstrate how aspects of it evidence the development of the systematic criterion-driven response that I argue emerges in particular in relation to representation of the Armenian genocide in Britain. This thesis here is indebted to Tusan's scholarship in this regard. I also engage with the Blue Book to demonstrate continuity in the discourse and its place in a tradition of polemical, 'atrocitarian' and denunciatory listing (Toynbee's other propaganda pamphlets are very much in this vein<sup>102</sup>). Furthermore, the thesis uses the Blue Book to contrast this tradition with the very real elements of change in the representation of atrocities in Armenia and to identify how this evolved from the continuity in more traditional representations of violence.

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<sup>101</sup> McNeill, *Arnold J. Toynbee*, 74.

<sup>102</sup> See Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation, with a speech delivered by Lord Bryce in the House of Lords* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915). *The Destruction of Poland: A Study in German Efficiency* (1916). *The Belgian Deportations, with a statement by Viscount Bryce* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1917). *The German Terror in Belgium: An Historical Record* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917). *The German Terror in France: An Historical Record* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917). *Turkey: A Past and a Future* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917).

These elements of change are to be found chiefly in the wider newspaper representations of the period and the dissertation maintains a focus on newspapers as sources. *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* were selected in particular as these papers are often cited in the provincial papers as sources for articles and editorial opinion. This is evidence that the discourse identified to be emerging was of some significance and reasonably widespread. We can clearly see in the newspaper reports and editorials that new conceptualisations of mass violence against civilian populations were indeed developing. *The Times* was chosen due to its reputation as the newspaper of the establishment, widely read by Britain's political and intellectual elites. Thus, it can be argued that it had both an important opinion-forming role and that it reflected an important body of opinion. Two examples from the area of war coverage demonstrate this, both from Andrew J. A. Morris's 2015 biography of *The Times* First World War correspondent, Charles a la Court Repington. Firstly, when Charles Callwell was made Director of Military Operations at the War Office he urged the War Minister, Kitchener to 'treat newspaper correspondents as responsible professionals, and also to acknowledge *The Times* as a special newspaper.'<sup>103</sup> Secondly, when Field Marshal Haig attempted to snub Repington when he visited British GHQ in July 1916 for the first time since the former had been appointed Commander in Chief it was pointed out by a colleague 'that the military correspondent of *The Times* enjoyed a political importance he could not afford to ignore.'<sup>104</sup> Perhaps more importantly for this particular study *The Times* had a reputation for being in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of taking a Disraelian position on the issue of the Ottoman Empire and 'the Turk.' This line of thought chiefly amounted to a recognition that the interests of the British Empire were best served by regretfully turning a blind eye to the mistreatment of Christians in the Ottoman Empire and supporting the Turks vis a vis the Russians. They were seen as a major threat to the British Empire in the Near East and it was widely believed that the Russians had designs on Afghanistan and British India. Looking ahead it could be said that this was the

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<sup>103</sup> Andrew J. A. Morris, *Reporting the First World War: Charles Repington: The Times and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 179.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* 223.

reason that the British abandoned the goal of a Greater Armenia after Ataturk's Nationalists were victorious and succeeded in overturning the 1920 Treaty of Sevres and replacing it in 1923 with that of Lausanne. The new Turkey would be a buffer zone between British India and a potentially expansive Soviet Union and the threat of world communist revolution it apparently represented.<sup>105</sup>

*The Manchester Guardian* was as the name suggests a provincial newspaper but had considerable importance as a voice of liberal opinion nationally. Indeed, John M. McEwen suggested that it 'was unique for the influence it wielded in London and indeed throughout the land.'<sup>106</sup> With a readership of probably no more than 35,000 in 1914 McEwan argues that its influence was not to be measured by its circulation but rather that it's famous editor C. P. Scott 'and his staff of excellent writers spoke authoritatively on both national and international questions, and the Guardian was rightly described as 'an instrument of journalistic authority scarcely inferior in influence to that of *The Times* under Barnes and Delane.'<sup>107</sup>

Mart Hampton has argued that the educational role of the press postulated by J.S. Mill to teach the 'proper opinions' persisted at *The Manchester Guardian*. This was despite the pressure from commercialisation and divorce and murder stories in the historical context of the 1870 Education Act and new working class markets. The New Journalism and 'yellow press' of the 1880s onwards saw newspapers as a commodity to make money or a 'representative' medium and as such contrasted with the ethos of *The Manchester Guardian*.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, it could be said that the challenge of the New Journalism created a new impetus to this ethos. David Ayerst has made the point that in the 1870s the paper no longer

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<sup>105</sup> Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 134, 138-9, 145-6.

<sup>106</sup> John M. McEwen, "The National Press during the First World War: Ownership and Circulation," *Journal of Contemporary History* 17, no. 3 (July 1982): 461.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. p. 476. Quote from Francis Williams, *Dangerous Estates: The Anatomy of Newspapers* (London, New York: Longmans Green, 1957), 163. John Thadeus Delane was editor of *The Times* 1841-1877 succeeding Thomas Barnes who had held the post since 1816.

<sup>108</sup> Mart Hampton, "'Understanding Media': theories of the press in Britain, 1850-1914," *Media, Culture & Society* 23, (2001): 215-17.

confined itself to public men and events and actions in the courts. Rather, it sought to delve into the 'hidden occurrences of ordinary life, bringing out dark things which the enlightened conscience of middle- and upper-class England ought to have known but did not.'<sup>109</sup> Nicholas Owen has suggested that this was unique and 'it had sought to preserve the educational ideal of mid-Victorian journalism.' Further, that it was resolute in its vocal determination to 'speak truth to power, its commitment to hearing every voice, and the importance of moral obligations in imperial policymaking.'<sup>110</sup>

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the paper became known more and more for an impassioned stance regarding being unbiased and objective. During the Bulgarian atrocities the paper's correspondent, Capt. H. F. Woods was a Turcophile but recognised Ottoman atrocities as well as anti-Muslim massacres<sup>111</sup> and Ayerst argues that, 'The paper took up in general almost a cross-bench position in these years,' and held a 'straightforward hatred of oppression from whatever quarter it sprang.' Furthermore, that the paper 'went thoroughly enough into the details of east European politics to see that nobody had clean hands.'<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, after its adoption in terms of editorial stance of the cause of Irish Home Rule in 1886 *The Manchester Guardian* shifted to the left of the Liberal Party after sixty years on the right.<sup>113</sup> This shift to the left did not harm its influence within the party at the highest levels. During the Panther/Agadir incident 1911 Scott was entreated not to write anything without seeing government ministers, which he did, including the Prime Minister Asquith.<sup>114</sup> However, during the First World War the paper continued to maintain a left liberal stance even when this clashed with the policies of the largely Liberal government. For example, by urging 'vigorous but not repressive government throughout WW1' and defending minorities such as German

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<sup>109</sup> David Ayerst, *The Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper* (Ithaca (N.Y.): Cornell University Press, 1971), 170.

<sup>110</sup> Nicholas Owen, "'Facts Are Sacred': The Manchester Guardian and Colonial Violence, 1930-1932," *The Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 3 (Sept. 2012): 662.

<sup>111</sup> Ayerst, *The Guardian*, 198.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* 201-2.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* 204.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.* 366-7.

'aliens' and Conscientious Objectors.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, only *The Manchester Guardian* printed full exhaustive summaries of the secret treaties made between England, France and Russia released by the Bolsheviks in November 1917. *The Times* in contrast and some other papers gave a few short, discreet extracts and Ayerst argues that this led directly to Wilson's 14 Points.<sup>116</sup>

During the Boer War as *The Manchester Guardian* became increasingly critical of the prosecution of the war, many of its readers from the business community apparently threw their papers away in noisy disgust. Owen has commented on this, reinforcing what he regards as the fearless objectivity of the paper. The 'long history' of this included 'the violent suppression of Irish Home Rulers in the 1880s and the "Black and Tan" atrocities against Sinn Fein in 1920 – 21,' as well as controversial Boer War policies. This was in spite of the unpopularity it courted, the loss of 25% of its readership and attacks on its offices.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, despite the very real threat to the papers existence that this approach represented it seems in the long run to have bolstered its reputation and importance for the modern historian. Thus, Ayerst comments that the newspaper was 'nearly killed' as a result of events between 1897 and 1902. However, this stance was in stark contrast to other Liberal papers based in London and this the 'made the Guardian the dominant expression of radical thinking among educated men and women.'<sup>118</sup>

*The Manchester Guardian* therefore, amounts to an invaluable source for any study of British representations of the Armenian genocide during 1915-23. Its position in relation to the Liberal Party and therefore the British wartime government at the same time as being a stalwart defender of journalistic objectivity is important here. As the demands of modern, industrialised, 'Total War' placed

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. 380.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. 405.

<sup>117</sup> Owen, "Facts Are Sacred," 662.

<sup>118</sup> Ayerst, *The Guardian*, 266.

increasing pressure on British society in general and British liberalism in particular, the paper acted as a forum for the subsequent responses and an indicator of the anguish this produced. Its controversial stance on British colonial policies also make it an important source for investigating and analysing the degree of projection which may have been involved when British commentators so polemically denounced Turkish atrocities. It could be argued that if there was one place in British politics that one might expect a different approach to the Armenian massacres and deportations calling out the hypocrisy and projection involved it was here. However, as I demonstrate, despite Toynbee's reporting in 1922 this did not happen. The new conceptualisations of mass violence against civilians that this thesis suggests developed in the First World War, developed here also.

These representations also developed within the other major group of primary sources used. This grouping is diverse and that fact is again significant in terms of the new conceptualisations regarding the mass killing of civilians that arose. It consists firstly of speeches of politicians in government making official responses to the relevant significant events and include the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Andrew Bonar Law, Lloyd George's Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour as well as Lloyd George himself. Secondly, experienced politicians, both Liberal and Conservative, sitting in the House of Lords who were frequently moved to condemn the Turks in relation to the Armenians. Men such as the Marquess of Crewe and Lord Cromer. Thirdly, committed Armenophiles who had voiced their concern for the Armenians back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is a degree of overlap within this group and the two previous ones in that Lord Bryce for example is to be found in those too. Though he was not a member of the government, his role in the compilation of the Blue Book and his many public pronouncements on its significance, amounted to a role as an official spokesperson on the matter. Other characters included Sir Edwin Pears, a British barrister, author and historian who had lived and worked in Constantinople for 40 years. Further, Aneurin Williams, a Liberal M.P. and Noel Buxton, another Liberal M.P. who joined the Labour Party in 1919. The latter, like Bryce had

travelled extensively in the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire and travel writing was a significant feature of the Armenophile community. Sir Edwin Pears writing career concerning these matters stretched back to the Bulgarian massacres of 1876 and he can be seen as a leading example of the Gladstonian so-called 'atrocitarians'. However, he had lived for many years in Constantinople, was critical of the Armenian radicals and was capable of words of great moderation concerning the Turks as well as a critic of their despotism. In his 1906 work *Forty Years in Constantinople*, for example, he concludes with the plea that, 'The Turk should be trusted with justice and generosity. He has failed lamentably as a ruler of subject races. Europe should show him a more just and generous spirit.'<sup>119</sup> Armenophiles were not only noted political figures and writers but also committed activists involved in organisations such as the Lord Mayors Fund, the Armenian Red Cross and the Women's Armenian Relief Fund. These were individuals who publicly advocated the Armenians cause and organised fund raising and relief activities for the survivors of the massacres and the deportations. Emily Robinson was a key individual here. Her father J.T. Stead had run *The Daily News* in the mid-1890s, which sent out correspondents during the Hamidian massacres. Michelle Tusan places her in the Gladstonian 'atrocitarian' tradition, which placed the Christianity of the Armenians at the centre of discourse and analysis. She describes her as the 'steady force' behind the Armenian Red Cross; being its chairwoman.<sup>120</sup>

Fourthly and a diverse group within this diverse group, are various writers and pamphleteers who were moved to respond to the massacres and deportations and the behaviour of the Turks in print. Their work clearly seems to fit a definition of propaganda and sometimes they were officially employed by the government to do this. Again, there is overlap with other groups, for example in the person of the editor of the Blue Book, Arnold Toynbee and the British diplomat, Sir Mark Sykes. Other individuals include the ghost story writer Edward Frederic Benson (a son of the Archbishop of Canterbury) and the popular Methodist minister novelist Joseph

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<sup>119</sup> Edwin Pears, *Forty Years in Constantinople: The Recollections of Sir Edwin Pears 1873-1915* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd, 1916), 379.

<sup>120</sup> Tusan, *Smyrna's Ashes*, 116.

Hocking. The former wrote a polemical piece of non-fiction on the Turks, whilst the latter wrote an adventure romance novel about the Armenian massacres and deportations themselves. Another clergyman, based in Jerusalem, Canon J. T. Parfit wrote pamphlets for Wellington House (as did Toynbee), the official government propaganda unit. The head of this organisation Charles Masterman also wrote a piece on the Armenian events. Therefore, although this group overwhelmingly comes from middle and upper class backgrounds, there is a significant degree of diversity in terms of political opinion, religious belief, occupation and experience.

I analysed the primary sources in the changing short term historical context of the First World War as well as that of the long-term context of the Ottoman Empire and the representation of the mass killing of civilians there and in the Balkans in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Using the recent scholarship on homogenisation policies, genocide and ethnic cleansing alongside that on emerging 'Total War' practices and the manner in which these areas spoke to ideas on Modernity led me to construct hypotheses that form the judgments of this thesis. Also informing the construction of these hypotheses was an engagement with the scholarship on the representation of mass killing and the actions of the Ottoman government that has analysed an orientalist approach in these representations. Using Raymond Williams's notions of the emergent and the residual added to this methodological approach.

The scholarship on homogenisation, genocide and ethnic cleansing highlighted the significance of the increasingly modern language of the representations. This informed an analysis that identified an emergent trope that supplemented a residual one of an 'atrocitarian' and polemical listing technique. Attention was paid to the propagandistic rhetoric involved and the typology of the words used. The analysis identified in particular a modernity of language and representation revolving around the concept of a process of extermination. The aforementioned scholarship informed a diagnosis of the representations that

argues that this process was understood and articulated at the time as one involving facilitating stages of persecution carried out by central government agencies. Further that this involved clear notions of what an ethnic group consisted of, how it could be taken to pieces and partially or fully destroyed and how this was related to geographical space.

Other areas of scholarship utilised in this analysis were those on 19th and early 20th century colonialism and science which informed an interpretation of these representations that highlights the biomedical language involved as well as the invocation of a rural idyll. Both of these allowed a careful explanation of the developing representation of the mass killing of civilians demonstrating the residual and the emergent. An engagement with the scholarship on Orientalism obviously dominated the work of this thesis that sees an orientalist act of projection in British representations of the Armenian genocide.

The methodological approach of this thesis is overwhelmingly qualitative rather than quantitative. It focuses on how language changed and the development of new descriptive tropes alongside the continuation of more traditional ones. Further, how the former related to the latter. However, during the research of newspaper articles considerable attempts at a quantitative approach were made using newspaper headlines and sub-headings looking at how many times certain words and phrases were used in them on the same day in a number of publications. This also involved surveying how much certain items of information were included or omitted and whether this threw light on a more modern discourse emerging. A few relevant examples of this approach are included in the main body of the thesis. The table in this introduction above demonstrating the volume of reporting, for example. If anything, the quantitative approach demonstrated strong features of continuity in the discourse. It demonstrated a high incidence of words, phrases and information found more typically in the 'atrocitarian', polemical listing trope of discourse. The central argument of this thesis is that this reinforces its conclusions

on the novelty of the newer discourse and how it was truly emergent and marked during these years.

A final point regarding the methodological approach concerning the newspaper articles used needs to be made here. Most of these articles whether in *The Times* or *The Manchester Guardian* or in the provincial press contain exactly the same wording on any given single day. The papers reprinted agency (Reuters and Associated Press for example) reports on the events and sometimes foreign newspaper pieces (from the Russian and French press most often). However, individual papers then very often selected and omitted information as they saw fit and added their own headlines and sub-headings. In this manner examples of non-British discourse become integral to British representations. Furthermore, on many occasions editors and journalists gave their own comments and concluding remarks. This thesis signposts when extracts are opinion pieces. It is often very difficult if not impossible to trace the original text and the mechanics of how the newspaper reports were compiled and produced is beyond the scope of this research. The emphasis of the thesis is on the nature of the accumulated discourse produced in the public sphere in Britain. Moreover, when a senior politician or Armenophile is quoted in a piece such as Lord Bryce that same quote can be found in many other publications of that particular day. The diverse choices of publication demonstrate the wide diffusion throughout the British provincial press of the information regarding the Armenian massacres and deportations.<sup>121</sup>

### **Structure**

The approach of this thesis has been both thematic and chronological. Thus, four key themes have been identified and analysed with a chapter devoted to each despite the way they overlap and interact. However, each thematic chapter is

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<sup>121</sup> When a page number is not given, this is because the scan of the page in the British Newspaper Archive is indecipherable in this respect.

developed chronologically to describe how the discourse changed as the historical context did so in the form of the unfolding events of the First World War. One chapter in particular, Chapter one on German 'Frightfulness,' follows a more distinct chronological structure with clearly identifiable phases. To an extent that structure can be applied to the ensuing chapters but less explicitly.

Chapter 1 of this thesis concentrates on how the British descriptions of the Armenian massacres and deportations were developed and written through and using a prism of German 'frightfulness'. In short, how the events were directly compared with and explained by alleged German war crimes such as the 'rape of Belgium,' the sinking of the *Lusitania* in particular and unrestricted submarine warfare in general. Further, the bombing of civilians by Zeppelins and Gotha aeroplanes, naval shelling of British east coast towns, the initial use of poison gas and the execution of individuals such as Edith Cavell and Captain Fryatt.<sup>122</sup> The necessities of wartime propaganda it is argued in this chapter meant that more distant events in the Ottoman Empire were made more immediate to the British public by this technique. It also demonstrates further the role of Orientalism in the wartime discourse arguing that the 'Hun' was orientalised in Europe whilst the 'terrible Turk' was Europeanised in the Orient. The chapter emphasises how there was a great deal of continuity in the way the mass killing of civilians and atrocities against them was described. In addition, I demonstrate, that there was a great deal in common between denunciation of the oppression of helpless civilians in a 'small nation' such as Armenia and those in Belgium. Further, that the trope of a process of extermination was not the only significant feature of the discourse. The argument is made that despite the potency of these approaches it is highly significant that the new trope described above of a process of systematic extermination developed alongside this more traditional discourse. One could say in spite of it. The changing historical context of the First World War is key to

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<sup>122</sup> Edith Cavell was a British nurse working in Belgium who was executed in 1915 by the German authorities for assisting in the escape of British soldiers caught behind the German lines after the 1914 invasion. Captain Fryatt was a merchant seaman executed by the Germans for ramming a U-boat with his ship.

explaining how this discourse developed, changed and declined. Indeed, the post Treaty of Versailles circumstances in relation to Germany and Turkey are vital to understanding how and why the more modern and genocidal discourse came to dominate when describing the massacres and deportations of the Armenians.

The historical scholarship on First World War propaganda and gendered approaches to it and the theme of Britain fighting principally for the honour and safety of women and children is also important in this chapter. Further, how this approach revolved around the notion of a war for 'civilisation.' Some of the research and writing on the German Military's notions and methods of waging war is also utilised to define the concept of 'frightfulness.' The issue of 'Total War' and the erosion of the division between the civilian and material spheres are central to the analysis of this chapter. There is also a discussion of the scholarship on Orientalism in this chapter to better frame the issue of British projection in representations of the Armenian genocide. Further, to explain the argument that a more traditional discourse was supplemented with a new more modern one, what I call 'atrocitarian' polemical listing is introduced in terms of explanation.

Chapter 2 analyses how the British discourse very often deployed the concept of a rural idyll to idealise Armenian society, particularly its peasantry and the geographical space it populated. This was directly related to the manner in which its dialectical opposite, the 'terrible Turk' and his geography was associated with dirt and decay and disease. Indeed, the rural idyll of Armenia and the squalid topography of 'the terrible Turk' are represented in a symbiotic, oppositional relationship. Chapter 3 and the following chapter, reinforces one argument of this thesis that the British discourse was in part a projection onto the Turkish 'other' of British rationales which would now be described as genocidal. The rural idyll has been associated with the discourse of annihilation throughout history and its use to condemn the perpetrators of atrocity who themselves used it to justify their actions is of great significance.

In addition to drawing on scholarly material in relation to British racism, the chapter is also concerned with the apparent malaise in pre-First World War Britain and fears for the physical and psychological health of its population in an increasingly changing and modern world. Relevant historical scholarship on British Armenophiles from the later nineteenth century is used to demonstrate the very significant changes that took place in the discourse describing the Armenian peasantry and the landscape it inhabited and worked. Orientalism is again a feature of the writing on the 'Turk' relevant to this chapter and its key features are subsequently utilised to establish the argument.

Chapter 3 analyses biomedical language and use of scientific models and rationales in the discourse and this material follows on from and complicates the concept of the rural idyll. Modern scholarship on homogenisation policies and genocide is invoked in this and the preceding chapter to demonstrate how important these are in the genocidal mind-set and how their use in the condemnation of the perpetrator is again of great significance. The perpetrators often used the same language and rationales as their outraged critics. Indeed, there is an apparent awareness in the discourse of how these tropes are part of the process of systematic extermination being described. That a more traditional 'atrocitarian' trope involving polemical listing was superseded by one of a more modern and genocidal nature is a key argument of this thesis. The scholarship on colonialism used in Chapter 2 is mobilised here alongside that on the development of the homogenisation of territory based on ethnicity.

Chapter 4 describes what is meant by a process of extermination in the context of the contemporary discourse in Britain and traces the development of this trope. The key details involved and the criteria used in the discourse is explained and demonstrated with examples from the primary sources. These features have not been previously analysed in depth by the existing scholarship. The manner in which it contrasts markedly from what this thesis argues was an

'atrocitarian' polemical listing method of description is also detailed and explained. As such some examples of this trope from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century are provided and analysed, as well as those that represent the presence of the residual during the First World War. The chapter establishes that a newer more 'modern' trope had developed very significantly by the end of 1915, a full year before the Blue Book. As such it argues that the latter is not the best evidence for the view that a contemporary realisation of genocide using the language of the day (extermination of a people for example) had developed in the First World War. Sections on humanitarian responses to atrocity, the role of gender and the development of a discourse on a process of systematic extermination provide the context for the analysis of this chapter.

The chapter argues that the trope of a process became more fully concretised in the form of succinct and perceptive summaries by the end of the war. Further, that this was often voiced in the post-war period until developments in the politics of the region influenced its marked decline after 1923-4. Therefore, the changing historical context is key to analysing the rise and decline of this new more modern trope. The work of Jo Laycock on the role of Orientalism in how Armenia was imagined and how this changed during the First World War is used to establish the argument of this thesis. Also utilised is Michelle Tusan's on the 1916 Blue Book. Recent scholarship on the development of population policies aimed at homogenisation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is referred to as a means of reinforcing the significance of the representations studied here.

As well as summarising the key findings of this thesis the conclusion will suggest that the evidence of a new more modern genocidal trope developing in the British discourse during the First World War adds to the argument that what would now be described as a genocide took place in the Ottoman Empire. That the fact that the discourse contained visualisations and conceptualisations of a new method and rationale of the treatment of minority populations may reflect that such new

methods and rationales had developed. Furthermore, the conclusion will suggest that this thesis adds weight to an argument that the phenomena of genocide and ethnic cleansing is far more prevalent and widespread than many would like to think. The denunciation of the perpetrators contained within it many of the rationales and attitudes of those perpetrators. This shows to an extent the discourse was a projection onto the enemy during a 'Total War.' The division between the civilian and military spheres was increasingly being dissolved during such a war and this adds to that argument.

## Chapter 1

### British Representations of the Armenian Genocide During the First World War Alongside German 'Frightfulness.'

#### Introduction

In May 1915 *The Manchester Guardian* printed the following in an editorial.

Trustworthy reports from the interior of Turkey have been rare, but it is clear (and indeed only logical) that, free from outside control of any kind, condoned if not encouraged by their German ally, the Young Turks allowed the Kurds to develop that persecution of Armenians which had never been really stopped. In Constantinople, however, it is the Government itself which is acting, arresting and transporting leading Armenians as it likes. The theory underlying this conduct is, of course, the same which governs the terroristic methods of the Germans in their occupied territories... <sup>123</sup>

This seems to indicate that as early as May 1915 the British discourse in representations of the massacres could clearly distinguish between a more traditional type of mass killing of civilians, particularly of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and something, which was new in the present. In this case a distinction was made regarding Kurdish violence, 'which had never really been stopped.' This presumably harks back to the Hamidian massacres on one hand and a more centrally controlled process on the other which the Germans are facilitating to 'develop.' Whilst there was a considerable number of representations in the 1890s, which did blame the Sublime Porte for centrally organised mass killing, this article suggests that in the circumstances of this war different distinctions were being made. 'In Constantinople... it is the Government itself which is acting, arresting and transporting leading Armenians as it likes.' The article continues by asserting that there is a theory (suggesting a growing use of criteria for a new method of mass persecution) behind this centrally planned action. Furthermore, that this theory is 'the same which governs the terroristic methods of the Germans in their occupied

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<sup>123</sup> "The Armenians in Turkey," *The Manchester Guardian*, May 26, 1915, 6.

territories...’ The fact that this sentence starts with ‘of course’ suggests that the writer is very much of the opinion that the Germans are largely influencing the methods of the Turks by providing the ‘theory.’ Thus, this thesis will add to the existing scholarship by demonstrating how British representations of the Armenian genocide were viewed through a prism of German ‘frightfulness.’

This chapter will briefly describe the term German ‘frightfulness’ and its role in the British propaganda of the First World War. It will then describe the way it was deployed in relation to the massacre and deportation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the reasons for that and for the change and continuity involved. To do this effectively six distinct phases of the discourse in the representations have been identified and described already in the introduction above. To repeat they are: The pre-genocide phase from January to April 1915; the beginning of the genocide in April and May 1915; the reporting of the events in the summer, autumn and winter of 1915; 1916 and the parliamentary Blue Book; 1917 to 1918; and finally, 1919 to 1923. It will be explained how a trope of German ‘frightfulness’ was immediately deployed as a sort of prism through which the Armenian massacres and deportations could be viewed. The figurative meaning of prism is deployed in that this is used to refer to the clarification or distortion afforded by a particular viewpoint. For example, as soon as reports of atrocities in the Ottoman Empire reached Britain, commentators immediately made comparisons with German actions. This seems to have been very clear to these commentators despite the fact that in reality what was happening there was of a dreadfully singular nature thus these comparisons also distorted the picture. This thesis needs to explain how this happened so as to better understand the significance of a new trope of a process of systematic extermination using biomedical language and imagery of a rural idyll.

The way representations of the Armenian genocide involved direct comparisons with German behaviour in Europe is of great historical significance in

itself and the detailed research regarding this for this thesis helps fill an important gap in the scholarship. It adds to an understanding of both the contemporary representation of the Armenian genocide and that of German atrocities in Belgium and France. Moreover, the new trope did emerge from that of 'frightfulness' as well as more traditional orientalist readings, which themselves are relevant to those with a German emphasis. One argument of this chapter in this regard is that the 'Turk' was Europeanised in the Orient whilst the 'Hun' was orientalised in Europe. Examining this trope of German 'frightfulness' is also essential to the ongoing concern of this thesis to explore the question of what the British representations of the Ottoman 'Other' in accounts of the genocide tell us about the 'British Self?'

This thesis uses the concept of Orientalism to establish some of its arguments mentioned directly above. The orientalist 'style' pervades the traditional representations and discourse of violence being discussed here. Critiques of the 'Western' way of viewing the 'East' summed up by the phrase 'Orientalism,' go a long way to supporting an argument that an analysis of a type of 'othering' is vital to a better understanding of the British discourse on the Armenian genocide during the First World War. Edward Said in his groundbreaking book *Orientalism* argued that its subject was 'a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place to European Western experience.' Its close proximity to Europe and the fact that it was the site of Europe's oldest and most lucrative colonies was of crucial significance. This and the fact that it was also 'the source of its civilizations and languages' meant it was Europe's foremost 'cultural contestant,' and the source 'of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other.'<sup>124</sup>

'Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident",' and that this 'basic distinction between East and West' was 'the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts

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<sup>124</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin. 2003), 1.

concerning the Orient, its people, customs, “mind,” destiny, and so on.’ Said lists the chief practitioners of this Orientalism as ‘poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists and imperial administrators.’<sup>125</sup> This thesis uses as its chief primary sources such figures as well as daily newspapers to establish arguments concerning British representations of the Armenian genocide. As such it will demonstrate the usefulness of Said’s theory of Orientalism for analysing and making sense and significance of these representations and the ‘theories...social descriptions, and political accounts’ involved.

Ziauddin Sardar writing on Said’s theory also makes the point that Orientalism, although real, is an artificial construct, ‘entirely distinct and unattached to the East as understood within and by the East.’<sup>126</sup> It is significant in this context that there was during the war, as well as before and after it, a method of constructing the actions of the Turks that was particular to them. This was above and beyond the discourse on the violence of the wider war. Furthermore, that it amounted to a ‘constructed ignorance...concocted and manufactured...to “contain” and “manage” these cultures and civilisations.’<sup>127</sup> In examining orientalist discourse and the representations involved Said used a Foucauldian framework of discourse as an act of power.<sup>128</sup> Thus, the British discourse on the Turks and their violence against the Armenians can be interpreted as a highly organised ‘collection of statements.’ It was ‘unified’ and the repetition of ‘certain connections’ bestowed on the articulation of the knowledge involved ‘regularity, order, and systematicity.’<sup>129</sup>

Said used this analytical framework to argue that Orientalism amounted to a ‘western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid. 2-3.

<sup>126</sup> Ziauddin Sardar, *Orientalism* (Buckingham: Oxford University Press. 1999), vii.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. 4.

<sup>128</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 3

<sup>129</sup> Michel Foucault, “Questions on Geography,” in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), 77.

Orient.<sup>130</sup> Sardar reinforces this analysis of a highly organised discourse involving a ‘unifying set of values.’ He suggests that the ascribing to the Turks of certain ‘regular characteristics’ explained ‘Orientals’ and allowed Europeans to deal with them.<sup>131</sup> There are two key tropes of Orientalist discourse that can be most usefully studied to analyse the wartime British representations of the Armenian genocide. Namely, the concept of the Ottoman Empire being a despotic state lacking a civil society and the ascribed violence of the ‘terrible Turk,’ which also included heavily gendered and sexualised descriptions. These elements of Orientalist discourse emphasise moral and sexual degeneracy and gross distortions of the Muslim harem.

Patrick Porter’s<sup>132</sup> and Ziauddin Sardar’s use of the orientalist discourse also suggests that in ‘othering’ the ‘East’ and the ‘Turk’ powerful evidence can be found for the argument that the creation of the discourse in British representations of the Armenian genocide was to an extent an act of projection. Sardar argues that Orientalism was ‘a constructed artefact, through which the West explains, expounds, objectifies and demonstrates its own contemporary concerns.’<sup>133</sup> Thus, the Western orientalist history of Islam acted as a contrast and a justification of Christianity and when there was a crisis of western self-consciousness as a result of the Enlightenment and the French revolution the classic age of Orientalism resulted.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, when studying the British discourse on the Armenian genocide and how it was established through orientalist tropes it is pertinent to ask the question regarding the extent to which this was part of the wider context of contemporary concerns. Concerns such as those emanating from British colonial practice, the feared degeneration of British masculinity and how Allied military behaviour in an age of ‘Total War’ also found itself eroding the divisions between

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<sup>130</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

<sup>131</sup> Sardar, *Orientalism*, 41-2.

<sup>132</sup> Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War Through Western Eyes*. (London: C. Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd., 2009).

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. 13-14.

<sup>134</sup> Sardar, *Orientalism*, 17.

the civilian and military spheres.<sup>135</sup> Placing these orientalist tropes in the context of the First World War, comparisons would involve deep-seated concerns regarding Allied war practice. These included the British naval blockade of Germany, British and French repression of indigenous communities in their African colonies and the Russian deportation of Polish Jews and their genocide of Kirghiz peoples. All of these events were contemporary to the Armenian genocide.<sup>136</sup>

This argument involving projection can be supported by Patrick Porter's work on military orientalism. This suggests that the discourse is not just about power but also acts as a site of anxiety. Anxiety regarding the vulnerability of that power as well as its effective projection. Thus, the controversial Allied acts in a new age of 'Total War' challenged as well as facilitated that effective projection of power, which resulted in what Porter calls 'a mixed bag of self-glorification and self-doubt.'<sup>137</sup> Porter goes on to cite the example of Charles Edward Callwall's work on *'Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice'* (1896) as an orientalist work of 'permissive ideology.' The rhetoric involved was deliberately espoused to use the apparent barbarity of the enemy to justify fierce imperial retaliation. In short it enabled western colonialists 'to think of themselves as civilised whilst practising barbarity.'<sup>138</sup>

However, Valerie Kennedy has argued that; 'Despite its groundbreaking role,' Said's *Orientalism* 'homogenizes Orientalist discourse.' It does so chiefly she contends, by neglecting resistance and ignoring 'the role of women in both

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<sup>135</sup> On fears of degeneration in an imperial framework see John H. Morrow, JR, "The Imperial Framework" in *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume I: Global War*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 408.

<sup>136</sup> Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary at War, 1914-1918* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 232-3. Hans-Lukas Kieser & Donald Bloxham, "Genocide," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume I Global War*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 594, 596. Mark Levene, *The Crisis of Genocide, Devastation: The European Rimlands 1912-1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 69.

<sup>137</sup> Porter, *Military Orientalism*, 29.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.* 40.

Orientalism and imperialism.’<sup>139</sup> Thus, another aspect of Orientalism that provides a highly relevant context for the argument of British projection is the conscious Turkish response to such views in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ussama Makdisi has gone as far as calling this ‘Ottoman Orientalism.’ He has analysed the way that the Ottomans ‘responded to and resisted’ the European portrayal of them as ‘a brooding non-Western despotism incapable of “progress”.’<sup>140</sup> My reading of his work would argue that there was an awareness of ‘sites of anxiety’ on both sides that led to mutual feelings of vulnerability. This resulted in a process whereby the Ottomans copied the West in partial response to vulnerability regarding sites of anxiety and backwardness. However, the West continued to criticise the Ottomans in an orientalist manner to which the Turks responded with Ottoman Orientalism. This in turn led to further orientalist demonisation, especially in the emotionally heightened atmosphere of the First World War.

Makdisi argues that Ottoman Orientalism was a product of the ‘last decades of Ottoman rule.’ Its context he suggests was ‘an ongoing Ottoman challenge’ to a European conversation regarding ‘a fanatical and depraved’ empire responding to losses in the Balkans in 1878 and again in 1913.<sup>141</sup> There were though antecedents before this where, in ‘a wider culture of modernity’ the Ottoman Empire ‘sought to define itself as an equal player...on a world stage of civilisation.’ This involved an ‘official nationalism’ whose aim was to ‘assert much stricter political and administrative control’ on the ‘periphery.’ This ‘stroved to cohere different ethnic groups...religious communities...regions, and above all different stages of progress within a unified Ottoman modernity.’<sup>142</sup> This led to increased orientalist demonisation by the West in ‘a dialectic between European Orientalism’s insistence

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<sup>139</sup> Valerie Kennedy, “Edward Said and Resistance in Colonial and Postcolonial Literatures,” in *Orientalism and Literature*, ed. Geoffrey P. Nash (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 219.

<sup>140</sup> Ussama Makdisi “Ottoman Orientalism.” *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002): 768-796.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* 787.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* 778-9.

on a stagnant Orient that had to be colonized by Europe and Ottoman Orientalism's riposte.' This involved the insistence that far from being stagnant the empire was 'independently moving and dragging all Ottoman subjects toward modernity.' This was simultaneously a projection of power and an act of resistance to Western imperialism.<sup>143</sup> This involved an embracing of the West's 'underlying logic of time and progress, while resisting its political and colonialist implications.'<sup>144</sup> Thus, British representations of the Armenian genocide can be said to be part of an act of orientalist projection within a powerful adversarial context. The context was of sites of anxiety being produced by colonial and nationalist acts on the part of the West which the East sought to copy. This in turn led to western demonisation, which was enhanced by its anxiety, especially during the First World War, over continuing western behaviour.

Another scholar who has added to a more complex view regarding Orientalism is Billie Melman in her study, *Women Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918* (1992). Her work demonstrates a greater diversity of views of the Orient, some of which contradict one another in a marked fashion. A major feature of her argument is that there was a strand of British female opinion that represented a very favourable view of gender relations in the Orient. It is my argument that these views also add to a central contention of this thesis that representations of the Armenian genocide were an act of projection. Melman does outline the Saidian view in relation to the harem, multiple marriage and the extended family. These institutions 'seemed threatening' to the West 'because they presented alternatives to monogamy, based on gender inequality, and to the nuclear family.' In the male dominated discourse the 'segregated woman was the Christian West's ultimate other.'<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid. 772.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. 769.

<sup>145</sup> Billie Melman, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918. Sexuality, Religion and Work* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1992), xxvii.

However, Melman goes on to argue that 'Europe's attitude to the Orient was neither unified nor monolithic.'<sup>146</sup> Some writers in the eighteenth century she contends, held the view that the upper-class woman of the Ottoman Empire was 'economically as well as sexually free.' Their 'obsession with the freedom of the Ottoman women' was the obverse to the concern regarding 'the comparative bondage' of western women.<sup>147</sup> Indeed, in certain areas a 'prevailing opinion' became established that 'Muslim women were freer than their Western European sisters.'<sup>148</sup> Arguments were made that highlighted how Muslim marriages could be dissolved, how Muslim women had property rights and how they had greater privacy in the harem which, gave 'them greater freedom *from* sex.'<sup>149</sup> By the mid nineteenth century, Melman suggests that British female writers came to the view that the veil no longer symbolised '*subjection* and sexuality, but autonomy or, freedom *from* sexual exploitation.'<sup>150</sup>

Such scholarship therefore challenges the more binary views regarding Orientalism and the creation of the ultimate 'Other' for the West. This to my mind though, does not undermine an argument that British representations of the Armenian genocide were an act of projection. The work of such scholars as Melman demonstrates how both negative and positive views of Ottoman society represented significant threats to Western identity. Such views therefore, signify some of the motives behind the representations of the Armenian genocide being a powerful act of projection.

Thus, this thesis argues that the British representations of the Armenian genocide was part of this multi-layered orientalist rhetoric of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, that the newer, more modern elements of these representations were not innocent descriptions of what the Turks actually did in Anatolia but also how

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. 88.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. 104.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. 108-111.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. 121.

violence against populations was conceptualised. It was articulated and utilised by 'western' governments in an effort to mitigate how those acts potentially undermined the effective projection of their power. Evidence for this argument will be offered principally by pointing out the way the language condemning the perpetrators often contained within it very similar understandings of the rationales and criteria of the guilty parties. My thesis is particularly interested in demonstrating how orientalist condemnation had seemingly evolved during this period and now often consisted of biomedical language using the imagery of a rural idyll that also reflected the language of the perpetrators.

After the First World War as well as during it and despite what seemed to many as a complete victory a very significant 'site of anxiety' remained. In analysing British attitudes to Nazi atrocities Russell Wallis looks at the long-term context of these attitudes starting with the First World War and then the immediate post-war period. Wallis argues that General Reginald Dyer's orders on April 13, 1919, to a detachment of 50 riflemen to open fire on an unarmed crowd in Amritsar in the Punjab region of India 'caused a storm in Britain.' The event that left, in the British official account, 379 dead and over 1,200 injured 'was fundamental to the national psyche' where 'Britons liked to see themselves as the bringers of civilization, benefactors to lesser peoples.' He states that as a result 'it was no longer possible to remain silent on the nature of empire' and 'the crisis called into question what it meant to be British' and a key concern 'was whether traditional methods of British rule had been usurped by "Prussianism".' Indeed, Dyer's actions were described as those of 'frightfulness' and when the issue was debated in the House of Commons on July 8, 1920, this word and its associated behaviour featured strongly. There was significant support for Dyer but the Secretary for State for War, Winston Churchill emphatically rejected 'frightfulness' as a method for Britain to follow.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Russell Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust: British Attitudes towards Nazi Atrocities* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 70-1.

Another 'site of anxiety' in 1920 was Ireland. The conflict over independence there between British Government forces and the Irish Republican Army Wallis argues 'was a dirty war, characterized,' on both sides, 'by shootings, ambushes, midnight raids, kidnappings, hostage taking, torture, curfews and arson.'<sup>152</sup> He describes how the editor of *The Manchester Guardian*, C.P. Scott 'severed ties with Lloyd George over his Irish policy.'<sup>153</sup> Demonstrating the continued role of German 'frightfulness' in these representations Scott published an editorial during the September of 1920 on an incident in the Irish town of Balbriggan<sup>154</sup> entitled 'An Irish Louvain.'<sup>155</sup> It condemned the British government for hypocrisy. Whilst the British were at the forefront of an international stand on the behalf of the Armenians and the Belgians 'we ourselves have drifted into a position where our criminal failure to govern a conquered white people stinks in the nostrils of the world.'<sup>156</sup>

There was considerable wider coverage of and public meetings about this 'frightfulness' on the part of Britain<sup>157</sup> and such 'sites of anxiety' are a vital context for British representations of the Armenian genocide to be placed in. Moreover, this context went further back, into the nineteenth century, and Gary Bass has raised the strong possibility of a process of projection being present when the British regaled against humanitarian abuses, primarily by oriental governments such as that of the Ottoman Empire. He points out that the British 'largely missed

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<sup>152</sup> Mark Levene has written a comparative piece on British Ireland and the Armenian genocide demonstrating this issue although qualifying it thus; 'The scale of the brutality and atrocity committed by British forces, especially auxiliary units such as the Black and Tans in the Anglo-Irish war from 1919 or the reprisals and ethnic cleansing enacted by the UVF against Catholic Irish within Ulster in the same period, were clearly of a lesser scale than those enacted in Ottoman Armenia. Mark Levene, "From Armenian Red Sunday to Irish Easter Rising; Incorporating Insurrectionary Politics into the History of the Great War's Genocidal Turn, 1915-16," *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies* no. 8 (2018), 130.

<sup>153</sup> Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 76.

<sup>154</sup> British forces killed two men and badly damaged several buildings in retaliation for the murder of the head constable of the Royal Irish Constabulary there.

<sup>155</sup> Louvain was a significant site of alleged German atrocities in 1914 that included the burning down of its medieval library.

<sup>156</sup> *The Manchester Guardian*, September 22, 1920, 6.

<sup>157</sup> Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 76-7.

the irony' of their lamenting Greek suffering in the nineteenth century whilst overseeing a long list of imperial atrocities.<sup>158</sup>

Indeed, this hypocrisy was noted by some significant contemporary voices. For example, the British political commentator Wilfred Scawen Blunt wrote in 1900 regarding the behaviour of western 'white' governments that:

All the nations of Europe are making the same hell on earth in China, massacring and pillaging and raping in the captured cities as outrageously as in the Middle Ages. The Emperor of Germany gives the word for slaughter and the Pope looks on and approves. In South Africa our troops are burning farms under Kitchener's command and the Queen and the two houses of Parliament and the bench of bishops thank God publicly and vote money for the work. The Americans are spending fifty millions a year on slaughtering Filipinos; the King of the Belgians has invested his whole fortune on the Congo, where he is brutalising the natives to fill his pockets...The whole white race is revelling openly in violence as though it never pretended to be Christian. God's equal curses on them all! So ends the famous nineteenth century into which we were so proud to have been born.<sup>159</sup>

To return to the immediate historical context of the First World War John H. Morrow has written about the brutal suppression of colonial uprisings in Africa by the Entente colonial powers and suggested that they; 'suppressed information on the scope of these conflicts' as this would 'have demonstrated the hypocrisy of their condemnation of German pre-war atrocities in Africa.'<sup>160</sup>

Therefore, using this historical context it will be argued that the British representations of the Armenian genocide were part of an orientalist rhetoric of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and may very well have contained strong elements of a

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<sup>158</sup> Bass, *Freedom's Battle*, 343.

<sup>159</sup> Cited in Clive Ponting, *Progress and Barbarism: The World in the Twentieth Century* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1998), 33.

<sup>160</sup> Morrow, "Imperial Framework," 425.

process of projection. Moreover, that this contained a necessary creation of a powerful 'Other' in the shape of for example, the 'horrible Hun' and the 'terrible Turk.' Thus, this thesis adds to the work of scholars such as Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau using the example of British representations of the Armenian genocide. Audoin-Rouzeau argues that 'in the West the attacks on unarmed populations were limited to 1914' but 'it was in 1915 that *awareness* of the attacks spread through the warring nations.' He calls the government reports, popular literature, caricatures, posters and films as well as newspaper accounts as the 'moment of "revelation" of the violence of the "Other".'<sup>161</sup>

Analysing contemporary comparisons of the Armenian massacres with German behaviour in Europe clarifies how the mass killing of civilians was being viewed in wartime Britain. It does so because it demonstrates how incidences of massive violence against civilian communities were immediately propagandised to fulfil the following functions. Firstly, it demonstrates the 'British Self's' conceptualisation as a positive force in a war for civilisation where the Germans and then the Turks were seen as a barbaric threat. Secondly, it shows how that was played out in terms of a threat to innocent small nations, such as Belgium and Armenia. Thirdly, it reveals how traditional orientalist discourses adapted and changed during and because of the circumstances of the First World War, as the German was orientalised in Europe and the Turk was Europeanised in the Orient. The function here was to 'other' the enemy most effectively but, it also distorted the view of what was actually taking place in Anatolia. Therefore, this chapter shows the different and changing views on the extent of German and Turkish agency. The chapter will conclude with some observations that demonstrate the significance of this trope in relation to the central argument of this thesis: Firstly, that a traditional and orientalist polemical listing of atrocity was supplemented by representations of a process of systematic extermination. They were increasingly and radically informed by a growing awareness of a criterion, which foretold

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<sup>161</sup> Stefan Audoin-Rouzeau, "1915: Stalemate," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume I: Global War*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 73-4.

modern definitions of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Secondly, and most importantly, that the emotive power of the trope of 'frightfulness' might well have prevented the development of the new trope but it emphatically did not.

Before a clarification of what 'frightfulness' was and how it was conceptualised during the First World War it is important to briefly describe the context in which it was discussed. That this was a war for 'civilisation'. Alan Kramer has argued that, '...the war was seen by the belligerents as a war to defend their culture; for some, it was a war to export culture.'<sup>162</sup> Daniel Pick suggests that British propaganda was, 'a continuing and sometimes uneasy attempt to grasp and define national character.'<sup>163</sup> He also argues that it 'would be difficult to overestimate the centrality of the notion of "civilisation" in the language of the First World War.'<sup>164</sup> Descriptions of mass violence towards civilians, therefore, very much revolve around notions of barbaric as against civilised belligerents. Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker suggest, 'that the meaning of the combat unquestionably lay in the struggle between civilisation and barbarity.'<sup>165</sup> Cate Haste argues that this was heightened at the end of the war, and it was seen in Biblical terms. With the conflict of 'heaven against hell,' a 'Holy War-a War of Right against Wrong,' of the forces of God against the forces of the Devil.' Indeed, she asserts that the Allied victory was seen as a form of 'divine salvation.'<sup>166</sup> This struggle between civilisation and barbarity was very often articulated in a manner which I have called 'atrocitarian' polemical listing. The following section will now explain what I mean by this term.

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<sup>162</sup> Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, 2.

<sup>163</sup> Daniel Pick, *War Machine: The Rationalisation of Slaughter in the Modern Age* (New Haven, Conn; London: Yale University Press, 1993), 140-1.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.* 153.

<sup>165</sup> Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau & Annette Becker, *14-18 Understanding the Great War* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2002), 102.

<sup>166</sup> Cate Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 182.

This thesis will argue that despite new types of representation emerging an 'atrocitarian' polemical listing discursive technique amounting to the aforesaid 'literature of denunciation' continued to be used during the First World War. I argue in this thesis that the language of denunciation concentrated on the ghastlier details of individual acts of physical violence and often dwelt on sexual offences. It listed these acts, sometimes for pages and often in a highly stylised and exaggerated manner. This manner could be seen as one of fascination with intimate details of horrific violence. The intention was to denounce the perpetrators in a polemical fashion and to prove by repetition that they could not be possibly excused for their behaviour and that they were irredeemably barbaric. The word polemical is used in that the listing technique piles awful fact on top of awful fact. This amounts to a bitter, venomous and virulent style. This concept will be returned to and explicated more thoroughly with examples below.

Rebecca Gill has placed this more traditional discourse in the context of the First World War (referring to all its theatres) showing it still had a role to play under the changed circumstances this war presented. She contends that this more traditional listing technique was an 'enumeration of...abuse and 'the occupation of a network of liberal "atrocitarians"'. Further, that its careful itemisation and illustration in newspapers and propaganda 'validated war as a moral struggle against the forces of evil.' Also, that this was a 'primary justification for the purposes of war' and not an issue of 'subsidiary concerns.'<sup>167</sup> Likewise Bruno Cabanes despite arguing strongly that humanitarianism became more 'modern' also comments that; 'In 1914-18...a relatively recent literary genre was born: the literature of denunciation, which took on paramount importance in the wake of war.'<sup>168</sup> We shall see below how Stefan Ihrig develops an argument that demonstrates a new language of systematic extermination in Germany but he in a

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<sup>167</sup> Rebecca Gill, 'Now I have seen evil, and cannot be silent about it'; Arnold J. Toynbee and his Encounters with Atrocity, 1915-1923," in *Evil, Barbarism and Empire: Britain and Abroad, c. 1830-2000*, ed. Tom Crook, Rebecca Gill, Bertrand Taithe (Houndmills, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 74-5.

<sup>168</sup> Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism*, 303.

similar fashion to Cabanes concerns himself with the strong strains of continuity during the First World War. For example, to show the discourse of atrocity in the war generally he quotes the German politician Helmut von Gerlach's memoirs concerning the violence of Russians, French and Belgians; 'There were variations and combinations. But the leitmotiv remained the same; in the east hacking and cutting, and in the west gouging.'<sup>169</sup> Further he states that German atrocity allegations against Russians in the Ottoman Empire listed so many 'outrageous cruelties' that the discourse 'covered the whole range of imaginable transgressions of the rules of war.'<sup>170</sup>

This style was also applied to German denunciations of Ottoman behaviour regarding the Armenians and Ihrig quotes the German army medic Armin Wegner's letter to US President Wilson published in the *Berliner Tageblatt* on February 23, 1919 and describes this as a 'litany of pain and suffering.'<sup>171</sup> Wegner took important photographs of the genocide and became one of Germany's leading Armenophiles. Thus, in the context of demonstrating how the German press responded to the Allied allegations of atrocities against the Armenians Ihrig gives examples of the 'atrocitarian' listing that this thesis argues emerged in a British context with a particular polemical intent.

More relevant to this thesis as it concentrates on British responses and representations is the work of Michelle Tusan. In her *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide* (2017) she notes the existence of what this thesis calls polemical 'atrocitarian' listing in the new humanitarian journalism of the 1890s onwards in the representation of atrocity and the activism it generated. In relation to the *Pall Mall Gazette* and other publications she notes that, 'stories of human

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<sup>169</sup> Stefan Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 99. Quoted in David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War, 1914-1918* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 61.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. 100.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. 197-8.

suffering had their greatest effect when they came from the experiences of individual victims of systematic violence...Thus, collected personal stories from the site of the massacres took on added weight as the tragedy of an entire people.<sup>172</sup>

Likewise, Keith David Watenpaugh's study of modern western humanitarianism in *The Middle East, Bread From Stones* (2014) notes the existence of what he calls a 'sentimental missionary narrative' before the First World War.<sup>173</sup> Jo Laycock in her *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention* (2009) also shows how this literary style was ever present during the First World War regarding the Armenians. She too argues that it harked back to the 'Bulgarian Horrors,' but that it had been more recently enervated during the 'Belgian Congo atrocities,' the Balkan Wars and the concentration camps of the Boer War. Indeed, just as was the case during the 1890s she argues that 'reports emphasized the extreme and ingenious methods developed by the Turks to inflict pain. Gratuitous descriptions of acts of wanton cruelty and sadism were common.'<sup>174</sup> Further, as the title of her book suggests she demonstrates how traditional Orientalism featured significantly in this discourse representing 'a culmination of almost a century of "atrocities" committed against Christian minorities.'<sup>175</sup> Similarities with alleged German excesses in Belgium were common, particularly the trope of the severed hands of children and there was a marked emphasis on despotic and barbaric government.<sup>176</sup> Therefore, this thesis builds upon and extends existing work on representation of the genocide taking as its starting point the continuities in the discourse involved.

The Belgian atrocities, which took place and were reported on so intensively in the early months of the war, very much defined to a large extent how the British

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<sup>172</sup> Michelle Tusan, *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide: Humanitarianism and Imperial Politics from Gladstone to Churchill* (London & New York: I. B. Taurus, 2017), 79.

<sup>173</sup> Keith David Watenpaugh, *Bread From Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 59.

<sup>174</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 107.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* 108.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.* 111-13.

framed mass violence that directly impacted on civilian populations.<sup>177</sup> This framing consisted of an overwhelmingly powerful German militarism willfully and criminally taking advantage of an otherwise accepted neutrality guaranteed by the international rule of law. Germany was seen as a monstrous bully, while perceptions of its victim, Belgium were personalised by images of domestic and familial innocence. The invasion was viewed as one on hearth and home, portrayed through heavily gendered and sexualised graphic descriptions of sexual violence against young women and girls who were seen as symbols and carriers of Belgian nationality and national spirit. This was further emphasised by descriptions of mass and barbaric violence against children-the future of Belgium. Furthermore, much was made of what would happen in the event of a German invasion of Britain and the consequences for British hearths, homes and their female guardians.<sup>178</sup>

For example, Russell Wallis suggests ‘that distorted descriptions, such as stories about limbless babies and systematic rape,’ contributed powerfully to a situation where the ‘British public imagined what would happen to them and their families should German troops invade.’ This in turn ‘inevitably played into the recruitment drive that followed.’ Wallis argues that accounts of German atrocities became a central part of recruitment rallies and meetings.<sup>179</sup> This in essence is what the trope of German ‘frightfulness’ represented in relation to Belgium. It dominated early wartime conceptualisations of this violence and greatly influenced the way the Armenian massacres were represented when a huge battery of reports reached Western Europe in the late summer and early autumn of 1915. However, the

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<sup>177</sup> For literature on the role of Belgian atrocities in Britain in 1914-15 see for example: Leanne Green, “Advertising war: Picturing Belgium in First World War publicity,” *Media, War and Conflict* 7, no. 3 (2014):309-325. Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*, 6-30. Trevor Wilson, Lord Bryce’s Investigation into Alleged Atrocities in Belgium, 1914-15, *Journal of Contemporary History* 14, no. 3 (July 1979): 369-383. Horne& Kramer, *German Atrocities*. Nicoletta Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 17-33.

<sup>178</sup> See Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons*, 17-33. “Meg Albrinck, Humanitarians and He-Men,” in *Picture This: World War 1 Posters and Visual Culture*, ed. Pearl James (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 316-319. Maggie Andrews, “Ideas and Ideals of Domesticity and Home,” in *The Home Front in Britain: Images, Myths and Forgotten Experiences since 1914*, ed. Maggie Andrews & Janis Lomas (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 6-20.

<sup>179</sup> Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 22.

emotive power of these representations did not push those describing a 'process' of extermination aside. More modern language and conceptualisations had though, been developing in the nineteenth century.

British representations of the mechanics and process of killing undoubtedly built on significant developments in the nineteenth century. This did involve representations of the concept of extermination that gave a new and more modern meaning to more traditional words and terms regarding mass violence. For example, Patrick Thornberry suggests that European governments and cultivated elites used the term 'massacre' to indicate loss of innocent human lives on a vast scale caused by a deliberate act.<sup>180</sup> David Rodogno adds that those elites used the term 'massacre' in combination with 'atrocities' and sometimes 'horror' and by 'atrocities' Europeans meant deliberate acts of violence against innocent civilian populations such as rape, pillage, slaughtering people, burning villages and destroying religious buildings.<sup>181</sup> He goes on that the term 'extermination' in the nineteenth century had a polysemic meaning and was a synonym of massacre and the Latin word *exterminare*. By this Europeans meant to extirpate, expel, remove or replace indigenous populations, usually to allow for the settlement of European colonies. This Rodogno approximates with ethnic cleansing as well as suggesting that it is very close to the modern concept of genocide.<sup>182</sup> He also suggests that many campaigners and diplomats on the spot seemed to refer to extermination as an act of what is now called genocide as in their view the objectives of the massacres were to destroy all members of a group, including children. That it was to kill an entire community without allowing the chance to flee, or to slaughter them after deportation.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Patrick Thornberry, *International Law and the Rights of Minorities* (Oxford, OUP, 1991), 33. Cited in David Rodogno, *Against Massacre* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), 31.

<sup>181</sup> Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 32.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.* 32.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.* 33.

Gary Bass has also added powerfully to the scholarship on the longer-term evolution of more modern language regarding the mass killing of civilians. He cites the London Greek Committee who in 1823 warned of an absolute annihilation of the Greek people'; Also, *The Times* writing in 1860 on 'a general extermination of the Christians in Syria.' He describes Gladstone in 1876 fumbling for words due to the scale and the vile nature of the crimes in Bulgaria. He concludes that the 'word they were grasping toward was genocide.'<sup>184</sup> This thesis adds to such scholarship by showing how British representations of the Armenian genocide during the First World War despite demonstrating more traditional aspects continued to develop in this more modern manner. Particularly by using criterion-based approaches to representations of a process of systematic extermination. These involved staged and facilitating acts of mass violence against communities. They were also linked to the geographical areas they inhabited and how these could be demographically altered. Indeed, this thesis demonstrates that the 'grasping toward' process Bass describes began to reach much greater clarity in terms of understanding.

In explaining the development of language in this process of 'grasping toward' this thesis uses one aspect of the work of Raymond Williams. Namely the concepts of the dominant, residual and emergent language. To summarise, this thesis uses William's argument that works should be understood in their original historical contexts. Further, that no existing, single system in terms of language exhausts itself or includes, 'all human practice, human energy and human intention.' This dominant order cannot be separated from residual and emergent alternatives and that all three mix and operate at once. The representations this thesis analyses are part of contemporary British culture during the First World War and Williams contends that culture is part of a dynamic and ever-changing process where something is always emerging from the dominant and the residual. The emergent can develop from the past, the residual. Therefore, this thesis uses the terms residual and emergent in particular to describe how a new more modern

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<sup>184</sup> Bass, *Freedom's Battle*, 341.

language of representation regarding the mass killing of civilians emerged from a residual language. The latter amounted to 'atrocitarian' polemical listing, whilst the former takes the shape of criterion-driven descriptions (often using bio-medical language) of facilitating stages that foretold modern definitions of genocide and ethnic cleansing.<sup>185</sup>

To return to the prism of German 'frightfulness,' there was a fully formed contemporary conceptualisation of it during the First World War in Britain. Perhaps it was most memorably depicted in *London Opinion's* September 1916, 'Professor of Frightfulness' cartoon.<sup>186</sup> The Kaiser is urging the said professor to invent ever more deadly and diabolical means of warfare. Liquid fire and poison gas are depicted in the image. To a great extent the notion of a deliberate strategy of 'frightfulness' stemmed from a commonly held belief that it was part of German military thinking. James Morgan Read noted in 1941 that there was a case for '*Schrecklichkeit*' -the German word that was translated by the British as 'frightfulness'-held by the Germans themselves. It was 'based on the idea that ruthlessness shortens war' and that its exercise was actually humane.<sup>187</sup> Gary S. Messinger writing on the influence of Clausewitz and the issue of morale in the war plans of the German general staff at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave a definition seemingly rooted (though not referenced) in a reading of primary sources. He defined *Schrecklichkeit* as 'the calculated use of terror as part of a lightning-like disabling of the enemy designed to win quick victory and minimise casualties on both sides.'<sup>188</sup>

More recently Isabel Hull has written persuasively of the logic of absolute destruction inherent in the military culture (as against the political culture, which she argues sought to stop the process) of the late nineteenth and early twentieth

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<sup>185</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 125.

<sup>186</sup> An influential magazine best known for its September 1914 Kitchener cover, *Your Country Needs You*. In 1907 it sparked a limerick craze in Britain.

<sup>187</sup> James Morgan Read, *Atrocity Propaganda 1914-1919* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1941), 86.

<sup>188</sup> Gary S. Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 15.

centuries. Whilst stating that, 'Germany was at the end of a spectrum it shared with the rest of the Western world,' she argues that the German military did have a 'default program of escalating violence.'<sup>189</sup> Moreover, Hull quotes a number of contemporary German authors who 'repeatedly equated' actions, which represented an 'acute spasm of cruelty' with 'true humanitarianism.'<sup>190</sup> It has been argued that Germany developed this theory in conscious defiance of the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions, which Alex Bellamy suggests 'formalised the idea that "military necessity" could not be used as a justification for breaking the laws of war.' This was on the basis that as Bellamy also notes that 'the laws still permitted reprisals against civilians during insurgencies.'<sup>191</sup> Indeed Alexander Watson suggests that the 1907 Convention all but banned guerilla warfare and that German and Russian representatives 'had fought largely successfully to restrict civilians' right of resistance.' He writes that the German army saw irregular combatants as an 'abomination' and this 'abhorrence...was motivated by an old-fashioned humanitarianism, as well as pragmatic self-interest. German officers agreed that one could do no more for humanity than to keep the fighting as brief as necessary.'<sup>192</sup> Horne and Kramer quote the Prussian strategist Julius von Hartmann who wrote in 1878 that 'where the People's War breaks out, terrorism becomes a principle of military necessity.'<sup>193</sup> Whilst discussing the German reprisals in Belgium of 1914 Bellamy goes on to state that a German *War Book* of 1902 confirmed this as official policy.<sup>194</sup>

Finally, Russell Wallis gives examples of German historians in 'a political culture that reinforced the position of the army' before the First World War helping to create a situation where 'the way was left open for routine German military operations to develop a "dynamic of extremism"'. Wallis cites the history professor

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<sup>189</sup> Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 326-7.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.* 186.

<sup>191</sup> Alex Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality: Mass Atrocities in an Age of Civilian Immunity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 45.

<sup>192</sup> Watson, *Ring of Steel*, 10.

<sup>194</sup> Bellamy, *Massacres and Morality*, 79.

Heinrich von Treitschke and military historian Friedrich von Bernhardi in this regard. They both espoused views that argued strongly for highly aggressive military behaviour in the interests of German self-preservation that itself was tied to Social Darwinist ideas of racial superiority concerning expansion.<sup>195</sup> Again, we can see the concept of a self-propelling dynamic process involved in 'Total War.' This speaks to the scholarship on modernity which this thesis argues is essential for an understanding of the representation of mass killing during the First World War in Britain.

This contemporary conceptualisation and theorisation of German 'frightfulness' was articulated during the First World War both in the British press and official communication. For example, the Bryce report on the alleged German atrocities in Belgium published in 1915 not only listed events of atrocity but also drew conclusions in terms of a deliberate German policy with a theory driving it. Thus, events such as those in Louvain and the transport to Cologne of influential Belgian citizens 'were due to a calculated policy carried out scientifically and deliberately...under the direction of higher military authorities.'<sup>196</sup> This conclusion of a 'calculated policy' was further analysed with a distinction being made between two types of outrages, isolated and individual on one hand and systematic and organised on the other. This was done to the extent that the report suggested a geographical pattern which involved drawing lines on a map from Liege to Charleroi and from Liege to Malines that produced an irregular Y shape. The report concluded that it was 'along this Y that most of the systematic (as opposed to isolated) outrages were committed.'<sup>197</sup> A little later the report argues that the atrocities amounted to 'a system and in pursuance of a set purpose' and this was based on a 'doctrine' spelt out in the 'German Official Monograph on the usages of War on

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<sup>195</sup> Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 14-15

<sup>196</sup> Committee On Alleged German Outrages, *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages, Appointed by His Majesty's Government and Presided Over by the Right Hon. Viscount Bryce* (London: HMSO, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1915), 35-6.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.* 39.

land.’ The book was ‘pervaded throughout by the view that whatever military needs suggests becomes thereby lawful.’<sup>198</sup>

This thorough understanding of this concept was indeed labelled as ‘frightfulness’ by British contemporaries. Russell Wallis has argued despite other phrases being used in First World War Britain such as ‘Prussianism’ and ‘atrociousness’ the ‘one that stuck...that became a metonym for state-sponsored violence against defenceless civilians’ was ‘frightfulness.’<sup>199</sup> He gives the example of a correspondent for *The Times* suggesting that to insure that the events described in the Blue Book discussed immediately above were not forgotten ‘a national museum should be dedicated to German “frightfulness”.’<sup>200</sup> British representations of the Armenian genocide also demonstrated this contemporary understanding of frightfulness after the publication of the Bryce report on the Belgian atrocities. For example, *The Times* on the September 30, 1915, commenting on the growing reports of atrocities perpetrated against Ottoman Armenian civilians observed that if Turkish leaders ‘are allied to official exponents of the German theory of “frightfulness” then we fear there is small hope for the Armenians.’<sup>201</sup> The label of ‘German theory’ amply attests to an understanding of something that was a thought through and constructed procedure that went beyond what might have been merely a British way of description and demonisation. A little more than a week later the same newspaper returned to the theme seemingly using the theory to compare current behaviour with that of the 1890s and Abdul Hamid thus; ‘They (Talaat Bey and his extremist allies) have even shocked their German friends, thus attaining an eminence in “frightfulness” to which the “Red Sultan” never soared.’<sup>202</sup> This is amplified in the same edition in a separate article demonstrating again that this was a constructed theory and understood as such at the time. ‘It was an act of policy, as deliberate as the exercise of German “frightfulness” in Belgium and

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid. 44-5.

<sup>199</sup> Wallis, *Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 10

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. 25. *The Times*, May 14, 1915, 9.

<sup>201</sup> “Wiping Out the Armenians,” *The Times*, September 30, 1915, 7.

<sup>202</sup> “The Armenian Massacres,” *The Times*, October 8, 1915, 5.

France.<sup>203</sup>The use of speech marks or inverted commas in all three articles adds to this argument as they are surely being used to define the word and the behaviour concerned.<sup>204</sup>

Therefore, in part the trope of German ‘frightfulness’ stemmed from a contemporary British conceptualisation of German military culture, which itself theorised it and sought to defend it as humane. The above does seem to demonstrate that the erosion of the barriers between civilian and military spheres was very much a developing bone of contention before the war. This adds to the argument in light of German complaints regarding British, French and Russian behaviour, that there was a process of projection involved in British representations of German and Turkish violence against civilians. However, British propaganda fundamentally reinterpreted the German policy of ‘frightfulness’ in the first months of the war to produce a notion of a radical new form of barbaric warfare, though built on perceived existing German military practice. Later in this chapter, it will be argued that a clearer picture of the Armenian massacres and their singularity was to an extent subsumed by an emphasis on the German comparison. This dominant role of ‘frightfulness’ in the British imagination was first due to the proximity to Britain of apparent German atrocities and the existentialist threat they represented. Secondly it was the result of the motif’s potential to mobilise the domestic population and to encourage American intervention. This was done by emphasising events involving unrestricted submarine warfare such as the *Lusitania* sinking and Zeppelin bombings. Thus, the British propaganda administrator Sir Gilbert Parker stated in 1916, ‘There seems to be no more certain appeal to the American public than through the medium of such atrocities.’<sup>205</sup> Furthermore, entwined with this was the desire to ‘other’ the Germans as barbaric and a throwback in European history whilst emboldening and protecting the British ‘Self’ as civilised. Sadia McEvoy suggests that, ‘Emphasising German barbarity was a way

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>204</sup> For a discussion on the German role in the Armenian genocide, see for example, Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 115-33. Chapter 3, “Imperial Germany: A Case of Mistaken Identity.”

<sup>205</sup> Quoted in Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons*, 19.

of garnering sympathy from neutrals and gave meaning to the war on the home front.' A means to this end she continues was that, 'the propagandists wasted little time in producing the Bryce Report of May 1915<sup>206</sup> which concluded that Germany had indeed committed atrocities as part of a deliberate strategy of terror.'<sup>207</sup> It will now be demonstrated how this conceptualisation of German 'frightfulness' was deployed as the Armenian genocide developed through the six phases identified in the introduction.

### **The Pre-Genocide Phase: January-April 1915**

The violence against Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 was being reported in the British press well before the arrest of Armenian notables in Constantinople on April 24. This date is now described by many Armenians as the moment when the Armenian genocide, began.<sup>208</sup> Thus, British newspapers started reporting incidents of mounting Turkish violence against the Armenians as the Ottoman Empire's first military campaign against the Russians was ending in complete disaster at the battle of Sarikamis in January 1915. As noted in the introduction both national and provincial newspapers carried the same reports from foreign newspapers (mainly French and Russian) or news agencies such as Reuters and the Associated Press. However, the individual papers would often digress and give their own commentary on events (provincial papers would also commonly repeat the views of editorials in national titles such as *The Times* and influential ones from outside London such as *The Manchester Guardian* and then add their view).

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<sup>206</sup> James, Lord Bryce was chosen to oversee this report as a highly respected former ambassador to the US and author of the standard work on the American Commonwealth partly demonstrating the explicit intention of influencing American opinion. His reputation as something of a Germanophile and his pre-war scepticism of the Triple Entente was seen as an indication of his impartiality. Wilson, "Lord Bryce's Investigation into Alleged Atrocities in Belgium, 1914-15," 370-1.

<sup>207</sup> McEvoy, *The Construction of Ottoman Asia*, 43.

<sup>208</sup> Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*, 168. McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame*, 235.

One example of these early reports can be found in *The Dundee Evening Telegraph* of January 13, 1915; 'The only consolation that can be derived from the present excesses on the part of the Turks is the fact that the latest outburst may be looked upon as the final effort of its kind before the curtain rings down on the Turkish rule in Europe.'<sup>209</sup> The quote demonstrates that as soon as reports arrived in Western Europe of a resumption of Ottoman violence against Armenian civilians as early in the war as January 1915 British representations immediately recalled earlier events. Thus, 'present excesses' and 'latest outburst' indicates the existence of an established trope concerning previous atrocities within a wider context concerning long term Ottoman decline and 'the sick man of Europe.' The reference later in the article 'cruelties' against Christians also demonstrates a strong orientalist trait involving the idea of backward and despotic government. However, the report also seems to make it clear that, this 'final effort' is only possible 'under the driving power of Germany.' Therefore, from the beginning of this discourse in British representations of Turkish violence it is being described very much in relation to its apparent (to British writers) relationship with German violence in the war. A day later *The Times* had immediately begun to describe it through a prism of German 'frightfulness' and the current exemplar of that in Belgium. 'As these poor people had to flee in the depth of winter, the exodus from Belgium has had a still more tragic counterpart in Asia.'<sup>210</sup>

The wider context of this type of representation was that in Tammy Proctor's words; 'Civilians also served an important rhetorical purpose in modern, industrial, total warfare.' She points out how the "home front" was in fact 'a vital complement to the "battle front," and as an important ingredient in governmental propaganda machines.'<sup>211</sup> Such discourse would subsequently allow the British government and the press to sell the war to the public more effectively as a war for civilisation and as a war on the behalf of small nations threatened by German

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<sup>209</sup> "Position of the Turks," *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, January 13, 1915, 2.

<sup>210</sup> *The Times*, January 14, 1915, 9.

<sup>211</sup> Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918* (New York: NYU Press, 2010), 7.

‘frightfulness.’ In this context Meg Albrinck comments that; ‘Appeals often linked the fate of Belgium to the fate of Britain, suggesting that delay in enlisting could result in the invasion of England.’<sup>212</sup> Therefore, when reports of atrocities in the Ottoman Empire began to arrive in Britain it was perhaps natural for them to be viewed alongside and indeed through events in Belgium. Michelle Tusan has argued that; ‘The fate of the Armenians was represented as analogous to Belgium,’<sup>213</sup> and Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker suggest ‘the previous massacres in the Ottoman Empire (in 1894-6, for example), the German atrocities in Belgium and northern France in 1914, the deportations of 1915’ were part of a longer term pattern of ‘the same fabric’.<sup>214</sup>

As the violence continued, the device of ‘frightfulness’ was deployed in some papers to demonstrate that Germany was a sort of all-pervading scourge influencing the nature of war as conducted by its allies. Thus, on January 22, 1915, *The Devon and Exeter Gazette* published a piece headlined ‘Germany’s Dupe’ demonstrating how the atrocities that had begun to be inflicted on the Armenians were decisively influenced by the Germans. It also portrayed Turkey in a traditional orientalist manner stating that the Turks ‘were still able to massacre the helpless Armenians and they have resumed their work with their traditional vigour and spirit in such exploits.’<sup>215</sup> However, they were ‘still able’ to do this ‘under their German masters.’ Thus, ‘The Turkish Navy, such as it is takes orders from Berlin. The Turkish Army is commanded and dragooned by German officers. Turkish policy is directed by German intrigues, supported by threats, promises of loot, and doles of blood-money.’ Not only that though, the article suggests that the manner in which mass violence against civilians is carried out is firmly German rather than Turkish. It stated that ‘during the past week we have seen the Prussian hand at work as plainly in the Turkish Empire and its environs as in Belgium.’ The Germans could and did

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<sup>212</sup> Albrinck, “Humanitarians and He-Men,” 318.

<sup>213</sup> Tusan, *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide*, 127.

<sup>214</sup> Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau & Annette Becker, *14-18 Understanding the Great War* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2002), 68.

<sup>215</sup> “Germany’s Dupe,” *The Devon and Exeter Gazette*, January 22, 1915, 6.

murder Belgian non-combatants, not sparing women and children.’ The article mentions Field-Marshal von der Goltz as a major perpetrator in Belgium ‘now directing the Turkish campaign in Asia Minor.’

These examples go to the heart of one of the major issues in this trope, the extent of relative agency involved on the part of Turks and Germans. Not surprisingly perhaps, there is no consensus throughout the war about whether the Armenian massacres during it are yet another aspect of ‘frightfulness’ in a new type of warfare. Nor, whether they denote a particularistic Germanic military behaviour or a continuation of the despotic, lustful, cruel and tyrannical behaviour of the ‘Turk’ a la Orientalism. Nor, whether the events are something particularly singular even with the wider context of atrocities committed elsewhere during the First World War by both sides. The fact that there was no consensus adds to the arguments of Stefan Ihrig<sup>216</sup> and Michelle Tusan<sup>217</sup> that these events were being conceptualised as ‘genocide’ despite the contemporaries involved lacking that particular vocabulary by demonstrating the emergent nature in the evolution of the discursive process.

The following two examples demonstrate how contemporaries actively engaged with this question of the relative agency regarding the Germans and the Turks in this early pre-genocide phase. Thus, *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner* commented on this attack on ‘a neutral and comparatively defenceless people,’ that ‘neither “the Turk of the East” nor the “Turk of the West” has much to gain by it.’<sup>218</sup> Here it would appear that the mass violence against civilians in the early months of the First World War in both Europe and the Ottoman Empire is seen as firmly Turkish. However, *The Dublin Daily Express*, under the headline ‘Belgium in the East’ describes the situation a month later in February as one where the ‘Turks

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<sup>216</sup> Ihrig argues that a genocidal conceptualisation was firmly in place in Germany in the 1890s. Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide*, 55.

<sup>217</sup> Tusan, *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide*, 134-6.

<sup>218</sup> “The Turks at Tabriz,” *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, January 14, 1915, 2.

following the example of Germany have invaded Persia,' and Thousands of Nestorian Christians and Armenians have been plundered, and many massacred.'<sup>219</sup> Thus, here the violence is described as imitating Germany and the piece demonstrates the degree to which events in Belgium had come to represent quintessential examples of atrocity. This trope was subsequently being readily deployed in the Ottoman Empire when acts of mass violence against civilian communities took place there. Further, such examples could be said to support a hypothesis that the Turks were being Europeanised in the Orient. Interestingly, we could also argue that the prevalence of tropes of barbaric and gendered violence in the discourse on the Belgian atrocities demonstrates a process whereby the Germans were being orientalised in Europe. Thus, this trope of German 'frightfulness' is fundamentally connected to the role of Orientalism discussed earlier in this chapter and therefore to what these representations tell us about the 'British Self'. They both demonstrate elements of continuity in contrast to the more concise and criterion driven accounts of systematic extermination, but the latter emerged from them. This, it could be argued can clearly be seen during the next phase of the genocide.

### **The Beginning of the Genocide: April-May 1915**

When the genocide began in late April 1915 it did not take long before the Allied governments recognised the very real escalation in the violence involved. This culminated in late May with a joint Allied statement accusing the Turks of crimes against humanity and civilisation. Accompanying this was also a commitment to bring those responsible to account. In mid-May, *The Yorkshire Post* reported that the British Foreign Secretary for one was associating the violence with German agency. He stated in correspondence with the US ambassador 'the Turks are employing the brutal methods of the Germans.'<sup>220</sup> The piece in question was

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<sup>219</sup> "Belgium in the East," *The Dublin Daily Express*, February 10, 1915, 4.

<sup>220</sup> "Notes and Comments," *Yorkshire Post*, May 15, 1915, 6.

printed before the Joint Allied Declaration of May 24 and would appear to anticipate the latter's assertion that these were crimes against humanity. The criteria being the effect on non-combatants 'outside the zone of military operations.' It strongly suggests that the Turks were helpless to do anything, which was not willed by German officers, and therefore, that they were very much a junior partner in this wartime alliance. Their influence the article asserts was believed to be 'supreme.' Moreover, that as the genocide proper began (although at this stage this would not be apparent to foreign observers) one view of events was that German methods were crucial. Indeed, Laycock recognises how 'German influence in Turkey...was believed to have led to greater organisation and militarism which made carefully planned and systematic deportations possible.'<sup>221</sup> Thus, the established tropes from the Belgian atrocities regarding the nature of the violence were immediately and readily adopted to describe events in the Ottoman Empire, as they seemed to quantitatively and qualitatively escalate.

Furthermore, some observers took account of the recent changes in Ottoman politics and the rise of the CUP by suggesting that the Young Turks had consciously adopted German methods. Laycock supports the argument that there was a more modern and 'genocidal' understanding of the discourse by suggesting that much of it took account of the CUP's pan-Turanist ideology.<sup>222</sup> Indeed the comment below indicates a British belief that some CUP Ittihadists consciously saw the potential of German approaches in terms of modernising traditional policies; 'There has always been a certain affinity between the political attitude of the Turk and the German, and what Western ideas were imported by the Young Turks represented the worst and most reactionary sides of German officialdom.'<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 114.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.* 116-7.

<sup>223</sup> "The Armenians in Turkey," *The Manchester Guardian*, May 26, 1915, 6.

This is an editorial piece from *The Manchester Guardian* two days after the Joint Allied Declaration. It could be suggested that this significantly concentrated the mind of this writer in terms of analysing the mechanics of this violence and the reasons for it. Again therefore, a commentator of some significance within the milieu of British public opinion was seeing these events through a German prism. The relative agency involved was being studied using the established German trope to apparently reinterpret recent Ottoman history. We shall see that the discourse in British representations on the blame for the atrocities and the influence of 'frightfulness' was far from simple and swayed back and forth considerably as the reporting on events rose exponentially in the summer and winter of 1915.

### **Summer to Winter 1915**

During June and July 1915, there was regular reporting of the massacres and deportations in the British press reflecting the increased incidence of politicians calling attention to the events in Parliament. At the end of July, British politicians in the House of Lords seemingly took stock of the reports and reflected upon them seriously in a summative manner. The role of the Germans was again an important matter for discussion and polemical statement. For example, the Marquess of Crewe<sup>224</sup> after stating that the crimes had increased in number and atrocity since the Allied Declaration and the clear warning it contained, turned to this issue; 'It was also true that the crimes had not been challenged by German officials, whose presence and influence might have mitigated the sufferings of the people.'<sup>225</sup> This reflects another of the major themes concerning the German role, not the role of German method and personnel but their failure to act when they could see what was happening. It would appear that Crewe believes that the German presence in Ottoman Turkey had the potential to civilise the situation. In an orientalist manner he seems to be suggesting that instead of saving the Turkish or Armenian people (it

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<sup>224</sup> A Liberal politician who led the party in the House of Lords during the 1911 People's Budget crisis.

<sup>225</sup> "Reported Massacres in Armenia," *The Times*, July 29, 1915, 10.

is not clear which or both), from the actions of a despotic and barbaric government, German acquiescence was crucial in their fate. In addition, that the 'cynical disregard' involved indicates an active decision.

In a letter to the editor of *The Times* Lord Cromer<sup>226</sup> commented on Crewe's points:

The results which would accrue from a complete German victory may be fore told with the utmost confidence. Not only would every semblance of genuine Turkish independence disappear, but, in addition to this, the worst defects of Turkish administration, from which Moslems and Christians alike suffer, far from being mitigated, would be enhanced by the addition of a powerful European element which, on its moral side, would represent the least admirable features of Western civilisation.<sup>227</sup>

Whilst, like Crewe he recognises the potential for the Germans to mitigate the situation he goes further and suggests that they have betrayed their civilised European origins and made Turkish despotism worse. This is another example of how the orientalist discourse was changing during wartime circumstances and another variation in the Europeanisation of the Turk in the Orient and the orientalising of the German in Europe. Indeed, a day later, a letter to the editor from a Roland L. N. Michell of the Royal Colonial Institute warned of the 'Germanisation of the East.'<sup>228</sup>

Therefore, by late August a shift in how the trope of German 'frightfulness' was being deployed can be detected. Now that a distinct escalation of violence against Armenian civilians had been noted much was made of a proactive German choice not to intervene and or to acquiesce. On August 23, 1915, *The Manchester Guardian* demonstrated this and also the notion that it was believed that the

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<sup>226</sup> A 'traditional Orientalist' who firmly believed in the inherent superiority of the 'west'. A member of the Conservative Party he had been British Consul-General of Egypt 1883-1907.

<sup>227</sup> "Letters to the Editor," *The Times*, July 30, 1915, 7.

<sup>228</sup> "Letters to the Editor," *The Times*, July 31, 1915, 7.

Germans desired and encouraged the anti-Armenian policy; ‘From one quarter alone could any mitigation of the Armenian lot come. In that quarter there has been absolute silence. Not a word has been said of the plight of the Armenians in the German press.’<sup>229</sup> Another observation made later in the article was that the Germans approved and encouraged the Turks because they believed that the Armenians were a ‘disintegrating factor.’ This also suggests a contemporary awareness of the principle of homogeneity as a state policy and that this was a German conceptualisation rather than a Turkish one. However, another theme of this trope became a common headline and subheading in the British press and suggested willful and criminal negligence rather than sinister design. Such headlines as, ‘Massacre And Exile: Germany “Very Sorry” But Cannot Interfere’<sup>230</sup> derived directly from an official German diplomatic statement commenting on the events.<sup>231</sup> *The Manchester Guardian’s* coverage was quoted on the same day in *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner* as is Lord Bryce’s comment on ‘the havoc which German “Kultur” has wrought in Belgium.’ Extensive ‘massacre and deportation’ is blamed on ‘the German officials who have been organising Turkey for war,’ and ‘have added a Teutonic thoroughness to this devil’s work.’<sup>232</sup> However, in line with this aforementioned shift in the discourse *The Manchester Guardian* proceeds to concentrate on one ‘of the most unhappy features of the present crime against the Armenians.’ Namely, ‘the connivance of German officers and officials.’ Though leaving open the question of whether the German government was responsible for the actions and attitudes of its personnel in the Ottoman Empire the article stated; ‘the German Government has the power if it has the will to persuade the Ottoman Government to better courses. If it does not use its power to that end it becomes a partner in the guilt of the Turks.’<sup>233</sup> This theme continued in September with *The Manchester Guardian* quoting a Reuters correspondent in a headline announcing Lord Bryce’s appeal to the American people, ‘What Germany Could Do.’ He stated

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<sup>229</sup> “Germany and Armenia,” *The Manchester Guardian*, August 23, 1915, 4.

<sup>230</sup> “The Turkish War on the Armenians,” *The Manchester Guardian*, August 25, 1915, 6. “Turkish Atrocities on Armenians,” *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, August 25, 1915, 4.

<sup>231</sup> The German Ambassador allegedly made the statement to the US Ambassador Henry Morgenthau.

<sup>232</sup> “Armenian and the Unspeakable Turk,” *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, August 25, 1915, 2.

<sup>233</sup> “Turkey and the Armenians,” *The Manchester Guardian*, August 25, 1915, 4.

that only Germany could influence matters and urged ‘an expression of American public opinion voicing the conscience of the neutral nations lead Germany to exert her influence to check the Turkish Government before their ghastly work is completed?’<sup>234</sup> The following day another headline, ‘Silence Of German Press,’ introduced an official French communication that stated that Germany was ‘for the moment all-powerful in Turkey.’<sup>235</sup>

As the massacres and deportations continued, another British press response from the same papers that used the tropes described above, was to see a degree of interdependence and active reciprocity between the Turks and the Germans. *The Manchester Guardian* stated, ‘In its conception it has something of the thoroughness of the Germans; in its execution it is as brutal as the Turk can make it.’ The words ‘thoroughness’ and ‘brutal’ perhaps, very explicitly and in this case very simply suggests a straightforward and equal mixture. This is made doubly significant by the immediately preceding sentence, which despite the evident consideration of the wider context of atrocity in the war, clearly sees something unprecedented in the events. ‘Never has there been so resolute an attempt to exterminate a whole race, never one which promised to be so successful.’<sup>236</sup> The strong implication being that it is the respective nation’s particular brands of ‘thoroughness’ and ‘brutality’ and the particular mixture of them making it so. Thus, aspects of singularity can be seen emerging from within both orientalist tropes and the one concerning ‘frightfulness.’

This can perhaps be further exemplified by *The Aberdeen Daily Journal’s* headline in the same month, ‘Twins in Cruelty.’ However, this may be more a case of direct comparison rather than an observation describing how German methods concerning the Belgians were directly influencing that of the Turks regarding the

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<sup>234</sup> “The Armenian Horrors,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 22, 1915, 4.

<sup>235</sup> “The Armenian Massacres: Silence of German Press,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 23, 1915, 8.

<sup>236</sup> “Exterminating the Armenians,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 11, 1915, 8.

Armenians as the article states; 'As was the case with the Germans for a time in Belgium, the complete destruction of the Armenian nation seems to be the object of the Turks.'<sup>237</sup> A similar comparison, which also suggests a greater degree of interdependent interaction can be seen in *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner* three days later that stated that; 'We are not unmindful of the violation of Belgium or the ravaging of Poland when we say that this is the most fearful crime which has yet been committed by the Turco-Teuton Alliance.'<sup>238</sup> However, it is to be noted that the piece then goes on to condemn the acquiescence of the German authorities, which could otherwise have stopped the tragedy, in the manner discussed above. *The Times* speaks similarly on September 30, 1915, stating that the Turks 'are in the hands of their German masters' and that the Kaiser 'could compel the cessation of the Armenian massacres with a nod.' They are compared with 'the horrors of Louvain and Dinant,' before the goes on to describe a degree of functional interaction:

The Armenian massacres are an even more appalling example of the German delight in organised murder and wholesale lust. Left to themselves, the Turkish leaders of The Committee of Union and Progress might in time weary of their evil work. Some of them are not yet lost to all sense of shame. But if they are allied to official exponents of the German theory of "frightfulness," then we fear there is small hope for the Armenians.<sup>239</sup>

Not only that but the first sentence of the extract demonstrates a mixture of German military method and orientalist discourse, of 'organised murder and wholesale lust.' The observation regarding being left to themselves and the possibility of wearying of their evil work demonstrates that this is an example of equal interdependence rather than dominant German influence. Indeed, we have an excellent example here of the tropes of German decisive control, German acquiescence, German methodology and a sort of orientalist hybridity all overlapping together in one short piece. This thus demonstrates an argument that

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<sup>237</sup> "Twins in Cruelty," *The Aberdeen Daily Journal*, September 24, 1915, 4.

<sup>238</sup> "The Tragedy of Armenia," *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, September 27, 1915, 2.

<sup>239</sup> "Wiping Out the Armenians," *The Times*, September 30, 1915, 7.

commentators were having real problems in deciding just what it was they were describing and who or what to blame it on.

This takes us back to the point made above regarding an apparent lack of consensus in terms of chief responsibility for these crimes. Indeed, on the same day as the article described above in *The Times* that puts all the blame on Germany, another of the pages has a report from 'our correspondent' that firmly blames the Turks. It also claims that their crimes of 'systematic butchery, abduction and deportation to the desert' outdo those of the Germans:

The nature and scale of the atrocities dwarf anything perpetrated in Belgium, or under Abdul Hamid, whose exploits in this direction now assume an aspect of moderation compared with those of the present Governors of Turkey, who certainly can outdo their Teuton masters in the matter of coercion. That Talaat Bey is responsible seems incontestable.<sup>240</sup>

However, what is apparent here is the possibility that German 'frightfulness' had become the default standard of atrocious violence early in the war with which all other incidences were compared. This adds to the significance of the point made later in the chapter that by the end of the war and in the post-war period the 'extermination' of the Armenians did become a central example in the British canon of infamy regarding atrocity.

One aspect of this discourse in these British representations of the genocide is the observation that in the words of the headline in *The Birmingham Daily Post* of September 1915, 'Even The Germans Appalled' and that if the German people knew the protest would be great.<sup>241</sup> Thus also, *The Manchester Guardian*:

Even in Germany there must be many who, if they knew the truth, would cry out against the fiendish barbarities which are being committed under the

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<sup>240</sup> "Wholesale Murder in Armenia," *The Times*, September 30, 1915, 5

<sup>241</sup> "Turkish Persecution of the Armenians," *The Birmingham Daily Post*, September 2, 1915, 7.

protection of the Turco-German alliance. The German Government knows the truth, but not a word of the outrages is allowed to appear in the German press.<sup>242</sup>

Implicit here is the fact that these ‘fiendish barbarities’ are unprecedented as even the Germans would protest at their degree. So great are they, that they would end the alliance.

Furthermore, the use of ‘the truth’ suggests one of extra significance, almost of an elevated conceptual nature rather than a glib description of what really happened. This point can be reinforced by the paper’s report cited above of September 11, 1915, that, ‘Never has there been so resolute an attempt to exterminate a whole race, never one which promised to be so successful.’<sup>243</sup> The fact that, ‘The Germans will not or dare not protest,’ about ‘the most savage and maniacal crime in history,’ shows how a conceptualisation of singularity flowed from one of comparison and symbiotic interaction. Indeed, the article, after suggesting this, spells out the prime responsibility being that of the ‘Young Turk Government.’ In doing so it begins to strip down the process into its integral parts anticipating the trope to be discussed in Chapter 4, that of a process of systematic extermination. ‘It is the Young Turk Government which gave orders for the deportations, which organised bands of brigands to attack the convoys, and even sent its envoys to supervise the massacres.’

Similarly, this swaying back and forth in terms of blame continued a day later in *The Times* where it was suggested that these crimes were unprecedented and outdid German actions demonstrating the role of German ‘frightfulness’ as a prism and a sort of benchmark. However, it also demonstrates how new tropes of systematic extermination and singularity emerged from that prism: ‘Exterminating

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<sup>242</sup> “Destroying a Nation: The Armenian Massacres,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 25, 1915, 6.

<sup>243</sup> “Exterminating the Armenians,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 11, 1915, 8.

A Race; Talaat Bey and his extremist Allies have out-Hamided Abdul Hamid. They have even shocked their German friends, thus attaining an eminence in “frightfulness” to which the “Red Sultan” never soared.’<sup>244</sup> Another article in the paper on the same day also emphasises the word ‘frightfulness’ as a benchmark of atrocity stating it was ‘a campaign of organised outrage’ but an ‘act of policy’ rather than ‘an outbreak of ferocity.’ It was ‘as deliberate as the exercise of German “frightfulness” in Belgium and France.’ The article also demonstrated a new trope of systematic extermination in that Lord Bryce commented on orders from Constantinople and then:

As a rule there was first a massacre of the Hamidian pattern. Then the example of the Germans in Belgium was followed. The able bodied men were set apart and either drafted into labour battalions or murdered there and then by the troops. The women, children, and old men were driven into exile-masses of them into the desert between Aleppo and the Euphrates.<sup>245</sup>

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that the unprecedented nature of events in the Ottoman Empire during a world war of unprecedented totality when the boundary between military and civilian spheres was being eroded in an unprecedented manner made this confusion inevitable. The relative remoteness of the events and the fact that they were taking place within an enemy country amplifies this. We shall see that during the next period of discourse in 1916 this confusion perhaps inevitably continued for the same reasons. As the reporting died down before growing considerably with the publication of the Blue Book it can be argued that the tropes discussed above were significantly concretised. However, we shall see that the use of the prism of German ‘frightfulness’ was contingent on changing circumstances and the need or not to condemn the Germans as much as the Turks.

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<sup>244</sup> “The Armenian Massacres,” *The Times*, October 8, 1915, 5.

<sup>245</sup> “The Armenian Massacres,” *The Times*, October 8, 1915, 7.

### **1916 and the Blue Book**

Before the publication of the Blue Book in the winter of 1916 the almost frenzied discourse on the massacres and deportations died down considerably as did the events it described in terms of acts that were observable and readily reported on. The survivors were placed in remote concentration camps in the Syrian Desert and further killings continued but they were largely hidden from wider view. Nevertheless, reporting of the fate of the Armenians continued and public discussion took place about the survivors and what would befall the 'remnant' as they were often referred to.<sup>246</sup> The rhetorical device of viewing and explaining the Armenian massacres through a prism of German 'frightfulness' for propaganda purposes can also be seen in British efforts at fundraising for Armenian refugees from the massacres and deportations. Indeed, this had begun in October 1915. *The Manchester Guardian* reported a speech by Sir Edwin Pears to a meeting launching a national fund for the Armenians. He emphasised his belief that the massacres were not religious and profoundly German in nature due to the level of organisation which meant they surpassed those Abdul Hamid in thoroughness; 'He was certain that they had been carefully organised by the Germans themselves, because the Turks were not capable of such organisation.'<sup>247</sup>

On February 19, 1916, *The Aberdeen Press and Journal* reported on a Lady Ramsay speaking at public meeting to raise funds for refugees. Under a subheading, 'Germans Behind the Turks.' She echoed the view the view of Pears above that the Turks were incapable of such acts as their government 'was a poor organising body and neither far-sighted or clever.' Therefore, they must have 'had the benefit of

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<sup>246</sup> "The Armenian Remnant," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 21, 1916, 12. 'The remnant of Armenia must be saved' in "In Aid of Armenia," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 5, 1916. The Lord Mayor's Fund appealed to 'the clergy and to the philanthropic public generally to assist us to obtain further financial help for the relief of the remnant of the earliest Christian nation, who have escaped into territory now under Russian control.' "The Armenian Horror," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 13, 1917, 5.

<sup>247</sup> "Armenian Atrocities," *The Manchester Guardian*, October 16, 1915, 11.

German intelligence at the back.<sup>248</sup> Taken with Pears statement above this provides evidence of a concretisation of this trope and the language is a variety of traditional racial prejudice and Orientalism regarding the Turks. There is perhaps an unusual use of the word 'intelligence' in light of the discourse dwelling on Hunnish barbarity and savagery.

However, we can see a deliberate use of a now firmly established trope of German influence on the Turkish organisation and method for a specific purpose of destroying the Armenians as a people. In the same month that Lady Ramsey voiced her opinion at a public meeting a Mr. J.L. Garvin addressing the Royal Colonial Institute also talked of German influence. Moreover, he deploys the benchmark of 'frightfulness' and demonstrates the manner in which the war was conceptualised as civilised states rescuing small nations from it. The crime he said had been 'rising to the fearful climax of massacre in the last twelve months,' after twenty years of persecution. He went on that it 'has been a crime beyond even the agony inflicted on Belgians, Poles, and Serbs.'<sup>249</sup> The unprecedented nature of the event is thus commented on and also of interest is the mention of the Poles. One aspect of the context of the production of the Blue Book was the apparent need to divert attention away from German criticism of the Russian deportation of Polish Jews for largely the same reason as that of the deportation of the Armenians, internal security.

During the summer of 1916 at the height of the Battle of the Somme, this process of theorisation and concretisation in a relatively calmer atmosphere in terms of the persecution of the Armenians continued. This came in the form of discussions of the geographical and colonial theories of the German political writer Paul Rohrbach<sup>250</sup> (who also features as a character espousing his theories in Joseph

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<sup>248</sup> *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*, February 19, 1916.

<sup>249</sup> "A Thrust Through the Balkans," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 9, 1916, 6.

<sup>250</sup> Rohrbach was concerned with 'world politics' and between 1903-06 was a Settlement Commissioner in German South-West Africa where he was an advocate of removing native Africans

Hocking's 1917 novel *The Path of Glory*<sup>251</sup>). For example, *The Times* reported in its History and Encyclopedia of the War and the section on 'Turkish Atrocities' in late July:

... the theories of the notorious Dr. Rohrbach. "an expert in the geography of racial ascendancy and racial repression," are described, the adoption of which by the Turks led to the wholesale "deportation" and subsequent slaughter of the Armenian population.<sup>252</sup>

The next day the same paper went further and specifically named an aspect of the ideology of the 'Young Turk' CUP as directly inspired by Rohrbach and incidentally demonstrates a growing awareness of a criterion-driven understanding of what today would be called ethnic cleansing. This labelled a 'Pan-Turanian idea' and a 'scheme' that was a brainchild of Rohrbach centrally organised in Constantinople and 'executed with the help of German officers.' Rather than a 'spontaneous outburst of fanaticism or race hatred,' it was carefully planned using a demographic rationale. It 'involved the "removal" of the Armenian population that separated the Turks in the heart of the Anatolian Peninsula from the other Turkish-speaking populations in North-Western Persia and Russian Caucasia.'<sup>253</sup>

This more modern racial discourse demonstrates the developing tendency in this period to conceptualise ethnic groups and the geographical areas they inhabited. Further, how these could be modified and changed in a more concrete and sociological manner. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4 but a July 26,

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in order to make way for German colonists. David Olusoga & Casper Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010), 111-14. However, he did speak out against the Turkish treatment of the Armenians. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 120-1.

<sup>251</sup> 'Have we not been told,' went on Dr. Rohrbach, 'that the enterprise, the power to make a desert bloom and blossom as the rose, lies with the Armenians? Have they not boasted of it? Very well. Are there not vast tracts of land down besides the Euphrates, which are declared to be rich, and which yet yield nothing, because they are uncultivated? Is not the whole land of Mesopotamia sterile through want of willing workers? Yet the river Euphrates runs through it.' Joseph Hocking, *The Path of Glory* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917), 104.

<sup>252</sup> "Fate of the Armenians," *The Times*, July 24, 1916, 7.

<sup>253</sup> "Nemesis in Armenia," *The Times*, July 25, 1916, 7.

1916, (the previous two quotes come from the editions of the 24 and 25) article in *The Times*, 'Exterminating the Armenians.' It shows to an extent how new, more modern methods were being propagandised to better pursue this 'war for civilisation' through the more traditional prism of German 'frightfulness.' There was a necessity to tell the 'terrible story' to demonstrate that the Allied cause was based on 'the very foundations of civilization.' This was testified to by 'neutral eyewitnesses' who had suggested 'that the attempt to wipe out the Armenian nation was approved by Germany.'<sup>254</sup> Significant here in this daily building of a theme is the apparent distinction between 'cold-blooded massacres' and an 'attempt to wipe out the Armenian nation.' The former being 'ghastly' whilst the latter was presumably beyond the pale and beyond the benchmark of 'frightfulness' in Belgium but stemming perhaps from it. Unprecedented and qualitatively different.

The next significant upsurge in the press coverage of the massacres takes place in the winter of 1916 with the publication of Bryce and Toynbee's Parliamentary Blue Book. Michelle Tusan argues that the Blue Book's main purpose was to establish by repetition 'a clear, consistent pattern of atrocity' (essential she says in making the modern case for genocide) and to 'chronicle atrocity.' In doing so, she notes that Toynbee complained that it made for 'dull reading.'<sup>255</sup> Tusan suggests that, 'No other document made a clearer case for genocide against the Armenians' and did so 'by defining the massacres as systematic acts of state terror.'<sup>256</sup> It will be argued in Chapter 4 that the Blue Book is not the best evidence from the period that a conceptualisation of systematic extermination had developed by 1916. There is though, another point of significance, particularly for the purposes of this chapter. In contrast to the evidence cited above, it does not concentrate on seeing the massacres through a prism of German 'frightfulness.' Indeed, the major thrust of the Blue Book in relation to Germany, is its use of German evidence supporting a picture of systematic extermination. This is

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<sup>254</sup> "Exterminating the Armenians," *The Times*, July 26, 1916, 9.

<sup>255</sup> Tusan, *The British Empire & the Armenian Genocide*, 138.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.* 135-6.

emphasised by the separate publication for the public of the specifically German sources to validate and corroborate the other sources and the extent of the crimes.<sup>257</sup> This adds somewhat to the discourse mentioned above suggesting that, ‘Even the Germans Appalled’ and appears to be a very conscious effort to demonstrate guilt ‘straight from the horse’s mouth’ as it were.

The man tasked by the Foreign Secretary Edward Grey to organise the collection and publication of material James Bryce had already in 1915 voiced his views on German involvement and acquiescence. The degree to which this aspect of the acquiescence is actively and deliberately chosen by the Germans is demonstrated for Bryce by his accusation that the act of mendacity involved ‘was no less adept’ as their capability in ‘the processes of war.’<sup>258</sup> That Bryce himself had a very clear notion of the importance and actual practice of acquiescence can be demonstrated by reference to a letter he wrote to Arnold J. Toynbee in 1915. Sadia McEvoy suggests that Bryce had warned Toynbee ‘to tread carefully regarding German culpability.’<sup>259</sup> The letter tells Toynbee that the Blue Book should be ‘an impeachment of the Turks not...a “campaign document” against the Germans. We want to get the Germans to stop the massacres and to try to make them responsible is not the best way to do that.’<sup>260</sup> This quote also demonstrates only too well the lack of contemporary consensus regarding the nature of German influence. It is clear from it that others were seeking to make Germany chiefly responsible and Bryce wants to avoid this for the Blue Book. This further demonstrates that for the particular purpose of the Blue Book the prism of German ‘frightfulness’ in terms of the importance of German military and organisational method as well as influence regarding the decisions involved, was less important than in the discourse of 1915. This highlights the manner in which this research makes necessary a modified reading of the Blue Book and its significance. It is still a

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<sup>257</sup> Anonymous, *German, Turkey and Armenia: A Selection of Documentary Evidence Relating to the Armenian Atrocities From German and Other Sources* (New York: Wallachia Publishers, 2015). Original 1917.

<sup>258</sup> “Armenian Atrocities: Lord Bryce on German Responsibility,” *The Manchester Guardian*, October 16, 1915, 11.

<sup>259</sup> McEvoy, *The Construction of Ottoman Asia*, 77.

<sup>260</sup> Bryce to Toynbee, 18/19th October 1915, TNA FO 96/207/136.

central source that cannot be ignored but it could be suggested that the wider discursive context within which it rests raises questions regarding its role in the development of new conceptualisations of mass violence against civilians during the First World War. This wider context perhaps heightens a more critically orientalist reading of the Blue Book without this undermining a genocidal analysis of these events. Furthermore, adding these points to those to be discussed in a later chapter regarding the British discourse as a projection of British fears and concerns regarding British colonial and wartime behaviour may be a fruitful process.

This chapter has traced the way the discourse on the massacres and deportations varied in terms of the extent and nature of German agency and how this demonstrates a desire to mobilise the British home front. To emphasise German agency made the Armenian massacres more relevant to potential recruits and now in 1916 and 1917, conscripts as well as industrial workers and all involved in the war effort. The British civilian population was threatened by German rather than Turkish invasion.<sup>261</sup> The lack of consensus as to German agency also perhaps shows that British commentators had real trouble deciding on just what they were describing. This continued after the publication of the Blue Book.

### **1917-18**

In January 1917 the Allies formally replied to a peace note written by US President Wilson and Point 7 dwelt on the apparent threat to humanity and civilisation of the calculated and aggressive war policies of Germany and Austro-Hungary. Part of it includes the following:

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<sup>261</sup> To highlight German agency was to further encourage US intervention in Europe. Indeed, when the US did enter the war in April 1917 the chief factor was the unrestricted submarine warfare campaign and German efforts to enlist the Mexicans with the Zimmerman telegram. A view emphasised by the fact that the Americans did not declare war on the Ottoman Empire despite the huge interest in the plight of the Armenians and the long standing American missionary presence in Anatolia.

Is it necessary to recall the horrors that marked the invasion of Belgium and Serbia, the atrocious treatment undergone by the invaded countries, the massacres of hundreds and thousands of inoffensive Armenians, the barbarities inflicted upon the peoples of Syria, the raids of Zeppelins upon open towns, the destruction by submarines of passenger liners and merchant vessels even under neutral flags, the cruel treatment inflicted on prisoners of war, the judicial murders of Miss Cavell and Captain Fryatt, the deportation and enslavement of civil populations, &c.<sup>262</sup>

This quote demonstrates that by 1917 contemporaries had become fully cognisant of the realities of a new type of warfare whereby traditional boundaries between the civilian and military spheres had been broken down. Heather Jones and Laurence Van Ypersele have observed that this was central to the experience of the First World War, but it was overshadowed by ‘the grim horrors of trench warfare.’<sup>263</sup> Here though, this marked erosion is being noted and denounced, and the blame for it is being placed firmly on Germany and her allies. Other articles on these proposals commented on Germany complaining about the Allied blockade and the Russian and French deportations of civilians in East Prussia, Galicia and Alsace-Lorraine.<sup>264</sup> This adds further to the argument of this thesis that an act of projection was taking place, evidenced by Toynbee’s concerns regarding the Blue Book. The marked impact of these actions on the civilian populations demonstrates how there was a simultaneous acceptance of the erosion of the boundaries between the civilian and military spheres as well as a passionate denunciation of the process. This list therefore, is acting as rallying call to a position justifying no compromise with the enemy. It seems clear that the Armenian massacres, very much in the recent news due to the publication of the Blue Book on them the

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<sup>262</sup> “Allies Peace Terms,” *The Manchester Guardian*, January 12, 1917, 5.

<sup>263</sup> Heather Jones & Laurence Van Ypersele, “Introduction to Part III.” *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume III Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 181.

<sup>264</sup> See for example, “London Correspondence,” *The Manchester Guardian*, January 13, 1917, 6. ‘Germany’s complaints against the blockade carried on against her they (neutral states) thought came badly from the Power which sought to starve Paris to death, and her complaint against the employment of coloured troops had no weight as the plea of the ally of the race who perpetrated the ghastly Armenian massacres. The argument about the civil deportations from East Prussia, Alsace-Lorraine, and Galicia came as it was put to me “out of the clouds.”’

previous month, had taken their place alongside the major examples of so-called German 'frightfulness' listed here. Furthermore, those tropes relating them directly to German behaviour and mentalities were strongly persisting two years after the persecution of the Armenians began and into the third full year of the war.

Again, in the winter of 1917 the issue of a symbiotic interaction between Turk and German and an interpretation of modernising CUP ideology and practice being directly influenced by the latter continued. It continued in this case as a readily used rhetorical and propaganda technique for the purposes of raising money for The Lord Mayor's Fund. Thus, *The Manchester Guardian*, quoted its chairman, Aneurin Williams in interview (a veteran Armenophile, which demonstrates the role of deep-seated views and motives in these representations). The deportations are again described as a 'Pan-Turanian' idea which 'probably originated in Germany.' The plan he suggested was to 'remove the Armenians and bring together the Turks and other kindred Mohammedans.' The idea that it was beyond 'powers of organisation of the Turks,' is again evidenced by its 'great scale' and systematic nature. He thus concludes it was 'organised by the Germans,' as it was tolerated and helped by them.<sup>265</sup> This is a further example of a criterion-driven understanding of ethnic cleansing. Further, of how these tropes were developing and concretising as the war wore on under the influence of its changing circumstances and indeed in spite of them. In this case, of growing war weariness towards the end of the third battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) and the huge number of casualties therein. Other issues were continued food shortages due to the German submarine campaign, which advocates of charity for the Armenians, had to increasingly deal with.

We could also argue that such examples are part of a pattern of representation, which despite continuing to use the German aspect was nevertheless evolving according to changing circumstances. Sadia McEvoy has used

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<sup>265</sup> "The Turk in Armenia," *The Manchester Guardian*, November 5, 1917, 6.

a Mark Sykes pamphlet adapted from an article in *The Times*, 'The Clean Fighting Turk'<sup>266</sup> to argue that by 1917 a new agenda arose where there was less concern for offending Muslim opinion in the empire and a greater necessity of removing the Ottoman Empire. Sykes was a key character in terms of British government policy and principally responsible for the Sykes-Picot agreement that signposted the post war settlement of the Middle East with the French. After for years supporting British support for the Ottoman Empire as a buffer against Russian ambitions in the region, as one of the leading British experts on Turkey in the First World War he increasingly denounced the country.<sup>267</sup> One feature of the wartime representation of people and events was to distinguish the 'clean fighting' Turkish soldier from his government and to contrast him from his German allies. In this article, Sykes argues that this is a 'spurious claim' and that the Turkish military were 'apt pupils of Prussianism.' However, despite demonstrating evidence for Laycock's argument concerning German influence, Sykes seems to recognise a Turkish singularity, which stems from the German comparison but also has very active agency:

The young Turk who snubbed his mother, pulled his sister's hair, kicked the Armenian porter, cringed before his father, gobbled up the dogmas of the German professor, mastered the formulae of the Prussian military instructor, and resuscitated the dormant lusts of his savage ancestors in his heart, is the man who counts. The lumpish peasant conscripts of Anatolia are his tools. His dream is to reassert once more the pristine authority of the Turanian races, and to exterminate or Turanise everything within reach.

The discourse was one where there was an element of Turkish singularity, distinct but learnt to an extent from the 'Hun' and also from the Hamidian 'Turk'. In it the 'Young Turk' CUP very much symbolised this singularity.<sup>268</sup> However, this singularity is being firmly filtered through the prism of 'frightfulness' despite the traditional Orientalism of references to gendered attitudes and propensities for

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<sup>266</sup> "The Clean Fighting Turk," *The Times*, February 20, 1917, 7.

<sup>267</sup> See for example McEvoy, *The Construction of Ottoman Asia*, 32-3. Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War*, 623. McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame*, xv-xviii. Levene, *The Crisis of Genocide*, 77-8.

<sup>268</sup> McEvoy, *The Construction of Ottoman Asia*, 119-20.

casual violence against Armenians and the servility of ‘lumpish peasant conscripts’ in the service of a despotic regime with no civil society. The ‘dormant lusts’ also highlights gendered and sexualised orientalist discourse suggesting that for all his apparent modernity the ‘young Turk who snubbed his mother’ has an innate predestined nature he cannot throw off. Thus, from within a very powerful orientalist reading the prism of ‘frightfulness’ still shines brightly. The ‘dogmas of the German professor’ likely refers to the aforementioned Rohrbach and the use of the word ‘formulae’ suggests that his combination with ‘the Prussian military instructor’ has been theorised in the manner described above. Moreover, the phrase ‘to exterminate or Turanise everything within reach’ is perhaps of huge significance in terms of an argument that a newer, more modern conceptualisation of mass violence against civilians as a government led process was developing during this period.

The rhetorical trope of associating the Armenian massacres firmly with German ‘frightfulness’ continued in the war’s final year. In an act of memorial being used to rally, in the words of the headline, the ‘Spirit Of The Nation’ the Armenian massacres are brought to the fore alongside a by now standardised list of acts of German ‘frightfulness.’ The Dean of Westminster, Bishop Ryle, speaking at a Fleet Street memorial service in June 1918 after the German spring offensive had threatened to end the war with German victory talked of how ‘frightfulness’ had been an explicit and conscious tactic of the enemy. He notes a new type of modern warfare beyond the battlefield ‘to break the spirit of the Allied peoples in their respective countries and in their individual homes.’ This ‘Prussian militarism is evidenced by a list ‘of prisoners murdered and ill-used, of merchant ships and their crews sunk without warning, of Armenian massacres, of tortured Belgians.’ This is summed up as ‘inhumanity harnessed to the chariot of a ruthless military autocracy’.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> “Spirit of the Nation,” *The Times*, June 14, 1918, 3.

In this case the Turks are not mentioned suggesting strongly that this speaker firmly believes that the Germans are the dominant influence. The Armenian case is placed immediately beside and indeed before the Belgians denoting perhaps a degree of cognitive organisation of 'frightfulness.' Moreover, 'Prussian militarism' and 'military autocracy' demonstrates the now firmly concretised trope. Again, four days later a report from a special correspondent observing Germans in neutral Switzerland selects the Armenian massacres alongside only one other specific example, that of the Lusitania. This perhaps highlights the growing importance of the Armenian massacres in the trope of 'frightfulness' and its prismatic role. He described his feelings toward the Germans in front of him and remembered 'the Lusitania, and the Armenian massacres, all the long list of horrors perpetrated in the name of their abominable *Kultur*.'<sup>270</sup>

In conclusion, in terms of this period of the war, there was growing concern in Britain regarding huge casualties, for example at Passchendaele, hardship caused by the German submarine campaign and the existentialist threat of the German offensive of spring 1918. Despite this the Armenian massacres viewed through the prism of 'frightfulness' persists and is indeed concretised. This took place even though one of the main reasons for its deployment in the first two years of the war was no longer relevant after April 1917 with the entry into it of the United States. However, as McEvoy points out there are early signs that changing circumstances in relation to Turkey were leading to significant changes in the discourse. Changes which appear to demonstrate a greater notion of Turkish singularity and also support one of the central arguments of this thesis. Namely that it is surely very significant that despite the emotive power of the trope of 'frightfulness' it did not obscure a new trope of a process of systematic extermination.

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<sup>270</sup> "In Neutral Switzerland," *The Times*, June 18, 1918, 5.

**1919-1923**

After a comparative lull in reports of the fate of the Armenians during 1917 and 1918 newspaper coverage increased markedly once more between 1919 and 1922. The reason for this was a recurrence of massacre as the Nationalist Turks under Mustafa Kemal fought to undermine the efforts of the first post-war Ottoman government to accommodate Allied plans for the area. This also developed into a war with Greek forces landing in Anatolia with British support in 1919, which saw massacres of civilians by both sides. Moreover, whilst this was taking place the Ottoman government itself sought to bring perpetrators of the 1915-16 massacres to trial. The newspaper coverage and political discourse not only reported on events taking place during 1919-22 but also looked back on 1915-16. This was a rhetorical device to emphasise the significance of the more recent developments as well as a natural tendency to make comparisons and, especially in the case of the trials, highly relevant. Therefore, this gives historians an excellent opportunity to analyse the extent to which views of German agency had changed or continued.

When massacres of Armenians began again in the winter of 1918 there seems to be a distinct lack in the British press coverage in terms of relating them to German 'frightfulness.' Perhaps this was due to the context of complete victory over the Germans before it became necessary to remind the public of their role in Ottoman Turkey during peace settlement talks in 1919. Indeed, as soon as the Ottoman government began to put alleged criminals on trial for the massacres as the Versailles talks began, the German's role was enthusiastically recalled. Thus, as the trials started British newspapers contained the following headlines on January 3, 1919. 'Responsible Turk And German Leaders.'<sup>271</sup> 'Organised By Germany.'<sup>272</sup> 'Systematically Organised by Germany.'<sup>273</sup> 'Massacres Organised By The

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<sup>271</sup> "Final Turkish Efforts Against Armenians," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 3, 1919, 5.

<sup>272</sup> "Armenian Massacres," *Gloucestershire Echo*, January 3, 1919, 4.

<sup>273</sup> "Armenian Massacres," *The Western Times*, January 3, 1919, 12.

Germans.<sup>274</sup> ‘Scientific Massacre By Huns: Slaughter Of Thousands Of Children.’<sup>275</sup> ‘Turco-Hun Massacre Of 1,500,000 Armenians.’<sup>276</sup> Such references are found in six of a sample of thirteen papers on that day and it is clear that the prism of German ‘frightfulness’ was still ever present in the immediate post war period. Nevertheless, the parent piece came from a French paper, the *Petit Parisian*, which included the phrase ‘scientifically organised by Germany.’ Thus, this was picked up readily by nearly half the papers selected but apparently ignored in terms of headlines by the remainder. A significant trope therefore, but not dominant.

What then follows in the discourse in terms of the research carried out for this thesis is a quite extraordinary dropping off, of this prism of German ‘frightfulness.’ After *The Times* suggested in May 1919 that the Armenian massacres may be what ‘future historians will fix on their complicity in this wholesale massacre as the crowning infamy of German “real policy,”<sup>277</sup> we apparently see a marked change. A change to references to the massacres and deportations as singularly Turkish and as a greater atrocity than those carried out by the Germans. Thus, *The Manchester Guardian* reported the arrival of Turkish delegates to Versailles with the following; ‘Compared with the Turkish massacres of 800,000 Armenians all the atrocities of German and Austrian are venial; and there is nothing so black in the record of her allies as Turkey’s treatment of the prisoners of Kut.’<sup>278</sup>

This was in response to an observation that the reception of the Turks was ‘very amiable’ compared to that of the Germans. Of interest though, is the equation of the fate of several hundred Anglo-Indian prisoners of war with the deaths of

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<sup>274</sup> “2,000 Women Burned in Armenia,” *Yorkshire Evening Post*, January 3, 1919.

<sup>275</sup> “Organised Armenian Slaughter,” *The Globe*, January 3, 1919, 10.

<sup>276</sup> “2,000 Women Burned,” *Nottingham Evening Post*, January 3, 1919, 2.

<sup>277</sup> “The Plight of Armenia,” *The Times*, May 2, 1919, 13.

<sup>278</sup> “The Turks at Versailles,” *The Manchester Guardian*, June 19, 1919, 6.

800,000 Armenians.<sup>279</sup> A reminder perhaps of the exigencies of stressing the apparently more relevant to a British public still coming to terms with reports of the Amritsar massacre in April of that year. Stressing the infamy of the Kut incident may well have served the purpose of mollifying Indian opinion and moderating British guilt. However, such references in terms of direct comparison with German actions seem to be far and few between but they are there. For example, in August 1919 the same paper reported on an American relief commissioner's appeal to the British public. It included the judgment that nothing during the First World War 'exceeded in cruelty the deliberate massacre and deportation of the Armenian people of the Turkish Empire.'<sup>280</sup> This was followed in February 1920 with this in *The Observer* that contends that the guilt of German society from the highest to the lowest was 'nominal or nil' compared to that of the Young Turks. In terms of the event, it is described as the 'extirpation of half the Armenian nation was a crime of colossal ferocity above every crime in the war.'<sup>281</sup>

This would seem to reflect again the changing circumstances and context. The last sentence points to the fact that the most recent massacres were focusing minds, where there was no German involvement. Furthermore, the prevailing desire to heavily punish Germany for the war the previous year had started to wane. Now it was the turn of the Turks to be pilloried in a more singular manner during the Sevres peace talks amidst fears that the Ottomans would remain in charge of the strategically vital straits at Constantinople. For example in February 1920, *The Western Morning News* bemoaned that prospect with a reminder that, 'Turkey shielded the German enemy and prolonged the war for three years, and

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<sup>279</sup> On the treatment of Anglo-Indian prisoners of war after the siege of Kut al-Amara see for example Rogan, *The Fall of Ottomans*, 271-3. After the Dardanelles campaign a British division was cornered in Mesopotamia by Turkish forces under Nurettin Bay. After the Turkish victory at Kut, British officers were well treated but the Anglo-Indian common soldiers were beaten and whipped on a 'death march' and many succumbed to starvation and disease. Rogan states that of the '2,592 British rank and file led into captivity from Kut, more than 1,700 died in captivity or on the death marches-nearly 70 percent'.

<sup>280</sup> "The New Armenian Crisis," *The Manchester Guardian*, August 18, 1919, 10.

<sup>281</sup> "Constantinople: Bring Back the Young Turks," *The Observer*, February 22, 1920, 12.

was instrumental in wrecking the Russian Empire.<sup>282</sup> Indeed on March 6, 1920, *The Manchester Guardian* (as well as again mentioning the Anglo-Indian Kut POWs) detailed the ‘extermination of a people’ in 1915 and went further by suggesting that this was ‘not fully realised’ at the time because of the ‘general resentment as was everywhere excited by the Germans.’<sup>283</sup>

Therefore, it is only in the early 1920s that the discourse on the Armenian genocide significantly moves away from direct comparisons with German ‘frightfulness.’ This would appear to be the result of the apparent necessity for British commentators to mobilise purely anti-Turkish sentiment as fears of a peace settlement, which actually seemed to favour and reward Turkey grew.<sup>284</sup> This while anti-German feeling had begun to fall away very soon after the very robust punishment represented by the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>285</sup> The contingent nature of this discourse is exemplified once more after 1923 when Kemal’s Turkey was increasingly seen as buffer against Soviet Bolshevism. Under these circumstances the Armenian genocide was all but forgotten.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, British observers readily and immediately made direct comparisons between German and Turkish acts concerning the mass killing of civilians. The Armenian massacres were equated with acts of German ‘frightfulness’ in northwest Europe and in the Atlantic. The Germans were accused of willing the massacres for

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<sup>282</sup> “Shall the Turks Go?” *The Western Morning News*, February 24, 1920, 4.

<sup>283</sup> “The Case of the Armenians,” *The Manchester Guardian*, March 6, 1920, 10.

<sup>284</sup> In January 1920 the American film based on the memoir of the survivor Aurora Mardiganian was released in Britain. Under Foreign Office pressure it was renamed *Auction of Souls* as its much more orientalist American title *Ravished Armenia* was considered too titillating. The newspaper coverage of the controversy makes no mention of Germany and concentrates on discussion of harems and the flogging and crucifixion of Armenian women. For discussion on the significance of the film see Michelle Tusan, “‘Crimes against Humanity’: Human Rights, the British Empire, and the Origins of the Response to the Armenian Genocide”, *American Historical Review* 119, no. 1 (February 2014): 69-76.

<sup>285</sup> Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 3, 7, 63-117.

their own ends and of using a dominant influence in the wartime alliance to persuade the Turks to carry them out. Moreover, of making them possible with more efficient German methods. This supports Jo Laycock's and Sadia McEvoy's points concerning the adaptation of the traditional British orientalist discourse during the First World War. When the Germans were not accused of direct influence they were heavily blamed for making a conscious choice not to intervene and in acquiescing in their perpetration. Some pieces of the discourse accused the Germans of all of these simultaneously. This was done because Germany was involved as an ally of Turkey and some Germans were involved in both the perpetration of the acts of persecution and speaking for their support, equivocation and their condemnation. Further, because the rhetorical propagandisation of them served to further rally British civilians to the war effort and to encourage American military intervention. Thus, the new evidence found and analysed adds weight to the arguments of scholars such as Cate Haste, Daniel Pick, Nicoletta Gullace, Meg Albrinck, Tammy Procter, Michelle Tusan, Alan Kramer, Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker concerning a war of civilisation fought against a barbaric other in the interests of small nations. Stressing the German aspect tapped into the issue of Germany being a greater existentialist threat for the British public. It testifies further to the manner in which the contemporary 'British Self' was brought into play in the constructions of these representations as civilised in contrast to barbaric.

Another aspect of 'frightfulness' in relation to its repeated use by the British in the context of a 'Total War' seeing the rapid erosion of the barriers between the military and civilian spheres to shore up the 'British Self' was its historical presence during the Russian invasion of East Prussia. Alexander Watson writes that in August and September 1914, East Prussia was devastated by Russian invasion leaving ruined, destroyed buildings and nearly 1,500 civilians killed. He argues that due to East Prussia's smaller population the 'scale of the violence was...no different from that of the more famous contemporaneous German atrocities in Belgium and

France.<sup>286</sup> On this occasion though the perpetrators were Britain's allies and this adds to the argument that the orientalist approach to British representations of events in Belgium and the manner in which Turkish acts were seen through this prism were in part an act of projection.

It could be suggested that this research and analysis goes further than the existing scholarship in the following manner. The variety present in this trope of viewing the atrocities through a prism of German 'frightfulness' demonstrates the difficulty observers had in terms of clearly seeing what was taking place in remote parts of Anatolia. It also demonstrates the difficulty of establishing the degree of Turkish and German agency and of interpreting what is now recognised as a qualitatively and quantitatively different event in terms of the mass killing of civilians. The relative degree of Turkish and German agency in the discourse corresponded to wartime circumstances. Greater German agency was stressed when the greater condemnation of the 'Hun' was required. For example, in 1915 as a Blue Book on atrocities in Belgium was published, as the Germans used poison gas on the western front, as warships and Zeppelins shelled and bombed English towns and U-boats sank amongst other ships, the *Lusitania*. Likewise, in early 1919 as the Versailles settlement took shape. In contrast, greater Turkish agency was stressed in 1920 during the Sevres negotiations.

The prism of German 'frightfulness' demonstrates a great deal of continuity as traditional orientalist discourse was brought to bear on the wartime situation. However, there was a significant degree of change as 'Total War' seemingly demanded that the Turk be Europeanised in the Orient and the Hun be orientalist in Europe. This was to ensure British civilians enduring commitment to a war for civilisation in the name of small nations. Further, when the erosion of the boundary between the civilian and military spheres was being simultaneously accepted and denounced. Its significance for this thesis is that the exigencies of this particular war

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<sup>286</sup> Watson, *Ring of Steel*, 171.

might well have made it so dominant in the discourse that the true nature of the Armenian massacres could well have been shrouded and distorted. The fact that it did not heightens the significance of the trope to be analysed in Chapter 4. The trope of a process of systematic extermination with a growing awareness of a criterion, which foretold modern definitions of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Finally, the analysis of the discourse that was filtered through a prism of German 'frightfulness' demonstrates a significant degree of centrality in terms of the contemporary awareness of the Armenian genocide. Indeed, this chapter has shown how it became at the time to an extent a defining aspect of a new type of warfare regarding civilians for those experiencing it. This chiefly can be seen in the way it held a prominent place in a hierarchy of war crimes committed by the enemies of the Allied Powers before being all but forgotten in the 1920's with arguably terrible consequences. Indeed, if as suggested earlier in this chapter Belgium was the quintessential war atrocity in terms of Allied propaganda in 1915, by the end of the war the Armenian genocide had taken its place alongside it. It could even be said that in some significant quarters it had surpassed it by 1920. This adds to one of the observations to be made in the conclusion regarding the significance of the research for this thesis. Namely, how the grappling with and denunciation of modern genocide up to the present is highly contingent and heavily dependent on diplomatic, political and economic circumstances.

## Chapter 2

### British Representations of an Idealised Armenian Peasantry Living in a Rural Idyll and its Despoliation by the 'Turk.'

#### Introduction

E. F. Benson asserted in 1918 that the Ottoman Empire 'did not contain a single seed that might ripen into progress and civilisation.' Further that 'Mesopotamia was once the most fertile of all lands,' but that, 'under the stewardship of the Turk, it has suffered to become a desert for the greater part of the year and an impracticable swamp for the remainder'.<sup>287</sup> Canon Parfit in his 1917 book *Mesopotamia: The Key to the Future* had a chapter describing the present situation under the title, 'Mesopotamia: Its Dreary Desolation'. He called attention to 'the immense quantity of thorns and thistles that cover the greater part of Mesopotamia and Asiatic Turkey; millions of acres of good arable land are overrun with thorns and weeds, indicative of the greatest possible neglect'.<sup>288</sup> Moreover; 'This most fertile region of the earth that enriched the inhabited world for thousands of years has been gradually reduced to dust and ashes...'<sup>289</sup> that 'Turkish despotism' had 'blighted the fairest lands of the Levant'<sup>290</sup> and that 'Turkish domination is everywhere coincident with ruin and decay.'<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>287</sup>Edward Frederic Benson, *Crescent and Iron Cross* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), 13. Benson was a writer best known for humorous and satirical ghost stories and as the son of an Archbishop of Canterbury and a brother of the author of the words to Elgar's, *Land of Hope and Glory*, he can be described as an 'establishment' figure.

<sup>288</sup> Canon Parfit, *Mesopotamia: The Key to the Future* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917), 12-13. A clergyman based in Jerusalem, Canon J. T. Parfit wrote pamphlets for Wellington House (as did Toynbee) which, was the official government propaganda unit. Despite this official sanction, the Foreign Office described him as a 'tub thumper' and he saw the 'Turk' very much through a religious prism and held extreme almost apocalyptic views concerning a Pan-Islamic state under German protection threatening to destroy the British Empire. Indeed, Sadia McAvoy argues that Parfit's explicit intention was to justify a continued role for the British Empire in a post war world. The fact therefore, that he readily used the rural imagery explored in this chapter testifies significantly to its colonial aspects and the motives for using it. McAvoy, *The Construction of Ottoman Asia*, 102-3, 106-7.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.* 16.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.* 29.

This research I would argue fills one important gap in the existing scholarship by using sources such as those quoted above. They demonstrate one particular feature of British representation of the genocide not previously noted. That feature being the use of a trope revolving around an idealisation of a rural idyll cultivated by a noble Armenian peasantry that was subsequently despoiled by the 'terrible Turk.' The quotes cited above refer to a longer history, but it will be demonstrated below how this was linked to a more modern-day representation of the Armenian peasantry and the lands they husbanded. These representations are another example of the orientalist style that featured so strongly in the general discourse analysed in this work. As such they are part of the process of projection that it argues was at work in this period.

This thesis attempts to show how a new trope of British representation describing the mass killing of civilians in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War emerged. It was more concise and succinct than previous ones of the 'atrocitarian' type, such as those recounting the Bulgarian massacres of the 1870s, the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s and instances such as the Adana massacre of 1909. The new trope represented systematic extermination as a stage-by-stage process. It also used criteria regarding how this could be done and to whom. This was in contrast to a style of polemical listing in the 'atrocitarian' discourse. It is in this context that biomedical language using the imagery of an idealised Armenian peasantry living in a rural idyll, which reflected the rationales of what we would today call genocide and ethnic cleansing is highly significant. This chapter will begin by examining the related wider scholarship on aspects of British colonialism and fears of British urban degeneration. This provides a useful analytical framework for exploring the significance of this biomedical language in the representations involved. A section will then describe how what was also widely used was a description of the 'Turk' and his way of living and his subsequent geography (the impact of 'his' activity on the landscape and its economy) that was portrayed as an antithesis of the rural idyll. This, demonstrates the function of these British representations in terms of propaganda and the ongoing production of an

appropriate national identity (the 'British Self') to better fight this 'Total War.' A principled people living in its own rural idyll, albeit threatened by an urban nightmare and social degeneration. Further, one coming to the aid of 'small nations' being attacked by despoiling and authoritarian, militaristic forces. The chapter will then detail one aspect of this trope, the idealisation of the Armenian peasant village, and how this can be firmly placed within the representational framework of a process of systematic extermination. This will in turn provide an introductory framework for the following chapter that concentrates on the nature of the biomedical language involved. Together these two chapters will demonstrate how both these elements of the representations are inextricably linked.

Peter Ackroyd in his cultural history of England, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* (2002) demonstrates the importance of the rural idyll and its antithesis. A brief summary of his description of this serves as an introduction to how the trope exercised itself in the immediate years before the First World War and during it. He describes how Anglo-Saxon literature was full of references to rugged places and waste lands which were full of darkness that haunt the English imagination. He makes a link between the use of a 'wilderness' in *Piers the Plowman* to the malignancy of a swamp in Thomas Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd* and states that this is the internal landscape of T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*. In terms of the idyll as a counter to this antithesis Ackroyd invokes the trope of 'hallowed places,' and 'a pact with the earth' from the 'forest path' of *Beowulf* to a 'trackway' in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, John Clare's 'crooked sheds/ of footpaths,' to Stanley Spencer's *The Bridlepath at Cookham* and Paul Nash's *The Field Path*.<sup>292</sup>

Ackroyd goes on to look at representations of the English landscape arguing that Saxton's county maps, published in 1579 and Camden's work on British antiquities, *Britannia* from 1586 created an idea of 'sacred soil.' He uses the maps

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<sup>292</sup> Peter Ackroyd, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2002), 65-7.

accompanying Michael Drayton's 1622 work *Poly-Olbion* to suggest that a 'divinely ordered' 'song of the earth' actually supersedes the authority of a monarch or a state. The importance of English landscape painting is also emphasised by Ackroyd and he quotes Jane Austen's *Emma* and how the English landscape represented 'English verdure, English culture, English comfort.' John Ruskin, Richard Wilson, William Gilpin and Uvedale Price are also invoked to support his argument. Finally, and significantly for this thesis Ackroyd describes how the frontispiece of *Poly-Olbion* 'displays England draped across the image of a woman's body.' This was 'a recognition of the landscape as an organic being with its own laws of growth and change.'<sup>293</sup> This speaks powerfully to a central argument of this thesis that the biomedical language of the representation of the mass killing of Armenians was inextricably linked to an understanding of how a given geographical area and its landscape (often described in terms of a human body that could be impaired by impurities, cancers and parasites) could be fundamentally altered by removing one group of people and replacing them with another.

The argument of this thesis that there was a strong element of orientalist projection involved in British representations of the Armenian genocide is further bolstered by an analysis of the articulation of the rural idyll in them. This is due to the fact that this idyll has mythic properties and served a clear purpose in terms of dealing with British concerns regarding its identity. For example, David Haigron argues that the English countryside is a myth and 'an imagined place,' the result of a 'discursive construction.'<sup>294</sup> Indeed, Howard Newby observed that a 'real' England was represented by the village instead of the town. The 'real English countryside has been converted into a vast Arcadian rural idyll.' This was in response to industrialisation which was seen 'as a threat to the nation's genuine identity' that involved 'a happier past.'<sup>295</sup> Haigron describes this 'as a refuge away from the angst

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid. 68-71.

<sup>294</sup> David Haigron, "Introduction," in *The English Countryside: Representations, Identities, Mutations*, ed. David Haigron (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 5.

<sup>295</sup> Howard Newby, *The Deferential Worker* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 12.

of modernity.<sup>296</sup> Brian Short has commented that this led to the rural idyll being elevated 'to a disproportionate and distorting status within British culture.'<sup>297</sup> Michael Woods also asserts the argument of 'an artificial construction,' more specifically 'the dichotomy of the city and country.' He describes an 'imagined division of space' and the 'filling of rural space with characteristics and meaning.'<sup>298</sup>

Haigron suggests that this meaning was of an 'apolitical space where nothing happens.' It could though, when required, be politicised as it was with representations of the Peasants Revolt, the anti-enclosure agitation, the Diggers, the Swing Riots and the ramblers of the twentieth century.<sup>299</sup> This thesis argues that it was particularly weaponised during the First World War in respect of the Armenian peasantry. It will be shown below how descriptions of the Armenian peasant's homeland fit the way that the scholarship on the British rural idyll has identified particular tropes. Patrick Abercrombie describes the English countryside as the nation's 'greatest historical monument.' In so doing he points out 'the Market Town, the Village, the Hedgerow Trees, the Lanes, the Copses, the Streams and the Farmstead.'<sup>300</sup> Haigron details aspects of the south country, the 'thatched cottages, medieval churches and manor houses, a chequer-board pattern of fields and hedgerows, rolling hills and so forth.'<sup>301</sup>

The biomedical language using the rural idyll in the First World War may well be linked to pre-war British writing. This reflected fears of a degeneration of the British body in terms of its society and economy and has been commented on above. For example, Patrick Brantlinger has argued that Victorian social reformers desired the removal of waste population. If it could be sent ('drained') to the

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<sup>296</sup> Haigron, "Introduction," 2.

<sup>297</sup> Brian Short, "Idyllic ruralities," in *The Handbook of Rural Studies*, eds. Paul Cloke, Thierry Marsden and Patrick Mooney (London: Sage, 2006), 145.

<sup>298</sup> Michael Woods, *Rural* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 264.

<sup>299</sup> Haigron, "Introduction," 8.

<sup>300</sup> Quoted in Philip Lowe, "The rural idyll defended: from preservation to conservation," in *The Rural Idyll*, ed. G. E. Mingay (London: Routledge, 1989), 121.

<sup>301</sup> Haigron, "Introduction," 2.

colonies ‘it might there fertilise “waste lands” and make the deserts bloom.’ Left in Britain, the contention was that ‘this human excrement bred the diseases of discontent, crime, and revolution. The contagion.’<sup>302</sup> As such Brantlinger demonstrates that the biomedical language to be analysed more thoroughly in the next chapter was to be found in the Victorian period. Further, that British colonialism was celebrated and vindicated by its function of transforming the world’s ‘wastelands.’ Making the ‘deserts bloom’ can be said to be an explicit reference to an imaginary rural idyll. It was imperilled in Britain by the by-products of the industrial revolution and one that could be re-created in the colonies. In turn it is clear that the creation of a rural idyll was seen as a primary purpose of colonialism itself, which (though not mentioned here) would mean the displacement of indigenous peoples. Therefore, we start to see a long-term colonial context in which the representations of the Armenian genocide can be placed.

For example, Anne McClintock in her work, *Imperial Leather* summarises the Victorian literature that demonstrates some of the fears in the Britain of that age. It could be said to have motivated in part the imaginary of the ‘terrible Turk’ using the rural idyll. Images of disease and contagion produced an institutionalised fear that justified for Victorian elites the necessity of disciplining and controlling the ‘dangerous classes.’ By the end of the nineteenth century ‘biological images of disease and pestilence formed a complex hierarchy of social metaphors that carried considerable social authority.’<sup>303</sup> This scholarship goes a long way to providing the analytical framework for the analysis of the biomedical language discussed in the

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<sup>302</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 117.

<sup>303</sup> Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 46-7. Sander Gilman ed., *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), xiv. Gareth Stedman Jones shows how London became the focus of wealthy Victorians’ growing anxieties about the unregenerate poor, variously described as the “dangerous” or “ragged” classes, the “casual poor”, or the “residuum”. Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* (New York: Pantheon, 1971), 11. “Festering” in dark and filthy dens, the scavenging and vagrant poor were described by images of putrefaction and organic debility. Thomas Plint described the “criminal class” as a “moral poison” and “pestiferous canker”, a “non-indigenous” and predatory body preying on the heathy. Thomas Plint, *Crime in England: Its Relation, Character and Extent, as developed from 1801 to 1848* (New York: Arno, [1851] 1974), 148-9.

next chapter. This is however, inextricably connected to the trope of the rural idyll. This language is important to this chapter as it is clear that these fears revolve around the perils of urbanism, which could be said to be the polar opposite of a rural idyll. For example, Daniel Pick contends 'that the sustained cultural pessimism of the 1870s and 1880s recast the Victorian evolutionary theory within the biological rhetoric of degeneration.' Towns and cities 'were especially targeted as "literal breeding ground[s] of decay".'<sup>304</sup> Furthermore, Stedman Jones adds that part of the discourse on the 'condition of England' involved 'a biomedical framing of urban degeneration and prophesied England's fall from the development of a new physical breed of people.'<sup>305</sup>

This is the background needed for a better understanding of the significance of descriptions of Armenian peasant village life in a rural idyll portrayed as a polar opposite of Britain's urban nightmare. Thus, the idealisation of Armenian peasant village life described below takes on great significance when it is seen as having an active function during the First World War regarding the 'British Self' and propaganda. Therefore, this discourse is highly significant as a framework to explore the way, as soon as what could be said to be an indigenous people, the Armenians, was displaced the language of a rural idyll was immediately invoked by those reporting on and denouncing it. As will be explained below, this invocation of the rural idyll was in fact a marked change in the way that the Armenian peasantry and countryside was described. This adds weight to the point that this discourse had a clear propaganda function in First World War Britain. The rural imagery involved in British colonial discourses will now be examined to demonstrate the relevance of the rationales of colonialism and its impact on landscape. It also testifies to the relevance of the subsequent impact on indigenous peoples.

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<sup>304</sup> Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 180, 190.

<sup>305</sup> Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, 128.

### **The Rural Idyll: Race Theory, Geography, Population and Homogenisation**

Before giving examples from the scholarship on British colonial discourse in the nineteenth century it is important to give some detail regarding the race theory that ran alongside it. Alexander D. Barder has argued that land and territory could be conceptualised in biomedical terms. It was explicitly linked to racism in that the ‘geographical imaginary of the nineteenth and early-twentieth century was taken for granted in terms of socio-biological differences that were increasingly alleged to be incommensurable.’<sup>306</sup> He cites Jürgen Osterhammel to reinforce this point who writes in regard to the popularity of social Darwinism; ‘This main imagery was of bodies and physicality: people spoke of threats to ‘the national body’ from enemies and pests...conceptions of race war and the inevitable subjugation of the weakest were part of the picture.’<sup>307</sup> Therefore, again we see how geography and population are inextricably linked in the way they are talked about. The implication is clear how this way of thinking contributed powerfully to the development of new practices and rationalisations of mass killing. In turn this can be linked to colonial rationales, which invoked ideas concerning landscape.

Dana Arnold has written about the importance of national landscapes and how despite ‘the increasing importance of the metropolitan landscape in the social and cultural map of Britain in the opening years of the nineteenth century, the rural landscape was not forgotten.’ Thus, she argues urban parks and landscape ‘became an important element in the creation of nationalist feeling and a sense of belonging within an established social framework, especially for the urban middle class.’<sup>308</sup> This, adds weight to the argument that the rural idyll was consciously invoked as a polar opposite to the urban nightmare and had a functional discursive role in this respect. Further, she ties this with a need to express colonial authority and in the

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<sup>306</sup> Alexander D. Bardar “Race War and the Global Imperial Order: The Armenian Genocide of 1915.” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 63, no. 3 (2017): 386-7.

<sup>307</sup> Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 856. Cited in Ibid. 386-7.

<sup>308</sup> Dana Arnold, “Trans-Planting National Cultures,” in *Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness*, ed. Dana Arnold (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 70.

case of Phoenix Park in Dublin an attempt 'by the British government to impose its political will on Ireland.' This 'could not be better represented than by Burton's [the architect concerned] "smoothing and levelling" of the rugged Irish terrain.'<sup>309</sup> This manipulation of terrain in the pursuit of political goals was accompanied by the manipulation of populations within the geographical areas concerned. In *Purify and Destroy* Jacques Semelin heads a section under the title, *Surgical Practices in politics*. He argues that the state developed new practices regarding 'undesirable or dangerous' populations that amounted to shaping and moulding and carrying out political surgery. Indeed 'it planes off the rough edges, and removes contagious and impure elements...In short, it shapes the social body in its own way, *to its own design*.' Populations were banished and purified.<sup>310</sup> Therefore, Semelin's model can be usefully invoked and how this links to imagery of a rural idyll. In turn this is of significance to how British representations of the Armenian massacres and deportations of the First World War were described both as an act of political surgery and as despoliation of a rural idyll.

Additionally, Gail Ching-Liang Low demonstrates how British pastoral fantasies can begin to be connected to a discourse of subjection and control. This leads ultimately to acts of mass killing in the pursuit of these aims when the landscape and its people are viewed in biomedical terms. English gardens in the colonies, for example, 'were a sustained attempt to inscribe a leisured pastoral ideal of Englishness in a foreign land.' It can also be linked to the British First World War cemeteries, which could also be said to be consciously designed as idyllic British gardens.<sup>311</sup> Ching-Liang Low has also pointed out how pastoral representations in Henry Rider Haggard's fiction involves British men making the desert bloom. She notes that in the same year as *Allan Quatermain* (1887) he

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid. 84-5. It is worthwhile here to note how the Nazis destroyed the Czechoslovakian village of Lidice during the Second World War as punishment for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich. Not only was the site levelled but tons of soil from Germany itself was taken there and deposited to literally Germanise the landscape after its population had been removed.

<sup>310</sup> Jacques Semelin, *Purify and Destroy, The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 338.

<sup>311</sup> Gail Ching-Liang Low, *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995), 163.

published a farm novel, *Jess* involving a rural idyll called 'Silas Croft'.<sup>312</sup> Furthermore, she explains that 'MacKenzie, the missionary and trader in *Allan Quatermain*, sets up in his personal fortress in a rural African station and makes it 'blossom like a rose in the wilderness.'<sup>313</sup> In *Allan's Wife* (1915) Haggard writes of Squire Carson, 'Renouncing civilisation, he treks into virgin territory to impose his version of a perfect harmonious world on a barren wilderness.'<sup>314</sup> Moreover, the idea of 'virgin territory' links this strongly to the themes of the sexualisation and the embodying of colonisation and therefore of the sexualisation of violence. Ching-Liang Low also demonstrates the issue of using rural imagery to reflect on and deal with difficult questions present in contemporary Britain. The pastoral trope, full of elegiac notions of 'lost innocence and nostalgia' was involved in 'the poetics of Empire.' As such, it achieved 'the twin tasks of disowning culpability for the destruction of indigenous cultures, and of producing a gendered and...infantilised notation of culture, central to the important mythopoetics of the boy's story.'<sup>315</sup> This then is the long-term context in which British representations of the Armenian deportations and massacres can be placed.

A key point in the development of the theme of a rural idyll is how accounts of the Armenian peasantry suddenly changed from largely negative to overwhelmingly positive. This happened at the same time as a trope of dirt and disease was focused on the 'terrible Turk' and his geography. It could be said therefore, that there are grounds for suggesting that the 'pastoral form' was an attempt to bolster British feelings of elegiac 'lost innocence and nostalgia' by celebrating the 'mythopoetics' of the Armenian peasantry. This was to shore up British identity in the face of the existentialist threat of the 'horrible Hun.' At the same time, it built up Britain's self-perception as a defender of small, rural nations such as Belgium, Serbia and Armenia in the face of Prussian and Young Turk militarism. It is worth pointing out that this task was made even more urgent by the

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid. 38.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid. 37-8.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid. 38-9.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid. 43.

incongruity of Russian authoritarianism as well as British and French colonial operating procedures. In turn it adds again to the argument of this thesis that to a significant extent the British representations of the Armenian genocide were part of an orientalist process of projection. That of concerns regarding the 'British Self' onto the 'Other' of the 'terrible Turk.'

### **The Trope of the Rural Idyll**

The theme of a rural idyll was established to an extent in the writing about the Armenians before the First World War particularly amongst Armenophiles. This was strongly linked to the religious element in their interest in this persecuted Christian community. Therefore, it is no surprise to see the language of the Old Testament in the discourse. This was also entwined with how land required careful husbandry by civilised and godly people to make it flower and be bountiful. Thus, Emily J. Robinson in a 1913 pamphlet, *The Truth About Armenia*, commented that the Armenian provinces should receive money to benefit the Turks as well as the Armenians. The latter would make 'the land which held the Garden of Eden would become one of the most fruitful parts of the earth, so great are the undeveloped resources of nature there.' Not only that but civilisation itself would spread 'across the plains of Asia.'<sup>316</sup> The Garden of Eden could be said to be the paradigmatic rural idyll and indeed the foundation stone of the whole trope. However, although this was made by God its continued bounty in this passage clearly relies on its resources being developed by a people who would subsequently create the preconditions and foundations for civilisation. Robinson identifies the Armenians as the prime candidates to do this in this part of the world. The same author returned to this theme again in her 1917 pamphlet, *Armenia and the Armenians* but in the context of fighting the Ottoman Empire in the First World War she identified the 'Turk' as the despoiler of the rural idyll. After such a 'long record of murder, rapine, burning, desolation' and the damage dealt by the 'Asiatic hordes...the powers of endurance

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<sup>316</sup> Robinson, *The Truth About Armenia*, 18.

of the Armenian race' meant a rapid recovery. Indeed, 'before many years passed homes and towns rose from their ashes and the land flourished again.'<sup>317</sup>

However, the dominant themes of the discourse in the nineteenth century concentrated on Armenians as "'mere" tradesmen who saw no military service' as Christopher Walker notes. He goes on to suggest that, 'Little heed was paid to the peasant Armenians, except' by very few 'perceptive writers and travellers.' This was despite the fact that, as Walker states, the 'Armenians were overwhelmingly a peasant agricultural people.' This was before the havoc wrought in the 1890s and the First World War. The Armenian peasantry were ignored he argues by travellers who wanted to see 'money-making middlemen.' Such Victorians saw 'trading races' rather than a 'martial' one and in 'order to give semblance of justification to such myths, the peasant with his husbandry and flocks was ignored.'<sup>318</sup> The obsession with 'martial races' emphasises further the importance of the context of the First World War. It changed the frameworks through which the Armenian peasantry was portrayed and the function that they played within Britain. In 1915 it could be said that the Armenian peasantry was suddenly transformed into a 'martial race' by recognising their hardy and resourceful peasant nature, which had been ignored previously. The significance of this shift is emphasised by looking at some of the nineteenth century British depictions regarding the Armenians as a religious and ethnic group. To support his points concerning the negative image of the Armenian peasant Walker quotes *The Daily News* during the 1877-8 Russo-Turkish War. A village is described in an 'expanse of marshy land' as once populous, but now with 'empty houses and deserted-thoroughfares' and 'a few suspicious looking ducks and hens.'<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Emily J. Robinson, *Armenia and the Armenians* (1917), 4.

<sup>318</sup> Christopher J. Walker, *Writings on Armenia: Visions of Ararat* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 56.

<sup>319</sup> Archibald Forbes et al., *The War Correspondence of the Daily News, vol. II* (London: MacMillan & Co, 1878), 124, 127-30.

This description is very similar to the manner in which Turkish settlements were described in the First World War discourse discussed below as well as a traditional orientalist motif. Interiors were also described in largely negative terms as well. For example, to 'inhabit...an Armenian peasants house is literally to inhabit a stable.'<sup>320</sup> Such representations stressed the unsuitability of indigenous peoples to otherwise fruitful regions. Jo Laycock has also written on the negative aspects of British descriptions of Armenia and Armenians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, suggesting that they 'marginalised the contemporary population of the region, who appeared passive or absent.' This she argues 'reinforced British authority over the landscape.'<sup>321</sup>

Laycock also states that Armenia was viewed in Britain as a liminal borderland, not quite 'West' and not quite 'East.' This fulfilled the function identified in Saidian critique of the orientalist discourse as a means to deal with the 'self.' The Armenians were a minority cause and Laycock suggests that these causes and how they were written about were important in the creation of a British imperial identity. Part of this creation of an identity was about 'delineating...the boundaries of the "self" or the civilised European world.' This, Laycock argues presented a problem for British commentators as the Christian minorities of the Balkans and the Near East 'did not conform to the Orientalist East/West division of the world which has come to be associated with imperialism.' Thus, the necessity for Armenia to be imagined as a borderland and for the Armenians to be 'characterised by ambiguity.'<sup>322</sup> For Laycock this 'liminal position blurred the border between 'self' and 'other' and presented a confusing mix of characteristics and features.' Representations of Armenia involved the reassertion of a natural order. Armenia's deviation from 'the proper path of development' in turn, justified British intervention in the future. This in turn 'also presented an opportunity to shore up the boundaries of the European, 'civilised' self.'<sup>323</sup> She also references various

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 49.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid. 28.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid. 34.

writers in arguing that there was a trope of ‘otherness’ referring to the Armenians as well as rural primitiveness and a lack of hygiene in terms of their villages.<sup>324</sup> Thus, it is of great significance during the entirely different circumstances of the First World War that the Armenian peasantry were placed at the forefront of these lands. These frames of reference were subsequently dropped, and they were made into a ‘martial race.’

What had held back anti Ottoman and pro Armenian views to an extent before 1914 was the realpolitik of the apparent necessity of an intact Ottoman Empire as a bulwark against Russian expansion toward India. With Russia as an ally the new circumstances of the war meant, Michelle Tusan argues, it was now desirable to destroy the Ottoman Empire and Armenian independence was now a real possibility. Therefore, the definition of the Armenians of as an oppressed Christian minority no longer served a purpose; ‘Instead there was an increasing tendency from all parties to represent the Armenians as a coherent “national” body.’<sup>325</sup> Furthermore, representations of the Armenians were no longer ambiguous and no longer ‘in-between.’ Indeed, they were ‘made part of the civilised European world and their suitability as a nation was proclaimed with renewed vigour.’<sup>326</sup> Therefore, the type of description given by Emily Robinson above before the war and that made during it could be said to demonstrate this change. More and more observers began to adopt the same discourse of representation. Thus, the Armenophile Harold Buxton before detailing the effect of ‘the Turk’ on the Armenian rural idyll talked of ‘the natural beauty of the Switzerland of the Near East.’<sup>327</sup> A year later in a piece discussed further below *The Manchester Guardian* talked of an Armenia of ‘rich, fertile valleys.’<sup>328</sup> Joseph Hocking’s novel *The Path of Glory* in 1917 also associates the Armenians with an English like rural idyll. His hero encounters an Armenian landscape and finds it ‘rich,

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid. 64-5.

<sup>325</sup> Tusan, *Smyrna’s Ashes*, 118.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid. 121.

<sup>327</sup> “Armenia’s Immediate Need,” *The Manchester Guardian*, August 21, 1916, 6.

<sup>328</sup> “The Armenian Orphans’ Fund,” *The Manchester Guardian*, March 24, 1917, 4.

fertile' and 'cultivated.' The land was green 'with shoots of young corn which had been lately sown. Cattle, too, were feeding upon rich, luscious grass, while the whole valley was dotted with dwelling-places.'<sup>329</sup>

Thus, there are descriptions of the actual landscapes the Armenians farmed that can be said to be of an idyllic nature in the rural sense. However, there are more references to an idyllic peasantry and their villages rather than their fields and this will be discussed below. In terms of the geographies involved what predominates far more are descriptions of what 'the Turk' did to the landscape. This sudden change in the representation of the Armenian peasantry suggests strongly that the trope of the rural idyll in the First World War was directly contingent on circumstances in the Near East and what the government and military forces of the Ottoman Empire were doing there. The next section of this chapter will now examine how 'the Turk' was very often seen and carefully described as an antithesis of the rural idyll and its despoiler. This in turn links in to Victorian writing on the urban nightmare in Britain as described in the introduction to this chapter and the similarities between the two have significance. The representation of the 'Turk' as a despoiler was part of putting Britain right. It championed the rural idyll against its own urban nightmare by denouncing its protagonists within the ranks of its wartime enemies. This in turn projected concerns regarding the 'British Self' onto the Ottoman 'Other'.

### **The 'Turk' as the Antithesis of the Rural Idyll**

Just as British colonial discourse associated uncivilised (and indigenous) peoples with the wasting of land the discourse on the lands of the Ottoman Empire not only celebrated the positive impact of Armenian husbandry but also blamed 'the Turk'

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<sup>329</sup> Hocking, *The Path of Glory*, 208.

for its neglect. Further, it tended to strongly suggest that ‘his tread’<sup>330</sup> rendered otherwise fruitful lands desolate and infertile. Later it will be shown how this was increasingly linked to more modern and ‘scientific’ biomedical language likening this tread with disease, particularly cancer. In this period of the discourse though references to earlier persecutions repeatedly associate the Ottomans with toxicity and foulness<sup>331</sup> and how this effectively polluted and devastated communities and their rural village homes. James Ellis Barker<sup>332</sup> in his work *Menace in the Near East* argued that this had always been the case throughout history. Calling Turkey an alien nation he asserted that it had lost the right to rule, in this case, Egypt on moral grounds. He maintained that its history was one of running, ravaging and creating nothing. Turkey according to Barker turned the ‘glorious empires of Babylonia, Assyria’ and Egypt ‘into a wilderness.’ Indeed, Turkey’s empire had as its chief characteristic desolation.<sup>333</sup> This could be said to be a classic piece of Orientalism, which ties the Turkish influence on geographies, farmland and the economy in terms of communication to political integrity and the right to rule. The Turks are said to have a very active effect on the landscape and the spectre of a spreading disease was invoked. The quote also highlights how the language relating to a rural idyll and its destruction was inextricably intertwined with biomedical language. This

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<sup>330</sup> David Lloyd George, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer in November 1914, declared before the Armenian massacres and deportations had taken place that; ‘The Turk is a human cancer, a creeping agony of the flesh...the tread of his bloodstained sandals scorches and withers life and fertility out of whole territories’. It was used in an appeal to newspaper readers on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1920 (for example in *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian*) to send a form to their Member of Parliament calling for them to do what they could to prevent Turkey from keeping control of the Dardanelles. An accompanying map had an arrow pointing to ‘The Lair of the Turk’. Quoted in Sir John A. Marriot, *The Eastern Question: An Historical Study in European Diplomacy. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 538.

<sup>331</sup> The assurance that the Turkish occupation of Tabriz is of no military importance will bring little comfort to Persia, who, through no fault of her own, is suffering all the horrors of war, or to the Armenian population which is witnessing the repetition of those massacres that made the name of ABDUL HAMID stink in the nostrils of Europe. “The Turks at Tabriz,” *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, January 14, 1915, 2.

<sup>332</sup> An unusual figure, who can still be firmly placed within the dominant trends of the time and another writer of political tracts, was James Ellis Barker. He was an Anglo-German who had changed his name from Julius Otto Elzbacher (naturalised as British c.1900) and before becoming a leading homeopath in Britain was an historian and journalist. He was best known for warning of the German threat before the First World War. <https://www.sueyounghistories.com/2008-07-31-j-ellis-barker-and-homeopathy/> 11/04/20.

<sup>333</sup> James Ellis Barker, “Menace in the Near East,” *Fortnightly Review*, December 1914, 1011.

in turn adds weight to one argument of this thesis that traditional orientalist discourse was changing in the circumstances of the First World War.<sup>334</sup>

Another aspect of a strong association with a negative impact on agricultural activity is the manner in which the Turk's deployment of Kurdish irregulars in the violence was often mentioned and denounced. This more often than not repeated standard stereotypes from the Hamidian massacres of the Kurds as uncivilised brigands who provided themselves with sustenance by either stealing from Armenians who had worked the land and provided what became loot, or nomadic pastoralism.<sup>335</sup> This type of agriculture was largely looked down upon and seen as a less civilised form of agriculture. For example, in respect of Kurdish involvement in the massacres, in the coverage on the Joint Allied Declaration of May 24, 1915, *The Liverpool Echo* stated under a headline 'Abdul Hamid Recalled'; 'Turkish Regulars, helped by Kurdish brigands and the low elements in the populace, systematically work ruin and desolation on the whole of Armenia.'<sup>336</sup> *The Manchester Guardian* on the same day repeated this trope of representation using the same quote (here though the words 'dregs of the population' were used) from the French paper *Humanite*. It added that after 'physically incapable men' and then male children had been killed and 'good looking women' and girls carried off; 'No one remains in the devastated and ruined villages except for old women.'<sup>337</sup>

Therefore, the developing concise and criterion-led summary of systematic extermination with facilitating stages described in a later chapter was also part and parcel of the rural idyll discourse. These stages of persecution left the land 'devastated and ruined.' Two days later the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* again

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<sup>334</sup> Similarly, *The Manchester Guardian* asserted 'To make a desert was to make a Turkish peace'. "The Future of Palestine," *The Manchester Guardian*, December 10, 1917, 4. John Buchan's 1916 novel *Greenmantle* about German machinations in the First World War in the Ottoman Empire described the situation thus. 'There is a dry wind blowing through the East, and the parched grasses wait the spark'. John Buchan, *The Complete Richard Hannay* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 113.

<sup>335</sup> On the relationship between the Armenian peasantry and Kurdish tribes, Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 39-44. Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert and Nowhere Else*, 12-24.

<sup>336</sup> "Abdul Hamid Recalled," *The Liverpool Echo*, May 24, 1915, 4.

<sup>337</sup> "Massacres in Armenia," *The Manchester Guardian*, May 24, 1915, 4.

placed the current events in the longer-term pre-war context, which suggests that the destruction of villages was a conscious and integral part of a plan of extermination. When the First World War began, the paper asserted that what followed was the Armenians made Van a fortress of the Armenian movement. The Turks then ‘took their revenge’ and ‘arrested and killed several Armenian leaders, and let loose the Kurds on the Armenian villagers.’ Then in March they ‘began systematically to massacre the Armenians in the vilayet, and Turkish soldiers and Kurds plundered and burned Armenian villages.’<sup>338</sup> Interesting here is the association of Kurd’s and their perceived as inferior nomadic pastoralism with despoliation and the Armenians as a civilised solution. Furthermore, the phrase ‘let loose the Kurds’ might suggest a conceptualisation of primitive savagery as a plague or disease that could be controlled or otherwise.<sup>339</sup> Swarms of crop destroying insects such as locusts and blights also spring to mind. Later on, in 1915 Toynbee made completely explicit the concept of savage inferiority in terms of agriculture and implicitly used biomedical language suggested the spread of a disease. Toynbee suggested that under ‘the malignant<sup>340</sup> administration of the Moslem conqueror, the Kurds’ spread out from their traditional homelands into those of the Armenians. Further, they ‘prefer a wilderness for their pasturage of their sheep and goats, and

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<sup>338</sup> “The Armenians,” *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, May 26, 1915, 6.

<sup>339</sup> The scholarship on the Armenian genocide has established a great deal of Kurdish involvement in the massacres as well as some instances of Kurds helping Armenians. Kurds were often nomadic pastoralists who often came into conflict therefore, with Armenian farming communities. Themselves on the periphery of Ottoman society and discriminated against (and often very poor) the authorities encouraged and exploited these conflicts for their own ends. Ozlem Belcim Galip has argued that modern Kurdish political groups have often acknowledged culpability in the Armenian genocide and expressed deep regret for the Kurdish role. Ozlem Belcim Galip, “The Politics of Remembering: Representation of the Armenian Genocide in Kurdish Novels,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 30, no. 3 (Winter 2016): 458-487.

<sup>340</sup> Caution though should be exercised in emphasising the significance of the word malignant. It is of 16<sup>th</sup> century origin and was for example used frequently in anti-Royalist propaganda in the civil wars of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, its common use in this period alongside more modern bio-medical language would suggest a modified change in its meaning by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly a graph demonstrating the frequency of its usage shows a marked decline during this period, which in turn perhaps emphasises the importance of its use in the representations studied here.

[https://www.google.com/search?q=malignant&rlz=1C1EODB\\_enGB515GB515&oq=malignant&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.22818j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=malignant&rlz=1C1EODB_enGB515GB515&oq=malignant&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.22818j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

look askance at the neat villages and well-tilled fields of the original inhabitants of the land.’<sup>341</sup>

Similarly, M. Philips Price of *The Manchester Guardian* wrote a piece under the title, ‘The Kurds Descend’ that associates them with despoiling insects which destroy a rural idyll. He wrote that ‘swarms of Kurds suddenly descended’ leaving a fertile country ‘devastated from end to end, its population massacred, carried off by fever, or fled into exile.’<sup>342</sup> The idea of a disease or swarm is again attested to in a piece from *The Manchester Guardian* in 1916 where a mountain pass is no escape for fleeing Armenians as it is ‘infested by Kurds and other marauders.’<sup>343</sup> Such statements can be directly compared to the discourse of the 19<sup>th</sup> century such as this from Winston Churchill on the Mohmand tribes of the Indian Northwest Frontier. He stated that these ‘tribesmen are among the most miserable and brutal creatures of the earth.’ He called them ‘pernicious vermin’ which infested the valleys of the area. Humanity would be increased and the ‘progress of mankind’ accelerated if they were ‘purged.’<sup>344</sup> Therefore, this again demonstrates the context of British colonial discourse that British descriptions and representations of the Armenian genocide need to be placed in. These were part of a continued orientalist othering of ‘the Turk’ that acted as a clear propaganda function and also involved the idealisation of the Armenian peasant village. This was, as has been

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<sup>341</sup> Toynbee, *Armenian Massacres*, 18. Toynbee, *Western Question*, 1922. In this work Toynbee theorised the conflict between sedentary and nomadic peoples but gave reasons why neither were to blame. Instead, he put it down to long term climatic changes. ‘When desiccation reaches a degree at which the steppe can no longer provide pasture for the quantity of cattle with which the nomads have stocked it, the herdsmen swerve from their beaten track of annual migration and invade the surrounding cultivated countries in search of food for their animals and themselves. On the other hand, when the climatic pendulum swings back and the next phase of humidity attains a point at which the steppe becomes capable of bearing cultivated roots and cereals, the peasant makes his counter-offensive upon the pastures of the nomad. Their respective methods of aggression are very similar. The nomad’s outbreak is a sudden as a cavalry charge, and shatters sedentary societies like the bursting of high explosive. The peasant’s is an infantry advance.’ 340-1.

<sup>342</sup> “War and Massacre in North-Western Persia: 30,000 Kurds Descend From the Hills Into the Plain,” *The Manchester Guardian*, October 28, 1915, 8.

<sup>343</sup> “An Armenian Exodus,” *The Manchester Guardian*, October 26, 1916, 8.

<sup>344</sup> Fredrick Woods ed., *Young Winston’s Wars: The Original Dispatches of Winston S. Churchill, War Correspondent, 1897-1900* (London: Leo Cooper, 1972), 33-9.

argued above a new and a direct and immediate response to the changed circumstances of 1915 and to which we will now turn.

### **The Idealisation of the Armenian Peasant Village**

David Spurr has demonstrated the relevance of Victorian colonial discourse on villages in a rural idyll. He does this with the example of the American journalist and rapacious coloniser Henry Morton Stanley in the context of the so-called colonial gaze. This gaze over the Ukawendi near Tanganyika which was 'wild' and 'unpeopled' was transformed into 'familiar terrain' of 'pretty cottages, and 'cattle by the stream' Spurr argues that this 'utopian vision imposes an entire series of European institutions on the natural landscape.'<sup>345</sup> Thus, Spurr demonstrates again the relevance of British colonial discourse and how representations of the Armenians and the genocide emerged from an established background. This involved conceptualisations of a rural idyll in terms of the landscape and how peoples, their settlements and subsequently their institutions make and are made by it. The British descriptions of the Armenian peasant village reflected colonial rhetoric and what the Turks were doing was to an extent seen by Britain as a Turkish and German colonial exercise.<sup>346</sup> Therefore, the British representation of

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<sup>345</sup>David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 29-30. "What a settlement one could have in this valley! See, it is broad enough to support a large population! Fancy a church spire rising where that tamarind rears its dark crown of foliage, and think how well a score or so of pretty cottages would look instead of those thorn clumps and gum trees! Fancy this lovely valley teeming with herds of cattle and fields of corn, spreading to the right and left of this stream! How much better would such a state become this valley, rather than its present wild and deserted aspect"! Norman R. Bennett ed., *Stanley's Despatches to the New York Herald*. (Boston: Boston University Press, 1970), 75-6.

<sup>346</sup> Thus, E. F. Benson interpreted the massacres as a change in imperial Ottoman strategy. 'In the early days...their policy was to absorb the strength of their subject peoples by incorporating the youth of them into the Turkish army, by giving them Turkish wives, and by converting them to Mohammedanism. Such was the foundation of the Empire and such its growth...Instead of absorbing their strength, Abdul Hamid hit upon the new method of killing them, so that the Turks should still maintain their domination. And the policy set on foot by him was developed... into a scheme of slaughter.' 203-4 of *Crescent and Iron Cross* the title of which clearly demonstrating that writers such as Benson saw developments in wartime Near East as a joint imperial exercise on the part of

the Armenians in the First World War uses to an extent the language used regarding British colonialism in Africa but in a manner, which criticised Turkish and German colonialism in the Near East.

British representations regarding this theme can also be very strongly placed in to the historical context of traditional orientalist discourse. Sardar argues that Orientalism uses vague generalisations to construct a discourse representing the Orient as a dead and unchanging society. He uses the arguments of Tibawi that modern Orientalism continues to rely substantially on a medieval image of Islam.<sup>347</sup> Further, those of Abdel Malek who suggests that from Greek antiquity onwards, the European man becomes the measure of all men everywhere.<sup>348</sup> He suggests moreover, that the decline of the Orient was viewed as a natural and inevitable phenomenon and that Arabic was studied in the 'West' as though it was a dead language. Indeed, that the past of the Orient was seen as divorced from any social evolution there, ceasing to be a life enhancing force and reduced to mere exoticism with achievements deliberately ignored or suppressed. This unproductive backwardness in turn justifies colonialism there.<sup>349</sup> It is significant that some of the British discourse on the future prosperity of the area revolved around how the Armenians would make the area fertile and prosperous once more.<sup>350</sup>

This sits comfortably perhaps with Said's contentions that orientalist discourse often talked of fertilising the Orient and the geographical area as a body to be surveyed and dissected.<sup>351</sup> Indeed for the purposes of this study of significance here is Asli Cirakman's specific history of western orientalist discourse

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Britain's enemies there. 'Already, in preparation for world-conquest, Germany has proceeded far with her construction of the Bagdad Railway, which was intended, after her absorption of Turkey, to link up Berlin with her next Oriental objective, namely India.' 234.

<sup>347</sup> Sardar, *Orientalism*, 58.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid. P. 59.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid. P. 60.

<sup>350</sup> For example, Bryce stated in 1916 that; 'These people are the most industrious as well as the most intelligent part of the population, and it is they alone who can restore the prosperity of the country.' "Repatriating the Armenians," *The Manchester Guardian*, June 8, 1916, 6.

<sup>351</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 219-20.

on the 'Turk.' Cirakmen focuses on the changing idea of 'the Turk' from the scourge of Europe to the sick man and argues that Europeans saw the depopulation and desolation of the countryside as a deliberate policy intrinsic to despotic governments from the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>352</sup> When the Ottoman Empire began to decline so obviously Cirakman argues that the emphasis of the discourse concerned the land and not the people. Further, that 'the Ottomans did not morally or rightfully deserve to rule the lands they had conquered centuries ago.'<sup>353</sup> Increasingly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Cirakman suggests, Western writers portrayed 'the dominions of Turkey as fertile and rich but since the Turks are idle, ignorant and despotic, they are subject to decline.'<sup>354</sup> It was this context that led Europeans to see these lands as 'the rightful domains of Europe.'<sup>355</sup> This is reflected in the way that a significant amount of the British discourse in representations of the genocide repeatedly talks of a rural idyll. However, the accompanying tropes involved a biomedical discourse, which can be linked to this idyll in its organic aspects. This justifies the exploration of an argument suggesting that these representations were newer and more modern and that at the turn of the century Orientalism was linking up with late 19<sup>th</sup> century Social Darwinism.

As the information regarding the massacres and deportations and the subsequent reporting and public speaking concerning it expanded exponentially during late summer and autumn 1915 a common theme was the attention given to the destruction of villages. This therefore suggests a particularly British and conscious manipulation of the facts to idealise the Armenian peasantry, their villages and their crop farming rural idyll.<sup>356</sup> Moreover, this acted as a means

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<sup>352</sup> Asli Cirakman, *From the Terror of the World to the Sick Man of Europe: European Images of the Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth* (Bern: Peter Lang Publishing Inc, 2002), 114.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid. 167.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid. 167-8.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid. 169.

<sup>356</sup> The British discourse did also involve idealisations of the Armenian bourgeoisie and how they represented the potential for civil society in an otherwise despotic one. For example, Toynbee uses an arguably significant metaphor of Ottoman society as a body and the Armenian's place in that body thus: 'It has been said, and cannot be emphasised too strongly, that the race was industrious, prosperous, devoted to the works of peace. It included a large proportion of highly educated men

whereby the Armenians could be more readily associated by the target audience with British idealisations of the shires, particularly of England. Such imagery featured heavily in British recruitment propaganda in this early period of war and this chimes with the way the war was justified in this period as a civilised defence of small nations against barbaric savagery in Belgium and Serbia. The idyllic fields of Belgium in particular were explicitly compared to those of England in spite of the actual reality of the geographies involved. Furthermore, the contention made in the above chapter on German 'frightfulness' regarding the orientalisation of the Hun in Europe can be deployed here. Instead of the 'terrible Turk' despoiling the rural idyll with his 'tread' it is the 'horrible Hun' doing likewise.

For example, at the end of the war Lord Robert Cecil was made chancellor of Birmingham University and in his address to mark the occasion he summed up what the war had meant for civilisation. The Somme battlefield was 'a devastated country' with pretty villas, delightful gardens and village streets replaced by 'endless shell holes and earthen boulders covered with wild flowers and coarse grass.' This 'abomination of desolation' was the result of 'the demon of Prussian militarism.'<sup>357</sup> Therefore, the British discourse on the Armenian genocide may be placed into a wider context of 'Total War' in the First World War and developments therein regarding the mass killing of civilians and the rationales given for that. There are distinct elements of singularity. However, it is also part of a wider picture where biomedical language invoking a rural idyll was readily used in more than one setting.

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and not a few educated women, who had been taught in the schools and universities of Europe, or in the excellent colleges of the American missions; and it supplied Turkey with that class of thinkers and contrivers, teachers, traders and artificers, which gives a country its brain.' Toynbee, *Armenian Massacres*, 1915, 26.

<sup>357</sup> "World Peace," *The Times*, November 13, 1918, 6.



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Such material, therefore, adds greatly to the significance of the way in which the reporting of the massacres makes much of the destruction of villages and their rural idyllic peasant life. It also places the argument that the alleged conscious tactic of such actions in the British representations, were part of a planned and systematic process of extermination into a wider British cultural context.

In an article of August 2, 1915, *The Manchester Guardian* places the Armenian's initial victory at the city of Van into a wider context of a Turkish plan of

<sup>358</sup> <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/women-britain-say-go> 15/4/20  
<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/27751> 15/4/20

extermination. It does so by giving as evidence for this of what could be called a facilitating stage, the murder of Armenian soldiers in the Turkish army. The piece then immediately and therefore, significantly goes into some detail concerning the destruction of villages. The piece is headlined, 'The Armenians,' demonstrating perhaps how it is village life that in part defines them. It describes how Christian villages '[at the slightest pretext]' were put to 'fire and sword.'

Pelon, the largest village of the Kavash district, was reduced to a heap of ruins. Twelve villages in the Gargar district, on the Persian frontier, Bashkals, and Sarai, with the Nestorian and Armenian villages around, were ruthlessly wiped out after the Russian retreat, and of their population only a few old crippled women were left as survivors.<sup>359</sup>

This article could be said to be demonstrating how important to the British mind the Ottoman attack on Armenian villages was. So 'at the slightest pretext' it is the villages, which are immediately targeted and 'ruthlessly wiped out' showing too how the perpetrators themselves in the minds of the British were alert to the importance to their plan of such acts. An article in the *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* later the same month after initially mentioning 'towns and villages' then goes on to concentrate on the fate of villages; 'All the accounts said that a hundred villages had been destroyed and the inhabitants massacred.' An Armenian journalist reported 'unheard of atrocities,' where 'the inhabitants of several villages had been almost entirely wiped out, a large number plundered and burnt,' despite many escaping with 'slight loss' or entirely.<sup>360</sup>

This would evidence the argument of Chapter 4 that the British discourse of representation was developing a criterion-backed understanding of what was happening. A criteria, which foretold more modern conceptualisations of genocide

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<sup>359</sup> "A Brilliant Armenian Exploit," *The Manchester Guardian*, August 2, 1915, 4.

<sup>360</sup> "Turkish Atrocities on Armenians," *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, August 25, 1915, 4.

and ethnic cleansing and how an ethnic group can be taken to pieces and partially or completely destroyed. Some detail is devoted to describing the destruction of the villages, which suggests an awareness of their importance to the long-term survival of the Armenians as an ethnic and cultural entity. There is some evidence that the Turks themselves were conscious of this. Fuat Dündar has commented that the CUP had a toponymical strategy for the construction of an ethnically homogeneous geography and history. He argues that the most important aspect of that was a systematic name change for Armenian villages. This took place during the few weeks after the May 27, Deportation law of 1915 was enacted and according to Kerem Oktem this was an important act for changing a multicultural geography in order to construct an ethnocratic state.<sup>361</sup>

Indeed, when massacres re-occurred in 1919 the Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland recalled the massacres and deportations of 1915. It focused immediately on the rural and agricultural aspects of the Armenians as a people and ‘the burning of their crops, the laying waste of their lands, the putting of villagers to rapine and death, and the carrying out of a policy of extinction.’<sup>362</sup> Thus, the orientalist image of the despoiling Turk is integrated into a more modern image of one ethnic group systematically exterminating another. As a further example and referenced above the Armenophile Harold Buxton<sup>363</sup> being interviewed as head of the Lord Mayor’s Fund in August 1916 can be quoted to demonstrate the importance of the villages after the genocide has for now apparently ended. The piece, headlined ‘People Drifting Back To Ruined Homes,’ clearly demonstrates how the recovery of the Armenian people revolves around the re-establishment of the rural idyll, thus emphasising the importance of its destruction in a wider plan of systematic extermination. ‘Asiatic terrorism’ rather

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<sup>361</sup> FUAT DÜNDAR, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskan Politikası (1913-1918) [The settlement policies of the Committee of Union and Progress]* (Istanbul: 2001), 65, quoted by KEREM ÖKTEM, ‘Incorporating the Time and Space of the Ethnic “Other”: Nationalism and Space in Southeast Turkey in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,’ *Nations and Nationalism* 10, 4. (2004) 559-578, here 568.

<sup>362</sup> “Armenian Massacres: Baptist First Union and Rule of the Turks,” *The Manchester Guardian*, November 20, 1919, 16.

<sup>363</sup> The brother of the prominent Armenophile and Liberal M.P. Noel Buxton.

than 'legitimate war' has led to 'blackened streets, the long avenues of burnt timber, the absolute wreckage of entire districts.' However, recovery is described as ever more likely with, 'little shops timidly reopened, the farms once more bravely occupied.' It will come Buxton asserted from this 'cheerful, courageous, hardworking' people whose 'spirit is entirely unbroken.'<sup>364</sup> The 'spirit' of the people seems here to be clearly linked to the little shops and farms, which had been destroyed by 'Asiatic terrorism.' Of significance here is the contrast to the German discourse of the Armenians as merchants, middle-men and financiers<sup>365</sup> with the description of little shops in small villages surrounded by farms in the 'natural beauty of the Switzerland of the Near East.' The choice of this small country does admittedly complicate the argument of the rural idyll and its firmly British aspects. Perhaps it is a reference to innocent neutrality.

The conceptualisation of the defining aspect of the Armenian people to be their peasant status seems to have been concretised by early 1916. An article of January 15, 1916 was circulated amongst a number of provincial papers and described the ongoing massacres leading to 'the manliest' of the Armenians, who had lived 'a quiet life in their remote valleys' being destroyed.'<sup>366</sup> Of note here is an indication that being the 'most secluded part of the Armenian nation' the Armenian peasantry may not actually be the most numerically significant part of it. This adds to the importance of the fact that there is such an emphasis in the reporting on the peasant villages. 'The final destruction of unfortunate Armenian peasantry' denotes perhaps an understanding of a last phase or planned stage in a process of extermination.<sup>367</sup> Furthermore, a comprehension that the 'manliest...part of the Armenian nation' represents the soul of this ethnic group and the key aspect of its

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<sup>364</sup> "Armenia's Immediate Need," *The Manchester Guardian*, August 21, 1916, 6.

<sup>365</sup> See Stefan Ihrig in a section entitled 'The "Jews of the Orient,"' *Justifying Genocide*, 74-81.

<sup>366</sup> "Armenian Victims," *Portsmouth Evening News*, January 15, 1916, 8.

<sup>367</sup> In reality the peasantry made up 70-80% of Armenian society in the Ottoman Empire. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide*, 9. For more on the Armenian peasantry and its relationship with Kurdish tribes see for example, *Ibid.* 39-44. Also, Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert and Nowhere Else*, 12-24.

identity. Headlines on the same day included, 'Turks Campaign To Exterminate Peasantry',<sup>368</sup> 'Fate Of Armenian Peasantry',<sup>369</sup> '1,500 Armenian Peasants Massacred And Drowned',<sup>370</sup> 'Massacre Complete. Final Destruction Of Armenian Peasantry',<sup>371</sup> 'Destruction Of Peasant Refugees'<sup>372</sup> and 'The Final Tragedy. Armenian Peasantry Almost Wiped Out.'<sup>373</sup> Such exclamations suggest that it is the final destruction of the Armenian peasantry, which truly denotes their extermination as an ethnic group. *The Manchester Guardian* reporting on efforts to help Armenian orphans seems to state this explicitly whilst demonstrating clear awareness of other ways of defining the Armenian people. Instead of commerce the Armenia of the peasant villages is carefully specified as the 'soul' of the nation. Its 'true nature...is not the Armenia of commerce, but the Armenia of bare hillsides and rich, fertile valleys, of a simple, hospitable peasantry, of a tough and noble fibre.'<sup>374</sup> Not only is the singularity of the massacres and deportations during the First World War highlighted but also the singularity of this particular peasantry and race. As mentioned above the British discourse on the Armenian genocide was part of a wider First World War conversation regarding the mass killing of civilians. However, such examples of singularity referenced here do add weight to the argument that observers (including German ones –see introduction) did recognise something quantitatively and qualitatively different was taking place in Anatolia and other parts of the Ottoman Empire. This was articulated in various ways, one of which was by invoking a rural idyll inhabited by an idolised Armenian peasantry that was being despoiled by 'the terrible Turk'.

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<sup>368</sup> "Turks Campaign to Exterminate Peasantry," *Birmingham Mail*, January 15, 1916, 4.

<sup>369</sup> "Fate of Armenian Peasantry," *Dundee Courier*, January 15, 3.

<sup>370</sup> "1,500 Armenian Peasants Massacred and Drowned," *The Devon and Exeter Gazette*, January 15, 4.

<sup>371</sup> "Massacre Complete: Final Destruction of Armenian Peasantry," *Leeds Mercury*, January 15, 1916.

<sup>372</sup> "Armenian Massacres: Destruction of Peasant Refugees," *Liverpool Daily Post*, January 15, 1916, 4.

<sup>373</sup> "The Final Tragedy: Armenian Peasants Almost Wiped Out," *Sheffield Independent*, January 15, 1916, 1.

<sup>374</sup> "The Armenian Orphans' Fund," *The Manchester Guardian*, March 24, 1917, 4.

One argument might be that this is not a true trope or motif in that these newspaper reports are merely recounting what was happening in Anatolia and are not a conscious and deliberate articulation of an idealised representation. However, the aforementioned contrast with German representations of the Armenians and the number of times the 'most secluded and manliest' part of the Armenian nation is mentioned in reports and headlines suggests that there is a real trope present. Indeed, I would argue that the way 'the Turk' is demonised as an antithesis to a peasantry living in a rural idyll demonstrates that this is in fact the case.

### **Conclusion**

The trope of the rural idyll was firmly placed within existing British colonial discourse, and it was quickly adapted to take account of changed circumstances regarding the Armenian peasantry of Anatolia. It also involved the orientalist theme of the despoiling Turk. The significance of the Armenian peasant village and the perceived consequence of its destruction is another aspect of new more modern accounts of systematic extermination, which foretell modern definitions of genocide and ethnic cleansing. It is also inextricably intertwined with bio-medical language and the rationales behind the treatment of geographies and the populations that inhabited them. The rural idyll functioned as a rationale and justification of colonialism and one answer to growing fears of urban decay and its impact on the 'British Self.' In order to mobilise the British population during 'Total War' both the Turks and Germans were condemned as despoilers of the idyll and this was strongly tied to the rights of small nations such as Armenia. The war was also seen as an opportunity to deal with the urban nightmare in Britain and therefore it is no surprise that rural nostalgia as to its geography and identity was mobilised. This tied in perfectly with a desire to change previous negative views of the Armenians very quickly. This made them a positive and functional part of this.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Biomedical Language and Scientific Rationales in British Representations of the Armenian Genocide.**

##### **Introduction**

In February 1920 the *Portsmouth Evening News* commented on the issue of the post war settlement regarding the Ottoman Empire in the following manner and by quoting from *The Times*; ‘The only way to deal with the Turkish ulcer in Europe is to remove the last vestiges that remain.’ It warned that if ‘the operation’ was not completed now ‘it will have to be undertaken within a limited period, or we may have to face another serious war.’<sup>375</sup> Another gap in the scholarship that this research fills is not only the utilisation of the trope of the rural idyll but also the use of biomedical language and scientific rationales. The above quote is a good example of such discourse, and it demonstrates how traditional Orientalism was becoming more modern in this period. Thus, the Other is referred to as a disease and the solution to the problems it presents is described in terms of a medical intervention. The fact that this language reflected that of the perpetrators adds to the argument that this was part of a process of projection.

The above chapter on the rural idyll and the idealised Armenian peasant community began to demonstrate how British representations of the Armenian genocide can be firmly placed within a wider context of developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century concerning science. This chapter will firstly explain some of those developments in relation to colonialism. It will demonstrate, more specifically, the way the language of colonialism and attitudes towards land and peoples used biomedical and scientific models and rationales. For example, how a given geographical area and the communities who lived there were often described as a large human body as was its medical health. Therefore, how threats to the nation’s

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<sup>375</sup> *Portsmouth Evening News*, February 27, 1920.

well-being were framed in terms of disease. Further, how its better health could be ensured with actions that were described in terms of medical intervention. The chapter will then give some examples of how the CUP used such language in its approach to the Armenians and the demographic condition of the Ottoman Empire both before and during the genocide of 1915-23. The chapter will focus on how the language of condemnation in the British representations of the genocide also reflected biomedical language and scientific rationales. This work will be divided into sections which reference: dirt, disease and decay; cancer; scientific models; society and territory as a human body. These tropes were central to representations of the perpetrators but also featured an imagining of their mind-set.<sup>376</sup>

### **Biomedical and Scientific Language in Modern Governmental and Colonial Discourse.**

Laura Franey in her analysis of ‘Sovereign Medicine’ quotes David Livingstone’s last words, inscribed on his tomb in Westminster Abbey; ‘May Heaven’s rich blessing come down on every one, American, Englishman, Turk, who will help to heal this open sore of the world.’ Although this relates explicitly to the Muslim slave trade, Franey argues that it also represents an organic as in a biomedical view of societies and the medicalisation of Empire. She also quotes the imperialist explorer William Winwood Reade. His racialised gendered language of inscription saw Africa as a diseased woman ‘whose breasts stream milk and honey, mingled with poison and

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<sup>376</sup> Biomedical and scientific language in describing a political, religious or cultural threat does of course have a pre-modern history. For example, ‘The Jesuits (established by a Papal decree of 1540) had a clear mission to extirpate Protestantism, which their founder called “an epidemic of the soul”. They would first remove the causes of the “infection” by displacing Protestants, and those Catholics who would not co-operate, from positions of influence, and then restore “health” by promoting the vitality of Catholic life and doctrine’. Peter H. Wilson, *Europe’s Tragedy: A History of the Thirty Years War* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 28. John Milton ‘In his *Of Reformation* (1641) ...employed a corporeal metaphor, describing episcopacy as the “Huge and Monstrous Wen little less than the Head (Monarchy) itself”. Radical surgery was required to support the “floating carcass of a crazy and diseased Monarchy”’. Edward Vallance, *A Radical History of Britain: Visionaries, rebels and revolutionaries-the men and women who fought for freedom* (London: Little, Brown, 2009), 144.

with blood' and in whose 'horrible womb heave strange and monstrous embryos.'<sup>377</sup> David Spurr (citing John and Jean Comaroff) argues that:

The image of Africa as an "afflicted continent" shaped a European sense of social and bodily health and a European iconography of healing. With the formation of the colonial state, regularity agencies of public health "disciplined" and "redistributed" communities "in the name of sanitation and the control of disease" ...Just as with medicine, technological development was a "hallmark of the racial pride," disease was part of Africa's and Asia's backwardness. <sup>378</sup>

This takes us back to Semelin's aforementioned political surgery and how this was related to colonialism and can also be reinforced with some of the scholarship on homogenisation policies, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

As previously cited Alexander D. Barder quotes the historian Jürgen Osterhammel to stress the way in which land and territory were conceptualised in biomedical terms. These terms were intrinsically tied to a politics of 'race,' a toxic language of hierarchy and 'natural' difference which foreshadowed the language of genocide. The imagined geography of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became imbued with rationales of 'socio-biological differences.' These images Jürgen Osterhammel writes, were 'of bodies and physicality: people spoke of threats to "the national body" from enemies and pests.' Bardar adds that 'the fusion of biological division with the popularity of social Darwinism resulted in a situation in which according to Osterhammel 'conceptions of race war and the inevitable subjugation of the weakest were part of the picture.'<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> Laura E. Franey, *Victorian Travel Writing and Imperial Violence: British Writing on Africa, 1855-1902* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 42. William Winwood Reade, *Savage Africa: Being the Narrative of a Tour in Equatorial, South Western and North Western Africa* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1864), 383.

<sup>378</sup> David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 29. John & Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992), 215-6.

<sup>379</sup> Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*, 856. Bardar, "Race War and the Global Imperial Order," 386-7.

Alf Ludtke and Joanna de Groot have noted these trends specifically amongst elites and governments. Further, how such developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century went on to profoundly influence incidences of genocide and ethnic cleansing in the 20<sup>th</sup> including the Armenian genocide. Ludtke argues that in the late nineteenth century; ‘Biopolitics and the furthering of demographic reproduction become imperative...among socio-cultural and socio-political elites in central and western Europe and in North America.’<sup>380</sup> De Groot’s work emphasises the bio-political language of purification in a global sense throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century asserting that; ‘Discourses of homogeneity and purity with associated medical/coercive notions of “cleansing” shaped the politics of national emancipation or renewal.’ She argues that this was present in Israel, central Europe and India. She adds that was also present ‘in the politics of “national” defence and control in Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, or Anatolia under Young Turk rule.’<sup>381</sup>

To develop this further one of the most important analyses of genocide regarding modernity can also be usefully referenced in this historical context, that of Zygmunt Baumann. In his *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989) Baumann argues that a hugely significant change took place in the modern era concerning the way the state addressed issues of social threats. Bauman’s central point is that governments changed from gamekeepers whereby they responded to natural and unstoppable societal developments, limiting and promoting the effects as they saw fit, to gardeners. The fundamental change here was from a reactive stance to a proactive one. Baumann is worth quoting at length here:

Here, nothing could be taken for granted any more. Nothing should grow unless planted, and whatever would have grown on its own must have been the wrong thing, and hence a dangerous thing, jeopardising or confounding the overall plan. The gamekeeper-like complacency would be a luxury one could ill afford. What was needed instead was the posture, and skills, of a

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<sup>380</sup> Alf Ludtke, “Explaining Forced Migration,” in *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World*, ed. Richard Bessel & Claudia B. Haake (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 26.

<sup>381</sup> Joanna De Groot, “Comparing Forced Removals,” in *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World*, ed. Richard Bessel & Claudia B. Haake (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 432.

gardener; one armed with a detailed design of the lawn, of the borders and of the furrow dividing the lawn from the borders; with a vision of harmonious colours and of the difference between pleasing harmony and revolting cacophony; with determination to treat as weeds every self-invited plant which interferes with his plan and his vision of order and harmony; and with machines and poisons adequate to the task of exterminating the weeds and altogether preserve the divisions as required and defined by the overall design.<sup>382</sup>

Baumann's sinister gardening metaphor is relevant for my work in this chapter which is concerned with the biomedical language of race and nature which informed British representations of people and places. Moreover, this period saw the emergence of criteria for what an ethnic group was and how it could be taken to pieces and partially or completely destroyed. The views of contemporary commentators which stressed those criteria, showed an awareness that they thought the Ottoman government were consciously and deliberately modifying the ethnic composition of given areas and this extends Bauman's lawn metaphor. The biomedical language of representations of Armenia demonstrates that those concerned thought that the Ottomans saw the Armenians as 'self-invited' weeds. Indeed, that the deliberate settling of the Muhacir Moslem refugees from the Balkans was part of a plan to 'altogether preserve the divisions as required and defined by the overall design.'

This modern governmental, social and colonial discourse is important for the argument of this thesis. It is surely significant that a similar discourse was used by the Ottoman imperial authorities as they sought to deal with their imperial problems and the apparent threat of minorities in the Empire to its health. Furthermore, it is doubly significant for this thesis in that the British condemnation of the CUP's solutions to these perceived threats also contain within it the same (not just similar) biomedical language and scientific models and rationales.

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<sup>382</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 57.

Therefore, using the argument that Orientalism and the ‘othering’ of the ‘terrible Turk’ can perhaps be seen as an act of projection it also suggests a significance in terms of what these representations tell us about the ‘British Self.’ The next section will proceed to give a brief overview of this discourse in the Ottoman Empire.

### **Biomedical and Scientific Language in the Ottoman Discourse.**

Major CUP figures explicitly used bio-medical and scientific language, models and rationales in the discourse leading up to the Armenian genocide and in post-genocide justifications. For example, a Special Organisation leader Kuscubasi Esref insisted that; ‘The non-Turkish elements are an internal tumour, the purging of which is a matter of national importance.’<sup>383</sup> The party’s leading ideologue, Ziya Gokalp explicitly mobilised the language of horticulture in his insistence on national purity; ‘The people is like a garden, we are supposed to be its gardeners! First the bad shoots are to be cut and then the scion is to be grafted.’<sup>384</sup> Indeed, it could be said the CUP’s language from its inception indicated a pseudo-scientific discourse and criticised the Sultanate of Abdul Hamid II in the same vein, as Hans-Lukas Kieser has pointed out; ‘They frequently used medical and biological metaphors to argue “scientifically” what they consider wrong with their enemy.’<sup>385</sup>

Kieser goes on to argue that this attitude continued with regard to the Armenians who the CUP had initially worked with when they took power in 1908. He suggests that just before the First World War the CUP ‘had formed a highly destructive view of the Anatolian Christians as “a mortal worry,” as a race and a

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<sup>383</sup>Quoted in Bayar, C. *Ben de Yazdim*, Vol. 5. Istanbul, 1966. 1578. Also, Akcam, *A Shameful Act*, 91.

<sup>384</sup> From his poem *Kızılma*. Quoted in Graham C. Kinloch, & Raj P. Mohan, *Genocide: Approaches, Case Studies and Responses* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005), 50.

<sup>385</sup> Hans Lukas Kieser, “From “Patriotism” to Mass Murder: Dr Mehmid Resid (1873-1919),” in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Muge Gocek & Norman M. Naimark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 128.

privileged class to be combated; as a “tumor” requiring an operation.<sup>386</sup> As a case study Kieser examines the exterminationist governor (*vali*) of Mossul and then Diyarbakir during the genocide—a medical doctor, Mehmid Resid. In adopting a well-worn trope of perpetrators of genocide and ethnic cleansing that the Armenians should be eliminated before they could do likewise to the Turks, Resid stated; ‘The Armenian bandits were a load of harmful microbes that had afflicted the body of the fatherland. Was it not the duty of the doctor to kill the microbes?’<sup>387</sup> Of interest here is not only the conceptualisation of a geographical and national area as body and an ethnic group living there as a disease but also the nation state governing that area as a surgeon, dispenser of antibiotics and a medical barrier or prophylactic. This is amply attested to in the memoirs of the CUP’s secretary general between 1916 and 1918, Mithat Sukru Bleda. As these are exculpating memoirs this attests to the depth and strength of these beliefs; ‘He (Resid) diagnosed the mental illness of the minorities.’ After arguing that this illness helped the desire of England, Russia and France to ‘partition Turkey’ he notes Resid’s ‘last possible cure. This was to ‘destroy the illness and the ill, or to see the entire Turkish people and its country perish at the hands of the maniacs.’<sup>388</sup> Here the discourse involved includes in a process of observation, diagnosis and prescription. The issue of mental illness (and maniacs) is seen as a scientifically explained disease, resolutely confirmed with a statement that Resid ‘was a scientist’ rather than perhaps, an ill-informed person motivated by unreasoned prejudice.

One of the leading scholar’s of the Armenian genocide Taner Akcam also places the ‘CUP Population and Resettlement Policy’ as he titles it within this bio-medical and scientific discursive context. He identifies ‘two main pillars of the government’s “population and resettlement” policy.’ Firstly, a ‘“cleansing” of Anatolia of its non-Muslim (which basically meant Christian) population, seen as a mortal threat to the continued existence of the state and even described as a “cancer” in the body of the empire.’ Secondly, ‘the assimilation (read Turkification)

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<sup>386</sup> Ibid. 133.

<sup>387</sup> Quoted Ibid. 137.

<sup>388</sup> Mithat Sukru Bleda, *Imparatorlugun cokusu* (Istanbul: Remzi, 1979), 61-2. Quoted in Ibid. 147.

of Anatolia's non-Turkish Muslim communities.<sup>389</sup> Furthermore, he places the CUP firmly in a context of post-Enlightenment modernity and attests strongly to the view highlighted above of the state as doctor. Citing the; 'Faith in science' in which a 'modernist philosophy' featured strongly he argues that they felt they had a 'historical mission...entrusted to them by...science.' He concludes that; 'Just as physicians cured their patients by means of medicine, the Unionists would cure society's ills through the proper application of science.'<sup>390</sup> It is the case that Britain and indeed the entire 'west' also subscribed to this 'force outside their own society' as the first section of this chapter demonstrates. Therefore, in the context of socio-biological racism that underpinned the colonial project it is no surprise that the language of condemnation shares significant common traits with the language of the perpetrators.

### **Bio-medical and Scientific Language in British Representations of the Armenian Genocide.**

#### **Dirt, Disease and Decay.**

My focus here is on the wider historical context in which the bio-medical and scientific discourse on the Armenian genocide can be placed. Significant in this regard is the language of dirt and waste and the relationship of such language to the trope of the rural idyll. This section will discuss the biomedical and scientific language in relation to dirt, waste and decay being seen as a medical threat to the healthy body. This can be placed in the context of the corresponding trope of the rural idyll discussed in Chapter 2. British newspapers sometimes punctuated headlines on the subject with the word 'ravaged'<sup>391</sup> and used a number of terms to

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<sup>389</sup> Taner Akcam, "The Young Turks and the Plans for the Ethnic Homogenisation of Anatolia," in *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian and Ottoman Borderlands* ed. Omer Bartov & Eric D. Weitz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 260-1.

<sup>390</sup> Akcam, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity*, 337.

<sup>391</sup> "Appalling Details of the Armenia Massacres," *The Birmingham Daily Post*, October 7, 1915, 5 for example, 'Whole Country Ravaged.'

describe the Turks as despoilers of the rural idyll. The British colonial administrator Lord Cromer speaking in the House of Lords suggested that Armenia was being turned into 'a sort of Turkish shambles.'<sup>392</sup> Other examples, recall references to ruin and desolation (according to the Welsh newspaper the *Western Mail* Armenia was 'a desolated country with smoking heaps of slain'<sup>393</sup>). Other newspapers also presented orientalist constructs rooted in the language of sanitation and waste such as the *Sheffield Independent's* description of Constantinople as a 'cesspool of intrigue.'<sup>394</sup> There was also, *The Observer's* similar designation of the city as a 'cesspool of insanitation as well as a sink of corruption.'<sup>395</sup> Moreover, according to the *Gloucestershire Echo* the Turkish government itself was a 'poisonous system.'<sup>396</sup> The *Leeds Mercury* used the term 'Vampire Turks' in one of its headlines though whether the theme of blood in this context can be related to biomedical language is open to question.<sup>397</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee working as a special correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian* wrote a piece entitled, 'In Turkish Tracks' with the subheadings 'Dirt And Decay,' 'Weeds and Ruins' and 'a dreary waste.' This continued to demonstrate perfectly the theme of the Turks representing dirt and decay in contrast to the Christian Armenians' agricultural bounty; 'The town, dilapidated, unsightly, and squalid, like every other town that has been under Turkish rule, is now doubly forlorn and neglected. The malodorous, deserted streets are littered with refuse and garbage.' He described Turks standing around with sewage stagnating and the town also 'doomed to fall into complete ruin and decay.' He accounts for the disappearance of its prosperity as a result of the absence of its Christian population.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> "House of Lords: Our Parliamentary Correspondent," *The Manchester Guardian*, October 7, 1915, 9.

<sup>393</sup> "Armenia," *Western Mail*, October 7, 1915, 4.

<sup>394</sup> "Premier Would Tolerate the Wicked Turk," *Sheffield Independent*, February 27, 1920, 1.

<sup>395</sup> "Political Notes," *The Observer*, March 7, 1920, 13.

<sup>396</sup> *Gloucestershire Echo*, September 16, 1922, 4. On the burning of Smyrna.

<sup>397</sup> "The Assassination of a Nation: Deeds of Vampire Turks in Armenia," *Leeds Mercury*, December 15, 1916, 2.

<sup>398</sup> "In Turkish Tracks," *The Manchester Guardian*. October 28, 1922, 9.

Toynbee's language fits the orientalist construction of the East as despotic and decaying. However, its particular tropes are more striking when it is seen alongside the biomedical language of many pieces, which have at their heart the idea of a rural idyll being blighted by disease. Not only does this reflect the language of colonial rationales as argued above, it reflects that of rationales seen in the language of perpetrators involved in the Armenian genocide. Discourses of disease produced the discourses of diagnosis and explanation regarding germs, microbes and cancers.

### **Cancer**

When news of a re-occurrence of massacres reached Britain in the winter of 1916 before the publication of the Blue Book the *Birmingham Daily Post* used the headline 'Recrudescence Of Armenian Atrocities.'<sup>399</sup> The term 'recrudescence' does have a more traditional meaning from Latin from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards which means become raw again. Thus, suggesting how something regressed to come back as a kind of haunting. However, its use increased markedly in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it became part of more modern medical vocabulary denoting the return of illness after a period of stabilisation and remission.<sup>400</sup> Such a development is most often associated with cancer and an equation of this type of disease with 'the Turk' and the Ottoman Empire becomes firmly established as a trope towards the end of the war and the immediate post war period.

David Lloyd George, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer in November 1914, declared before the Armenian massacres and deportations had taken place that; 'The Turk is a human cancer, a creeping agony of the flesh...the tread of his bloodstained sandals scorches and withers life and fertility out of whole territories.'

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<sup>399</sup> "Recrudescence of Armenian Atrocities," *The Birmingham Daily Post*, November 24, 1916, 4.

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[https://www.google.com/search?q=recrudescence+meaning&rlz=1C1EODB\\_enGB515GB515&oq=RECRUDESCENCE&ags=chrome.1.016.1813j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=recrudescence+meaning&rlz=1C1EODB_enGB515GB515&oq=RECRUDESCENCE&ags=chrome.1.016.1813j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

This quote was used in an appeal to newspaper readers on February 23, 1920, (for example in *The Manchester Guardian*) to send a form to their Member of Parliament calling for them to do what they could to prevent Turkey from keeping control of the Dardanelles. An accompanying map had an arrow pointing to 'The Lair of the Turk.'<sup>401</sup> The use of a pre-genocide piece of discourse demonstrates how the events had made this trope more significant. The popular ghost story writer E. F. Benson repeats this cancer metonym in 1918 after the major massacres and deportations in his polemical non-fiction book, *Crescent and Iron Cross*. 'For Turkey is not a sick man: Turkey is a sickness. He is not sick...for he is the cancer itself, the devouring tumour that...has fed on living tissue, absorbing it and killing it.'<sup>402</sup> Moreover; 'While there was left in the emaciated carcase of the Turkish Empire enough live tissue for the cancerous Government to grow fat on, it gave not one thought to the welfare of all those races on whom it had fastened itself.'<sup>403</sup>

The above-mentioned appeal of February 1920 was placed in the immediate historical context of the negotiations, which eventually led to the Treaty of Sevres. There were concerns that 'the Turk' would be left in control of Constantinople and the highly strategic Dardanelles Straits. Indeed, the issue of communications and the veins and arteries they represented in the biomedical conceptualisation of societies and geographical territories as bodies (see below) is related to the likening of 'the Turk' to disease and cancer. The appeal clearly resonated with some. A letter printed in *The Manchester Guardian* a day after its placement from a John Clifford, West Ealing, London commented on the Sevres negotiations thus. Stating that placing the Sultan in power again would endanger the peace of the Near East and the world, he goes on; 'It would be an act of consummate folly. The toil and sacrifice of the war would be lost. The "cancer" would be left in the long suffering-body.'<sup>404</sup> Moreover, on the same day the *Western Morning News* for the same reason stated; '...It was taken for granted that this "human cancer" would be cut

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<sup>401</sup> "A Menace to the Peace of the World," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 23, 1920, 4.

<sup>402</sup> Benson, *Crescent and Iron Cross*, 3.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid. 14-15.

<sup>404</sup> "The Future of Constantinople," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 24, 1920, 10.

out of Europe. As long as it remains we shall never be free from its menace.<sup>405</sup> Thus, the classic Orientalism of the language of the 'unspeakable Turk' is reiterated through the modern biomedical and 'scientific' language of the period. The language of illness and despoliation is countered to the remedying language of science.

### **Scientific Models**

The massacres and deportations were often referred to in British representations of the Armenian genocide in scientific terms. For example, whilst addressing the British Armenian community in September 1918 Lloyd George suggested that; 'In spite of persecution and disaster, and of ruthless and scientific repression, Armenia still claims justice from the world, and disdains to crave for mercy from her oppressors.'<sup>406</sup> In the post war period British newspapers had used such headlines as 'Scientific Massacre By Huns: Slaughter Of Thousands Of Children' (under 'Organised Armenian Slaughter' and above a subheading Fifty Per cent. Gone.)<sup>407</sup> and 'Scientific Massacres.'<sup>408</sup> This seems to have originated in a report widely circulated in the British press that day from the *Petit Parisien*, which was quoted in *The Manchester Guardian* thus; 'According to the "Petit Parisien's" correspondent, 50 per cent of the total Arminian population have been slaughtered, the massacre having being scientifically organised by Germany.'<sup>409</sup> The context of the story was the beginning of trials concerning the massacres held by the post-war Ottoman authorities themselves. The extent to which the massacres were represented through scientific discourse is also perhaps attested to by the

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<sup>405</sup> "Shall the Turks Go?" *The Western Morning News*, February 24, 1920, 4.

<sup>406</sup> "Lloyd George's Reply to the British Armenian Community," *The Manchester Guardian*, September 12, 1918, 8.

<sup>407</sup> "Organised Armenian Slaughter," *The Globe*, January 3, 1919, 10.

<sup>408</sup> *Western Daily Press*, January 3, 1919, 5.

minutes from a company meeting in 1922 that was reported in *The Manchester Guardian*:

British Sulphate Of Ammonia Federation, Limited.

Sulphuric Acid Still Too Dear.

Well, I was under the impression that for the past seven years or so spent oxide producers and sulphate of ammonia makers had rather been playing Armenian to the acid makers Turk.<sup>410</sup>

The fact that a businessman could seemingly, perhaps with little thought, quickly recall events from three to seven years ago and use them as a metaphor to reinforce an argument that was completely irrelevant to the matter in hand is important for an understanding of the centrality of the Armenian genocide in Britain during this period. The scientific aspects of the representations could be said, in one case at least, to have permeated the world of industry and science as well as the political arena. In terms of this latter field Toynbee continued to be a leading thinker and writer firstly as a newspaper correspondent and secondly as the author of an important work of history and political and social science concerned with the Near East.

Toynbee working as *The Manchester Guardian's* special correspondent in the region during 1921 commented on the practicalities of a population exchange in Anatolia. Significantly he adopted a scientific and biomedical model in condemning the idea. Though here writing about Greeks and Turks, Toynbee was still concerned with new massacres of Armenians in this period. The scientific categorisation he was increasingly using are relevant to this thesis (see the explicit link between atrocities involving Greeks and Turks and those involving Armenians in his 1922 book, *The Western Question* quoted below). Stating that Greeks and Turks were not only different nationalities but also different social classes the population

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<sup>409</sup> "Final Turkish Efforts Against Armenians," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 3, 1919, 5.

<sup>410</sup> "Company Meeting: British Sulphate of Ammonia Meeting," *The Manchester Guardian*, November 21, 1922, 13.

exchange 'would also be a vast surgical operation inflicted on two nationalities or classes under such unfavourable conditions that it might kill rather than cure.'<sup>411</sup>

Toynbee continued in this vein throughout 1921-2. For example, when commentating on the; 'The Fatal Greek landing' in July 1921 he talked of the Supreme Council which 'deliberately inoculated the mixed population of Western Anatolia with the germ of racial warfare which had hitherto been confined, on the whole, to the north-eastern provinces and to Turkey in Europe.'<sup>412</sup> Thus, a writer who had a great deal of influence on the wider British discourse on the Armenian genocide which in turn took on a biomedical aspect then finishes the genocidal era using scientific models to give a concluding explanation.

In his 1922 book *The Western Question* he compared the 1915 genocide with Greek atrocities in April 1921. A modern scientific term, 'metamorphosis,' is used to describe a regression in civilisation and human behaviour speaking to a view of how these events had fundamentally challenged an optimistic Enlightenment informed and Whig interpretation of history that stressed a general progression in human development. A particular disease is named, rabies, (albeit one with an ancient literary past demonstrating the interaction between the emergent and the residual) to support this scientific diagnosis of events. That the disease could be communicated by 'a few individuals' to a 'mass' echoes contemporary conceptualisations of society and territory as a corporeal, which is the subject of the next section of this chapter. Here we see how a diagnosis of exterminatory behaviour has been firmly established and is being applied to, in this case, a previous historical event from the 18<sup>th</sup> century as well as a very recent one. Further, it has a 'stimuli' and an 'antidote,' though Toynbee doubts its efficacy at

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<sup>411</sup> "The Greek Retreat and After: Problem of Anatolia, Two Possible Solutions," *The Manchester Guardian*, May 13, 1921, 14.

<sup>412</sup> "The Fatal Greek Landing," *The Manchester Guardian*, July 23, 1921, 6.

this particular moment in time. One of these scientific models and rationales was the way that societies and territories were talked of in terms of human bodies.<sup>413</sup>

### **Society and Territory as a Corporeal**

Another aspect of what can be described as a biomedical scientific discourse in representations of the genocide regarding the massacres and deportations is the way the Ottoman Empire and the Armenian people are often described as part of a large body, a corporeal. E. F. Benson's observation that the Turkish Empire was an 'emaciated carcass' with 'live tissue' for the 'cancerous Government' to feed on has been quoted above. See also below his comments on the 'impaired digestion' of the empire. Metaphorical and analogous language it may well be but its frequent appearance alongside biomedical language is significant. More so when contrasted with the corresponding image of the rural idyll, which can be kept pure and protected from weeds and disease. Thus, a Dr Alphonse Mingana writing in *The Manchester Guardian* described a CUP plan for making Constantinople the 'centre of a nervous system' to protect 'pure and holy mountains' from the 'unclean flags' of the Russians, French and British who are 'born of impure parentage.' He further suggests that we cannot be sure that the 'seed sown by them will not grow and bear fruits.' Interestingly he also asserts that this is a secular plan and that; 'The comparison drawn between the Christian massacres and St. Bartholomew's Day is absurd; no religious fanaticism has ever circulated in the blood of Enver and Talaat.'<sup>414</sup> This would attest to a more modern and scientific discourse. Alphonse Mingana was an ethnic Assyrian theologian, Orientalist, Syriacist, historian and a former priest who lived in Manchester working at the John Rylands Library, cataloguing its collection of Arabic manuscripts.<sup>415</sup> It is interesting therefore that he

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<sup>413</sup> Toynbee, *The Western Question*, 265-6.

<sup>414</sup> "The Aims of Turkey," *The Manchester Guardian*, June 16, 1917, 5.

<sup>415</sup> The papers of Alphonse Mingana and the details regarding his career are at the University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Special Collections.

<https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/data/gb150-da66> Accessed January 28, 2022.

apparently identifies the CUP's agenda as modern and scientific, thus anticipating the modern research of for example, Taner Akcam quoted above.

Toynbee demonstrated how the Armenians were often incorporated into a corporeal trope and described as a potential 'brain' in a larger social 'body.'<sup>416</sup> A Principal Graham speaking at a Manchester public meeting quoted a Dr Rendel Harris who had described the Armenians as the 'brain of Asia' and 'that brain was being destroyed by the savage cruelty of the Turk and German.'<sup>417</sup> This idea of the Armenians as the brains of the Ottoman Empire is part of an orientalist trope of the Ottoman Empire as a despotic state lacking civil society with the Armenians as the solution to this. There is also a wider historical context for such a discourse. That of increasingly 'scientific' justifications for colonialism and the expropriation of territory from indigenous peoples. For example, Anne McClintock has suggested that one of the developments in 19<sup>th</sup> century racism was the use of the models of a family and a male child to justify hierarchical theories in this regard. This allowed the mapping, measuring and ranking of 'inferior' groups against a 'universal standard' of the 'white male child.' This was 'within the organic embrace of the family metaphor and the Enlightenment regime of "rational" measurement as an optics of truth.' It amounted to 'a three-dimensional map of social difference' and thus allowed the measurement of 'minute shadings of racial, class and gender hierarchy.' This used 'the measurable space of the human body.'<sup>418</sup>

Therefore, the use of descriptions conceptualising whole territories, societies and religious and ethnic groups as whole and independent human bodies is of great significance to the argument of this thesis. It demonstrates how British representations of the Armenian genocide as it was happening can be placed into the centre of the context of modern, scientific discourse on government, empire

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<sup>416</sup> His 1915 *Armenian Atrocities* pamphlet described the Moslem conqueror's administration as 'malignant,' 18, the Armenians as the part of Ottoman society which gave it its 'brain,' 26, and the choice of destination for deportees as 'scientifically' made, 57.

<sup>417</sup> "The Turk in Armenia," *The Manchester Guardian*, November 5, 1917, 6.

<sup>418</sup> McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 50-1.

and race. This perhaps can be seen most of all in the ability of those condemning the genocide being completely capable of placing themselves into the heads of the perpetrators and imagining their mind-set and the scientific and genocidal rationales involved.

### **Imagining the Perpetrators Mind-set**

Much British representation of the Armenian genocide also saw the denunciatory voices imagining and articulating the mind-set, motives and rationales of the perpetrators. Indeed, it seemed to quite readily and knowingly adopt the racist concepts involved. More research needs to be undertaken to ascertain the extent of contemporary British awareness of CUP ideology regarding homogenisation of the Ottoman Empire but it is probable that this was scanty at best. However, there is one explicit reference at least from Bryce and Toynbee that is significant in Barder's work:

Bryce and Toynbee likewise write: "Nor do the authorities make any secret of the fact that that their main object is the extermination of the whole Armenian race"; quoting one Vali [governor]: "We are determined to get rid, once and for all, of this cancer in our country."<sup>419</sup>

These racist concepts have at their heart biomedical scientific language that also informs the denunciation of them given by British commentators. Thus, E. F. Benson talks of the 'Turk' as 'he' and 'his plan' and describes how in Asia Minor; 'There were excrescences there which he could not absorb, but which might be destroyed. He could use the knife on living tissues which the impaired digestion of the Ottoman Empire could not assimilate.'<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Quoted in Barder, "Race War and the Global Imperial Order," 390.

<sup>420</sup> Benson, *Crescent and Iron Cross*, 22-3.

Joseph Hocking's 1917 novel *The Path of Glory* is as is suggested earlier in this thesis an excellent example of how widespread the discourse on these events had quickly become. It is also an example of how apparently the denunciation of these events could demonstrate prescient understanding of the perpetrators' motives. One aspect of this understanding is the way in which Hocking used the perpetrator voice to describe a joint Ottoman-German plan to explicitly use the Syrian Desert to exterminate the Armenians after they have been deported there. The conversations concerned involved a joke at the Armenians expense, which revolved around the contemporary view that the Armenians could make a desert bloom. In other words, the British idealisation of the Armenian peasant is put into the mouths of Turkish and German perpetrators. The German voice used is the historical figure mentioned in the chapter above on German 'frightfulness', Paul Rohrbach:

Have we not been told,' went on Dr. Rohrbach, 'that the enterprise, the power to make a desert bloom and blossom as the rose, lies with the Armenians? Have they not boasted of it? Very well. Are there not vast tracts of land down besides the Euphrates, which are declared to be rich, and which yet yield nothing, because they are uncultivated? Is not the whole land of Mesopotamia sterile through want of willing workers? Yet the river Euphrates runs through it.<sup>421</sup>

Later in the novel a 'Young Turk' discussed; 'Your Dr Rorhbach's scheme' with the German ambassador thus:

'Do not fear,' said the Turk. 'We, the Turkish Government, will give guarantees that all their property, which cannot, of course, be taken with them, shall be taken care of by our Government until they return. You see,' added the Turk, with a leer, 'we are only sending them away for a little while, just long enough for the anger of the people to die down. When the trouble is over, they will again return, and enter into their own. Meanwhile they will make the desert bloom and blossom as the rose.'

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<sup>421</sup> Hocking, *The Path of Glory*, 104.

The German laughed. 'It is one of the best jokes since the days of Herod,' he said.<sup>422</sup>

The joke is continued later. ... 'As for Der-el-Zor, it is a perfect garden. Thus, we are sending these people, who have acted as traitors, to an earthly paradise.'<sup>423</sup>The British idealisation of the Armenian peasantry in a rural idyll is here invoked to denounce the Turks and Germans whilst indicating an understanding of the rationales involved in its negative application and in an exterminatory policy. The same rationales that have been shown above to have been operation in the rhetoric of the British Empire.

Hocking's fictional representation has echoes in the non-fictional work of the period. Benson in *Crescent and Iron Cross*, for example details his imagined picture of the CUP thought process; 'But above all, there must be thoroughness; not a man must be left alive, not a girl nor a woman who must not drag her outraged body, so long as breath and the heart-beat remained in it.' The 'joke' mentioned above is again repeated here. This again shows the coherence of many of the representations this thesis analyses. The Armenians would be transported 'agricultural colonies' which, in fact were a place where, 'for miles round, stretched the rocks and sands of a waterless wilderness.' The punch line concludes that, 'no doubt the women and children of this very industrious race would manage to make it wave with cornfields.'<sup>424</sup> Again, the updated wartime Orientalism is evidenced as well as the prism of German 'frightfulness' (Talaat Bey is said to have alluded to 'whimsical Prussian humour' in his description of 'agricultural colonies'). Further, the discourse of the rural peasant idyll and the criterion-backed understandings of systematic extermination. Such examples evidence the way despite the fact that scholarly research can readily categorise different elements of British representations of the Armenian genocide during the First World War and its

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<sup>422</sup> Ibid. 153-4.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid. 227.

<sup>424</sup> Benson, *Crescent and Iron Cross*, 89.

immediate post-war period there is in fact an integral coherence involved in their deployment.

Though we have returned to the trope of the rural idyll (demonstrating the strong relationship between it and the scientific, biomedical language) the Armenians are also associated with parasites and pests by the Turks in Hocking's story in much the same way as the British talked of them and the Kurds. For example:

'Cruelty! My lord! But if my lord has lived in Constantinople all his life, he does not know what these Armenians are. Cunning as the devil, they fought us at every turn; voracious as tigers, they have battened on our riches; blood-thirsty as leeches, they have been sucking our life blood; now we are making them disgorge. As for the cruelty,' and Achma shrugged his soldiers and smiled.

I see my lord understands. And what would you? The annihilation of two million people means much; these vermin are scattered everywhere, and like vermin they breed.<sup>425</sup>

Disease is also used to demonstrate the Ottoman motives. 'At length the day arrived when, as the fanatical Moslems said to each other, Erzerum was to be freed from the plague of Armenians.'<sup>426</sup> An 'old Sheikh' continues in this vein making explicit the concept of purity:

The command of Allah has been that we must not spare men, women, or children of the accursed Armenians, and we, because we have been merciful, have spared some of them, and Allah has been angry with us. Now the time has come to turn away His wrath. We still desire to be merciful, but the breath of the faithful must no longer be poisoned by breathing the same air as the infidel. Already many parts of the country have been purified of

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<sup>425</sup> Hocking, *Path of Glory*, 183-4.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.* 249.

their presence. They have been sent to a region where they can live amongst their own people.<sup>427</sup>

At the end of the novel the hero, Victor returns to England having rescued a beautiful Armenian woman who will become his bride from the evil and licentious clutches of the Governor of Van, Dvedjet Bey. They travel by train through the rural idyll of the English countryside:

England! He heard his mother-tongue, he saw English houses, English people; he felt the English life. How strong, how reliable everything seemed! The prosperity, too, seemed wonderful. After the squalor, the tawdriness, the shabbiness of the Turkish Empire, England seemed like a mighty mountain, verdure-clad to the topmost summit, compared with a dust-heap made up of filth and foul garbage. Oh, yes, England was glorious...

'It's all so wonderful!' cried Adana as the train swept through the smiling, sunlit country. It is like a great beautiful garden. There is no dirt, no squalor, no poverty, no danger. England can never be invaded.'

'No,' replied Victor proudly, 'England can never be invaded!'<sup>428</sup>

Here therefore, is a perfect example of how the British imagination associated the Ottoman Turks with dirt, disease and decay, which threatened lands and their otherwise rural purity. Moreover, that purity is a means to strength and that like a garden it needs protecting from weeds. This is exactly the rationale described in the novel on the part of the Ottomans and is also indicative of genocidal discourse before, during and after the Armenian genocide.<sup>429</sup> This was also the language of empire and colonisation. Hocking and his non-fiction contemporaries could readily imagine the rationale of the perpetrators using language that they would understand and indeed used.

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<sup>427</sup> Ibid. 250.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid. 303.

<sup>429</sup> Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 2007), 3, 5, 23-7, 29-33, 605-6.

Other writers can be demonstrated to perfectly imagine the Ottoman mind-set or indeed show prescient knowledge and understanding of it without it being clear whether they could have direct evidence from CUP and Ottoman sources. The American diplomat and historian Lewis Einstein writing in the British journal *The Contemporary Review* for example insisted; 'The few would settle in the desert hemmed in by Arab peoples' and they 'would no longer be a menace to the purity of the Turkish Empire...'<sup>430</sup> Lloyd George speaking in 1922 replicates this ventriloquism, this time by commenting on present Ottoman atrocities in the long-term context of the Hamidian massacres. He called it a policy of 'deportation or extermination' also applied by Abdul Hamed and now directed against Greeks as well. The Turkish rationale is signposted by the question; 'What does the Turk say?' Lloyd George's answer is; 'As long as these people are here Europe will interfere...and therefore the best thing is to get rid of these people, to get a homogeneous population.'<sup>431</sup>

## **Conclusion**

What is the significance of these tropes to the analysis of British representations of the Armenian genocide? Returning to the theme of possible projection on to 'the Turk' of British colonial rationales within a discursive framework involving nations and societies as bodies Reina Lewis has pointed out just such an attitude in the British opinion of the Tanzimat reforms in the Ottoman Empire. The British discourse on this at the end of the nineteenth century was one where Istanbul came to be presented as 'an almost miscegenated city whose lack of homogeneity was read as a sign of the "sick man's" weakness. This was due to 'ethnic and racial mixing.'<sup>432</sup> This chapter has shown that the development of scientific and corporeal

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<sup>430</sup> Lewis Einstein, "The Armenian Massacres," *The Contemporary Review* CXI, (April 1917).

<sup>431</sup> "Premier on the Far East War," *The Manchester Guardian*, August 5, 1922, 10.

<sup>432</sup> Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism; Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 70-1.

tropes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries continued during the First World War. Unlike though, the way this took place in the nineteenth century as described by Lewis above as a means of criticising the Ottomans for *not* homogenising their population now such tropes were used to condemn Ottoman policies *for* the purpose of homogenisation. They were embedded in British representations of the massacres and deportations of the Armenians. They are linked to the discourse described in the previous chapter with a line which can be drawn from images of a rural idyll. In this chapter, that line can be traced to a trope of dirt, disease and the decay that threatened it. This has been shown above to become more scientific with its accompaniment of a particular type of disease more associated with modern diagnosis, cancer. Alongside that, was a frequent use of scientific models and descriptions of society and territory as a human body. These discursive aspects can also be seen in British representations that do seem to all but perfectly imagine the mind-set of the perpetrators. At the same time these representations condemned them. This contradiction between the mobilisation of scientific language in the cause of condemning a genocide that was dependant on such structures of understanding adds to the argument that this was indeed part of a process of projection.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Representations of the Armenian Massacres and Deportations as a Process of Systematic Extermination.**

#### **Introduction**

On September 22, 1915, *The Manchester Guardian* reported on the massacres and deportations of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire in the following manner:

The men of military age have been killed. The younger women have been seized for Turkish harems, compelled to become Mohammedans, and kept-sometimes with their children, also forcibly converted-in virtual slavery. The rest of the inhabitants, old men, women, and children, have been torn from their homes and driven away under convoys of Turkish soldiers, some into unhealthy parts of Asia Minor, some into the deserts between Syria and the Euphrates. Many die or are murdered on the way; all perish sooner or later. Lest any should, if they escaped, try to regain their homes, Moslems have been brought in from other places to occupy the houses and farms from which the Christians have been expelled.<sup>433</sup>

In this article a pattern had been established for a whole area, 'Eastern and Northern Asia Minor and Armenia' (detailed elsewhere in the article) and a definite population identified. Three distinct and what could be said to be facilitating stages are delineated concerning three definite parts of that population. Military aged men, young women and children 'suitable' for harems and forced conversion. Finally old men, women and children marked for death by starvation, extreme conditions and disease. To complete the process of the homogenisation of a given geographical area another group of people are settled in their place to ensure the long-term success of the policy. Here is an example of a contemporary representation of a process which uses a criterion of 'success' that informs an understanding of how a policy of extermination could be successful in the long run.

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<sup>433</sup> "The Armenian Horrors," *The Manchester Guardian*, September 22, 1915, 4.

This chapter will analyse how the idea of systematic extermination began to structure British representations of the mass killing of civilians. This discourse developed during the First World War in the changing ways in which the massacres and deportations of the Armenians were reported. The representations still contained within them many features of previous types associated with the massacres in the Ottoman Empire from the 1870s to the outbreak of the First World War. As noted previously Gary Bass has described this as ‘atrocitarian’ and it was highly orientalist in character. The argument of this thesis is that it very often took the shape of a polemical list. This was a technique, which Bruno Cabanes has described as a ‘literature of denunciation’<sup>434</sup> often associated with the nineteenth century Gladstonian ‘atrocitarians’.

The argument of this chapter is that contemporary British representations of the Armenian genocide become decidedly more modern. Traditional ‘atrocitarian’ listing remained but it was supplemented by descriptions that show an awareness of criteria regarding how to take an ethnic group apart and destroy it partially or completely. Further, an awareness of how geographical areas can be fundamentally changed in their ethnic composition by moving people in and out and how this was completed in a series of facilitating stages. ‘Atrocitarian’ and polemical listing now needs to be defined more thoroughly with detailed examples to demonstrate the emergent nature of more modern representations.

As explained earlier it is the argument of this thesis that this ‘atrocitarian’ style concentrated on the more ghastly details of individual acts of physical violence and often dwelt on sexual offences. It listed these acts, sometimes for pages and often in a highly stylised and exaggerated manner. This manner could be seen as one of fascination with intimate details of horrific violence. The intention was to denounce the perpetrators in a polemical fashion and to prove by repetition that they could not be possibly excused for their behaviour and that they were

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<sup>434</sup> Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism*, 303

irredeemably barbaric. The word polemical is used in that the listing technique piles awful fact on top of awful fact in a manner, which amounts to, for example, a bitter, venomous and virulent style.

One of the most important landmarks of the ‘atrocitarian’ polemical listing style was that surrounding the Ottoman suppression of the uprising in April 1876 of Bulgarian nationalist revolutionaries. Ottoman irregulars known as bashibazouks participated in this suppression and in May ‘sacked’ a number of villages around Plovdiv. Five thousand Bulgarians (‘and possibly many more’), mostly women and children were massacred in the town of Batak.<sup>435</sup> The leading newspaper involved in the sensational reporting of these events was one of the new ‘penny papers’, the *Daily News*. These had proliferated to form a mass market after the 1855 abolition of the Fiscal Stamp that had kept the price of papers too high for a huge paying audience. Gary Bass suggests that the liberal *Daily News* was ‘cheap enough to attract a wide audience but reputable enough to be taken seriously at the highest levels, and hungry enough to go to the expense of fielding foreign correspondents.’<sup>436</sup>

Edwin Pears ‘lit the spark’ in a ‘huge exclusive’ in the *Daily News* from Constantinople claiming a death toll of at least eighteen thousand.<sup>437</sup> However, the key piece which truly mobilized a huge ‘atrocitarian’ movement headed by ex-Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone was written by the Irish-American journalist Januarius Aloysius MacGahan. Printed in the *Daily News* on August 7, 1876, MacGahan wrote an article describing his visit to Batak which was ‘to turn the stomach.’<sup>438</sup> Bass describes and recounts details from the article in a manner that reinforces the argument of this thesis concerning the existence before the First World War of a technique of ‘atrocitarian’ polemical listing. Thus, he asserts that,

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<sup>435</sup> Bass, *Freedom’s Battle*, 256.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.* 256.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.* 257.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.* 235.

'MacGahan hammered home the gruesome scene in a way that drives even a reader today...to the brink of collapse.'<sup>439</sup>This hammering home involved the listing of such details as the 'sickening odour', heaps of skulls and other bones, rotting flesh and hair, dogs eating corpses, beheaded women and girls, scattered female clothing, wailing survivors, burned bodies, evidence of rape, heaps of bodies with 'little curly heads in that festering mass,' 'little feet not as long as your finger on which the flesh was dried hard' and 'little baby hands stretched out as if for help.'<sup>440</sup>This article was a major inspiration for ex-Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone in his hugely significant pamphlet *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* published in the September of 1876. Bass again attests to the polemical listing style by describing it as 'wild, unhinged stuff: repetitive and histrionic, a heady mix of over-the-top moralizing, bitter sarcasms against British policy, perfervid appeals to public opinion, and raw anti-Turkish bigotry.' The idea that this thesis argues of an established, consciously constructed trope is echoed by Bass's assertion that the author 'went after Disraeli as if the prime minister was a tree that Gladstone was bringing down ax blow by ax blow.'<sup>441</sup>

Turning to the First World War and the continued presence of this style, important examples from September 25, 1915, when these representations were at their height in terms of their reproduction in the British press, will be used. Their analysis will theorise this trope more fully and demonstrate the continuity involved. In the words of the *Birmingham Daily Gazette*; 'The press association has received from a trustworthy source further details of the terrible massacres in Armenia that have been organised by the Turkish Government. The information is based on the reports of eye-witnesses and many of the victims themselves.'<sup>442</sup> It will be evident that some features of these articles (which are apparently largely verbatim transcripts of the press association's original piece and identical, with some subtractions and additions) do include the more modern representations

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<sup>439</sup> Ibid. 258.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid. 258-9.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid. 270.

<sup>442</sup> "Massacre of Armenians," *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, September 25, 1915, 8.

mentioned in the first paragraph of this section. This adds to the argument that the changes in representation described in this thesis involved a considerable degree of continuity.

*The Manchester Guardian* introduced the article by describing its origin as ‘from a trustworthy source’ without naming the Press Association. It cited the contribution of eyewitnesses and victims and then described ‘systematic’ deportation (and exiling ‘towards the south’), disarmament of village and town populations (described as a ‘beginning’) and ‘murders’ and ‘horrible tortures’ by ‘Gendarmes’ and ‘even criminals specially liberated from the prisons.’<sup>443</sup> The words ‘even’ and ‘specially’ attest to the beginning of a representational process of piling awful fact on awful fact in a bitter, venomous and virulent style. A ‘next step’ is described as the imprisonment ‘en masse’ of Armenians ‘on the excuse’ of finding books or weapons in their houses or ‘mere mention’ (another awful fact) of ‘one of the political parties’ (presumably one of the organisations such as the Hnchaks and Dashnaks). Another awful fact was the addition to these groups of those that, ‘Failing such excuses’, were imprisoned due to ‘mere possession of wealth or good social standing’ as, ‘a sufficient pretext.’ Then ‘the massacres took place. Not a single man escaped death.’<sup>444</sup> *The Birmingham Daily Gazette* adds to this virulent emphasis on ‘not a single man’ by describing ‘an official search’ and confiscation for and of money and valuables before being ‘tied up separately or in groups of five or ten.’<sup>445</sup>

*The Manchester Guardian* then turns emotionally as it were to emphasise again the cruelty involved in, ‘The Fate of Women and Children.’ Under this sub-heading, groups described as a ‘remainder of the population—old folk, women and children’ in the ‘province of Kharput’ are described as being ‘fair game’ and ‘put at

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<sup>443</sup> “Destroying a Nation: The Armenian Massacres,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 25, 1915, 6.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>445</sup> “Massacre of Armenians,” *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, September 25, 1915, 8.

the disposal of the Mussulman population.’ The prurient interest perhaps in the sexual and gendered aspects of these eyewitness accounts is evidenced by the following. The population from ‘the highest functionary’ to the ‘simplest peasant’ choosing women and girls that ‘pleased him best’ for wives that they converted ‘by force to Islamism.’<sup>446</sup> Thus, the awful fact of a society wide mass rape based on images of the victims being attractive and young (sometimes very young) women (rather than all women) is strongly suggested behind the descriptive tool of mass conversion. As such this is an excellent example of the role of contemporary Orientalism in these British representations of the Armenian genocide. In the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* this is described under the sub-heading, ‘Sacrifice of Women’ that adds to a picture of the Orientalism involved in terms of its religious imagery and the way these observers associated Islam as a binary opposite to Christianity.<sup>447</sup>

This ‘atrocitarian’ and polemical listing then turns even more emotionally perhaps to ‘little children.’ After as many ‘were taken as were wanted’ by Turkish families, presumably in the eyes of the correspondent for menial and hard labour, the ‘remainder were put on the roads famished and without food, to fall the victims of starvation, if not the cruelty of robber bands.’<sup>448</sup> Thus, this list of awful facts has ascended from the more abstract and hard to imagine deportation of Armenian society en masse to individual men, then women and on to a summit of graphically heart rending and easily imaginable solitary and small orphans dying alone on roads. Agonisingly slowly from starvation or quickly by violence inflicted by barbaric and terrifying criminal gangs.

After stating that similar atrocities and massacres took place in Diarbeker and Merdin the article proceeds to detail how in ‘the provinces of Erzerum, Bitlis, Sivas, and Diarbekir’ Armenians (‘a few families’) were tricked into putting their

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<sup>446</sup> “Destroying a Nation,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 25, 1915, 6.

<sup>447</sup> “Massacre of Armenians,” *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, September 25, 1915, 8.

<sup>448</sup> “Destroying a Nation,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 25, 1915, 6.

valuables and belongings into wagons during the deportation process. After several days on the road the wagon drivers deserted the victims who were then plundered by 'robber bands of Mussulman peasants, who looted them of all their possessions.' After the polemical list describes the killing of the few remaining men and male youths it proceeds to detail again the fate of women, girls and young children in these 'caravans' who were 'carried off.' The paragraph is completed with the final awful fact of how the remaining old women were 'driven along by the gendarmes under the lash of the whip' before they 'died of hunger by the roadside.' One can say here that a variety of diabolical acts are being arrayed in virulent and vehement style and this continues with the revelation that, 'An eye-witness recounts that the women deported from the province of Erzeroum were left for several days at the Kharput Plain, where all of them died of hunger at the rate of fifty or sixty a day.' The crime is emphasised further by the comment that some men were sent by the authorities to bury the bodies but that in the writer's view this was only to protect the health of the 'Mussulman population.'<sup>449</sup>

The gendered theme of child abduction and implied sexual violence and exploitation is then returned to again under the emotional sub-heading, 'Children Torn From Mothers.'<sup>450</sup> In the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* the fact is made more or equally as awful by personalising the representation further with the sub-heading, 'Little Girl's Story', inviting further empathetic emotion from the reader.<sup>451</sup> The 'little girl' (note the constant use of emotional adjectives to prove by repetition that the perpetrators could not be possibly excused for their behaviour and that they were irredeemably barbaric) in question recounts how both boys and girls were 'torn' from the 'arms' of their mothers. This again emphasises the horror of the awful fact by creating a vividly imaginable scene in the reader's mind's eye. These children were shut up in rooms and the caravan forced to proceed without them before 'word was sent round to the neighbouring villages that anyone could help himself

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<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

<sup>451</sup> "Massacre of Armenians," *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, September 25, 1915, 8.

to what he liked.<sup>452</sup> The detail of 'himself' adds to the implied rapacious and exploitative orientalist theme inviting the reader to imagine hellish slave markets and the like. This is reinforced by the immediate observation and repetition that, 'Women and children were exposed before the Governor's office in each village or town that they arrived at, so that the Mussulmans might make their choice.' This section is concluded with the final awful fact of condemnation that, 'The caravan that started from Papert was lessened in numbers in this way, and the women and children who remained were finally thrown into the Euphrates before Erzinga...'<sup>453</sup>

To demonstrate just how awful these 'barbarities' are the piece then recounts how two German Red Cross nurses handed in their resignations after trying personally to alert several embassies in Constantinople to 'these atrocious doings.'<sup>454</sup> We have seen that one technique of these representations was to detail German influence and complicity as well as showing that some Germans were appalled. There then follow passages which add to the representational theme of emotional adjectives by totalising the 'barbarities.' Thus, they have been 'committed everywhere' and that travelers 'on all the roads in these provinces' meet 'nothing but Armenian corpses.' In Malatia, 'All the males' were massacred whilst the women and children 'were all converted to Islamism.' Under the sub-heading, 'Armenian Soldiers Massacred' it is stated that these men have 'undergone the same fate' after, 'All of them...have been disarmed.' This is tellingly emphasised by the phrase 'by the way' as if the awful facts could not get any more awful. After saying that these men were put to constructing roads the piece then details how that those working on 'the Erzeroum-Yerzhingha road have all been massacred.'<sup>455</sup> Whilst *The Manchester Guardian* states that this was also the fate of soldiers on the 'Diarbekir-Urfa and Diarbekir-Kharput road' the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* states that this event occurred 'equally with those of other provinces.' This paper adds to the emotive power of the awful fact by designating in the sub-

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<sup>452</sup> "Destroying a Nation," *The Manchester Guardian*, September 25, 1915, 6.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

heading that it was in particular ‘Young Soldiers Massacred,’ and that of 1,600 of these men sent to build roads in Diarbekir, ‘All of them have been massacred.’<sup>456</sup>

The mounting variety of awful facts is added to with details of ‘dozens’ of hangings and then under the sub-heading of ‘Conversions’ the description of how Armenian women had to marry a Muslim as a condition of changing their faith. The religious element of Orientalism is then evidenced with the further information that, ‘Many Armenian women preferred to throw themselves into the Euphrates with their babes, or have committed suicide in their homes. The Euphrates and the Tigris have become the grave of thousands of Armenians.’<sup>457</sup> The totalising style continues with the sub-heading, ‘A Whole Population Massacred,’ that of Chiban-Kharahissar, this being done ‘ruthlessly’ after an initial artillery bombardment. This again adds to the dumbfounding array of atrocities being presented in one average length newspaper piece. The article emphatically concludes, ‘In short, from Sansum to Seghert and Diarbekir, there is at this moment not an Armenian living. Most have them been massacred; a portion have been converted to Islam. History has never recorded a hecatomb like this.’ The ‘atrocitarian’, polemical list analysed above culminates and seeks to show that as well as this being unprecedented in history, the Ottoman authorities wanted ‘to put an end once and for all to the Armenian question by the extermination of the whole Armenian population throughout the whole of Turkey.’<sup>458</sup> The variety of the awful facts, their remorseless listing and at times repetition, the use of emotional adjectives and totalising references in a virulent and vehement style lead the reader to agree wholeheartedly to an astounding conclusion that what would today be described as genocide has taken place.

The article is repeated virtually verbatim in several provincial newspapers but there are differences in the headlines and sub-headings used. These however,

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<sup>456</sup> “Massacre of Armenians,” *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, September 25, 1915, 8.

<sup>457</sup> “Destroying a Nation,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 25, 1915, 6.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*

demonstrate the existence and indeed prevalence of this ‘atrocitarian’ and polemical listing. Awful fact is piled on top of awful fact with the sub-headings standing out in the text and being a principal means of achieving this. The *Birmingham Daily Post* uses ‘The Infamy Of The Turk,’ ‘Appalling Massacres of Armenians,’ ‘Half A Million People Exiled,’ ‘Fiendish Treatment Of Women And Children,’ ‘How The Massacres Were Carried Out,’ ‘Women Whipped And Left To Die Of Hunger,’ ‘Women And Children Thrown Into A River’ and ‘Thousands Drowned.’<sup>459</sup> The *Daily Record and Mail* (Lanarkshire) chose the following; ‘Wiping Out An Entire Race,’ ‘Armenians Massacred In Thousands,’ ‘Children Left On Roads To Die,’ ‘Women Carried Into Captivity,’ ‘Every Man Killed,’ ‘Fallen Among Thieves,’ ‘Torn From Their Mothers,’ ‘Corpses On The Roads’ and ‘From Prison To Scaffold.’<sup>460</sup> The *Nottingham Evening Post*; ‘Worst Atrocities In History,’ ‘Terrible Massacre Of Armenians,’ ‘Roads Covered With Dead,’ ‘Children Starved To Death’ and ‘Women Thrown Into River.’<sup>461</sup>

Traditional and polemical descriptions of the moments of violence themselves during the massacres, which began in January 1915, involved the following. Graphic and visceral representations of blows to the head by blunt objects; the cutting and stabbing of the throat and torso with bladed weapons; the removal of viscera, bodily extremities and heads; assaults on hair and fingernails; the emasculation of men and the cutting of women’s breasts; the violation of orifices and the rape of females. *The Manchester Guardian’s* reporting of the publication of the Blue Book on December 14, 1916, is a good example of this and demonstrates the argument made by this thesis that this particular publication rather lent itself to the reproduction of ‘atrocitarian’ pieces of polemical listing. The article gives details of the following acts of atrocity; the burning alive of two bishops at Savit, the roasting to death of helpless women and children, infants being seized by the leg and thrown into a fire, mass drowning at Trebizond, butchers and tanners in Angora using their tools to murder and mutilate people,

<sup>459</sup> “The Infamy of the Turk,” *Birmingham Daily Post*, September 25, 1915, 12.

<sup>460</sup> “Wiping Out an Entire Race,” *Daily Record and Mail* (Lanarkshire), September 25, 1915, 6.

<sup>461</sup> “Worst Atrocities in History,” *Nottingham Evening Post*, September 25, 1915, 1.

eyebrows being plucked out, breasts cut off, finger and toenails torn off, the cutting off of feet and nails being hammered into feet in Harpout and Mezre.<sup>462</sup>

Representations such as these were often heavily gendered and sexualised and their continued and significant presence during 1915-23 demonstrates that continuity was an important aspect of representations concerning the Armenian genocide. This continuity can be demonstrated by looking briefly at some of the newspaper discourse from the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s.

The British press provides examples from the reporting of the massacres of Armenians, which took place after Armenian revolutionaries took hostages in the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople in early September 1896. For example, the *Cardiff Examiner and South Wales Weekly News* quoted a *Daily News* correspondent:

...I saw (Turkish Hamals) savage, barbarous, fanatic, bloodthirsty...bent on murder...armed with clubs and cudgels in order to fell him (a single Armenian) down with cruelty such as one would not kill a wild dog with...an Armenian priest was hacked into a shapeless mass with wooden sticks by a horde of these savages...FORTY-SIX ARMENIANS KILLED in one heap inside a coal depot...In the new house of the Oriental Railways...all Armenians were massacred with clubs, spades, and iron bars... On a bridge an Armenian was flung into the water. Turks threw stones at him each time he rose to the surface...

On the same page a quote from German news coverage described 'Armenians of rank who were driving in a carriage through Galata were surrounded by the mob, strangled, and cut to pieces. Hundreds of Armenian women, girls, and boys were outraged and afterwards killed.'<sup>463</sup> The *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* whilst criticising the 'reckless criminality' of the revolutionaries commented that 'there was no necessity whatever which could justify the turning loose of a Mohammedan rabble, numbering thousands of men, to dash out the brains of inoffensive

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<sup>462</sup> "Armenian Atrocities," *The Manchester Guardian*, December 14, 1916, 10.

<sup>463</sup> "Constantinople: The Attack on a Bank," *Cardiff Examiner and South Wales Weekly*, September 5, 1896, 5.

Armenians with their clubs or rip them up with their Circassian daggers.’<sup>464</sup> These reports all make reference to individuals and smaller groups within the larger group being attacked in a largely amorphous, disorganised series of related events. Where ‘all Armenians’ are mentioned, they are not described as an ethnic group being destroyed in an organised manner. Instead, it is a description of a crude list of implements of violence. Further, the perpetrators are not authorities but groups of individuals, ‘rabble’, and a ‘Mohammedan’ sectarian one rather than a governmental one at that. Where central organisation is involved, it only extends to encouragement and standing aside. This is significant but is quantitatively and qualitatively different from the nature of state violence and how it was described in the First World War.

However, in journals and periodicals such discourse continues for pages and pages and perhaps its arch practitioner was Emile Dillon. He was an Irish Linguist and reporter and a specialist in Oriental languages and comparative linguistics. In an article describing the escalation of violence against the Armenians throughout the early 1890s he writes in August 1895:

...at the present moment, within a stone’s throw of the foreign consuls and missionaries, loyal Armenians are hung up by the heels, the hair of their heads and beards plucked out one by one, their bodies branded with red hot irons and defiled in beastly ways that can neither be described nor hinted at in England, their wives dishonoured in their presence, and their daughters raped before their eyes.<sup>465</sup>

From detailing how individual Armenians and their families were attacked and violated in their homes Dillon proceeds in the same article to echo the British

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<sup>464</sup> “A Story of Reckless Criminality,” *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, September 5, 1896, 7.

<sup>465</sup> Emile J. Dillon, “The Condition of Armenia,” *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. 68 (August 1895), 153-189. Printed in Arman J. Kirakossian ed., *The Armenian Massacres 1894-1896: British Media Testimony* (Dearborn, Michigan: Armenian Research Center, University of Michigan-Dearborn, 2008), 232. Dillon had studied Armenian language and literature and was an author of several monographs on Armenian language and translations. He worked for the *Daily Telegraph* in the Ottoman Empire in 1895.

imperial discourse related to such events as the 'Black Hole of Calcutta.'<sup>466</sup> In this case he goes into fascinated, pornographic detail to describe his imaginings of the proceedings inside Turkish prisons when Armenian men were arrested during the violence of 1895. Here the intimate details of violence are framed in terms of Christian morality and all of the senses other than taste are deployed to revolt the reader:

Filth, stench, deformity, pain in forms and degrees inconceivable in Europe... In these noisome dungeons, cries of exquisite suffering and shouts of unnatural delight continually commingle; ribald songs are sung to the accompaniment of heart rending groans; meanwhile the breath is passing away from bodies which had long before been soulless, and are unwept save by the clammy walls whereon the vapour of unimagined agonies and foul disease condenses into big drops and runs down in driblets to the reeking ground.<sup>467</sup>

As I have argued this type of discourse was rife during the First World War both describing Turkish and German atrocities and it continued to inform the emerging trope around systematic extermination. Likewise, we can clearly see antecedents of the new discourse in the 1895-6 not least from the pen of Dillon who did talk in terms of a policy of extermination and a 'final solution of the Armenian problem.' For example, the 'first step in carrying out the Plan of Extermination was the systematic impoverishment of the people.'<sup>468</sup> Moreover, in the same journal, *The Contemporary Review*, the Reverend Malcolm MacColl described the systematic attack on Armenian education and Christian culture, which then allowed the more effective use of physical violence.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> In 1756 during a revolt on the part of the Nawab of Bengal against the British East India Company, 146 people were locked in a small cell in Calcutta. 123 suffocated or died of thirst overnight. This became a defining atrocity of the British Empire and a paradigm of evil that it used to justify its existence as a bastion of civilization against savagery. See for example, Jan Dalley, *The Black Hole: Money, Myth and Empire* (London: Penguin/Fig Tree, 2006).

<sup>467</sup> Dillon, "The Condition of Armenia," 255.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid. 235-236.

<sup>469</sup> Malcolm MacColl, "The Constantinople Massacre and its Lesson," *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. 68 (November 1895): 744-760. Printed in Kirakossian, *The Armenian Massacres 1894-1896*, 307-25.

To underscore the argument that an emergent discourse of systematic killings representations developed from a residual one of Turkish barbarity we can focus on the Blue Book. In these we can still see traditional gendered and sexualised orientalist tropes of the violence of the 'terrible Turk'. Toynbee in a section of the Blue Book penned by himself, 'Historical Summary. 1915: The Procedure,' seemingly justifies one of the major criticisms of this work as an impartial work of history by writing in a typically orientalist manner:

The passage of rivers, and especially of the Euphrates, was always an occasion of wholesale murder. Women and children were driven into the water, and were shot as they struggled, if they seemed likely to reach the further bank. The lust and covetousness of their tormentors had no limit. The last survivors often staggered into Aleppo naked; every shred of their clothing had been torn from them on the way. Witnesses who saw their arrival remark that there was not one pretty face to be seen among them, and there was assuredly none surviving that was truly old-except in so far as it had been aged by suffering. The only chance to survive was to be plain enough to escape their torturers' lust, and vigorous enough to bear the fatigues of the road.<sup>470</sup>

We shall see in the next section that both Bryce and Toynbee do evidence the development of a newer trope of violence concerning criterion-driven, succinct, and perceptive descriptions of staged facilitating acts of mass killing. However, the above quote is an excellent example of how that emerged out of a traditional orientalist discourse. The title of the section is significant and strongly suggests that Toynbee wrote this particular passage with the concept of a stage in a process in mind. Thus, Toynbee is describing a staged and planned act of deportation, a bureaucratically organised, modern method in terms of the mass killing of civilians. Within that stage of deportation, he turns to, despite its elements of spontaneity (reaching a major river) a seemingly planned act of 'wholesale murder'. Entangled within this representation of a process of a deliberate driving into the water to

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MacColl was a publicist and member of the pro-Armenian Grovesnor House association as well as a clergyman.

<sup>470</sup> Toynbee, *The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, 644.

drown, with the deliberate positioning of troops to mop up survivors by shooting, there is a classic orientalist reading. Therefore, the terms, 'lust and covetousness' seamlessly allude to the trope of the harem, as does the phrase, 'there was not one pretty face to be seen among them,' and also, 'The only chance to survive was to be plain enough to escape their torturers' lust...'

Another aspect of this deployment of a propagandistic imagination can be seen as Toynbee exploits the scenario of women being shot just as they neared the safety of the far bank of the river to the full. Thus, a tantalising sense of drama is added with the suggestion of near escape and survival teasing the reader in a sort of filmic extension of real time. This strongly suggests that the Blue Book was indeed a piece of dramatised Orientalism as well as a thoroughly researched and carefully corroborated collection of evidence for the purpose of serious enquiry. Toynbee's discourse is reliant upon orientalist assumptions regarding rape and the selection of women for harems based on sexual attraction. These Western orientalist fantasies frame an act of 'wholesale murder' where the perpetrators carefully made sure that there were no survivors. The issue of greed, harking back to the trope of corruption and despotism is mixed headily with gendered, sexual imagery. This is emphasised further by the image of nakedness, reinforced in turn by an invitation to the reader to imagine the tearing of clothes from bodies. The way this is classic Orientalism is exemplified again as Toynbee proceeds to demonstrate how Armenian women were stereotyped into beautiful and plain and how this decided their fate.

Toynbee wrote this after he was appointed to edit the collected testimony in June 1916, the Blue Book being published in the winter of that year. However, he had established this approach in his 1915 pamphlet, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation*. In a section headed with the phrase, The Road to Death he comments:

But the robbery of their goods was not the worst. These poor, worn out, perishing women were robbed obscenely of their honour, for any who had not brought a few shillings into the gendarmes' pockets by being sold to richer Moslems were abandoned to the gendarmes' own more brutal lust.<sup>471</sup>

Therefore, within a discourse, which identifies an act of expropriation before an act of deportation, traditional orientalist descriptions involving the sale into sexual slavery and the 'brutal lust' of the 'terrible Turk' are essential to the representation.

Toynbee's close associate Bryce in an essay entitled, 'Great Britain in the Present War' written in 1915 or 1916 and published in a 1918 collection was also enthralled by these gendered and racialised framings. Within a description of staged, facilitating, bureaucratically organised processes of mass killing, traditional orientalist descriptions again abound:

The snake has shed the old skin, but he is none the less venomous. This gang of ruffians slaughtered the men, enslaved some of the women by selling them in open market or seizing them for the harem, and drove the rest, with the children, out into deserts to perish from hunger.<sup>472</sup>

Here, the perpetrators are dehumanised into a snake, which acts as a telling metaphor with its skin-shedding properties to associate present Turkish violence to that of the past. The images of driving and the enslavement of spared women and children invokes references to despotism and the harem.

These tropes of despotism and imperiled females were mirrored in the wider press throughout the period 1915-16 demonstrating that the discourse was indeed a rhetorical device to mobilise British public opinion as well as putting pressure on American neutrality. Thus, *The Manchester Guardian*, used the sub-headlines, 'The Fate of the Women and Children, and, Sacrifice of Women'. The

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<sup>471</sup> Toynbee, *Armenian Atrocities*, 42.

<sup>472</sup> Bryce, *Essays and Addresses in War Time*, 27.

focus on women and children made them a symbol of Armenian suffering and the Armenian nation. We see this clearly in this *Manchester Guardian* article entitled 'Destroying A Nation: The Armenian Massacres:'

The remainder of the population-old folk, women, and children-were looked upon as fair game in the province of Kharput, and were put at the disposal of the Mussulman population. The highest functionary, like the simplest peasant, chose the woman or girl that pleased him best, and took her as his wife, converting her by force to Islamism.<sup>473</sup>

Here the paternalistic orientalist discourse is used explicitly to condemn Ottoman society in its entirety. Firstly, the 'Mussulman population' is depicted as economically exploiting 'the remainder of the population.' Then, the harem trope is used to condemn all Ottoman Muslim men by the selection of the 'highest functionary' and the 'simplest peasant.' Therefore, an entire spectrum of male Turkish society is constructed for the reader. Moreover, this spectrum is implicated in the systematic and wholesale sexual abuse of Armenian women.

This dates from the period of September 1915 when the first major comprehensive reports of the details of the massacres reached the west. It demonstrates how this orientalist concept was fundamental to the discourse from the start. However, it can be contrasted with other contemporaneous pieces to thus demonstrate how the process of evolution in orientalist discourse began. For example, according to the *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* in September 1915:

Women have been ruthlessly given over to Ottoman lust, old men and children have been slaughtered or left by the roadside to die, babes in arms have been torn from their mothers and sacrificed to the hideous blood-fever of the Turks.<sup>474</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> "Destroying a Nation: The Armenian Massacres," *The Manchester Guardian*, September 25, 1915, 6. strongly supporting Laycock's argument regarding the fate of Armenian women and children

<sup>474</sup> *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, September 27, 1915, 2.

Here the classic images of helpless innocence in the shape of women, old men, children, and particularly babes from mothers' arms are heavily exploited with 'Ottoman lust' and 'hideous blood fever.'

An example of how this became firmly established into 1916 and how it was also relatedly used for a US audience can be seen in the British writer Charles Masterman's piece, 'The Murder of Armenia' in the American magazine *The Living Age*:

At every village and town the prettiest girls were sold to the local Governors or rich Turks to do with them as they pleased, or for the brothels of Anatolia or Constantinople. At night their escorts or the neighbouring Kurds inflicted upon the remainder every element of bestiality or lust-under the sanction of the governors, that "they could do with them what they pleased."<sup>475</sup>

This perhaps emphasises how this discourse ebbed and flowed in terms of change and continuity. The talk of 'the prettiest girls', 'brothels' and 'bestiality and lust' is integrated with references to the 'sanction of the governors.' Furthermore, we could read this as another example of how writers using orientalist codes created spectrums of Ottoman Muslim society. In this case with 'local Governors or rich Turks' at the top and 'their escorts or the neighbouring Kurds' at the bottom.<sup>476</sup> Therefore, whilst establishing an argument that a new trope of representation concentrating on a process of systematic extermination developed it is important to recognise the very strong strands of continuity that this involved.

British representations of the Armenian genocide were to play a central role in the wartime condemnation of atrocity in this more traditional vein. Jo Laycock argues that differences of 'self' and 'other,' 'East' or 'West,' 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' were 'played out' in a forum provided by images of Armenia. Further, these representations 'demanded an exploration and an attempt at definition of

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<sup>475</sup> Charles Masterman, "The Murder of Armenia," *The Living Age*, February 5, 1916.

what it meant to be “civilized” and what it meant to be ‘European’.<sup>477</sup> Laycock demonstrates this by suggesting how the discourse on the violence meted out to the Armenian population was an orientalist act demonstrating the barbarism of the ‘other’ and the ‘East’ in contrast to the civilised European ‘West.’ However, this traditional orientalist discourse did have to adapt to the circumstances of the First World War whereby it was advantageous to also ‘orientalise’ the Germans. This took place within a wider context of the continued erosion of the boundaries between the civilian and military in ‘Total War.’ This was both simultaneously denounced and increasingly tolerated. Britain and her allies were engaging in acts of ‘Total War,’ which inflicted great suffering on civilian populations and were, therefore threatened by fears of being less than ‘civilised,’ ‘European’ and of the ‘West.’ The ‘self’ subsequently needed to be convinced that it was not becoming the ‘other,’ and not becoming ‘barbaric’ and ‘Eastern.’ This issue has been analysed extensively above in Chapter 1 on the prism of German ‘frightfulness.’ This chapter will demonstrate that despite marked aspects of continuity in the language of violent excesses British representations increasingly described a process of systematic extermination which spoke to changed discourse in terms of the Armenian genocide. As explained in Chapter 1 this representation of a process of systematic extermination might well have been subsumed by a more traditional narrative. This chapter will demonstrate that this was not the case.

Whether the emergence of this new trope was due to a new type of mass killing developing during the First World War in the Ottoman Empire or a new way of imagining what was taking place emerged, the discourse increasingly described a process of systematic mass killing. This is an important distinction, and I will argue that British representations of the deportations and massacres of the Armenians during the First World War involved the following. 1) A focus on central government decision making by the Ottoman authorities based on criteria and understandings of how the Armenians as an ethnic group and religious community could be destroyed. 2) The concept of ethnicity and what this involved in terms of

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<sup>477</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 37.

societal structure rather than just the groups' religious beliefs. 3) Ethnicity was discussed in a context of geographical space and how the nature of those spaces could be changed by artificially altering the proportions of the ethnic groups living there, although the modern word ethnic is not used.<sup>478</sup>

In conclusion, a strong case can be made that the 'atrocitarian', polemical listing of the nineteenth century was still a strong feature of the representations of mass killing during the First World War. It is important to analyse such representations in order to demonstrate the growing modernity that developed at this time regarding descriptions of the Armenian genocide. These representations and descriptions, this thesis argues demonstrate that British contemporaries (as well as elsewhere in the world) had a clear and growing understanding of what was happening to the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. Further, that it contained features which anticipate more recent definitions of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Both the traditional and more modern representations this thesis argues demonstrate both a crisis of representation and a clear understanding of what was taking place. This could be said to fit in with the 'maelstrom' of modernity described by Berman and cited in the introduction to this thesis. A survey of how this process of systematic extermination and its emergence has been dealt with in the scholarship involved is now necessary. This will highlight the significance of the representations analysed in this thesis and demonstrate how it sits within this scholarship.

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<sup>478</sup> Donald Bloxham has focused regarding this issue on the period of the two world wars thus; 'The years c.1914-45...provide a convenient temporal frame for the emergence of the tripartite battle of fascism, Communism, and liberal democracy as they each sought to address issues of industrialisation, political representation, social welfare and intensified international competition. The study of population removal, at least in two of its major guises, genocide and ethnic cleansing, has been no exception to this general rule.' Donald Bloxham, "The Great Unweaving: The Removal of Peoples in Europe, 1875-1949," in *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World*, ed. Richard Bessel & Claudia B Haake (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 167. Further, on the study of population removal he argues; 'After wars and for the victors: In the quest for a new stability, the disposition of minority populations was central, for, as should now be apparent, sizeable minorities were viewed as sources of instability, not just by ethno-nationalists but also by the great continental and world powers.' Ibid. 199.

### The Process of Systematic Extermination

Throughout the thesis I focus on primary sources demonstrating contemporary British representations of the Armenian genocide and very specific tropes and discourses. Particularly of representations describing a process of systematic extermination. There is a rich body of scholarship on violence and its representation in which the research of this thesis can be placed. Rebecca Gill argues that Arnold Toynbee developed a theory (aetiology) of atrocity in Anatolia. She contends that this was ‘a morphology of atrocity.’ In tune with the central argument of this thesis this involved ‘patterns in their organisation and execution.’ It was in his volume on the *Western Question* she adds that he analysed the ‘unwarranted excesses and potentialities of the modern state and the modern self.’<sup>479</sup> This speaks to the use of the concept of modernity outlined in the introduction of this thesis.

Similarly in terms of a theory motivating the particular discourses, Joceline Chabot, Richard Godin and Sylvia Kasperian’s study of the Canadian press and its representation of the genocide compared to German atrocities in Belgium suggests that the ‘superficial reporting of massacre after massacre might be hiding something deeper.’<sup>480</sup> They note that in the French Language Press there was a marked contrast between the descriptions of the Belgian atrocities and those committed in Anatolia. Using correspondence analysis they note the greater use regarding the latter of systematic methods and plans in the descriptions. This leads them to the conclusion that ‘German atrocities’ were presented as ‘*war crimes*’ whilst ‘the Armenian massacre was described as an *exceptional crime against humanity*’.<sup>481</sup> The similarities with the British Press are notable here. The particular concentration of this thesis on how discourse on the relevant criteria and rationales

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<sup>479</sup>Gill, ‘Now I have seen evil’, 179.

<sup>480</sup>Jocelyn Chabot, Richard Godin, and Sylvia Kasperian, “Extreme Violence and Massacres during the First World War: A Comparative Study of the Armenian Genocide and German Atrocities in the Canadian Press (1914-1919),” in *Mass Media and the Genocide of the Armenians: One Hundred years of Uncertain Representation*, ed. Jocelyn Chabot, Richard Godin, Stefanie Kappler, and Sylvia Kasperian (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 181.

<sup>481</sup>Ibid. 192 & 199-200.

also involved biomedical language and rural idyllic imagery adds greater depth and detail to the reconceptualisation of the crimes in the representations of them.

As mentioned above this thesis describes a process of a significant change in the way in which the mass killing of civilians was represented in Britain which is indebted to Stefan Ihrig's analysis of such developments in Germany. However, he has different emphases and like Jo Laycock has a wider contextual frame. Indeed, it could be said that Ihrig's principal intention is to draw a strong line of linkage between the massacres of the 1890s through the genocide and into the Nazi era and the Second World War. Ihrig's main arguments revolve around full awareness of 'official' Germany and the lack of intervention on its part.<sup>482</sup> His work demonstrates that the idea of a process of systematic extermination was widely but not completely rejected in Germany due to the very different motives involved on the part of an ally of the perpetrators.

Whilst he does not primarily focus on the minutiae of how the processes of violence were represented Ihrig does give several examples of German discourse that can be used to illuminate a parallel development in Britain. Namely that polemical, 'atrocitarian' listing was significantly supplemented with a new trope of systematic extermination which foretold modern definitions of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Thus, he gives examples from the vice consul Max Erwin von Scheubner Richter with phrases such as; 'Only a policy of violent extermination, a forcible annihilation of a whole people, could lead the Turkish government in this way to its longed for goal, to a "solution" of the Armenian question.'<sup>483</sup> Ihrig also gives as evidence another Scheubner Richter piece which details a four stage plan for the CUPs policy regarding homogenisation and all of the Ottoman Empire's Christian and indeed Arab minorities.<sup>484</sup> Other examples include the German Armenophile

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<sup>482</sup> Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide*, 105-56.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.* 123.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.* 126.

Johannes Lepsius's 1916 report on the 'extermination through deportation' and the German teacher in Aleppo, Martin Niepage's 1916 letter to the Reichstag. This detailed 'a new phase of Armenian massacres which aimed at exterminating, root and branch, the intelligent, industrious, and progressive Armenian nation and at transferring its property to Turkish hands.'<sup>485</sup> This letter was also published in London demonstrating perhaps how the development of such representations had become so established that foreign examples were eagerly quoted to support them further. Amongst other examples Ihrig extensively quotes a *Vorwärts* (the newspaper of the German socialist SPD party) piece of June 11, 1919. This described the planned arresting of notables before 'the disarmament of the male population was carried out and then the weaponless population deported toward Mesopotamia' followed by measures concerning younger women and children.<sup>486</sup> Further, Ihrig's presents an opinion piece of November 11, 1921, by a Willy Meyer ('Captain, retired') in *Germania* that described a 'methodical butchering of the Armenian people...organised in an excellent fashion' (the piece was condemnatory rather than 'justificationalist'). Meyer also supports this point with a description of eight clearly delineated and facilitating stages.<sup>487</sup>

Ihrig therefore argues that, similarly to Chabot, Godin and Kasperian's work on the French language Canadian press in Germany people did 'imagine, comprehend, and describe what it meant to deliberately annihilate a whole people.' Further, that they did so with words that echo the argument of this thesis. That is words that describe a process of systematic extermination.<sup>488</sup> This transnational discourse is instructive to this work's research and analysis of British representations and both the crossovers and differences are telling. This thesis further develops an argument concerning the rationales and criteria understood by the producers of the representations of the massacres and deportations. Furthermore, whilst it is notable that Ihrig does give examples of the biomedical

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<sup>485</sup> Ibid. 144 & 146.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid. 210.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid. 281-2.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid. 297.

language of the Nazi era in relation to the Armenians<sup>489</sup> this thesis demonstrates how this was largely ever present in the British discourses on the genocide.

Across the Atlantic Rouben Paul Adalian in his study of American diplomatic correspondence concerning the massacres and deportations also charts a change in the words and phrases used by contemporaries in their descriptions. Thus, he suggests there was an ‘evolution...of vocabulary’ in the language of the US ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau. He argues that ‘early descriptions relied on terminology reminiscent of earlier massacres,’ but by September 1915 ‘he’ Morgenthau ‘regularly associated deportations with destruction.’<sup>490</sup> And he ‘ceased to make links between military events that could be seen by the Turks as reason for action and a policy of extermination. This now was a separate process for him.’<sup>491</sup> Morgenthau’s chief sources, the reports of the US consular corps in the Near East reflected this says Adalian. The consulates ‘documented the deportations and decimation of the Armenians as a continuous process, and in doing so ascertained the fundamental difference between the atrocities of 1915 and preceding episodes of organised violence.’<sup>492</sup> Adalian’s focus on the US consular discourse on the social and economic consequences of the repression of the Armenians is illuminating for this work. This thesis is interested in how the violence can be understood through its fraught representations *in the public sphere*. The collection from which Adalian’s piece is a part as a whole does not place the central focus on the details of the violence itself. For example, Peter Balakian’s chapter recounts how these responses focused on the issue of relief and fund raising, capitalist philanthropy, the idea of an independent Armenia and the question of a US Mandate in the region.<sup>493</sup> Donald A. Ritchie looks at the Mandate

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<sup>489</sup> Ibid. 297-8.

<sup>490</sup> Rouben Paul Adalian, “American diplomatic correspondence in the age of mass murder: The Armenian Genocide in the US archives,” in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 151.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid. 152.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid. 161.

<sup>493</sup> Peter Balakian, “From Ezra Pound to Theodore Roosevelt: American intellectual and cultural responses to the Armenian Genocide,” in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2004), 240-53.

issue, awareness of the genocide and the impact on immigration to the USA<sup>494</sup> whilst Thomas C. Leonard argues that there was a 'press consensus that there was an extermination policy' concentrating on how and why this was so rather than analysing the formation of discourses which emerged around extermination.<sup>495</sup>

Thus, the above has given an overview on the scholarship on the trans-national contemporary representation of a process in Canada, Germany and the USA. Returning to Britain specifically Jo Laycock pays considerable attention to a new discourse which recognised a 'different order' of atrocities that amounted to a process of systematic extermination.<sup>496</sup> The emphasis of her work is on the results of the violence and the reasons for the changes in the discourse, particularly regarding how the nation of Armenia was imagined and represented and the ambiguities involved. Thus, she demonstrates how the massacres and deportations were used for British propaganda and in addition how the Armenians were 'worthy of political and humanitarian support' using 'pre-existing notions of the region as a site of Christianity and culture' and a 'civilised Britain, protecting innocent people' against 'a barbaric, amoral enemy which massacred its own population without mercy.'<sup>497</sup> The crucial change that Laycock argues took place was that the representation of the massacres 'was bound up with new concerns centred upon the idea of national self-determination...an act of violence against the "nation" in an attempt by 'British parties to redefine and even reclaim Armenia as part of a nation.'<sup>498</sup> The work of this thesis demonstrates how the representation of the mass killing and deportation of 1915-23 articulated what Laycock argues was a change in emphasis from the persecuted group as of a Christian nature to one where it was a nation state and 'coherent national body.'<sup>499</sup> This thesis analyses the

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<sup>494</sup> Donald A. Ritchie, "Congress confronts the Armenian Genocide," in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2004), 276-93.

<sup>495</sup> Thomas C. Leonard, "When news is not enough: American media and Armenian deaths," in *America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 2004), 294-308, 299.

<sup>496</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 99-100.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.* 100.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.* 100-1.

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.* 118.

type of language involved to demonstrate the contemporary understanding of that coherence and how that was constituted and then dismantled in a planned attempt to destroy that national body in facilitating stages.

A significant proportion of the most relevant existing scholarship pays especial attention to the humanitarian responses in Britain and other countries, and this has drawn attention to these more modern elements and new categories of war atrocity. Part of this scholarship concerns itself with the representation of the atrocities that produced this humanitarianism response. During the First World War a more 'modern' method and rationale regarding the mass killing and deportation of civilians developed.<sup>500</sup> Some historians have highlighted a simultaneous more 'modern' development in humanitarian operations to alleviate the consequences. Thus, Bruno Cabanes has argued that between 1880 and 1920 humanitarianism based on 'religious or moral principles' was replaced by 'a new kind of secular humanitarianism based on modern scientific knowledge.' This involved experts who collected and utilised 'precise data' based on a careful 'ordering of priorities' that formed the basis of standardised responses.<sup>501</sup>

In relation to the historical period that is the focus of this study Michelle Tusan's analysis of the way the Armenian genocide 'opened up a discursive space that made it possible to link humanitarian with military wartime objectives'<sup>502</sup> is particularly relevant. This thesis builds on Tusan's work but concentrates much more on the detail of the question of representation in relation to the violence. In *Smyrna's Ashes* her main concern is the development of the concept of the Middle East rather than the Near East; '...as a cultural marker that helped define its relationship to both the British Empire and Europe.'<sup>503</sup> Thus; 'Christian minorities became less of a humanitarian concern as a result of genocide,' and 'inability to halt

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<sup>500</sup> See below P.

<sup>501</sup> Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism*, 304.

<sup>502</sup> Michelle Tusan, *Smyrna's Ashes: Humanitarianism, Genocide and the Birth of the Middle East* (eScholarship: University of California, 2012), 121.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.* 175.

that and changing geopolitical interests in the Near East' meant that this region 'increasingly became the more distant Middle East.'<sup>504</sup>This thesis' findings that a new more modern language regarding the mass killing of civilians and their deportation developed during the First World War and then went into abeyance in the rapidly changing context of the mid 1920s adds to this point. It demonstrates how the representations of the relevant communities in terms of the violence rendered unto them developed alongside changing British geographical conceptualisations.

Tusan has also explored Britain's relationship with the Armenian genocide in *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide* (2017). The emphasis here is the role of the empire in the continued development of the humanitarian movement and efforts to combat crimes against humanity. Further, she explores the difficulties for the British regarding this in light of events such as in the Boer War, Ireland, and India (Amritsar) as well as involvement in the 1919 Greek invasion of Anatolia (see 'sites of anxiety' above). This is analysed in the wider context of humanitarian campaigns concerning the Balkans, the Belgian Congo and slavery.<sup>505</sup> Tusan analyses the British response to the events and the discourse of that response in a manner which enriches the focus of *this study* on the representation of the violence itself. As such this thesis demonstrates the detailed changes in the discourse on the events which Tusan analyses in terms of their results regarding Britain. The use of Orientalism in this study and how the language of condemnation often contained that of the perpetrators suggesting a process of projection adds to Tusan's work. She demonstrates how the humanitarian response to the Armenian genocide involved significant difficulties as a result of controversial foreign policy decisions and interventions.

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<sup>504</sup> Ibid. 179.

<sup>505</sup> Tusan, *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide*, 93, 97, 119-22, 205, 210, 218-19, 221.

Keith David Watenpaugh's work is also relevant to the work of this thesis. Watenpaugh perhaps concentrates more on the representation of the atrocities which, he suggests produced a much more modern humanitarian response with rationales based on ethnicity.<sup>506</sup> He dates the more modern humanitarian response back to Roger Casement's report on the Belgian Congo which stands in stark contrast to the earlier 'sentimental missionary narrative.' Thus, Casement's 'appeal enjoins a distinctively modern and rational form of humanitarian action that is different from sentimental empathy.'<sup>507</sup> Watenpaugh argues that the modern humanitarian reports contained elements of scientific philanthropy and a secularisation of the narrative that when they came to describing the Armenian genocide 'transcended older ways of thinking and writing about mass killing, starvation and displacement and instead insisted that what was happening...was nothing less than the "Murder of a Nation".'<sup>508</sup> Further, that these reports 'conceived of and elaborated a new conceptual framework with which to describe and assess the destruction of an entire ethnic community by the war machine and bureaucracy of a modern state.'<sup>509</sup> He goes on to analyse Arnold J. Toynbee's wartime writing on the Armenian genocide in light of this.<sup>510</sup> In its own work on Toynbee's writing this thesis develops this scholarship further. It does so with a much wider set of sources showing how it took place, the mobilisation of the tropes involved and the British representations of the mechanics of the process of violence and 'systematic extermination.'

Jo Laycock's work focuses on the role of the Armenian refugee crisis and the British humanitarian response in the ongoing British 'imagining of Armenia.' Part of that response was a new, more modern conceptualisation of 'a world where clearly defined nation states containing homogenous populations was increasingly

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<sup>506</sup> Watenpaugh, *Bread From Stones*, 15

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.* 57-8.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.* 59-61.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.* 76.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.* 81-4.

accepted as the ideal.<sup>511</sup> Moreover, she argues ‘that populations had come to be seen in a new way, as entities which could be moulded, manipulated or moved in order to fit neat borderlines and avoid conflict.’<sup>512</sup> This thesis shows how British contemporary representations of the massacres and deportations seemingly involved an appreciation of rationales and criteria necessary to understand that process of moulding, manipulating and moving. One aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how such views were also articulated and developed in the representations of the violence and process of systematic extermination that produced the humanitarian crisis analysed by the above scholars.

There is one very important antecedent from just before the First World War that demonstrates a new type of more modern representation of atrocity. It shows how British representations of the Armenian genocide reflected a new type of war atrocity and their place in a wider context of emergent discourse regarding this. This was the Carnegie Commission’s report on the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. This report made clear distinctions between ‘just’ wars and those of a ‘criminal’ nature. It made a ‘fundamental distinction’ between a war of ‘liberation’ and one of ‘conquest’. Between the martial motive of ‘patriotism’ in contrast to that of ‘crime.’ The report judged that this accounted for the high level of bloodshed and this was also because of the involvement of civilians where the ‘populations themselves killed each other.’<sup>513</sup> This involved a ‘competition’ in ‘who can best dispossess and “denationalize his neighbour”.’<sup>514</sup> This ‘elementary struggle for existence’ was waged by ‘the most primitive means’ and subsequently led to ‘excesses.’<sup>515</sup> A process of ‘assimilation through terror’<sup>516</sup> where instead of ‘legitimate national

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<sup>511</sup>Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 173.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid. 195.

<sup>513</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1914), 12.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid. 50.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid. 165.

sentiment which inspires acts of heroism' a 'perverted and chauvinistic nationalism' led to crime evidences this type of warfare.<sup>517</sup>

However, it is the manner in which the report analyses a demographic conflict involving notions of ethnicity and the homogenisation of given geographical areas that it anticipates the representations of the Armenian genocide discussed below. Further, how it describes a process regarding the mass killing of civilians. In a section entitled 'The War and Nationalities' the nature of the wars is labelled as one involving a 'medley of nations' with 'local populations' being 'divided into...fragments' where each wanted to 'substitute one for another.'<sup>518</sup> The issue of the conflict is 'geographical distribution' and the mixed nature of populations from 'an ethnographical point of view.'<sup>519</sup> The concept of 'assimilation' is at the forefront of the analysis of 'Ottomanization' and 'assimilation of heterogenous populations'<sup>520</sup> and the notion of process is raised by reference to the 'Turkizing of Macedonia.' This articulation of ethnic process and policy is repeated later with the description of 'Serbization'<sup>521</sup> and the idea of to make 'Servian' that anticipates Mark Sykes description of 'Turanisation' described later in this chapter. This is by the 'means of systematic colonization' involving the settlement of 'mohadjir' emigrants and thus anticipates CUP policies regarding Anatolia in 1915.<sup>522</sup> Reference is made to the letters of Greek soldiers that refer to efforts to make sure that the 'dirty Bulgarian race may not spring up again' which, involve the burning of villages, the massacring of the young and the sparing of only those not 'capable of carrying on the race.'<sup>523</sup> The report also references an 'Ethnographic map' published by Mr. J. Ivanov of the University of Sofia in 1913. It apparently showed 'the towns and villages in

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<sup>517</sup> Ibid. 206.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid. 13.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid. 30.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid. 35.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid. 174.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid. 36.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid. 148.

proportion to their size' and the 'the proportions of the various nationalities in color.'<sup>524</sup>

The report also evidences several examples of what this thesis has identified in British representations of the Armenian genocide as a process of systematic extermination. Indeed, Chapter IV on 'The War and Nationalities' has as its first section a piece entitled; 'Extermination, Emigration, Assimilation.' It states that 'the object of these armed conflicts...was the complete extermination of an alien population.' Further, that an 'order' was issued 'to kill the whole male population.' This anticipates the way this was represented as a facilitating act in representations of the Armenian genocide. Such a step left the rest of the civilian population very vulnerable. Indeed this part of the report continues to explain that in 'Turkey, Malgara and Thrace generally...Men, women and children were separated and all killed without exception.'<sup>525</sup> It proceeds to comment that an 'order' was issued 'to proceed systematically.'<sup>526</sup>

Another aspect of process is detailed in the form of the removal of certain personnel to facilitate the destruction of group identity. For example, the Bulgarian nation is described as being 'decapitated' by a 'systematic attack' by Greeks and Serbians on schools. The 'schoolmaster' was seen as 'the conspirator' and 'the dangerous man' and the closing of the schools was always the 'first act' of occupation.<sup>527</sup> A Greek and Serbian attack on the 'National church' is also described and how 'all possible steps to isolate...pastors from their flocks' is highlighted.<sup>528</sup> The process of 'Serbization' is further detailed with 'acts of violence against influential individuals, prohibition of transit, multiplication of requisitions,' followed by 'the organization of special bands, military executions...and so forth.'<sup>529</sup> The

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<sup>524</sup> Ibid. 194.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid. 148.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid. 149.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid. 52.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid. 165.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid. 181.

persecution of Albanians and Bulgarians in Macedonia is described in terms of ‘notables’ being shot before the burning of villages. Then ‘the official “classification” of Macedonia might be regarded as completed.’<sup>530</sup>

As such this report anticipates many of the details that this thesis highlights as significant in terms of descriptions in British representations of a process of systematic extermination. The destruction of the Armenians as a group was described in terms of planned stages carried out by organised authorities and state functionaries rather than spontaneous violence involving mobs. Michael Mann gives a model involving phases regardless of whether genocide or ethnic cleansing is premeditated (he suggests that it is not) and the essential point is that it escalates.<sup>531</sup> It is the argument of this thesis that the descriptions of process in the British discourse on the Armenian massacres and deportations fit in with this model of phased escalation. This chapter will demonstrate that the typical pattern of phased escalation involved disarming men and arresting elites followed by their murder before the deportation and then massacre of women and children.<sup>532</sup> As such, it is to be noted that this thesis refers to *a* process rather than *the* process of systematic extermination. This is to emphasise that its focus is on British representations of the Armenian genocide as it took place rather than what has now been overwhelmingly demonstrated by the historical scholarship as the process involved. It is the contention of this thesis that the commentators involved did not yet know enough about the CUP’s methods and rationales to give a fully factual account of them.

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<sup>530</sup> Ibid. 182.

<sup>531</sup> Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-33. Processes of murderous cleansing/genocide: comment on Hagan and Kaiser. *The British Journal of Sociology* 62, no. 1. (2011): 46.

<sup>532</sup> Adam Jones has made the point that the murder of Armenian recruits and the labour battalions alongside remaining male civilians as the deportations took place, meant there was no longer an element in the Armenian community in the rear or at the front who could protect women, children, the sick and the old, who would be subsequently wiped out in the genocide. Adam Jones, "Gendercide and Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* no. 2 (2000): 201-2.

The question of violence and its above-described planned escalation was also a highly gendered one. In this context one hugely significant contemporary representation of the Armenian Genocide was the American film made just after the war telling the story of the young female survivor Aurora Mardiganian. Its American title was *Ravished Armenia* (1919) but this was changed in Britain to the less titillating *Auction of Souls*. This film has generated a considerable scholarly response. In particular with regards to an analysis of the issue of gender in the contemporary representation of the Armenian genocide. Benedetta Guerzoni has commented on publicity posters for the film that ‘accentuate even more the dramatization and scandalous characteristics of the sexual element: the woman, the primary symbol among others (like orphans etc.) of an undefended nation, is here the sole exponent of a people’s tragedy...’<sup>533</sup> This gendered language around nation and violence is key to the representations this thesis focuses on. It is pertinent to note here Guerzoni’s argument that ‘...as a woman, this victim is the object of the most stereotyped sexual fantasies about harem and sensuality, typical of the orientalist idea.’<sup>534</sup>

Donna Frieze also engages with how the film was an overwhelmingly orientalist and gendered piece. She also argues that the existing surviving section ‘predominantly shows sequences of group destruction’ despite the fact that the original full feature film ‘emphasised individual experience.’<sup>535</sup> Likewise, Laycock argues that women in this film are seen an ‘abstract’ means of preserving ‘a repository of national culture.’ Further, that biologically they are ‘carriers’ of the nation. Subsequently mass rape and the killing of women become racialised in the discourse on the nation. In this manner ‘national purity and homogeneity’ as well as

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<sup>533</sup> Benedetta Guerzoni, “A Christian Harem: *Ravished Armenia* and the Representation of the Armenian Woman in the International Press,” in *Mass Media and the Genocide of the Armenians: One Hundred Years of Uncertain Representation*, ed. Jocelyn Chabot, Richard Godin, Stefanie Kappler and Sylvia Kasperian (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 63-4.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid. 78.

<sup>535</sup> Donna Frieze, “Three Films, One Genocide: Remembering the Armenian Genocide Through *Ravished Armenia*,” in *Remembering Genocide*, ed. Nigel Eltringham & Pam MacClean (London: Taylor & Francis, 2014), 47.

the ‘continuity of the race or nation’ is threatened.<sup>536</sup> This thesis details how this ‘group destruction’ was represented elsewhere in British discourses of Armenia and how representations of a process of systematic destruction involved an understanding of rationales and criteria that amongst other things included a gendered approach. An approach that seemed to realise the significance of planned and facilitating stages directed particularly at women and the importance of this in the CUP’s apparent goal of ‘group destruction.’

The importance of the Balkan Wars has been signposted above in the discussion of the Carnegie Commissions report on them. In terms of the immediate historical context some of the scholarship involved (exampled below) places a great deal of importance on the Balkan Wars on the eve of the First World War and indeed ethnic conflict in that area in the late nineteenth century in the development of these population policies. This historical context was crucial to how CUP population policy evolved. The resettling of Muhacir Muslim refugees from the Balkan Wars was a paramount cause of the genocide as their destination was very often in areas ethnically cleansed of Armenians. Roger Brubaker gives some of the ideological historical background to this development. He suggests that the Balkan Wars were conducted in a period amounting to ‘the high noon of mass ethnic nationalism.’ Further, that they were fought by states wanting to shape territory ‘in accordance with maximalist-and often fantastically exaggerated-claims of ethnic demography and committed to moulding their heterogeneous populations into relatively homogeneous national wholes.’<sup>537</sup> Donald Bloxham further argues that the demise of European empires and dynasties were organised ‘according to new ideas about inclusive and exclusive group identities, and the relationship of “loyal” citizen to sovereign state.’<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>536</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 131.

<sup>537</sup> Cited in Bloxham, “The Great Unweaving,” 154.

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.* 170.

This in his view led, 'in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars,' to 'a new practice being introduced into European diplomacy and population politics;' one which had the ultimate aim of 'creating ethnically homogenous territory' which 'now accommodated the new post-1913 boundaries that marked the expulsion of the Ottomans from all Europe bar a sliver of Thrace.'<sup>539</sup> This Bloxham argues is the immediate context of the Armenian genocide which exemplified 'the blending of a policy of ethnic cleansing and ethnic murder, with the latter pursuant to the former.'<sup>540</sup> Contemporary British representations of the Armenian genocide need to be read in this historical context and the current scholarship devoted to it to understand their significance. Further, to support and or question that scholarship.

In relation to the immediate historical context of the Ottoman Empire there have been further recent developments in the scholarship dealing with this phenomenon of homogenisation policies. For example, in the context of the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans Ella Fratantuono has written about how Ottoman government concerns regarding population density and a discourse of productivity regarding different groups profoundly influenced migration and settlement policies. Moreover, she uses an analysis of 'immigrant settlement as internal colonization' to situate 'the Ottoman Empire within global patterns of state building and imperialism.' This for her 'reveals continuity in how officials conceived of population productivity and population removal, allowing historians to understand better political, infrastructural, and ideological precursors to the Armenian genocide.'<sup>541</sup> Thus, another aspect of this historical context is the continued development of the modern imperial nation state which has particular resonances with Britain in this period. Indeed, this returns to the orientalist argument that the demonisation of the homogenisation policies when conducted by the 'terrible Turk' was an act of projection by the British.

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<sup>539</sup> Ibid. 181.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid. 168.

<sup>541</sup> Ella Fratantuono, "Producing Ottomans: Internal Colonization and Social Engineering in Ottoman Immigrant Settlement," *Journal of Genocide Research* 21, no. 1 (2019): 1.

Scholars such as Alf Ludtke suggest that these rationales developed first in the 'West' rather than in areas such as the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire and this perhaps bears the above point out. He like Baumann invokes the metaphor of gardening to explain 'plans and practices of intervention in society.' He argues that this was closely associated with the emergence of nation-states and the development of a rationale of defending 'we' against 'them' that increasingly involved 'clear-cut boundaries and frontiers.' In this context fears revolving around this conflict resulted in a growth of suspicion of potential threats within these nation states. A consequence was that, in the late nineteenth century; 'Biopolitics and the furthering of demographic reproduction become imperative, 'among socio-cultural and socio-political elites in central and western Europe and in North America.'<sup>542</sup> Ryan Gingeras has commented on CUP population policy in terms of language in a manner which perhaps demonstrates how these western ideas were adopted in the Ottoman Empire. He asserts that the Ottoman state enforced policies that sought to resolve this conflict of 'we' and 'them' on an internal level by targeting 'regional and ethno-linguistic differences.' He contends that the invoking of the concept of loyalty was not sufficient and it could be said that this more traditional method of government was supplanted by Baumann's 'gardening' model where; 'Citizens had to be moulded or re-engineered in order for state and society to function in coherent harmony with one another.'<sup>543</sup> Such scholarship adds further to the argument of this thesis that British representations of the Armenian genocide indicate to an extent a process of orientalist othering. This involved self-knowledge of colonial 'gardening' policies (that Ludtke suggests were 'western') revolving around the conflict of 'we' and 'them' led to a denunciation of 'the Turk' using language and criteria that reflected those of the perpetrator.

The Armenian genocide involved planned and facilitating stages. As well as identifying this using the coded telegrams of the Ottoman Interior Ministry, Taner Akcam has argued that the Armenian genocide was an organised process and that

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<sup>542</sup> Ludtke, "Explaining Forced Migration," 26.

<sup>543</sup> Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 17.

the end result was, 'the cumulative outcome of a series of increasingly radical decisions, each triggering the next in the cascading sequence of events.'<sup>544</sup> Raymond Kevorkian concurs citing the CUP's 'desire to homogenise Asia Minor, to Turkify this territory,' which, 'obviously went back a long way and certainly constituted the starting point for the collective thought process that eventually culminated, after going through a number of stages, in the plan for the physical destruction of the Ottoman Armenians.'<sup>545</sup> Kieser has identified 'three main phases from April 1915.'<sup>546</sup>

Akcam also identifies within a conscious plan of homogenisation an approach, which supports the way this thesis analyses British representations to identify change in the contemporary discourse. Indeed, the work of this thesis on British representations provides some further evidence for his arguments using Ottoman sources, that the CUP did develop criteria for their demographic policies. The evidence being that such policies were observed by outsiders and diagnosed in a manner reflecting such an analysis. The rationale was simple and straightforward and based on the relationship 'governability and demographics.' The CUP would retain control of the remaining post Balkan War territory only if the majority of the population were Muslim Turks. Thus this 'concept of *governability* can be considered as a kind of surveillance policy to collect information about the population in order to conceptualise it as a discrete aggregate object.'<sup>547</sup> This, it would suggest, echoes the argument made in this chapter that British contemporaries did have a criterion driven conceptualisation of how an ethnic group could and was being taken apart and partially if not fully destroyed. For example, Lord Bryce spoke in the House of Lords on October 6, 1915, and suggested that the Muslim population had no hatred of Armenian Christians. The policy was an act of government unrelated to 'religious fanaticism.' It was 'for reasons purely political, to get rid of a non-Moslem element which impaired the homogeneity of the Empire, and constituted an element that might not always submit to

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<sup>544</sup> Akcam, *The Young Turks Crime Against Humanity*, 128

<sup>545</sup> Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 808.

<sup>546</sup> Kieser, *Talaat*, 234-5.

<sup>547</sup> Akcam, *The Young Turks Crime Against Humanity*, xv.

oppression.<sup>548</sup> Therefore, this scholarship has been used to better place the contemporary British representations in their wider historical context and to demonstrate their significance and how they had developed from more traditional representations of the mass killing of civilians. The close analysis of the newspaper reportage below will show how it was full of references to political motives and the scientific idea of parts of society being elements that needed removal in the interests of homogeneity as suggested in Bryce's speech. This in turn speaks to Ackam's points concerning 'governability' of a population seen 'as a discrete aggregate object' that could be said to consist of Bryce's designation of the 'Armenian Christians as an 'element'.

These contemporary conceptualisations can also be shown to be new and modern by further citing Akcam who demonstrates using the work of Peter Holquist 'a shift in the goal of ruling, a shift from a territorial concept to a governmental one. A governmental state seeks to manage the populations, not just to rule the territories.' Kevorkian meanwhile, has written of a 'geographer's logic, the basis for the conception of the liquidation plan', and that 'the procedure elaborated by the Central Committee was the fruit of extended reflection on the demographic composition of Anatolia and Asia Minor, with the ambition of remodelling the human geography of these regions.'<sup>549</sup>

A similar but not identical method of periodisation to that used in Chapter 1 above on German 'frightfulness' will be adopted for my work here. The year 1915 will be used for the first phase for analysis, which will be followed by a section on the year 1916 and the Blue Book. However, a 1915 pamphlet written by Arnold Toynbee is included in this section due to its relevance to the analysis of the significance of the Blue Book. This chapter also includes a section on the post-war period of 1919-23. The years 1917-18 are not covered in this particular chapter as more detailed discourse on the Armenians declined markedly as the massacres and

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<sup>548</sup> Printed in Toynbee, *Armenian Atrocities*, 7.

<sup>549</sup> Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 809.

deportations did so. This was despite it being frequently mentioned in passing as an example of the 'frightfulness' of the Central Powers. As seen in the previous two chapters the representations of the Armenian genocide featured more strongly in the writings of individual commentators rather than newspapers. This thesis has found these pieces to be of great significance in terms of the use of biomedical language employing a trope of a rural idyll. This observation regarding the nature of the evidence is perhaps of great importance in itself. It is surely significant that during a period of a relative decline in the reporting concerning the Ottoman Armenians individual commentators were clearly still thinking deeply about the import of what had happened and had been reported in Anatolia during 1915 and 1916. They were also clearly moved to write enthusiastically and at length on the matter. To conclude, a further section will deal with the reporting of a particularly significant aspect of the mass killing of Armenian civilians, that of organised mass drowning which, had a huge impact in the British public sphere.

## **1915**

There is considerable evidence that contemporaries in 1915 very much believed that something quantitatively and qualitatively different was taking place in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 regarding its Armenian communities. For example, Jo Laycock notes that the exterminatory policies were 'recognised to be of a different order to previous "atrocities".' Furthermore, they were 'widely regarded as a systematic attempt to finally destroy or according to contemporary terminology, "exterminate" the Ottoman Armenian population.'<sup>550</sup> She also argues that there was a very real contrast between the Gladstonian rhetoric of extermination as used in the 1870s and 1890s and the discourse of 1915 to 1918. This emphasised that the Armenians were a racial blood group rather than a religious minority. This involved very much more positive attributes than were expressed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The representations produced during the First World War fitted in with rhetoric

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<sup>550</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, 99-100.

concerning a war of civilisation on behalf of small nations. She goes on to argue that this more 'genocidal' understanding of the discourse took account of the CUP's pan-Turanist ideology.<sup>551</sup> However she also contends that 'the sets of images that embodied the horror of the Armenian genocide for the British population' were 'of suffering women and children, sadistic Turks and Kurds and the relentless presence of Armenian corpses.'<sup>552</sup> This therefore, would suggest strong elements of continuity and she emphasises the role of orientalist discourse. As noted earlier she points out; 'The graphic language of atrocity from the era of the 'Bulgarian Horrors' was still in usage' and as 'in the 1890s, reports emphasised the extreme and ingenious methods developed by the Turks to inflict pain.'<sup>553</sup>

As such, although Laycock does not use the same terminology as this thesis, she recognises how much of the discourse involved a polemical listing of abuses full of righteous indignation and rather prurient fascination. Laycock's argument chiefly deals with the role of Orientalism in the depiction of the Armenian nation and society and it is a powerful one. In this chapter I will build upon this work by stressing changes in the discourse on the actual violence itself and suggest evidence for a new, highly significant trope in British representations describing mass killing as a systematic process. This extends my argument that a new etymology emerged as well as a new method of description. This involved summarising statements at the end of newspaper articles referring to a criterion-led conceptualisation of a systematic process of extermination.

Something new in the representations of mass killing and persecution of Armenians developed as reports from the Ottoman Empire began to reach Britain as the genocide began. On the May 26, 1915, *The Manchester Guardian* stated the following:

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<sup>551</sup> Ibid. 116-7.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid. 102.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid. 107.

The theory underlying this conduct is, of course, the same which governs the terroristic methods of the Germans in their occupied territories, and it is gratifying to notice the promptness and energy with which the three Allied Powers have voiced their disapproval and signified their intention to punish the guilty.<sup>554</sup>

The phrase earlier in the piece ‘acting, arresting and transporting’ alongside the idea of a theory that has been developed in relation to ‘terroristic methods’ suggests the beginning of a new conceptualisation. The phrase indicates a series of defined stages of persecution, a process of systematic extermination.

In July the same paper printed a Reuter’s telegram describing a report in the Russian “*Novoe Vremya*” using the headline, ‘Reported Massacre of 9,000 Women and Children.’ A polemical list followed detailing all the men having their throats cut, all the women and girls being carried off, the massacre of the entire male population in the district of Bitlis, and the shooting of 9,000 women and children in the same area. Their bodies were then thrown into the Tigris. The extract ends with a thousand Armenians having their throats cut before being thrown into the Euphrates.<sup>555</sup> This though is not a description of a pattern or a theory of terroristic method but predominantly the reporting of individual incidences redolent of the polemical and repetitive lists of the ‘atrocitarians’ reporting the massacres of the 1870s and 1890s. Thus, not surprisingly the development of the trope described in this chapter is not sudden. Nor is there a distinct clean break between earlier and emerging representations of mass killing of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Two

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<sup>554</sup> “The Armenians in Turkey,” *The Manchester Guardian*, May 26, 1915, 6. One could argue that as early as 24<sup>th</sup> May 1915 the Allied Powers recognised the events taking place concerning the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire since the arrest of Armenian notables in Constantinople in late April as qualitatively different from earlier acts of massacre. The clearest evidence of this would be the Allied declaration on that day stating that these were crimes against humanity and civilisation and their intention to bring all responsible to account. This article is commenting on that declaration.

<sup>555</sup> “Turks in Armenia,” *The Manchester Guardian*, July 23, 1915, 8. The atrocities committed by the Turks in the Bitlis region baffle description. After massacring the entire male population in this district, the Turks collected 9,000 women and children from the surrounding villages and herded them into Bitlis. Two days later they drove them down to the Tigris, where they shot the whole 9,000 and threw their bodies into the river. On the Euphrates the Turks cut the throats of over a thousand Armenians and threw their bodies into the river.

weeks later however, the paper again mentioned these events before suggesting that Armenians in Cilicia were 'being similarly treated.' A short list follows describing sequestration of property and possessions, driving into the desert and starvation and public hangings of Armenian activists.<sup>556</sup> Thus, despite the fact that these are different types of acts of mass persecution the paper is perhaps attempting to establish a pattern to organise these descriptions.

An opinion piece two days later could be seen as evidence that a pattern was established that suggested to the writer that a new type of crime was indeed taking place:

Under pretext of deportation, they are transferring whole communities from their homes into districts where there is a predominant Mussulman population, introducing in their place Arabs from Mesopotamia, or Hohadjvis, emigrants from the Balkans... Obviously, when peace negotiations are entered upon and the question of Armenia is broached, the Turks no doubt count on being able to point out that, racially and geographically, Armenia no longer exists.<sup>557</sup>

This could be interpreted as a more concrete representation of a wide policy and process of deportation with a definite rationale leading to an end result, a process of systematic extermination. There is a specific criteria employed to describe a process of mass killing. The criteria here being an idea that ethnic identity could be modified or indeed destroyed by moving people from area to area. Further, that these areas were identified by the number of people from different ethnic and religious groups living there and the percentage of the whole population each group amounted to in those areas. This then is a contemporary description of what historians later researched and noted as a planned CUP policy of homogenisation.

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<sup>556</sup> "The New Armenian Massacres," *The Manchester Guardian*, August 4, 1915, 5.

<sup>557</sup> "The Sufferings of Armenia," *The Manchester Guardian*, August 6, 1915, 6.

The aim of this was making sure that the proportion of the population that was Armenian in any area of the Empire never exceeded ten per cent.<sup>558</sup>

The journalistic reports filed by *The Manchester Guardian* in this developing discourse were based on accounts from non-British witnesses. These included American missionaries and educators, Armenian refugees from the violence, German personnel and Red Cross nurses, for example.<sup>559</sup> Many of them found their way into the Parliamentary Blue Book in 1916. The American Henry Wood's despatch for the United Press was particularly influential. It was used in *The Manchester Guardian* on August 16, 1915, and much was made of the mention of sealed orders leading to a simultaneous assault. The despatch also included the phrase, 'In the meantime, the position of the Armenians and the system of deportation, dispersion, and extermination that is being carried out against them beggars all description' (also described in the article as a 'newly devised system'<sup>560</sup>). This was quoted in the Blue Book.<sup>561</sup> This represents a trend whereby the acts of persecution were being summarised to demonstrate a series of systematic stages within a process. Furthermore, summaries, which showed an understanding of how one stage of persecution led to the next in a manner which suggests that a set of criteria was in place. For example, in September 1915 as the reports of the massacres reached a crescendo *The Manchester Guardian* reported:

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<sup>558</sup> See for example, Akcam, *The Young Turks Crime Against Humanity*, 242-253

<sup>559</sup> Toynbee, *Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*. For example; Letter from an authoritative source dated Constantinople, July 13/26, 1915, and addressed to a distinguished Armenian resident beyond the Ottoman frontier, 9. Letter, dated August 3/16, 1915, conveyed beyond the Ottoman frontier by an Armenian refugee from Cilicia in the sole of her shoe, 21. Letter from Mr. N. a foreign resident of Constantinople, dated August 27, 1915; Communicated by the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, 22. Information regarding events in Armenia, published in the 'Sonnenaufgang (organ of the 'German League for the Promotion of Christian Charitable Work in the East'), October 1915; and in the 'Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift', November 1915, 25. The American Mission at Van: Narrative printed privately in the US by Miss Grace Higley Knapp 1915, 41-2. Van after the massacres: Narrative of Mr. A.S. Safrastian, dated Van, December 2, 1915, and published in the Armenian Journal 'Ararat' of London, January, 1916, 72-3. Erzindjan: Statement by two Red Cross nurses of Danish nationality, formerly in the service of the German Military Mission at Erzeroum; Communicated by a Swiss gentleman of Geneva, 248.

<sup>560</sup> *The Birmingham Daily Post*, August 16, 1915, 10.

<sup>561</sup> Toynbee, *The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, 2.

The method now employed by the Turks in their policy of extermination consists in separating the men from the women and children. The able-bodied men are drafted in small lots into Turkish regiments and made to fight. The young women are sold to harems, and the old men and women and children are sent into the interior, and there turned loose in an uninhabited district.<sup>562</sup>

The criteria in place here is implicit whereby a 'policy of extermination' has been established, as have the facilitating stages of the 'method.' There is a concentration much more on the way the acts of violence were being described as stages and methods in a process.

This criterion for the success of the policy can be seen in an article a fortnight later whereby a detailed step-by-step account ends with:

The purpose of the Government is evidently to put an end once and for all to the Armenian question by the extermination of the whole Armenian population throughout the whole of Turkey; and this purpose has just begun to be put into execution even in the very outskirts of Constantinople.<sup>563</sup>

An accompanying leader piece on the same page distilled within it the step-by-step description in a manner very like the article analysed above on September 22. After observing how those 'capable of putting up a resistance,' the male population have been massacred after being enrolled as workers in the army, the paper describes how 'the rest of the population some have been taken to minister to the lusts of the Turks; the rest have almost all, sooner or later, perished.' What is being established by this point is the disarming of the Armenian population by first targeting men of military age as a deliberate facilitating act. This then allows what the same article describes as 'the process of extirpation' and the crime 'that history has never recorded, or spoken of, its like.'<sup>564</sup> Therefore, the development of a new

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<sup>562</sup> "Turks and Armenians," *The Manchester Guardian*, September 10, 1915, 12.

<sup>563</sup> "Destroying a Nation: The Armenian Massacres," *The Manchester Guardian*, September 25, 1915, 6.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*

trope of descriptions of process in the mass killing of civilians is significantly accompanied here by the naming of the process and a claim that this is unprecedented in history.

This pattern in the developing discourse in the representations is also evident in other publications. For example, *The Liverpool Echo* of September 30, 1915 stated that 'unrecordable horrors' amounted to 'the total extermination of the nation, of their deportation to desert regions, where they must inevitably perish by starvation, and of the appropriation of their lands by Moslems.'<sup>565</sup> Here the Women's Armenian Relief Fund quoted by the newspaper in this article suggests that deportation will facilitate starvation, which in turn will facilitate the settlement of Muslims. The above representation is reflected in other provincial press reporting on the same day. As explained in the introduction local newspapers largely printed the same articles based on news agencies and articles in the national papers. On the same day as the report in *The Liverpool Echo*, *The Newcastle Daily Journal* commented:

From Samsun to Trebizond from Ordu to Aintab, and from Marash to Erzerum come the same tales of atrocities of men shot down in cold blood, crucified, mutilated, or dragged off for labour battalions; of children carried off and forcibly converted to Islam, of women violated and enslaved in the interior, shot down or sent off with their children to the desert... where there no food... to die miserably.<sup>566</sup>

Again, we see the establishment of a pattern, the separation of the population into constituent parts, the disarmament of it and deportation to facilitate death. We now begin to see more explicit examples of an analysis of Ottoman actions, which demonstrate a growing awareness of a process of systematic extermination. Thus, 'A Correspondent' of *The Times* reported on October 8, 1915 on the object of

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<sup>565</sup> "The Armenians: Fiendish Cruelty of the Turk," *The Liverpool Echo*, September 30, 1915, 5.

<sup>566</sup> "Armenian Atrocities: Unspeakable Atrocities on Men, Women and Children," *The Newcastle Daily Journal*, September 30, 1915.

coverting Armenian children and the 'political' sale of women and girls. It was believed by 'foreigners' that 'Talaat has countenanced these crimes with the object of breaking up the strong social structure of the Armenian community in Turkey.'<sup>567</sup>

Of particular interest here is the reference to the strong social structure of the Armenians as a group demonstrating an increasingly scientific and sociological approach to the ethnicity of the Armenians. The analysis also speaks to the arguments of this thesis and scholarship emphasising the importance of gender and the special role of women and girls in the survival or not within targeted ethnic groups in genocidal policies. The same paper reported in November a massacre that took place in late June and gave another example of a polemical list with some highly gendered and sexualised, orientalist passages. This was followed by a description of the town, Bitlis being surrounded on June 25 and its communications with neighbouring Armenian villages being cut. The 'able bodied men' were taken away and shot' which then facilitated further stages of the process of extermination; 'The young women and children were distributed among the rabble, and the remainder, the "useless" lot, were driven to the south and are believed to have been drowned in the Tigris.'<sup>568</sup> Here the process is placed in the context of a 'surgical' type of operation, whilst also noting an economic basis for a process of selection as well as an awareness perhaps of the dehumanising nature of it with its accompanying language. However, as we shall see below the description of the process and rationale behind it are not as detailed and carefully described as they would become in the immediate post-war period.

### **1916 and the Blue Book**

The development of this discourse persists into the early months of 1916 when the level of reporting on the events had declined markedly. For example, in January *The*

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<sup>567</sup> *The Times*, October 8, 1915, 8.

<sup>568</sup> *The Times*, November 27, 1915, 7.

*Manchester Guardian* bewailed the fact that the Armenians had disappeared from Turkish Asia 'as an organised people.'<sup>569</sup> This leader column was followed three weeks later with another, which demonstrates that the same writer or a colleague had given some thought to what constitutes an 'organised people' and a distinct ethnic or religious group:

The myriad slaughter of the able, the soldierly; the sinister deportation of the feeble and the frail, attended by exposure, torture, murder, and outrage, unlimited and unrepressed; the decoying of women and children to barren solitudes, when they were abandoned to hunger and malaria, or to broad river passages when they were drowned. This was the treatment dealt out to an intelligent, industrious, and religious people.<sup>570</sup>

A distinction is made between the able and how their slaughter facilitated the deportation 'of the feeble and the frail,' who are further distinguished from the women and children, which in turn signifies their importance for the future of an 'organised people.' The writer sees the attributes of such a people as 'intelligent, industrious, and religious' as part and parcel of that organisation.

It adds further evidence of a conceptualisation of a people, who had a claim to autonomy and a nation, which could be taken to pieces by a process of systematic extermination. Therefore, a criterion, however fully or otherwise formed, presumably existed for how 'a people' functions and how it can be destroyed. This is further emphasised by the last ringing and impassioned line of the leader comment, 'The remnant of Armenia must be saved.'<sup>571</sup> This representational trope of the 'remnant' became firmly established in this period. It demonstrates, along with the evidence accumulated above a clear visualisation of a people and how it has been systematically dismantled with only one piece remaining. Indeed, Michelle Tusan names a chapter in her book on the British

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<sup>569</sup> "The End at Sasun," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 15, 1916, 6.

<sup>570</sup> "In Aid of Armenia," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 5, 1916, 6.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*

Empire and the genocide, Saving “The Remnant”<sup>572</sup> and a paper on the Lord Mayor’s Fund by Jo Laycock is entitled, *Saving the Remnant or Building Socialism: Transnational Humanitarian Relief in Early Soviet Armenia*.<sup>573</sup>

The next significant upsurge in the press coverage of the massacres took place in the winter of 1916 with the publication of Bryce and Toynbee’s Parliamentary Blue Book. This can itself be seen as a prime example of the polemical and propagandistic listing of atrocity that is qualitatively different from the developing trope of systematic, facilitating and bureaucratically organised stages of the destruction of a people. Indeed, as already noted in Chapter 1 Tusan argues that the Blue Book’s main purpose was to establish by repetition ‘a clear, consistent pattern of atrocity’ (essential she says in making the modern case for genocide) and to ‘chronicle atrocity.’ In doing so, she notes that Toynbee complained that it made for ‘dull reading.’<sup>574</sup> Tusan suggests that, ‘No other document made a clearer case for genocide against the Armenians’ and did so ‘by defining the massacres as systematic acts of state terror.’<sup>575</sup> However, despite its importance the Blue Book is not the best evidence for the development of a new, more modern representation of the mass killing of civilians, which we would now call genocidal. It is the development of the trope of systematic descriptions in the press coverage of the reports coming out of Anatolia in 1915 that more persuasive evidence that the concept of genocide in all but name had developed can be found. That is, a full year before the Blue Book was published, despite the fact that it contained many of these reports. It is also perhaps evidence for a more complex process of discursive formulation of the mass killing of civilians. The emphasis placed on the Blue Book by historians such as Tusan suggests a process of representation largely being shaped from the top, the Government, downwards. I argue that the patterns suggested here involve an interaction from several different

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<sup>572</sup> Tusan, *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide*, 151-183.

<sup>573</sup> Joanne Laycock, *Saving the Remnant or Building Socialism: Transnational Humanitarian Relief in Early Soviet Armenia* *Moving the Social: Journal of Social History and the History of Social Movements* no. 57 (2017).

<sup>574</sup> Tusan, *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide*, 138.

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.* 135-6.

directions.<sup>576</sup> Between London and provincial newspapers and politicians and concerned individuals in the Armenophile community. I also argue that the discourse of mass killing was both residual and emergent and this complicates a simple understanding of the term extermination as it was understood at this time. Rather it is not just extermination that is being discussed in the contemporary discourse but a staged process with a criterion involved describing the destruction of ethnic group as a more sociologically defined and structured body.

That is not to say that the description of process is absent from the polemical listing in the discourse surrounding the publication of the Blue Book. For example, H. A. L. Fisher (Vice Chancellor of the University of Sheffield and the new Minister of Education) was quoted in *The Manchester Guardian* and in the Blue Book; 'There is no contrariety as to the broad fact that the Armenian population has been uprooted from its homes, dispersed, and to a large extent; exterminated in consequence of general orders from Constantinople.'<sup>577</sup> However, in contrast to 1915 and what was to come between 1919 and 1923 such an example does seem to be an exception in 1916 as well as lacking in terms of a perceptive summary of the stages of the process. Moreover, there is much less in the way of clear criteria of how the process led towards an end goal of homogenising the population so that Armenians never made up more than ten per cent of it in any given area. Reasons for this may well be that the killings and deportations that had taken place in more or less clear sight in 1915 declined markedly in 1916. Therefore, reporting on what was happening to the Armenians did likewise until the Blue Book massively rebooted the newsworthy relevance of the story. Although there was a horrific spate of massacres in 1916 they took place largely hidden away in the remote concentration camps in the Syrian deserts. Thus, British observers in December 1916 tended perhaps to concentrate on the crime as a whole rather than its

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<sup>576</sup> Russell Wallis has suggested that the widespread discussion in Britain on the German atrocities in Belgium may well have 'emanated from below, rather than being imposed from above by the press or official sources' and a major source was not an initially sceptical press but returning British troops and Belgian refugees. Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 22.

<sup>577</sup> "Armenian Atrocities," *The Manchester Guardian*, December 14, 1916, 10.

constituent parts. The publication of largely polemical lists of atrocity in one volume at one time would tend to produce damning, judgmental responses to an unparalleled crime against humanity in late 1916. The journalistic response to a constant stream of reportage over several months in 1915 produced an increasingly analytical description of a staged process.

The newspaper reporting of the Blue Book and the commentary on it in the Houses of Parliament and in political and campaigning speeches (for charity for the survivors) mainly concentrates on the descriptions of the violence within it from eyewitnesses. As I have already suggested this lent itself to the ‘atrocitarian,’ polemical listing of acts of violence. This tended to obscure the stronger evidence presented in this chapter for a contemporary awareness and description of what is now called genocide. However, this contemporary awareness was in the Blue Book in the commentary written by Arnold J. Toynbee at its end, which in turn perhaps resulted in its comparative neglect by newspapers and politicians. This may well have been due to the situation described above.

It is important at this stage to engage in particular with the thoughts of Toynbee on what happened to the Armenians as it demonstrates the manner in which the residual discourse was giving way to an emergent one. Further, it shows how this had been all but fully concretised by Toynbee at least by the end of 1915 to be utilised in 1916 in the appendix of the Blue Book. In this appendix Toynbee described three phases of a process. Firstly, before the battle of Sarikamis in January 1915 he talks of conscription and requisitions and then proceeds to describe a second phase after the battle. This involved disarmament, namely the establishment of labour battalions and the ‘inquisition for arms.’ The third phase is that of deportation and the murder of men.<sup>578</sup> Later he proceeds to summarise ‘the process’ of the ‘deliberate systematic attempt to eradicate the Armenian population.’ He called this a general plan on the part of the Central Government

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<sup>578</sup> Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, 637-40.

and periodised the stages of extermination. April and May saw the clearance of Cilicia. June and July, the east, followed by the western centres in August and September. For the sake of 'completeness' the process was extended to 'outlying Armenian communities' in the south-east.' In short, it 'was a deliberate, systematic attempt to eradicate the Armenian population throughout the Ottoman Empire.'<sup>579</sup>

Toynbee as mentioned above had developed his aetiology of systematic extermination a year previously in his role at the propaganda office at Wellington House. This work resulted in a pamphlet entitled *The Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation, with a speech delivered by Lord Bryce in the House of Lords* (Hodder & Stoughton 1915). The subtitle itself serves to reinforce the argument of this chapter regarding the development of criteria as to what an ethnic group was. In the work he expounded on the manner of how a 'non-Moslem element which impaired the homogeneity of the Empire' could be destroyed. Toynbee saw this as modern it seems in contrast to previous acts of 'religious fanaticism' and the reasons were 'purely political.'<sup>580</sup> This 'procedure was exceedingly systematic:'

The whole Armenian population of each town and village was cleared out, by a house to house search. Every inmate was driven into the street. Some of the men were thrown into prison, where they were put to death, sometimes with torture; the rest of the men, with women and children, were marched out of town. When they had got some little distance they were separated, the men being taken to some place among the hills where the soldiers, or the Kurdish tribes who were called into help in the work of slaughter, despatched them by shooting or bayonetting. The women and children and old men were sent off under convoy of the lowest kind of soldiers-many of them just drawn from gaols-to their distant destination, which was sometimes one of the unhealthy districts in the centre of Asia

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<sup>579</sup> Ibid. 648.

<sup>580</sup> Toynbee, *The Armenian Atrocities*, 7.

Minor, but more frequently the large desert in the province of Der el Zor, which lies east of Aleppo, in the direction of the Euphrates.<sup>581</sup>

The reference to every house and every individual alongside their categorisation in the analysis by gender and age attests to the way this representation was describing a process involving organised central government action. Action that involved a phased escalation and was not spontaneous nor carried out by disparate personnel. The central authorities are according to Toynbee in this description seeking out Armenians and deploying soldiers, Kurdish tribes and gaol inmates to carry out a planned process. Further; 'The crime was concerted very systematically, for there is evidence of identical procedure from over fifty places.'<sup>582</sup> He also emphasises its qualitatively different and modern method and rationale by contrast with biblical massacres and introduces to the discourse the aforementioned concept of the remnant. However, in this case it is a reference to remnants of peoples from biblical history:

'Organised and effective massacre'-that is what such a deportation means, and that must always have been its implication. But the Assyrian at any rate gave the remnant a chance of life at the end of their journey...The Turk was more consistent in his cruelty. These people were to be deported to their death, and nothing should relieve them.<sup>583</sup>

The work also attests to the argument of this chapter that a new criterion for what an ethnic group consisted of and how a geographical area could be altered to fulfil a long-term goal, by Toynbee's analysis of the role of Muslim refugees from the Balkan Wars in these developments:

...the crime against the Armenian race was deliberate, carefully thought out, and highly organised in its execution. These 'mouhadjirs' were Moslems

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<sup>581</sup> Ibid. 8.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid. 28.

<sup>583</sup> Toynbee, *The Armenian Atrocities*, 54.

from Europe, emigrants from lost Ottoman provinces which had passed under Christian rule. They had been mustering since the Balkan war within the western fringe of the diminished Ottoman Empire, a drifting, unmarshalled horde. And now suddenly we find them distributed through the Asiatic provinces, even as far afield as Cilicia, in groups nicely proportioned to the Armenian population in each locality, and ready at a moment's notice to occupy the Armenians' places, as soon as the decree for their deportation had gone forth. As soon as the Armenian refugees left their houses, mouhadjirs from Thrace took possession of them ...The organisation is masterly, and conclusive in its implication.<sup>584</sup>

This description of massacre therefore is nuanced with the phrase 'in groups nicely proportioned to the Armenian population in each locality' demonstrating the awareness of what an ethnic group consists of and how it can be taken to pieces and partially or completely destroyed. Also, how presumably 'a drifting, unmarshalled horde' could be transformed into a more tangible ethnic group or community. However, despite this scientific analysis Toynbee, demonstrates how the novelty of these events led at the time to considerable rumination on its significance for humanity in a section entitled, 'The Toll of Death.' He stated that the imagination could not comprehend the 'statistics' and the 'actuality' of the extermination; 'A nation blotted out! It is easy to say it with the lips, more difficult to realise what it means, for it is something totally beyond our experience.'<sup>585</sup>

Nevertheless, despite Toynbee's involvement in the Blue Book and his more scientific analysis literally embedded within parts of it, the newspaper coverage and political fulminating of and about the Blue Book in the winter of 1916 largely ignored such discourse. Only H. A. L. Fisher's succinct and concise one sentence summary in this vein was widely reported on; 'the broad fact that the Armenian population has been uprooted from its homes, dispersed, and to a large extent;

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<sup>584</sup> Ibid. 80-1.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid. 99.

exterminated in consequence of general orders from Constantinople.<sup>586</sup>In conclusion, the subsequent historical scholarship by concentrating on the Blue Book and the eyewitness accounts within it, without considering the fuller newspaper reportage of 1915 has distorted the change in the representation of mass killing. It also has left neglected the reports demonstrating a far more scientific approach to describing a staged, criterion-driven process of the extermination of a distinct ethnic group.

### **The Post-War Period 1919-23**

After a comparative lull in the coverage of the fate of the Armenians during 1917 and 1918, newspaper coverage increased markedly once more between 1919 and 1922. However, the genocide had found its way into contemporary popular fiction in the form of Joseph Hocking's novel *The Path of Glory* discussed in Chapter 3. The novelisation of these events attests to a growing centrality of these events in the British consciousness during the First World War. As well as it abounding in traditional orientalist discourse Hocking's narrative also contains elements that describe the trope of a process of systematic extermination being analysed here; "The three orders were," and Adana spoke peremptorily: "First, disarm all the Armenian soldiers; second, disarm all the people; third, deport all the people."<sup>587</sup> We shall see in this section how descriptions and representations of a process of systematic extermination became more concretised and succinct in the immediate post-war period. The development of this particular trope of representation therefore, builds steadily on the widespread discourse of 1915 and the wider dissemination of such conceptualisations in 1916-18 that Hocking's novel evidences.

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<sup>586</sup> *The Manchester Guardian*, December 14, 1916, 10.

<sup>587</sup> Hocking, *The Path of Glory*, 183

The reason for the increase in news coverage in 1919 was a recurrence of massacre. This occurred as nationalist Turks under Mustafa Kemal fought to undermine the efforts of the defeated Ottoman authorities to accommodate Allied plans for the area. This also developed into a war when Greek forces landed in Anatolia with British support in 1921. During the ensuing conflict there were massacres of civilians by both sides.<sup>588</sup> Whilst this was taking place the new post-war Ottoman government itself sought to bring perpetrators of the 1915-16 massacres to trial. The Turkish cabinet had been purged of remaining CUP personnel and Tevfik Pasha appointed as the grand vizier on November 11, 1918. This new Ottoman government convened a Constantinople Court-Martial under Allied supervision. This was followed by war crimes tribunals being established in provincial cities such as Yozgat, Trabzon, Erzincan and Bayburt. Thirty senior CUP officials were arrested as well as some one hundred more minor figures. Leading figures who had fled such as Talaat, Enver, Djemal and Dr. Nazim were tried *in absentia* for war crimes. The Special Organisation was implicated in crimes related to deportation and massacre of Armenians. Sixty-seven defendants were released in May but some significant indictments were handed down in July 1919. These included death sentences for Talaat, Enver, Djemal and Dr. Nazim. The tribunal continued to deliver verdicts until 1922.<sup>589</sup> The newspaper coverage and political discourse not only reported on events taking place during 1919-22 but also looked back on 1915-16. This was a rhetorical device to emphasise the significance of the more recent developments and, especially in the case of the trials, is highly relevant.

It is in this period it will be argued that clear evidence emerges of a concretisation of a discourse in the representations describing a process of systematic extermination. This in turn reinforces the significance of the material

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<sup>588</sup> See for example recent English language histories: Sean McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame: War, Revolution and the Making of the Modern Middle East, 1908-1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), 393-495. Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917-1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 227-248.

<sup>589</sup> McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame*, 425-6.

from 1915. The trope identified and analysed in relation to 1915 becomes more numerous and uniform after receding somewhat during the coverage of the Blue Book's publication in 1916. This reinforces the argument that the development of more genocidal representations might be more complex and haphazard. It builds on Tusan's and Ihrig's contention that both British and German commentators quickly understood that what we now describe as genocide was taking place and used the contemporary term extermination to describe it.<sup>590</sup>

During the coverage of the Ottoman trials in January and February 1919 both residual and emergent ways of representing the mass killing and deportations are apparent. For example, in *The Manchester Guardian* on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1919 the testimony of two teenage girls (one bearing head wounds) was invoked. They 'described in vivid colours how Armenians were collected, deported, robbed of their money, and finally massacred.'<sup>591</sup> Thus, the very natural tendency to point out wounds on the person of innocent teenage womanhood is immediately followed by a summary of what the girls had said about the process of extermination. Notable here is the way that the journalist readily produced this summative statement from an apparently longer explanation. This involved the 'vivid colours' of a number of details.

There was widespread reporting of these trials in the national and provincial press on January 2 and 3, 1919, and there was significant orientalist fixation on sexual violence in relation to both Kurds and Turkish soldiers. The story most widely quoted originated in the French paper *The Petit Parisien*. The British papers made great use of the word 'massacre' in their headlines and sub-headings in eleven out of thirteen newspapers found in an archive search using the term Armenian

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<sup>590</sup> Tusan, *The British Empire and the Armenian Genocide*, 134-6. Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide*, 55, 296-7.

<sup>591</sup> "Armenian Massacre Trial: Nuri Pasha Arrested," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 18, 1919, 10.

Massacres.<sup>592</sup> There is one particular example that was selected and featured strongly in the British selection of information. That of Kurds outraging and mutilating Armenian women before smearing them with petrol and burning them to obtain jewels the perpetrators believed they had hidden by swallowing. Five of the papers used some of this information in their headlines and subheadings.<sup>593</sup> Not included in *The Manchester Guardian's* selection from the French paper as circulated by the Press Association but mentioned in six of the Provincial papers is the sieving of the ashes to find the gems and precious metals.<sup>594</sup>

*The Yorkshire Evening Post* for example, comments on one particular detail from the *Petit Parisian*. Amongst numerous atrocities, one particularly horrible case is singled out, involving the fate of two thousand women who were believed to have concealed jewelry by swallowing it. They 'were saturated with petrol and burnt, the cinders being passed through a sieve in order that the avaricious Turks might recover the jewels.'<sup>595</sup> This could be an example of how 'atrocitarian,'

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<sup>592</sup> "Massacre of 1,500,000 Armenians by Hun Order," *Daily Mirror*, January 3, 1919. "Final Turkish Efforts Against Armenians," "Massacre Organised," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 3, 1919, 5. "The Armenian Massacres," *Derby Daily Telegraph*, January 2, 1919. "Organised Armenian Slaughter," "Scientific Massacre by Huns," *The Globe*, January 3, 1919, 10. "Armenian Massacres: Organised by Germany," *Gloucestershire Echo*, January 3, 1919, 4. "2,000 Women Burned: Turco-Hun Massacre of 1,500,000 Armenians," *Nottingham Evening Post*, January 3, 1919, 2. "Armenian Massacres: Systematically Organised by Germany," *The Western Times*, January 3, 1919, 12. "Two Thousand Women Burned: Massacres Organised by the Germans," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, January 3, 1919. "Armenian Massacres," *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, January 3, 1919, 4. "The Massacre of Armenians," *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencier*, January 3, 1919, 5. "Scientific Massacres," *Western Daily Press*, January 3, 1919, 5.

<sup>593</sup> "Turkish Atrocities, Children Buried Alive: Women Burned," *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*, January 3, 1919. "Two Thousand Women Burned," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, January 3, 1919. "2,000 Women Burned," *Nottingham Evening Post*, January 3, 1919, 2. "Organised Armenian Slaughter," "Foul Outrages on Women," *The Globe*, January 3, 1919, 10. "Smearred With Petrol and Set On Fire: Fate of 2,000 Women at the Hands of Kurds," *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, January 3, 1919, 1.

<sup>594</sup> 'A central News dispatch says that in the case of the women burned to death, their remains were passed through a sieve in order that the avaricious Turks might recover the jewels.' "Organised Armenian Slaughter," *The Globe*, January 3, 1919, 10. "2,000 Women Burned," *Nottingham Evening Post*, January 3, 1919, 2. "Two Thousand Women Burned: Massacres Organised by the Germans," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, January 3, 1919. "Armenian Massacres," *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, January 3, 1919, 4. "Turkish Atrocities, Children Buried Alive: Women Burned," *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, January 3, 1919. "The Massacre of Armenians," *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencier*, January 3, 1919, 5.

<sup>595</sup> "Two Thousand Women Burned: Massacres Organised by the Germans," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, January 3, 1919.

polemical listing was now becoming more modern. It was perhaps reflecting the change in the nature of the atrocities being committed against individuals. The term 'avaricious Turks' is of a traditional orientalist nature. However, it is significant that a particularly modern atrocity one might suggest is picked out by the newspaper from 'numerous' others. Thus, it typified the diabolic nature of the crimes being committed. Burning women to death (presumably alive) could be said to be an age-old atrocity. However, in this case it would seem to be the second step of a process (after a first step of the diagnosis by the perpetrators of a problem to be solved) to facilitate the third and fourth steps of sieving the ashes and then recovering the jewels. This identification of particularly more modern and newer acts of atrocity that seem to have perplexed British contemporaries more significantly than others is taken up further below in a section on the organised mass drownings of Armenian civilians that were reported on in 1915.

The mixture of traditional and newer tropes January 1919 is perhaps best demonstrated by *The Globe's* use of headings. 'Organised Armenian Slaughter. Scientific Massacre By Huns: Slaughter Of Thousands Of Children. Foul Outrages On Women. Organised Outrage. Dug Their Own Graves.' Also, of interest is the headline, 'Fifty per cent, Gone.'<sup>596</sup> Such a short, sharp statement, though typical of headlines does suggest disbelieving horror alongside a conceptualisation of a whole population and what could be done to it in a highly organised process. Twice the word organised is used sandwiching the more traditional use of slaughter and foul outrages which is then followed by a reference to the digging of their own graves by the victims. This phrase suggests organisation and process but also the immorality and perversity of a traditionally cruel perpetrator mocking those victims. Yet, the reference to a statistical attack on a designated population is a stark contrast demonstrating a very different and more modern understanding of the mass killing of civilians.

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<sup>596</sup> "Organised Armenian Slaughter," *The Globe*, January 3, 1919, 10. This newspaper was a London based publication and as it was owned by Max Aitken who served in Lloyd George's coalition government as Minister for Information can be considered as a cross between a provincial and national paper of significant influence.

Further coverage in *The Times* testifies to a realisation in the post-war period that a more long-term policy than repeated massacres on the part of the Turks was at work and that these events constituted the final stage of a process. For example, *The Times* on the January 4, 1919 commented on continued outrages on the Armenian population in the Caucasus despite the armistice; 'The Turks have openly acknowledged that the intention is to deal a final blow at the Armenians and to consummate the Turkish policy of exterminating the race.'<sup>597</sup> In this vein of descriptions of a process of extermination of an ethnic group involving criteria there is growing evidence for this new trope elsewhere in the post-war period. What is described as a memorial signed by a number of prominent Armenophiles such as Noel Buxton and Aneurin Williams as well as Toynbee and forwarded to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary has as its third point; 'In wide areas the Armenians and other Christian races have been in part massacred and in part driven into exile. We ask that these districts be dealt with on a pre-war basis, so that no recognition be given to the policy of turning a majority into a minority by means of massacre.'<sup>598</sup>

Not only has this statement resulted from a conceptualisation of a process of systematic extermination it is a statistical and scientific. It is not a religious or cultural, long-term visualisation of 'a people' and how that can be statistically and scientifically controlled and fundamentally changed in the short-term. To further demonstrate that a new conceptualisation of a process of systematic extermination had indeed developed as a result of the First World War and its aftermath the following example can be cited from *The Manchester Guardian* six months previously. It stated that the 'principles and methods' of the Russians and the Turks were the same and both sought 'to destroy society in order to seize its ruin by putting members out of the way and taking possession of their property.'<sup>599</sup>

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<sup>597</sup> "More Armenian Massacres," *The Times*, January 4, 1919, 6.

<sup>598</sup> "Christian Races Under the Turks," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 16, 1920, 10.

<sup>599</sup> "The Ottoman Empire, Turkey's Case Against Dismemberment," *The Manchester Guardian*, June 27, 1919, 9.

This is a clear awareness of a perceived policy that is deliberate and moved by criteria involving an end result and that is staged involving 'principles and methods.' The practices and rationales of what today is referred to as ethnic cleansing and genocide here demands the necessity of a name due to its novelty. Most significant in this example demonstrating the development of a theory rather than merely a description of what is being observed is the way the writer, a special correspondent for the paper identifies two separate perpetrators of these 'principles and methods.' In 1922 the journalist (foreign editor at *The Times* 1899-1912), diplomat, historian and author Sir Valentine Chirol 'a passionate imperialist' who believed before the war that 'Imperial Germany and Muslim unrest' were the greatest threats to the British Empire also spoke to a theory of systematic extermination as process.<sup>600</sup>

But obviously such schemes are hopeless in Asia Minor if the Turks are determined to complete the elimination of all their subject races by their systematic expulsion, and by drafting the few able-bodied male survivors into labour colonies into the interior for the sole benefit of the ruling race.<sup>601</sup>

In the post-war period British observers were increasingly grouping separate incidences of atrocities being inflicted on civilian populations. *The Times* did so in relation to the Greeks and the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The article quoted below also deploys the concept of 'the remnant of a people' discussed above. Here it demonstrates a criterion of what an ethnic group is and how it can be partially or fully eliminated. It cited the experience of the Greeks of Eastern Thrace who had endured 'the same treatment that a few years earlier had reduced the Armenians to the remnant of a people.'<sup>602</sup> There is in fact one example at least in *The Times* of a new name being applied to the 'same treatment', 'principles and methods' and the policy of 'elimination of all their subject races by their systematic

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<sup>600</sup> Linda B. Fritzingler, *Diplomat Without Portfolio: Valentine Chirol, His Life and Times* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006).

<sup>601</sup> "A Million in Flight," *The Observer*, October 29, 1922, 6.

<sup>602</sup> "A League Success," *The Times*, November 3, 1926, 15.

expulsion' in the mid-1920s. In an obituary for the CUP politician, activist and ideologue, Dr Nazim *The Times* focuses on 'the elimination of subject races' by 'their systematic expulsion.' The Kurds, the Arabs and the Armenians are all described as 'an ethnical obstacle to a geographical policy, that must be wiped off the map.'<sup>603</sup>

That an 'ethnical obstacle' has been identified to a 'geographical policy' is significant in relation to an emergent discourse involving a criterion-driven process that had developed by the 1920s. This was a discourse, which was also developing a new vocabulary in form of such examples as 'ethnical.' Though this was an established word in the English language it is not used commonly if at all in the primary sources used for this thesis and its use here appears novel. It will be noted that these two examples are taken from 1926 and are used by this thesis as evidence that even in a period which saw a very marked decline in the discourse on the Armenian genocide a concretised trope of process has fully developed and is surviving in an otherwise discursive desert.

That such conceptualisations were becoming reasonably widespread and concretised in the more immediate post-war period can be demonstrated by an article from a correspondent in *The Manchester Guardian* on March 6, 1920 recounting the events of 1915. The immediate context of this article was the concern in that period that the post-war settlement was going to severely let the Armenians down and the headline is 'The Scandal of Armenian Martyrdom.' However, despite the traditional religious imagery so redolent of the British discourse on the Armenians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the article involved an analysis of ethnic destruction. In introducing the reader to the beginning of the massacres and deportations in 1915 the writer identified a 'scheme' on the part of the 'Ottoman Cabinet' in the 'territories lying north-east of the Anatolian and Bagdad railways:'

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<sup>603</sup> "Young Turk Leaders," *The Times*, August 28, 1926, 9.

They selected these territories (which amounted to rather more than a third of the Turkish Empire and included the vast majority of its Armenian inhabitants) because in large parts of them the Turkish nationality was in a small, in many districts in an infinitesimal minority, and their eventual loss was therefore probable unless the proportions of the different elements in the population were artificially-and profoundly-modified.<sup>604</sup>

This amounts to an establishment of clear criteria for a policy of homogenisation and a clear visualisation of a population that can be subsequently and artificially modified in a specified area, the 'territories lying north-east of the Anatolian and Bagdad railways.' This implies an assumption about populations and their natural state and development. An assumption challenged by a new type of governmental population policy using processes of mass killing and persecution. After establishing these criteria the correspondent then describes a step by step process later classified as an 'extermination scheme.' Firstly, the picking out of the army and the sending of Armenian soldiers to unarmed labour battalions, next the calling in of arms from unmobilised Armenians, 'and then next' the releasing of convicts to establish 'irregular bands of brigands'. Then the shooting of the labour battalions by military commanders and orders to:

...the civil officials in each province, department, and arrondissement to arrest the local Armenians on a given day, seize their property, separate the men from the women and children, and hand them over in batches to the diluted gendarmerie for deportation-hundreds of miles across the mountains-to the Syrian and Mesopotamian desert.<sup>605</sup>

References are made to 'batches of male victims' being 'generally butchered wholesale' and 'batches' of women and children being 'thinned out capriciously.'<sup>606</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> "The Scandal of Armenian Martyrdom," *The Manchester Guardian*, March 2, 1920, 8.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid.

Here we have the clear visualisation of the population and its constituent parts and a description of the different elements-the CUP Cabinet, the military commanders and civil officials-involved in the machinery of persecution. The fact that the criteria involved in a process of systematic extermination is described to a greater degree than in examples of descriptions from 1915 is significant. This suggests that there is more to this than people merely describing what is happening. It also suggests that since 1915 changes in how people conceptualised the mass killing of civilians had taken place. This is an article written in 1920 looking back on the events of 1915 and applying a diagnosis retrospectively. This can be usefully compared to the way the two articles from 1926 analysed above also look back on events and seemingly apply a similar diagnosis. Four days later the same paper all but repeats this representation of systematic organised killing in a manner which suggests the ongoing development of an agreed definition and description. One sentence summarises two facilitating stages stating that from 'the Armenian provinces the populations were driven out, the men divided from the women and children.' A second describes what was facilitated by these stages; 'The men were murdered by relays, the women and children driven on, subjected to repeated outrage, to perish in the end or live.'<sup>607</sup> This correspondent's analysis is more scientific and detailed than that of Bryce in a speech reported three days later. Using the ventriloquist technique of what the Turks wanted to do he stated, 'We want to have a Turkish Empire which consisted entirely of Moslems, and therefore we will put an end to the presence of Christians by the simple method of extermination.' He goes on to assert that nearly a million Armenians died as a result of the 1915 massacres.<sup>608</sup>

The following year another article in *The Manchester Guardian* demonstrates how the development of the criteria identified in these representations would, in part, would eventually lead to the principle of homogeneity being recognised in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.<sup>609</sup> Not only did this treaty recognise the Kemalist Nationalist government and its policy of ethnic

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<sup>607</sup> "The Case of the Armenians," *The Manchester Guardian*, March 6, 1920, 10.

<sup>608</sup> "England and Armenia," *The Manchester Guardian*, March 5, 1920, 8.

<sup>609</sup> Tusan, *Smyrna's Ashes*, 146, 174.

cleansing and therefore the earlier genocide of the Armenians (the principle of an independent Armenian state was abandoned) it was to be the means by which there was a huge population exchange between Turkey and Greece. Over one million Greeks ('or identified as such') were forced to leave Asia Minor and eastern Thrace from 1923 and around 350,000 Muslims ('or those so classified') 'were expelled from Greece's mainland and islands over the same stretch of time.'<sup>610</sup> The article stated that as the disputed territories are mixed in population 'assigning them to or partitioning them' between states will not solve this problem of minorities.<sup>611</sup> The article continues to argue that a solution is impossible regarding the physical land itself and the 'problem of minorities' and 'complicated transfers of territorial sovereignty, like those made in the Treaty of Sevres...will make its solution impossible.'<sup>612</sup> Presented here is an 'answer' that lay in the manipulation of the peoples, the ethnic groups, not the territory they inhabited. The nation state was then presented as the default and approved organ of government, but with some recognition that it is possible to have 'alien minorities' within it, albeit with provisos. The article argued that national states will not treat minorities well if their presence encourages claims from neighbouring states. Therefore, the 'more securely its frontiers are fixed, the more generous each State can afford to be to the minorities inside them.'<sup>613</sup> What is clearly signalled here is the problem of having minorities in more than one state and indeed in bordering states.

Further, the above quoted article in *The Manchester Guardian* entitled, 'The Extermination Policy Continuing' not only describes the extermination policy as part of a process relying on a criterion of 'plurality' but also could be said to be prescient. The Kemalist Government is described as 'settling Moslem immigrants in the district around Kars, in preparation no doubt, for a plebiscite.' A 'process' of 'settling Moslem refugees' is referred to in Van, Erzerum and Bitlis which has resulted in 'The Arminian plurality in those districts' being 'reduced not only by

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<sup>610</sup> Umut Oszu, *Formalizing Displacement: International Law and Population Transfers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 7.

<sup>611</sup> "A Near East Settlement," *The Manchester Guardian*, December 29, 1921, 4.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid.

massacre and deportation of Christians but also by the influx of Moslems.’ This is described as an ‘appeal to the Wilsonian principle of self-determination.’<sup>614</sup> Here the identified stages of massacre, deportation and replacing of population by immigrants is accompanied with mention of the modern plebiscitary machinery that came to be associated with decision making regarding population and sovereignty after the First World War.

The historical context of this journalism is the war between Greece and Turkey, the latter now dominated by Mustafa Kemal’s nationalist forces. They successfully fought to overturn the Sevres peace settlement and expel Greek forces.<sup>615</sup> The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and the ensuing population transfer that accompanied it was the result. Despite its acceptance by the British Government, condemnation of the violence against civilians persisted as did the processes and policies which had now been firmly identified and described. *The Manchester Guardian* in 1921 reported a ‘Renewal of Massacre’ which again demonstrated how different events aimed at different victims were now equated with identical methods. ‘The Turk’ has ‘seized the occasion in order to perpetrate a series of massacres, none the less cruel and detestable because they take the form of forced migrations in which the deported perish, and in which they are obviously intended to perish.’ ‘He’ is described as having ‘found his subject populations inconvenient and...has set himself to wipe them out.’ For the Armenians this was ‘largely accomplished’ during the war. Greeks ‘were also victims, but the process was not complete. It is now being resumed in earnest.’<sup>616</sup> Events which took place seven years earlier are being described by a new diagnosis that has developed since the war and is now fully concretised.

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<sup>614</sup> “Turks and Armenians: The Exterminating policy Continuing,” *The Manchester Guardian*, February 10, 1921, 4.

<sup>615</sup> See for example, McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame*, 439-81.

<sup>616</sup> “The Renewal of Massacre,” *The Manchester Guardian*, May 17, 1922, 6.

A fortnight later the same paper reported the Greek Foreign Minister's summary of events. They leave us to speculate whether these were his exact words accurately translated into English or whether they had been translated into English to best fit a newer British description of 'systematic extermination.' Its purpose being to change the 'ethnological complexion' of a geographical area. The possibility also exists that the minister's words were summarised by the journalists own description of such policies. The minister said that 'the object of the present atrocities was evident.' Namely, that it 'was the systematic extermination of the last Greek and the last Christian in the countries administered by Turkish authorities for the purpose of changing the ethnological complexion of the districts concerned, in most of which Greeks had not been in a minority.'<sup>617</sup> Whatever the truth regarding this point the readiness to use this language whether it is accurately translated or paraphrased is illuminating. It demonstrates further the development of a new conceptual representation and trope of discourse immediately recognisable to the readers of this and other newspapers.

### **Representations of Organised Mass Drowning of Armenians**

An article from January 8, 1917, in *The Manchester Guardian* attests to awareness within the trade union movement of the Armenian genocide. It is significant that a particular act of persecution apparently symbolises for this writer the worst aspects of the massacres and deportations. This was the use of barges to take Armenians into the Black Sea at Trabzon (Trebizond) for example, and drown them in a systematic manner. Indeed in a manner which could be described as a process.<sup>618</sup> As the newspaper articles analysed below demonstrate some eyewitnesses talked of people being tied together so as to ensure that they drowned. The piece also contains within it a frankly quite bizarre use of the issue to defend the right of

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<sup>617</sup> "The Turkish Massacres in Asia Minor," *The Manchester Guardian*, June 2, 1922, 10.

<sup>618</sup> Akcam, *A Shameful Act*, 197. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 471-3. Suny, "They Can Live in the Desert and Nowhere Else", 290.

British workers to imbibe alcohol. Its equation of 'teetotal fanaticism' and British teetotalers with their 'ruthless and brutal influence' and acts of genocide smacks of Godwin's Law and the invocation of Adolf Hitler, the Nazis and the Holocaust in all sorts of arguments and debates today:

We have no reason to imitate the example of the Turks-a nation of teetotalers which has murdered a million Armenian Christians.-yet no teetotal organisation has protested against this awful calamity. When one remembers that these poor victims have been tied together in bundles which have floated hither and thither on the tide, one can imagine the extent to which teetotal fanaticism can go. Are these precious creatures to be permitted to continue their ruthless and brutal influence upon British social life?...Ninety-five per cent of the fighting forces are non-abstainers; 90 per cent of the conscientious objectors are teetotalers. So far from teetotalism improving the *moral* of a nation it is all the other way, as we have seen from the example of the Turks.<sup>619</sup>

The headline is 'Docker's Union and Liquor Control.' It can be compared with the example from the same newspaper from 1922 regarding the use of the discourse on the Armenian genocide in a conversation on chemicals in a company board meeting. It demonstrates the manner in which its events were recalled to elaborate on completely unrelated issues during this period. This attests to its centrality in the British consciousness throughout society during the First World War and the immediate post-war years. It also could be said to be of a traditional orientalist nature. Further, it points to the way in which contemporaries were seemingly taken aback by some of the more modern features of the events and the way it was seen as a process of systematic extermination across the British social spectrum. There are several examples in British representations of the Armenian genocide of shocked incredulity regarding reports of mass and organised drownings of Armenians by the Turkish authorities during 1915.

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<sup>619</sup> "Docker's Union and Liquor Control," *The Manchester Guardian*, January 8, 1917, 7.

One of the surviving scenes from the film *Ravished Armenia* renamed in the UK *Auction of Souls* seems to show this act.<sup>620</sup> Gloucestershire newspaper *The Echo* used the subheadings, 'Worst Infamy in the History of the World' and '14,000 Thrown Into the Sea to Drown' in August 1915.<sup>621</sup> This was when reporting of the massacres was at a height as a result of the American journalist Henry Wood's highly influential despatch circulated widely on August 16, 1915. Similarly, the details of the drownings featured significantly in the representations of the genocide that were so numerous when the Blue Book was published in December 1916. For example, *The Birmingham Daily Post* used the headline 'Turkish Outrages on Armenians, Barge Loads of Victims Drowned.'<sup>622</sup> *The Newcastle Daily Journal* also seems particularly struck by this method of killing, amongst of those of murder, rape and 'offences against children.' It pointed to 'evidence of the drowning of barge-loads of Armenians in the Tigris below Djarbekr.' Then to 'the wholesale drowning of the Armenians of Trebizond in the Black sea,' and finally 'the drowning of other Armenian exiles who reached Biredjik in batches every night in the Euphrates.'<sup>623</sup>

The piece is headlined 'Turkey and Armenia' and this newspaper has chosen to dwell significantly on one particular aspect of organised killing in framing its understanding of what took place in 'Turkey and Armenia.' Furthermore, it comments 'attention is drawn in the preface to hideous atrocities of other kinds' but it emphasises the drownings as shown above. This is followed by 'Deportation, travel in a state of nakedness, going for days without food are some of the hardships the Armenians were made to suffer at the hand of the Turks.' However, this is the extent of the coverage, in contrast to the drownings. The drownings were also a significant feature of James Bryce's condemnation of Turkish violence against Ottoman Armenians. Bryce included the following in his preface to the Blue Book

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<sup>620</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTnCaW-Uo\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTnCaW-Uo_s)

<sup>621</sup> "The Armenian Masscres," *The Echo* (Gloucestershire), August 25, 1915, 4.

<sup>622</sup> "Turkish Outrages on Armenians," *The Birmingham Daily Post*, December 14, 1916, 8.

<sup>623</sup> "Turkey and Armenia," *The Newcastle Daily Journal*, December 15, 1916, 4.

(cited by the *Newcastle Daily Journal* above) and it was one of the more strident comments in terms of describing a centrally organised process:

The description in Doc. 12 (German material) of how barge loads of Armenians were drowned in the Tigris below Diyarbekir, renders more fully credible the accounts of how the Armenians of Trebizond were drowned wholesale in the Black Sea. Doc. 12 also contains the statement, from a German employee of the Baghdad Railway, that the Armenian exiles who reached Biredjik were drowned wholesale in batches every night in the Euphrates; and similar horrors are reported from almost every section of the Euphrates course. Docs. 56, 57, 59, and 62 describe how the convoys of exiles from the Vilayet of Erzeroum were cast into the Kara Su (western branch of the Euphrates) at the gorge called Kamakh Boghaz, and were then shot in the water or left to drown...Doc. 66 describes corpses floating in the river in the neighbourhood of Kiakhta, and Doc. 137 the drowning of exiles in the tributaries of the Euphrates between Harpout and Aleppo. These are evidently instances of a regular practice, and when we find the exiles from Trebizond and Kerasond being disposed of in the same fashion in a comparatively distant part of the Turkish Empire, we are almost compelled to infer that the drowning of exiles en masse was a definite part of the general scheme drawn out by the Young Turk leaders at Constantinople.<sup>624</sup>

The way some British contemporaries readily identified a pattern of systematic extermination in the form of organised drowning as part of a process can also be evidenced in some concise and succinct summaries of that process. For example, in an article of September 22, 1915, headlined, 'The Armenian Horrors', *The Manchester Guardian* published a letter from Bryce to the Armenophile Member of Parliament, Aneurin Williams. It described events in Trebizond and what happened to Armenians there; 'Troops hunted them all out, drove them to the shore, placed them in sailing-boats, took them out to sea, threw them overboard

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<sup>624</sup> Toynbee, *Treatment of the Armenians*, xxv.

and drowned them all, men, women, and children.’<sup>625</sup> Here he has given a clear and concise step by step summary. The description is Spartan and abrupt, one, two, three, four, five, six stages of the process in one thirty-word sentence. The last four of which (‘men, women, and children’ is surely an observation on totality) aims to resoundingly conclude on its significance for humanity. The coda is a statement regarding the one-sided nature of the killings followed by an attempt to forestall incredulity. This cites authoritative witnesses in a world where something to this writer, has fundamentally changed in the way governments kill people; ‘Resistance was impossible, for the younger men had been carried off to the army and the rest were unarmed. This was seen and described by Italian consuls.’ In 1916, *The Manchester Guardian* was moved to wonder on such matters of human nature in a similar manner to the way many people have puzzled over how ‘ordinary men’ with wives and children could commit the atrocities of the Holocaust. The piece quoted immediately below is commenting on the Turkish people as a whole, using a theme often voiced during the war regarding positive opinions on Turkish soldiers, sometimes known as ‘the clean fighting Turk.’ The Turkish troops, ‘who would scorn to purloin a wounded British soldier’s kit will apparently drown a shipload of Armenian women and children without a qualm.’ The article concluded that the Turk ‘is a Jekyll to his equals and a Hyde to those he considers his inferiors.’<sup>626</sup> The reference to Stevenson’s famous novel demonstrates how the language, which was coping with these challenges to the conventions of humanity, was rooted in the cultural scientific discourse of the day. As such, it perhaps considers the impact of modernity on human beings and what they are capable of.

Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker have commented: ‘Unprecedented violence became integrated with disconcerting ease into the daily life of every civilian and soldier to the point where it became commonplace.’<sup>627</sup> Using Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker’s view mentioned above, and as a challenge to it, it was not the scale of the events in Anatolia nor the idea that ‘a people’ that was being exterminated that

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<sup>625</sup> “The Armenian Horrors,” *The Manchester Guardian*, September 22, 1915, 4.

<sup>626</sup> “The Turk as Enemy,” *The Manchester Guardian*, June 24, 1916, 6.

<sup>627</sup> Audoin-Rouzeau & Becker, 14-18, 34

created the greatest shock and confusion in these examples of the British representation of the Armenian genocide. Abhorrence of the extermination of a people and the effect of propaganda inflation decrying the greatest ever massacres and atrocities in history can be strongly seen in both the 1890s and the First World War and its immediate aftermath. What created the greatest concern in the minds of so many British people across the social spectrum was the apparently comparatively calm act of placing people on specially commissioned barges, tying them together and pushing them into the sea to drown.<sup>628</sup> For example, this concern on the part of dockers was echoed by Sir John Spear (previously a Liberal Unionist now a Conservative M.P. in 1918) in the House of Commons in November 1918. After noting the occurrence of tragedies and tortures ‘nothing moved my people more than the action of Turkey in taking thousands of Armenians out to sea and throwing them into the water to drown.’<sup>629</sup> This perhaps can be seen as an example of the process whereby the said tragedies and tortures demonstrate a regretful acceptance of the dissolution of the boundary between civilian and military and a simultaneously enthusiastic repulsion of it. It could be said to denote acceptance of the Allied blockade and the Russian deportations whilst the ‘beyond the pale’ act of organised drowning is used to suppress and project away from the guilt involved.

### **Conclusion**

To proceed and to conclude on this development, this chapter has analysed British representations in the discourse on the Armenian genocide during and after the First World War and demonstrated key changes in the manner of describing the mass killing and persecution of civilian groups. Changes demonstrating newer more

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<sup>628</sup> In terms of this trope of atrocity, one possibility (and evidence for its impact and significance) is that the visualisation of people being tied together in bundles influenced the notorious propaganda story of 1917 involving the German corpse factory. This involved the allegation that the bodies and rendered fat of dead German soldiers was being used to produce soap. One feature of the story was that the bodies were delivered to the factory tied in bundles with barbed wire. See Neander, J. and Marlin, R. *Media and Propaganda: The Northcliffe Press and the Corpse Factory of World War One*. 2010, *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition*. Volume 3, Issue 2, pp. 67-82. Neander and Marlin do not make any links between the subject of their article and events in Anatolia.

<sup>629</sup> Sir John Spear, House of Commons, November 18, 1918.

modern conceptualisations that the sociologist Martin Shaw explains using the concept of groups as social constructions. He argues that social groups are not destroyed by killing individual members. This is done by destroying a groups 'social power in economic, political and cultural senses.' He concludes, '[Genocide] involves mass killing but...is much more than mass killing.'<sup>630</sup> It is the argument of this thesis that the polemical listing of denunciation of the traditional and orientalist discourse of the 'atrocitarians' was primarily, about 'mass killing.' The newer tropes describing a process of systematic extermination are about 'more than mass killing.' Furthermore, that the latter involved more modern, scientific and sociological social constructions and criteria of groups and how they can be destroyed. In addition, Jacque Semelin's observations regarding the conceptualisation of massacre and its influence on researchers to an extent, also supports the central contention of this chapter. He suggests that massacre as a concept has the drawback of focusing on the murderous event to the point of disregarding the process that led to it; 'This could greatly distort the way the phenomenon is perceived since different forms of violence occurring prior to a massacre might simply be ignored or played down.'<sup>631</sup>

The development of the representations described in this chapter attests to a view that British observers during 1915-23 were expanding on the moment of massacre by grappling fundamentally with a 'process that led to the slaughter.' This trope has similarities with those from the 1890s but what sets it apart is the succinctness of some of the writing and a greater development of criteria. In the nineteenth century representations, an emotive polemical listing of atrocity predominates despite the description of stages and planning in a few instances. In the representations of the First World War, this polemical listing strongly persists. However, more succinct passages regarding stages and planning become increasingly numerous and crucially, more uniform. Emile Dillon's writing is the only example this research has found of such a step-by-step analysis from the 1890s.

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<sup>630</sup> Martin Shaw, *What is Genocide?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 34, 106, 156. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>631</sup> Jacques Semelin, "From massacre to the genocidal process," *International Social Sciences Journal* no. 174, (November 2002): 435.

This fact it could be argued serves to emphasise the significance of the much wider use of such a trope in 1915. Moreover, as well as lacking the same succinctness and examples of concise summary Emile Dillon's work is some of the most polemical to be found in the nineteenth century discourse on atrocity. Further, it is overly fascinated by the sexual violence and the awful intimate details of physical violence involved to the point of pornography. Therefore, its emphasis in terms of interpretation is orientalist and gendered with the apparent modernity of the stage-by-stage aspects being largely incidental and a description rather than a deeper analysis.

This chapter has also drawn attention to the way writers and commentators looked back at events that had taken place from five to ten years ago and applied a diagnosis reliant on concepts of systematic extermination. These representations of the mass killing and persecution of civilians amounted to a now concretised conceptualisation of a process of systematic extermination. This also involved an awareness of criteria for how this could be done and the reasons for it. Further, of the desired end goal. The events were interpreted as facilitating stages demonstrating understanding of how these stages took an ethnic group apart and partially or completely destroyed it. This was accompanied with an understanding of how ethnic groups were constructed and what they consisted of. Moreover, how the ethnic composition of given geographical spaces could be altered by the deportation and killing of people followed by their replacement by others. The application of such diagnoses can perhaps be compared with the way today the United Nations 1948 Genocide Convention can be applied to ascertain whether a genocide is taking or has taken place.

To conclude, the way the British press, politicians and commentators represented the mass killing and persecution of the Armenians changed in some fundamental ways during the war and in the immediate post-war period. A move towards concise descriptions of systematic persecution which was added to a

polemical listing of atrocities demonstrated a growing awareness of a new type of organised mass killing on an ethnic basis. This period was according to Kramer an era of an inherent 'dynamic of destruction'<sup>632</sup> that Winter suggests 'changed what was thinkable, what was imaginable.'<sup>633</sup> Therefore, despite very strong strains of continuity, there were some profound changes in the ways that newspapers and commentators represented mass killing of civilians in the First World War in the Ottoman Empire that provides strong evidence for such scholarship. The development of newer, more modern and 'genocidal' representations and tropes did reflect the development of newer, more modern and 'genocidal' methods and mentalities. Such methods and mentalities also reflected how modern nation states had developed rationales involving geographical space. Further, how their ethnic composition could be modified and profoundly changed to their perceived advantage.<sup>634</sup> This involved a development of criteria for what constituted an ethnic group and how it could be dismantled in order to attain a long-term goal. This was described as a process which was increasingly carried out by bureaucratic and administrative as well as military means in a series of facilitating stages. The British representations of the deportation and massacres of the Armenians following the First World War strongly reflected this. This adds significantly to the evidence that what took place would now be described as the process of genocide.

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<sup>632</sup> Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*.

<sup>633</sup> Winter, *Remembering War*, 82-3.

<sup>634</sup> For example, Richard Bessel and Claudia B. Haake have argued that the forced removal of peoples in the world as 'a mass phenomenon is peculiarly modern'. They assert that; 'During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a number of factors combined to make forced removal a global phenomenon on a massive scale. These include the use of extensive apparatuses of organisation and modern technology. The combination of the development of a global capitalist economy, the emergence of modern race thinking, the conduct of two world wars, and the triumph of popular and national sovereignty has given this dreadful phenomenon a quantitatively and qualitatively new character'. Richard Bessel & Claudia B. Haake, "Introduction: Forced Removal in the Modern World," in *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World*, ed. Richard Bessel & Claudia B. Haake (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1.

## Conclusion

In the introduction to this thesis, I referred to Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau's work on 1915 and how this year represented a 'moment of the revelation of the "Other"'.<sup>635</sup> Indeed, his essay on that year demonstrates how important 1915 was in terms of, as one of its sub-headings denotes; 'Violence against unarmed populations.' He suggests that 'the "war cultures" became increasingly crystallised around a body of mobilising themes,' one of which and a central one, was that involving atrocities.<sup>636</sup> This thesis has demonstrated how significant the British representation of the Armenian genocide was in the development of what Audoin-Rouzeau calls a 'powerfully mobilising logic of justification'<sup>637</sup> and an extreme form of 'negative mobilisation.'<sup>638</sup> Indeed, this thesis has shown how central an event the Armenian genocide was to British contemporaries. Audoin-Rouzeau points out how most of the atrocities involved in this process took place in areas of enemy occupation such as Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Belgium, France and Galicia where 'the primary concern was the material exploitation of resources; the local occupied population was itself an important local resource...Violence was part of this process...'<sup>639</sup> Tremendously significant therefore was the role of a rationale involving 'ethnic nationality and origin'<sup>640</sup> in Russian occupied Galicia and even more so in the Ottoman Empire. Even more so, because what happened in the latter was a genocidal attack on a state's own population rather than one in an occupied area. This was Russia's treatment to a lesser extent of its Jewish population and to a greater extent its Kirghiz population. Audoin-Rouzeau calls this an 'unprecedented radicalisation of violence towards populations seen as too unreliable to be left alive in their towns and villages.'<sup>641</sup> He argues that the 'extreme hostility to the enemy' involved in the denunciation of such acts in 1915 saw 'the moment of full flowering

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<sup>635</sup> Audoin-Rouzeau, "1915," 74.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.* 73-4.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.* 78.

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.* 87.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.* 74-5.

<sup>640</sup> *Ibid.* 74.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.* 76.

of the different national “war cultures”...’<sup>642</sup>This thesis has shown how important British representations of the Armenian genocide were in the ‘war culture’ of Britain. However, it goes further by demonstrating the importance of biomedical language using the imagery of a rural idyll in an orientalist act of projection. This involved both more modern, emergent aspects and traditional, residual tropes. One hugely significant development though was a modern way of describing a process of extermination using rationales and criteria that foretold definitions of ethnic cleansing and genocide.

To demonstrate this, this thesis has concentrated on descriptions, views and attitudes from British politicians, journalists and writers during the First World War. These representations go beyond the Parliamentary Blue Book published in the December of 1916 and the first-hand accounts it contained. This consisted chiefly of eyewitness accounts by Armenian survivors, refugees and representatives of Armenian organisations, American missionaries and relief workers, foreign travellers and Russian Armenians. A significant number came from German diplomats and observers (including the German Red Cross) in the region. I have engaged with the Blue Book in a more domestic context and have focused on the way that these accounts were commented on and paraphrased by British commentators.

This work suggests that the way the ‘terrible Turk’ is ‘othered’ in an admittedly highly biased and propagandistic process can be read as further evidence for the genocide argument. This reading relies on the view that Orientalism was in part a means of dealing with the ‘West’s’ own concerns regarding its identity and problems therein. It suggests that, in this case, British fears concerning morality and identity were projected on to the ‘terrible Turk.’ Indeed, one argument made in the thesis is that the condemnation of the

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<sup>642</sup> Ibid. 78.

perpetrators involved language, which reflected the same genocidal rationales on the part of those denouncing them.

Some readers will no doubt contend that this may well not involve a conscious and deliberate act of projection. The argument may well be made that the British use of criteria that foretells modern descriptions of genocide and ethnic cleansing is the result of accurate reporting. Further, that the use of language and rationales very similar to that of the perpetrators is a coincidence and not a guilty act of projection. This thesis cannot prove otherwise but it can strongly raise the possibility of projection, whether conscious or not, using some of the scholarship on Orientalism. It can also point out the universality of what can be described as genocidal rationales and the potential for such policies within western colonial states. The genocidal implications of the Treaty of Lausanne and the acceptance of the principle of homogenisation therein goes some way to demonstrating this.

These newer, more modern and genocidal descriptions of the mass killing civilians reflected the fact that newer, more modern and genocidal methods and rationales of and for the mass killing of civilians were in place. Moreover, this occurred in the new context of 'Total War' and the markedly increased erosion of the boundaries between the military and civilian spheres that that involved especially in the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>643</sup> Indeed, this had taken place before the First World War as the Carnegie Commission's report on the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 had shown. The long-term context that this needs to be placed in is the developments in colonialism and the homogenisation of nation states alongside scientific racism and Social Darwinism. Indeed, Hans-Lukas Kieser says of the latter in his biography of the main governmental perpetrator Talaat Pasha the Turkish Minister of the Interior that 'Social Darwinism...played a seminal role during

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<sup>643</sup> Hans-Lukas Kieser and Donald Bloxham argue that; 'The most extensive anti-civilian violence occurred in the lands of the older dynastic empires in the east, south-east and east-central parts of the continent, where battlefronts were least stable, 'population' problems most toxic and, ultimately, where state frameworks fell under greatest pressure to act for their survival'. Bloxham & Kieser, "Genocide," 592.

World War I in general and for CUP members in particular.<sup>644</sup> Moreover, this thesis has argued that the contemporary British representations of the Armenian genocide during the First World War increasingly described a process of systematic extermination. This argument adds to a significant body of genocide scholarship that has stressed modernity as a key characteristic of this phenomenon in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. For example, Omer Bartov has argued that modern genocide 'is mass murder conceived and perpetrated by modern states and organisations.' Further, that 'bureaucratic, industrial, systematic genocide may actually serve as a signifier of modernity, even if we would like to label it barbarism.'<sup>645</sup>

In terms of this concept of modernity, the Introduction of this thesis engages with the work of Berman and others. It seeks to show how British representations of the Armenian genocide can be seen as part of the 'maelstrom' of modernity he describes. It also argues that though there was a 'crisis of representation' which was part of this 'maelstrom' there was also a good deal of clarity. That clarity amounted to a highly perceptive awareness of the rationales and criteria involved in events that would now be described as genocide and ethnic cleansing. Furthermore, this thesis has attempted to demonstrate how such policies were in themselves attempts to deal with and find a way through the 'maelstrom' of modernity. The use of biomedical language in the British contemporary representation of them evidences the way their denunciation was in fact, part of the same world view of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that was integral to the modernity that Berman describes.

Regarding how British representations became much more modern I have argued that traditional polemical and 'atrocitarian' orientalist language from the

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<sup>644</sup> Kieser, *Talaat*, 7.

<sup>645</sup> Omer Bartov, "Seeking the Roots of Modern Genocide: On the Macro- and Microhistory of Mass Murder," in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately, & Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 76.

nineteenth century continued to feature strongly in British representations of the massacres and deportations of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire throughout the period. This 'style' though was supplemented in 1915 as the genocide unfolded from summer onwards with a newer discourse that described a process of systematic extermination. There were examples in British representations of the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s in this vein but in 1915 they become much more common, explicit rather than implicit and more self-aware and upfront rather than incidental. These representations also demonstrate a growing understanding of ethnicity and of how a religious or religious group could be taken to pieces and partially or completely destroyed. This apparent awareness of the criteria involved also included a sense of how the ethnic structure of a given geographical area could be altered and homogenised by a process of population removal. Further, of how this could be done by moving other groups of people into these geographical areas to replace those who had been removed.

In contrast to previous representations of massacre and deportation, in the British newspapers during the First World War there is a modernity in the language relating to a biomedical nature. This chiefly featured a scientific understanding of germs, parasites and disease, particularly cancer that became mobilised metaphorically in relation to mass killing. This was part of the process of othering in that it most often referred to the 'terrible Turk' and the Ottoman Empire. However, it also reflected the genocidal rationales that the CUP government was itself using, viewing its territory and populations therein as a body which could be treated medically. In addition to this, compared to the nineteenth century and the period right up to the First World War the Armenians of Anatolia, particularly the Armenian peasantry, began immediately in 1915 to be represented much more positively than previously. In a development closely related to the biomedical language referred to, this peasantry was commonly placed in a type of rural idyll readily identifiable in the shires of England in particular. This more traditional discourse though was closely related to the more modern biomedical language

mentioned in that this rural idyll was represented as clean and pure and that this could be polluted and destroyed by threats associated with disease and dirt.

Another feature of the discourse in British representations of the genocide was the continued use of highly gendered material. This reflected traditional orientalist practice whereby western writers spent much time reflecting an obsessive interest in what they perceived to be eastern sexual degeneracy revolving around the much-misunderstood practice of the harem. In the area of representations of violence this manifested itself in the form of lengthy descriptions of rape and female abduction. However, in the later representations of the First World War this does seem to demonstrate a new sociological awareness of the importance of women to the existence of an ethnic group. Further, how a deliberate attack on the female part of the population partially or completely destroyed the ethnic group and its ability to recover in the long term. In the representations this was often seen as planned and part of a process of systematic extermination.

This point regarding gendered representation is one possible link between traditional and modern discourse. The Orientalism of the former could be said to have become more modern as it seemed to increasingly to acknowledge ethnicity in terms of the importance of gender. Further, the orientalist process of projection may well have been a result of British unease regarding its own rapacious colonial practices and fears concerning the state of Britain and its population. Moreover, British 'Total War' practice involving internment of 'aliens' and the naval blockade of Germany as well as that of its allies, in particular Russia's deportation of Jews from Polish Galicia and its genocidal treatment of its Kirghiz population.

Key to my argument is that the British representation of the Armenian genocide during the First World War was the way the massacres and deportations

took their place in a canon of infamy best described by the contemporary term 'frightfulness.' Thus, they were presented in an increasingly standardised roll call of wartime atrocities. In the British case this was dominated by the 'rape' of Belgium, the naval shelling of British east coast towns, the sinking of the *Lusitania* in particular and unrestricted submarine warfare in general. Further, the first use of poison gas, Zeppelins and Gotha planes bombing civilians and the executions of Edith Cavell and Captain Fryatt. The 'rape' of Belgium in particular encouraged a British desire to propagandise enemy atrocities in such a way as to celebrate Britain's civilised mission to protect small nations. It also encouraged a highly gendered and orientalist polemical and 'atrocitarian' listing of barbarous acts and the Armenian genocide was very often seen and filtered through a prism of German 'frightfulness.' The proximity of the German threat compared to that of the Turks to an extent clouded what was taking place in the Ottoman Empire and British representations were often confused and or misplaced. Indeed, the trope of German 'frightfulness' threatened to obscure the true nature of the Armenian genocide in contemporary British understanding. But this trope of frightfulness was not hegemonic. A trope of newer more modern criterion-driven descriptions of a process of systematic extermination of a people by centrally planned facilitating stages began to emerge during the First World War. Highly significant also was a marked tendency to represent the genocide as an act of Turkish singularity from 1920 or thereabouts, onwards.

Returning to the theme of the orientalist influence a further spur to intensive and condemnatory propaganda was the apparent increasing necessity of bringing the USA into the war on the side of the Entente Allies. As explained above the more immediate existential threat of Germany to Britain led to the Armenian genocide being filtered through a prism of German 'frightfulness.' This led to a Europeanisation of the 'Turk' in the Orient whilst the 'Hun' was being orientalised in Europe. Despite this though, representations of the Armenian genocide involving an appreciation of singularity did develop in a highly significant manner. Quite soon after the Treaty of Versailles the desire to hatefully punish Germany declined

markedly. This was as the danger of Turkey being relatively unpunished in 1919 and 1920 became apparent to contemporaries and representations of Turkish singularity increased accordingly. As Kemal's Nationalists established themselves and eventually overturned the Treaty of Sevres seeing it replaced in 1923 by the Treaty of Lausanne the discourse of singularity declined rather than changed. It remained but with the apparent necessity of maintaining the new Turkey as a buffer zone vis a vis Bolshevik Russia it was not used in such a condemnatory manner. Indeed, there was a general acceptance of the principle of ethnic homogenisation in the form of the population transfers involved in the Lausanne treaty.

Another significant feature of the British representations of the Armenian genocide during the years 1915-23 is the extent to which there is a marked consistency in them across the political spectrum. In terms of methodology and the selection of primary sources a chief feature regarding the research for this thesis is a concentration on *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian*. The main reason for this was that the editorial and political stance of these two newspapers were at the opposing poles of this spectrum in terms of mainstream British political opinion. As explained in the introduction to this thesis *The Times* to a great extent could be said to represent the British social and Conservative Party establishment. Further, it had in the past taken a Disraelian position concerning the Near East and the Ottoman Empire. In contrast *The Manchester Guardian* was not only a Liberal Party newspaper it also represented the more radical wing of liberalism. It had a strong tradition of strong and humanitarian criticism not only of Turkish abuses but of British colonial behaviour as well.

Despite this there is no significant discernible contrast to be made between the representations of the mass violence in the two newspapers regarding descriptions of a process of systematic extermination and the features therein explained in this thesis. This is the case not only during the years of war where

there was a strong tendency toward national solidarity in the face of an existentialist threat but also in the immediate but less imperilled post-war years. One might have expected *The Manchester Guardian* at this point to have taken a less partisan (regarding the Turks) stance and been more critical of potential British duplicity and hypocrisy. In the event the newspaper actually seems to have supported the potentially genocidal aspects of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and the recognition of population transfer and the abandonment of a Greater Armenia including Anatolia that that involved. Indeed, this research has found this critical approach and an apparent belief in the western influence on the rationales of homogenisation only in the post-war writing of Arnold J. Toynbee. There is a broad consistency on these issues to be found in the writing of the other commentators studied for this thesis. Thus, features of the new trope of representation identified in this thesis and the use of biomedical language with the employment of a rural idyll are to be found in the writing of Liberal Armenophiles such as James Bryce, the Methodism of Joseph Hocking as well as the conservatism of E. F. Benson, the realpolitik of Sir Mark Sykes and the xenophobia of Canon Parfit. Moreover, by the early 1920s there are a number of examples of a diagnosis of the systematic extermination of a people established during 1915-16 being applied to current events. There are also some examples of what took place in Ottoman Anatolia being used to make points concerning unconnected events in a similar manner to the way that the Holocaust is invoked today. Thus, we can say that British representations of the Armenian genocide were not only increasingly uniform but also concretised.

One last source will be mentioned here to further demonstrate the centrality of the Armenian genocide in the public sphere during the First World War and the immediate post-war years. Much has been made in this thesis of the significance of the novelisation of events in Ottoman Anatolia by the reasonably popular author Joseph Hocking. However, these events also featured in the work of a much more significant writer in the canon of English literature, Virginia Woolf. Her 1925 novel *Mrs Dalloway* describes a London socialites' preparation for a party she

is hosting and the soiree itself. Trudi Tate has written about the way the Armenian genocide featured in the novel pointing out that 'the matter is now almost completely forgotten, yet it was extremely important at the time.' Not only was it 'widely discussed in newspapers and political journals,' it also 'raised vital issues about human rights and Britain's quasi-imperial responsibilities.'<sup>646</sup>

Tate points out how Woolf and her husband Leonard were friends of the Toynbees. Further, that the 'Armenian Question' featured heavily in the journal *Nation and Athenaeum* of which Leonard was the literary editor between 1923 and 1929, in the early 1920s.<sup>647</sup> In the novel Mrs Dalloway's husband Richard is a Member of Parliament sitting on the committee that is negotiating the Treaty of Lausanne in June 1923. Despite this Mrs Dalloway does not know the difference between Armenians and Albanians and though she has an 'interest in Armenian [or Albanian] suffering as a political or ethical issue in its own right,' she loves her roses more.<sup>648</sup> The suicide of a disabled veteran of the First World War, the news of which Mrs Dalloway views as a most unwelcome intrusion into her party is comparable to Lausanne's 'final act of betrayal.' Tate suggests that in part the novel is about the necessity of 'taking responsibility to avoid a repetition of the disastrous decisions' which led to the First World War. She continues that when the novel was published, 'it was becoming clear that further disaster-direct consequences of the war and its settlement-were unavoidable.'<sup>649</sup> As such the novel demonstrates further the centrality of the issue by highlighting its forgetting and the terrible consequences of that, before it had really happened. It shows awareness of this phenomenon and compares it with the neglect and indifference shown toward shell shocked victims of the First World War.

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<sup>646</sup> Trudi Tate, "Mrs Dalloway and the Armenian Question," *Textual Practice* 8, no. 3. (1994): 472.

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>648</sup> *Ibid.* 471.

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.* 481.

I have suggested that the application of ideas concerning colonial biomedicine was arguably what the Young Turks were doing in 1915-16 and many British observers and commentators understood and described it as such. This was informed by their own attitudes and ideologies, which were subsumed with theories of race and colonial superiority. This represents a circular and symbiotic relationship involving western colonial, Social Darwinist and scientific racism whereby the condemned and those condemning were all in fact to varying degrees perpetrators. British observers and commentators were in fact developing a new understanding of mass killing because the way they both saw and imagined it was being changed by their own social, economic, political and scientific discourse. A discourse presenting significant problems for British self-understanding which, although greatly influential, was challenged also by its more liberal democratic and evangelising Christian elements. This produced a tension which was arguably released for many by projecting the subsequent emotions of guilt and self-hatred onto the perpetrators of mass killing in the Ottoman Empire using the same discourse which had influenced it. As such this thesis adds to an argument that modern genocide is a lot more 'normal' than many would like to think. Further, that condemnation of it, ignoring its application during some events, and indeed complicity in it or actual acceptance is highly contingent and dependent on the social, political, economic and diplomatic circumstances at any particular time.<sup>650</sup>

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<sup>650</sup> Indeed, as a final word, when a new Dean of Norwich was installed in April 1928, *The Times* reported on his reaction to the letter notifying of him of his appointment in the following manner;

Just before going to bed, however, he thought he would turn to the circulars. He turned them over, and he saw one with the name of the Prime Minister at the bottom. He thought, perhaps, it was an appeal for the Armenians. (Laughter.)

He was speaking at a luncheon in the Bishop's palace to mark the occasion.

"New Dean of Norwich Installed," *The Times*, April 13, 1928, 19.

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