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To cite this article: Brad Dennis (2019): Armenians and the Cleansing of Muslims 1878–1915: Influences from the Balkans, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, DOI: [10.1080/13602004.2019.1654186](https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2019.1654186)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2019.1654186>



Published online: 14 Aug 2019.



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Armenians and the Cleansing of Muslims 1878–1915: Influences from the Balkans

BRAD DENNIS

Abstract

Armenian liberationists and revolutionaries since the end of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1878 looked to the Balkan model of political autonomy and independence as inspiration for crafting a liberation strategy for the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia. In spite of the fact that more pragmatic revolutionaries attempted to convince the Armenian community that the Balkan model would not work for the Armenians because of demographic and geopolitical differences, the Armenian struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire was waged in a way that was similar to the Balkan model. There is strong reason to believe that if the Armenians had had stronger British and Russian backing and constituted a slightly higher percentage of the population in the region of Eastern Anatolia that an independent Armenia would have emerged in Eastern Anatolia and Cilicia much in the same manner that an independent Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro emerged in the Balkans. Given this retrospective likelihood, the question of whether an Armenian state would have taken steps to cleanse the indigenous Muslim population much like many of the Christian populations in the Balkans did is relevant. This study explores the propensities exhibited in the Armenian community towards cleansing the Muslims over a period of 8 decades stretching from 1828 to 1915.

Keywords: *Armenians; ethno-cultural cleansing; Muslims; Balkans; the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878; Russia; Europe*

Introduction

This study looks at various documents written by British, Ottoman, and Russian officials, Armenian and Bulgarian revolutionaries, and others involved in the conflicts in the Balkans and WWI in order to explain (1) what effect the activity of Balkan Christians against Muslims had on Armenians, (2) what evidence there is for an Armenian propensity towards a cultural cleansing of Muslims in Eastern Anatolia during WWI and earlier periods, (3) the reasons why Armenians may have preferred cleansing parts of Eastern Anatolia of Muslims as opposed to other resolution options, (4) the extent to which the propensity towards cultural cleansing emanated from top-down forces or bottom-up.

Brad Dennis holds a Ph.D. from the University of Utah in history and wrote his dissertation and published a few articles and chapters on relations between different ethnic groups in the late Ottoman Empire, particularly the Armenians, the Kurds and the Turks. He occasionally teaches history and political science classes at Utah Valley University. He is currently interested in victimhood narratives that are promoted and leveraged for privilege, influence, and wealth, and the role of finance in this promotion.

Cultural Cleansings in Context

Cultural cleansings,¹ the process of removing a group with distinct cultural markers from a particular region, have taken place in a variety of ways: organized mass deportation, forced migration, land expropriation, forced assimilation, murder, the passing and enforcement of laws and policies that discriminate against individuals because of particular cultural identity markers, and prohibition and/or discouragement of particular cultural markers, assemblies, and practices. In most of the former Ottoman Empire, the degree to which different ethnic and religious groups were cleansed from regions seeking independent statehood varies. Some cleansings involved multiple episodes of physical violence, threats, and coercion. Other cleansings are more prolonged and are more the product of discriminatory measures and less harsh forms of physical violence than rash violent action. Some cleansings are undertaken by highly organized movements, be these state or non-state, and others are more the product of a particular zeitgeist that enmeshes itself within the culture.

Evidence for the cleansing of Muslims from the Balkans, parts of Russia, Ukraine, and the Caucasus is seen in demographic shifts over time. Some cleansings of Muslims occurred in full over an extended period of time. In some areas of the Balkans, Muslims barely have a presence in areas that they once inhabited. Turkish-speaking Muslims, who populated Serbia from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, vacated Serbia because of direct force and lack of economic integration by 1867.² While Hungary used to be populated with Muslims in the 1600s,³ barely any Muslims live there today. Other cleansings were partial and are perhaps better described as “cultural thinnings”. The population of modern-day Bulgaria is approximately 8.8% Turkish, the majority of whom profess to be Muslims.⁴ This shows that the efforts to purge Turkish Muslims from Bulgaria between the 1870s and 1918 abated when Bulgarian Christians took control and thinned out of the Muslim population there. The same is true for the Crimean Tatars, whom Russia attempted to purge through a combination of physical violence, intimidation, forced resettlement, and legalized forms of discrimination between 1783 and 1900. Between Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 1783 and 1800, somewhere between 100,000 and 300,000 Crimean Tatars emigrated.⁵ However, this did not result in the complete eradication of Crimean Tatar cultural elements (at least not under the Romanov dynasty; however, under the Soviets, the Crimean Tatars were almost completely driven from the Crimean peninsula).⁶ The same cannot be said for Turks and/or Muslims in Armenia. The most recent census records in 2011 record only 812 Muslims in Armenia.⁷ The Armenian struggle for Nagorno-Karabakh 1988–1991 resulted in the displacement of over 700,000 Azeris, nearly twice the number of Armenians who were displaced during the war.⁸

It cannot be said that it is the nature of large land-holding governmental and non-governmental entities to seek to culturally assimilate different cultural elements, even if circumstances may arise that make them undesired. Nor is the propensity toward cultural cleansing a strictly modern phenomenon. Through the policy of *heqin* (marriage alliance), initiated by Emperor Gaozu of the Han dynasty in second century BCE, Chinese leaders gradually assimilated the Xiongnu tribes (who were pastoral nomads inhabiting modern-day northern China, Mongolia, and Siberia who spoke an Indo-European language) through a combination of force and marriage alliances into what became a larger Han Chinese identity.⁹ On the other hand, the New Assyrian Empire displaced Jews, Aramaeans, and other cultures deemed potentially rebellious in 600s BCE.¹⁰

In some cases, militarily powerful and organized groups have assimilated to the regional cultures of the people that they dominate. In spite of the strong desire of Genghis Khan's Mongol forces to win battles throughout Asia at seemingly all costs, his successors adapted to the cultures that they conquered. For instance, the Ilkhanids adopted Islam. Mamluk leaders in Egypt, from Georgian, Turkic, and Circassian backgrounds, maintained their language and military culture, but allowed the Islamic Arab Egyptian culture to persist and flourish.

Tolerance of Minorities by the Ottomans and Armenian Kingdoms

The Ottoman Empire was historically tolerant towards Christians and Jews, whom they allowed a number of special governing privileges. International war and separatist rebellion led many Muslims in the Ottoman Empire to become more distrustful and resentful towards non-Muslims. The Armenians can be identified as a people who developed a deep religious, ethnic, and cultural tradition arguably beginning with their conversion to Christianity. With the advent of the Ottomans into Armenian-inhabited territory in Eastern Anatolia, some Armenians adopted Islam, notably the Hemşin Armenians who dwelled in the Kaçkar Mountains.¹¹ Many Armenians who converted to Islam in the 1890s and WWI, mostly by force and out of the hope of sparing their lives against Muslim killers, changed their names and identities. Many in Turkey today are descendants of these Armenians.¹²

Armenian kingdoms of the past did not seek to forcibly assimilate surrounding groups to the kings' religions, language, and cultural preferences. However, when Russia captured the southern Caucasus from Persia in 1828, the Muslim population in the region decreased significantly, an indication that Armenians made them feel less welcome. Of the 143,000 total inhabitants of the Khanates of Nakchevan and Erivan in 1826, 117,849 (82.5%) were Muslims and 25,151 (17.5%) were Armenians. Of the 164,450 inhabitants of the Armyanskaya *oblast* (province), the area of which corresponded with the aforementioned *khanates*, 82,073 were Muslims and 82,377 were Armenians by 1832.¹³ While Muslims played a prominent role in the economy before 1820, Armenians came to dominate all economic activity in the Armenian *oblast* by 1850.¹⁴ In the 1897 census of the Erivan governorate, 441,000 were Armenians (53%), 49,389 were Kurds (6%), 313,176 were Azeris (37%) of a total population of 829,556.¹⁵

Armenians and the Question of Liberty from the Ottoman Empire

Since coming under Ottoman dominance in the 1500s, Armenians had been politically conflicted over the questions of self-empowerment and liberty. Generally, Armenians who sought to achieve political liberation for the Armenian community preached a message of liberty from oppressive Muslim government control but *with* Muslims instead of liberty both *from* Muslims and oppressive Muslim-controlled governments. With the collapse of the Kingdom of Armenia in 1375 and the steady influx of Muslim migrants to Armenian-inhabited regions in Anatolia and the Caucasus since then, Armenians did not imagine a liberation attempt that would rid Muslims of any relatively large swath of territory with a high proportion of Armenian inhabitants. What divided Armenian liberationist thinkers was whether to achieve this liberty by working with Muslim powers, such as the Ottoman Empire and Iran, or non-Muslim powers, such as Russia, Austria, France, and Britain. Tactical matters also came to divide Armenian liberationists, particularly after the Russo-Ottoman War 1877–1878. While some supported

liberation through open peaceful negotiations, others favored violence, conspiracy, and secrecy as means of forcing large-scale international diplomatic and military involvement.

Liberation attempts by Armenians on behalf of the Ottoman Armenian community before the 1800s were rare. However, Russia's territorial gains in the Caucasus, its several wars with the Ottoman Empire, and the gradual fragmentation in the Balkans during the 1800s caused an increasing number of Armenians to actively imagine a collective political future. From this new political environment grew an Armenian literary renaissance that stimulated a growth in political consciousness among a wider swath of the Armenian community. This political consciousness led to more diversified and in-depth narratives about the Armenians' political path forward. These narratives focused on the seemingly dire situation of the Armenian peasantry in Eastern Anatolia and articulated ideas for reform and liberation. Two predominant narratives emerged between the end of the Crimean War in 1856 and the Russo-Ottoman War 1877–1878 that continued to hold sway up until WWI. The first narrative sought to hold the Ottoman Empire to its promise to establish equality among Muslims and Christians that it made as part of the Ottoman Reform Edict 1856 (aka *Hatt-ı Hümayun*) under British guidance and sought to pressure the Ottomans to make swift political reforms to improve the lot of the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia. The second narrative was more cynical towards the Ottoman Empire and actively sought Russian intervention in order to liberate Armenians politically.

Armenian political attitudes became increasingly diversified and divided after the Russo-Ottoman War 1877–1878. The Patriarch of Constantinople Nerses Varzhabedian, who held the highest ecclesiastical and political office in the Ottoman Armenian community, encouraged liberation and reform through diplomatic negotiations with the Ottoman Empire, and was particularly influential among the Armenian community. He discouraged Armenian migration to Russia and encouraged Armenians to “remain faithful to the Sultan”.¹⁶ He held the belief that Armenian-inhabited areas could remain under Ottoman rule, but under Christian control, and that Muslims who were dissatisfied with how the Ottomans had been governing the provinces would tolerate life under Christian leadership.¹⁷ In attempting to persuade the British to drive a hard bargain with the Ottoman Empire, he asserted to British Ambassador Henry Layard that the “only thing ... that could induce the Armenians to refrain from listening to the advice of Russia to emigrate, and to be content to remain under the rule of the Sultan, would be the appointment of an Armenian as Vali of Armenia”.¹⁸

On the other hand, Armenians favoring Russian intervention camp grew increasingly strong. Influential pro-Russian Armenian thinker Grigor Artsruni encouraged Armenians to migrate to Russia in order to form a more concentrated block. Amid the Sheikh Ubeydullah revolt in Hakkari and northwestern Iran in 1880, Artsruni's pessimism toward the idea of creating an independent Armenia in the east grew. He foretold of an extermination of Armenians in the region: “the Kurds will devastate Hayastan [Armenia], they will destroy the Armenians and this time the Armenian question will be resolved, because the Armenians of Turkish Armenia will be eliminated”.¹⁹

The Rise of the Armenian Freedom Fighter

A new third attitude began to emerge in the aftermath of the Russo-Ottoman War 1877–1878: one that supported political liberation through self-struggle without reliance on any government power, be it Muslim or non-Muslim. Many Armenians freedom fighters (called *fedais* who were similar to Bulgarian *hayduks* and Greek *klephtes*) believed in

taking matters of social justice into their own hands. A number of Armenian secret societies also emerged in the early 1880s, notably the Union of Patriots in Moscow and the Protectors of the Fatherland in Erzurum, who advocated a liberation path that was free of government elements.²⁰ Although few Armenians remained fully committed to trying to achieve liberation without the support of or through the conduit of existing governments, an attitude of deep skepticism toward then-existing governments gained strength among many Armenians around burgeoning socialist and anarchist cultures in the Caucasus and Western Europe. The Hunchak and Dashnak revolutionary organizations, which were formed in Geneva in 1887 and Tiflis in 1890 respectively, came to preach a method of liberation that was profoundly cynical toward large governments in general. However, the thinkers of those organizations realized the need for some sort of backing to achieve political goals.

The Dashnaks and Hunchaks had both endorsed terrorism as a legitimate method of protest in their programs. While they both distinguished between peaceful Muslims and oppressive Muslims, which they identified to be the Ottoman government and Kurdish brigands, their violent methods led to the injuries and deaths of many innocent Muslims and Armenians and caused many Muslims to more deeply distrust the Armenians as a whole. Renowned historian of Armenian revolutionaries Louise Nalbandian notes,

although there were expressions of a democratic attitude toward the Moslem Turkish and Kurdish people in Dashnak and Hunchak official publications, individual members of both parties (as well as members of the Armenakan Party) often failed to put such principles into practice.²¹

While the Hunchaks were more committed to socialist ideas and Marxism²² and the Dashnaks more committed to nationalism, the two groups were similar in tactics and ideology. Yet, jealousies, personality conflicts, and power and status struggles kept the two groups from being able to establish any lasting accord. Between 1887 and 1896, the Hunchaks dominated political activism. Both parties tried to instigate the government to launch an attack on Armenians in Eastern Anatolia in order to gain the attention of the Great Powers with the hopes that they would leverage the Ottoman state to create political reforms for the Armenians, which would gradually lead to an autonomous Armenian state within the Ottoman Empire. This tactic worked in 1894 when Hunchak member Hamparsum Boyajian mobilized Armenians in the area of Sasun, historically populated by semi-independent Armenian groups, to launch an attack against Kurds whom they suspected of brigandage against Armenian peasants in the region. In response the Ottoman army and local Kurdish groups waged a brutal attack against Armenians in the region killing around one thousand. While this attack attracted the attention of the Great Powers, who launched an investigation and forced Sultan Abdülhamid II to draw up a new reform proposal for the Armenians, Armenian autonomy did not come about. In fact, the announcement of reforms spurred a much larger attack against Armenians that lasted from October 1895 until the fall of 1896, which resulted in the deaths of around one hundred thousand Armenians.²³

However, since the Great Powers were loath to disrupt the delicate balance of power in Europe, they desired not to repeat the diplomatic debacle that eventually led to the Russo-Ottoman War 1877–1878. While they condemned Sultan Abdülhamid II's government for the massacres, they did little to hold the Ottoman government accountable for direct involvement in the massacres or force the Ottoman government into any lasting political solution.

Reinvention of the Armenian Revolutionary Post-1896

Having failed to attract the international attention they wanted, and also having lost many of their members to the massacres, Armenian revolutionary movements in the Ottoman Empire waned for about five or six years after 1896. The Hunchaks would never fully recover their organizational capabilities. On the other hand, the Dashnaks managed to grow considerably beginning in the early 1900s. By 1905, the Dashnaks claimed 166,000 militants (which constituted about five percent of the Armenian population),²⁴ thus replacing the Hunchaks as the leading revolutionary party for the Armenians. They proved themselves to be effective fighters in the 1905–1907 clashes with Azeris, thus establishing their credentials to a greater extent among Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.²⁵ As the Dashnaks expanded, diversity of opinion and attitude grew in their ranks. Many Dashnak leaders who were formerly involved in terrorist activity became proponents of accords with liberal Muslim activist groups. At the same time, many Dashnak members and sympathizers throughout the Ottoman Empire were deeply skeptical of Muslim populations and idealized liberation from Muslims.

Among the Muslims the ideas of liberation gained momentum with the Young Turk revolution and subsequent restoration of the Ottoman constitution in 1908. Not long after the event, the Hunchaks promised to cease revolutionary activity and to support the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.²⁶ The Representative Council of the Dashnaks declared on 1 September 1908 that they recognized the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, that “Turkish Armenia was inseparable from the Ottoman Empire”, and that all *millets* and nations within the Ottoman Empire were equal.²⁷ However, the more radical current of the idea of liberation from the Muslims flowed stronger after the massacres of Armenians in Adana in 1909. The event caused Armenian revolutionaries to revert to previous distrust and skepticism towards different Muslim groups in the Ottoman Empire and towards different elements within the Ottoman government itself. In response to the massacres, the Hunchaks at their sixth congress adopted a resolution to organize “self-defense units”.²⁸ However, given the specificity with which Hunchak pamphlets, which were distributed among Armenian villagers in Eastern Anatolia, instructed villagers in methods of combat, it is reasonable to believe that the Hunchaks were teaching the villagers how to engage in guerrilla tactics and wage a full-scale revolt.²⁹

While many more moderate Dashnak and Hunchak elements tried to negotiate accords with various Muslim elements of the Ottoman Empire, they did not appear to have a united front or full control over their members. In January 1912, British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Gerard Lowther, informed British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, that many local Armenian villagers were “taking the law into their own hands” and that Dashnak weapons smugglers had managed to arm the Christians throughout Eastern Anatolia, and especially the district of Muş very well,³⁰ an indication that Armenian groups anticipated an armed struggle with Muslims.

On the eve of the Balkan Wars, Armenian revolutionary groups were no closer to forging united goals with each other than they had been. Armenians remained deeply divided about how they viewed the best means of achieving liberation within and/or from the Ottoman Empire.

The Influence of Bulgaria on Armenian Revolutionaries

Beginning in the mid-1870s, during which a series of violent conflicts broke out in Bulgaria and other parts of the Balkans, the political experience of Bulgaria began to resonate

deeply with many in the Armenian community. The creation of the Principality of Bulgaria as a result of the Treaty of Berlin 1878, which settled the Russo–Ottoman War of 1877–1878, caused many Armenians to think of the Bulgarian model of liberation as a viable way to empower Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Migirdich Khrimian, an Armenian cleric who had campaigned vigorously for the Ottoman government to recognize and alleviate the suffering of Armenian peasants in Eastern Anatolia through reform in the 1860s and 1870s and who headed a delegation to Berlin in 1878 to negotiate for an autonomous Armenia, gave a speech upon his return from Berlin, urging armed resistance in the Armenian community. In his famed “Iron Ladle” speech that he gave after returning from the Congress of Berlin, he expressed his deep disappointment with the Great Powers, extolled the Armenian rebels in Sasun, Shadakh (Çatak), and Zeytun, and promoted the idea that the armed rebels in the Balkans had managed to garner international attention and achieve independence due to their violent tactics of rebellion:

And I truly say that next to the Gharadagh [Montenegrin] and Bulgar delegates [at the Congress of Berlin in 1878] there were several brave youth; blood was dripping from the sabres hanging from their sides ... at that time I turned my face making believe that I was searching for my Zeytounsi, Sassountsi, Shadakhtsi or other brave mountaineer or peasant. But where were they? ... Dear and blessed Armenians, upon returning to your fatherland, each of you take a gun as a gift to your friends and relatives. Again and again, arm yourselves! People, place the hope for your liberation on yourselves. Use your intellect and muscle. Man must toil himself in order to be saved.³¹

The social experience of the Bulgarians and the Ottoman Macedonians (a group of Christian Slavs, mostly Bulgarian- or Macedonian-speaking)³² resonated more with the Armenians than that of any other ethnic group in the Balkans. Both groups had concepts of larger ethnic domains that once dominated the territory before the Ottoman conquests, both groups were thinned out because of Muslim migrations between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, and most importantly both groups had a large agrarian base which was dominated by large land-holding Muslims groups. Nationalist thinking emerged among the two after the 1877–1878 Russo–Ottoman War, which was relatively late when compared with Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Romanian nationalist movements. The Bulgarians and other non-Muslim Balkan groups influenced the Armenians, who in turn influenced the Macedonian revolutionaries. According to Hratch Dasnabedian and Mikael Varandian, two of the leading historians of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the Armenians actually influenced the creation of the first Macedonian Revolutionary Party in the 1893.³³

The Bulgarian experience was inspirational for the Dashnaks and Hunchaks. In their journals and correspondence among each other, they talked of the Bulgarian insurrection of 1876, the atrocities committed against Bulgarians, the freedom-fighting activities of the *hayduks*,³⁴ interpellation in parliament, and Russian political and military intervention.³⁵ They strongly entertained the idea of a model of political liberation for the Armenians that was based on the Bulgarian model.

Armenians Populating Bulgaria

The Armenians of the both the Principality of Bulgaria and the Ottoman-controlled Bulgarian-inhabited provinces never constituted a large percentage of the total population. According to the 1906 Ottoman census, the Armenians in the *vilayets* of Selanik

(921,329 total population) and Edirne (1,133,796 total population) numbered 637 and 26,144, respectively.³⁶ According to statistics published in 1905 by the Armenian Gregorian church, Armenians in Principality of Bulgaria numbered 12,622³⁷ out of a total population of just over four million.³⁸ Nonetheless, revolutionaries found Bulgaria an attractive place to conduct operations, especially because it was close to the Armenian community in the western part of the Ottoman Empire, and because Bulgaria, after achieving autonomy in 1878, was sympathetic toward the Armenian revolutionary cause but was not big or powerful enough to exploit it for its own political ends, as was the case with Russia.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many Armenians expulsions from Wallachia, Moldova, Crimean, and Kamenets as well as the spread of disease, famine, and war pushed Armenians in those regions to migrate to the more fully state-controlled Bulgarian-inhabited zones of the Ottoman Empire. During this period Armenian communities formed in Yambol, Ruse, Sofia, Razgrad, Provadia, Silistra, Shumen, Veliko Turnovo, Stara Zagora, Varna, Haskovo, Silven, Pomorie, Burgas, and other areas. Everywhere the Armenians went in Bulgaria, they built distinct Armenian churches, engaged in a number of crafts and trades, and established guilds. The Armenian communities had a deep connection with Bulgarian Christians. Under the Turnovo Constitution, the Bulgarian Principality granted the Armenians equal rights as well as autonomy with their communities after achieving autonomy within the Ottoman state in 1878. This made Bulgaria an attractive destination for Armenians fleeing persecution in the 1890s who fled mainly from Istanbul by boat to the coastal towns of Varna and Burgas.³⁹

Beginning of Armenian Revolutionaries in Bulgaria

Armenian revolutionary activity in the Balkans began in the mid-1880s in Ruse where Armenians met to discuss ways to emulate the Bulgarian model and free the Armenians from the Ottoman yoke.⁴⁰ Activist Vartkes Serengulian, a Dashnak activist imprisoned by Ottoman authorities in 1896, spent time in Bulgaria after his release and before going to Van to help organize the ranks of the Dashnaks there.⁴¹ By the early 1900s, Armenian revolutionaries established a sturdier footing in Bulgaria and coordinated their political goals with many Bulgarian revolutionaries. In 1903, Dashnak organization convened its third conference in Sofia where attendees agreed to work with the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), plan the assassination of Sultan Abdülhamid II, and organize a fund-raising effort among the wealthy Armenians living in Bulgaria.⁴² Bulgaria became a Dashnak center in 1905 when influential Dashnak leader Rosdom established a military academy in Plovdiv (Filibe).⁴³ Balkan and Armenian revolutionary elements met in 1906 to put forth a resolution to form a united front against the sultan to topple his regime, replace the sultan's regime with a constitutional government, and seek self-rule for Armenia, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina and a federative system for smaller groups in the Balkans.⁴⁴

Armenian revolutionaries managed to win the support of Bulgarian government leaders in achieving their political goals as well. In a meeting between Armenian revolutionary leader Andranik Ozanian and Bulgarian minister of defense Mihail Savov on 30 May 1906, the latter agreed to allow the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) to ship arms from Vienna through Bulgaria, transport weapons to any Bulgarian port that ARF leaders chose, train twenty Armenian students per year in the Bulgarian Reserve Forces Academy. If the ARF promised to aid and assist the Bulgarian-Macedonian revo-

lutionaries in Ottoman Macedonia, it would supply them with explosives, machine guns, and special equipment usage training.⁴⁵

In spite of the warm relationship between Bulgarian and Armenian revolutionaries, between 1906 and 1908, more liberal Dashnak thinkers and specifists (orthodox Marxists) attempted to persuade the Armenian community to reject the Bulgarian model of political liberty as viable for the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia. They argued that since the Armenians were too small in number and thinning out because of Armenian migrations to Russian territory, Muslims in Armenian-inhabited areas were becoming increasingly politically conscious as evidenced by market revolts, that the Armenian case was unique and that political liberation was best achieved by a collective action against Sultan Abdülhamid II's regime. They strongly encouraged a union with other Turkish, Kurdish, Azeri, and Persian activists and strove toward a constitutional government.⁴⁶

Armenians in the First Balkan War

Upon the outbreak of the Balkan War in 1912, the Ottoman Armenian community was divided over which side to support. Many remained loyal to the Ottoman state and fought alongside their compatriots. According to German Protestant missionary Johannes Lepsius,

the Armenian press and all Armenian parties from all called on Armenians to be loyal to the administration and to carry out their duties as citizens. The Armenian populations behaved themselves well, and the Armenian soldiers who heeded the call had fewer captives and battlefield clearers than the Turks.⁴⁷

According to N.N. Gordlevski, a Russian observer during the war, the Armenian parties promised to gather 40,000 soldiers from the Armenians for the Ottoman government. Some 8000 Armenians fighting for the Ottomans were wounded. The sacrifice of these Armenians was praised greatly in Turkish papers.⁴⁸

Balkan War correspondent Leon Trotsky notes that the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) encouraged the participation of Bulgarians, Greeks, and Armenians in the Ottoman army, but were berated by their Muslim commanders. Their inclusion in the army “destroyed the belief [among Muslims] that Islam [was] the one and only moral bond between the state and the army, thereby introducing the gravest spiritual uncertainty into the mind of the Muslim soldier”.⁴⁹ One Armenian prisoner of war said that the Christians were ill-prepared for battle:

Before the revolution we didn't serve in the army, but now they called us up by age groups, as reservists. They gave us twenty days' training altogether. That was enough, maybe for maneuvers, but far from enough for real war. None of us knows how to fire a rifle, and some don't even know how to hold one.

He added that the Muslim officers were incompetent at battle strategies, most of them being reserves (*ihtiyat* and *redif*) and not regulars (*nizam*). The Ottoman army fought “without conviction or purpose” and the officers often cleared the battlefield at the first signs of setback.⁵⁰

Another Armenian noted the prejudiced attitudes of Muslim officers towards Christians in the Ottoman army. One officer whipped an Armenian reservist's head so badly that he had to be bandaged simply because a bag of peas fell from a horse that he was leading and spilled out into the road. The offended officers yelled, “Ugh, you *giaour* [heathen]” after whipping him.⁵¹

Armenian Volunteers in the Balkan War

Three hundred Armenians from throughout the Ottoman Empire, Europe, and Russia,⁵² a small yet significant number, volunteered to fight on the side of the Balkan League's 750,000 soldiers.⁵³ Under the leadership of Andranik Ozanian and Garegin Nzhdeh, the Armenian detachment was commissioned to fight the Ottomans first at Momchilgrad and Komotini and its environs, and then later Ipsala, Keşan, and Malkara, and Tekirdağ. Nzhdeh is remembered in the radical Russian newspaper *Kievskaya Mysl*, which published Balkan War correspondent Leon Trotsky's observations, as a committed military man with a strong sense of camaraderie and discipline. He served as an instructor at a military academy in Sofia where he would spend "ten hours a day teaching [soldiers] the secrets of the art of drills". He was described as becoming "hoarse from the giving commands and speeches". For Nzhdeh, battle against the Ottoman state was part of a sacred cause. One soldier recalls him being "very brave in battle who never left the battlefield". When the first combatant fell, Nzhdeh "went up to him, kissed his forehead, and said, 'this is the first martyr'".⁵⁴

Not all reports were so rose-colored, however. According to one Ottoman report, Andranik and his men intimidated Armenians fighting on the Ottoman side to abandon their posts and "slaughtered helpless Muslim women and children, filled mosques with the elderly and the young and burned them alive, and turned Islamic places of worship into churches in Rumeli, Edirne, Keşan, Malkara, and Tekirdağ".⁵⁵

The Armenian volunteers in the Balkan States' struggle against the Ottoman Empire were unorganized and undisciplined, and appeared to fight with more anti-Ottoman passion than other soldiers. Armenian volunteers, alongside other soldiers and volunteers, physically harmed civilian Muslim populations, both settled populations and those fleeing from areas occupied by the Balkan rebels. Trotsky observes that in some areas,

the Turks burned and massacred as they fled. The local Christians, where they had the advantage, burned and slaughtered as the allied armies drew near. The soldiers finished off the wounded, and ate up or carried off everything they could. The partisans, following at their heels, plundered, violated, burned.⁵⁶

The Balkan War cut Andranik and Nzhdeh's teeth for what was the much larger struggle of the Russian invasion of the Ottoman Empire in WWI. It is unclear as to whether they had a direct hand in the more horrific attacks committed by Armenians in the war. Yet even if they did not directly order such attacks, it is highly likely that they turned a blind eye to them and did little to correct more savage cultural trends surfacing in Armenian revolutionary currents. Andranik made a noteworthy statement in an interview with Trotsky: "I never engaged in hostile acts against the peaceful Turkish population; I fought only against the beys and the government". He added, "I am not a nationalist. I recognize only one nation: the nation of the oppressed".⁵⁷ Yet the reported actions of the Armenian detachment, if indeed true, would tell a much different story.

Growing Fear and Pessimism During and After the Balkan Wars

Hope for continued life under the Ottoman Empire began to wane significantly among the Hunchaks and Dashnaks during and after the war and a palpable fear of being killed gripped many revolutionaries. The Hunchaks were particularly pessimistic in their outlook towards the Ottomans. In December 1912 the Hunchak Central Committee declared in their journal that the Ottomans "turned out to be, not doctors, but veter-

inarians; and not even that, but, rather, butchers killing animals in a slaughterhouse”.⁵⁸ Paranoia of a Muslim-perpetrated massacre was reiterated in March 1913:

When the least occasion offers ... Turkish nationalism, which, today, has the government of the country in its grip, will, without hesitation, ruthlessly massacre the Armenians, as a historical *necessity*. And, this time, it will massacre them more mercilessly than in 1895–6, more violently than during the Catastrophe of Adana. The psychology that makes for massacres is an abiding one; it has deep roots ... It is also plain that the old and new representatives of Turkish nationalism have no desire whatsoever to accept the idea of the existence, development and vitality of the Armenian people.⁵⁹

However, unlike the Dashnaks, who were growing in strength, funds, and numbers, the Hunchaks were strapped for money. At the Seventh Congress in Constanta in 1913, the party had only 48 franks to its name. They were unable to acquire new weapons.⁶⁰

Dashnak elements also shared the paranoia. During the war, they worried greatly about the Balkan League defeating the Ottomans. Simon Zavarian, one of the three founders of the Dashnaks, said, “if the Turks are defeated, they will naturally seek to avenge themselves on the Armenians, who constitute the weakest group and cannot defend themselves”.⁶¹ Anxiety increased in Dashnak ranks because of the large number of Balkan Muslims who sought to escape the wrath of Balkan League fighters and vengeful Christian groups by seeking refuge in Armenian-inhabited areas of the Ottoman Empire. Vahan Papazian, the Dashnak’s deputy for Van, said of the Muslim refugees, “we feared that, like locusts, they would devour everything the Armenians possessed and carry out a new massacre of them. Such was the government’s diabolical plan”.⁶²

The Russian Consul of Bitlis noted in a report to the Russian ambassador in Istanbul dated 24 December 1912 that during the Balkan War the Dashnaks had a tremendous influence on public opinion of Armenians in the region and that it took “great pains to instigate clashes between the Armenian and Moslem population, so as to give rise to a critical situation which would attract Russian intervention and prepare the ground for the invasion of the country by Russian troops”.⁶³ The Dashnaks were much more effective at weapons distribution. According to Garo Sasuni, Dashnak member and prolific historian,

when we look at the Dashnak activity between 1908 and 1912 and compare it with activity in 1913 and 1914, we see that few weapons were acquired during the first period, but during the last two years weapons acquisitions were doubled, especially in Armenian-inhabited rural areas.⁶⁴

Revolutionaries Still Conflicted on the Eve of WWI

The question of how best to achieve liberation weighed heavy on the minds of Armenian revolutionaries up until the outbreak of WWI. An analysis of available documents reveals that they hemmed and hawed over whether liberation could be achieved through continued cooperation with the Ottoman government or by Russian-backed rebellion. British Consul J. Molyneux-Seel’s observations indicate that in 1913 many Armenians were planning a rebellion. He noted in February 1913 that the Dashnaks were arming Armenians throughout the *vilayet* of Van and telling the villagers that the “Turks will revenge themselves for the loss of their European provinces by a general massacre of Christian inhabitants and that they must therefore put themselves in a position to defend their

homes and families”.⁶⁵ Molyneux-Seel noted in a piece of correspondence to Lowther on 4 April 1913 that the Armenian revolutionaries had “thrown off any pretense of any loyalty they may once have shown, and openly welcome[d] a prospect of a Russian occupation of the Armenian vilayets”.⁶⁶ He also reported that Dashnak revolutionaries in some cases coerced villagers to buy weapons. In one instance, a Dashnak weapons dealer told a villager to buy a weapon. When the villager said that he had no money, the dealer told him that he must sell his oxen for the weapon. When the villager asked how a weapon would help him reap his harvest during sowing season, the dealer “destroyed his oxen with his pistol and departed”.⁶⁷

The Consul of Van wrote in January 1914 that the Armenians in Van were reported to be “better armed than the Kurds”. They had in their possession some older Martinis distributed by the government as well as newer arms acquired by smugglers, including Mauser pistols and rifles, the former of which was light, small, and easy to hide in clothing. Armenians in Van were willing to pay three times the real value of a weapon thus making Van an attractive and lucrative destination for Dashnak weapons dealers.⁶⁸

Alliance-Making Among Revolutionaries

Not all revolutionaries were preparing for conflict, however. Some held onto hopes of a gradual transition towards Armenian autonomy through the conduit of the Ottoman state. Hunchak revolutionaries were committed against the ruling Committee of Union and Progress but forged an alliance with the Liberal Union (*İttilaf Fırkası*). Leaders Sabah-Gulian and Paramaz plotted an assassination of the three men governing the Ottoman Empire, Enver, Talat, and Cemal, at the seventh Hunchak congress in Constanta in August 1913. They obtained 20,000 francs from the Liberal Union to undertake the plots. As justification for his action, Sabah-Gulian cited his belief that the Ottoman government was plotting forced assimilation and removal.⁶⁹

At the ARF’s Eighth World Congress in Erzurum in August 1914, representatives agreed that if Russia invaded the Ottoman Empire that Armenians should fight to defend Ottoman territorial integrity. In the event that the Ottomans launched an attack on Russia, which is how the Ottomans actually entered the war, representatives stated that they could not answer this properly unless they had more information, indicating a reluctance to pledge loyalty to Russia or attempt a fully separatist movement all at once.⁷⁰

During the summer of 1914, Dashnak representatives Rosdom, Arshag Vramian, and Aknuni met with delegates of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) Bahaeddin Şakir, Ömer Naci, and Hilmi Bey at Erzurum. The CUP delegates promised provisions for an autonomous Armenian state in Erzurum, Van, and Bitlis in exchange for their collaboration against the Russians by inciting Armenian rebellions against them to help the Ottomans occupy Transcaucasia. The Dashnaks made insincere promises of loyalty to the Ottoman state in the event that conflicts broke out throughout the Ottoman Empire but said that they could not incite revolts.⁷¹

Recent decision to and instigations of Armenian strategists envisage the following moves: to preserve their loyalty in peace to the administration pending the declaration of war. If war is declared Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman Army will take shelter on the enemy side with their arms. If the Ottoman Army advances, to remain inactive, if the Ottoman Army retreats, to form armed bands and hinder transport and communications. The above infor-

mation based on documentary evidence was filed from Provincial authority of Muş.⁷²

It should be noted that many Armenians played a dual role in relation to the Ottoman Empire. For instance, Karekin Pastermaciyan Efendi (aka Armen Garo), who planned the raid on the Ottoman bank in 1896, helped organize the volunteer units, and joined the Van resistance in 1915, was also a former member of the Chamber of Deputies, elected by constituents in Erzurum in 1912.⁷³

WWI, Rebellion, and Cleansing

Not long after the Germans declared war on the Triple Entente, but before the entry of the Ottomans into the war, Illarion Ivanovich Vorontsov-Dashkov, Russian Governor General of the Caucasus, met with the Armenian bishop and Armenian mayor of Tiflis as well as Dashnak activist Hagop Zavriev and urged them to create an Armenian volunteer unit. Before a decision was reached to form the unit, Armenians were gathering throughout Transcaucasia ready to embark on a military invasion of the Ottoman Empire. Some Armenians, notably Hovhannes Kachaznuni, Simon Vratsian, and Sahak Torosian, were in disagreement with the creation of the unit, claiming that the Ottomans could use it as a justification to kill Armenians.⁷⁴

At the regional congress held in Tiflis on 13–14 September 1914, Dashnak leaders decided that it would be appropriate to form volunteer units to fight on the side of Russia. The Executive Committee would be headed by Rosdom, Armen Garo, Simon Vratsian, Ishkhan H. Arghoutian, and several others. Andranik, Hamazasb, Keri, Dro, Armen Garo, Vartan would serve as the military leaders for the units. Andranik headed the battalion moving towards Azerbaijan, Dro headed the battalion headed for Van, Hamazasb the battalion going to Sarıkamış, and Keri the battalion headed for Olti. Andranik and Dro moved their battalions towards Bitlis after the capture of Van.⁷⁵

On 17 September 1914 the day after the receipt of a message from Russia's ambassador to Turkey saying that "war seemed inevitable", Tsar Nicholas II issued a proclamation to the Armenians, in which he declared:

The Russian people proudly remembers its glorious Armenian children. [Ivan Davidovich] Lazarev, [Mikhael Loris] Melikov [Armenian generals] in the Russo-Turkish and others fought alongside their fellow slaves for the greatness of their country. Your age-old loyalty to me to pledge that you are waiting for these glorious days to fulfill all your responsibilities with an unwavering belief in the ultimate success of our armies and rights. Armenians, unite with your blood brothers under the scepter of the king, finally, you will find sweet freedom and justice!⁷⁶

Violence Against Muslims in Russia

Russia promised autonomy to the Armenians in the six *vilayets* on the condition that the Armenians gathered at Echmiadzin enter the war on the side of the Russians. When the Ottoman Empire declared war, calls for violence against Muslims were shouted on the floors of the Duma (the Russian advisory assembly that played a quasi-legislative function). Bishop Matthew in Orenburg called on Christians to avenge the Christian blood that was shed by Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, and Timur Khan. He called on the Russian Orthodox church to enter the battle in order to liberate the Hagia Sophia from

heathen control and restore lands formerly held by the Greeks to their Christian glory. Chief of Staff of the Russian Caucasus Army, General Nikolai Yudenich, granted Catholicos Georg V's request for 250 rifles and ammunition. He further granted the request of Armenian villagers in the Gyumri (Alexandropol region) for 1200 rifles and 24,000 cartridges. The Russians also supplied Armenian rebels at Zeytun with weapons. Both Hnchaks and Dashnaks joined the volunteer units.

Russian leaders sensed more of an incentive to preserve Muslim lives than did radical Armenians. The Russians anticipated a long reconstruction project in conquered areas that would require human bodies to till the soil, harvest crops, tend animals, and trade in order to keep the economy vibrant. Plus, the Russians had long administered over Muslim-inhabited regions and thought their occupation to be manageable as long as they thinned them out, much as they had the Circassians in the mid-1800s. Russian commanders at the same time sensed a deep and almost paranoid hostility of Armenian revolutionaries towards the Muslim populace in Eastern Anatolia. Alexei Podgurski, the major general of the First Corps of the Caucasian Army sent a telegram to Colonel Grigolia of Sarıkamış and the Russian officials at Oltın and Kağızman, ordering them to make the utmost concerted effort to "prevent the Christian population from robbing and plundering Muslims". He added that those who did would be brought before a court martial and face severe punishment. Perpetrators were to be disarmed, detained, and brought to justice.⁷⁷

In the 19 February 1915 issue of *Iqbal*, a newspaper published in Baku, it was reported:

We have information that on the battlefields in the Ottoman borders Muslims suffer incredible disaster: they slaughter men, and kidnap the women forcing the children to flee to the mountains and forests and leaving the whole area in ruins ... Refugees go naked and hungry.⁷⁸

The brutality of the Armenian volunteers made the Russians mistrust them. Russian intelligence intercepted a letter written by Arshak, an Armenian volunteer fighting in Van, which read:

Certain sections of the [Russian] government are hostile towards the Armenians. The [Russian] press claims that it is not time for [Armenian] autonomy and that they have made a bad impression on neighboring peoples and Armenian circles. The heroism of the [Armenian] volunteer [units] has experienced miracles, but the Chief of the Caucasus Army hates the Armenians. This is why in official writing he has urged changes that will be to the detriment of the Armenians. They have complained about the Armenians to the Vicar. Our excessive preparation has made government circles increasingly worried and made them reduce the number of volunteers, give them poor weaponry, and force them to fight on the front lines.⁷⁹

Russians and the Armenian Volunteers

The Russians were uneasy with the idea of Armenians mobilizing and concentrating to be able to form an independent Armenia after the war. In April 1915, General Nikolai Nikolayevich Yudenich wrote to Count Vorontsov Dashkov that the

It is intention of Armenian [revolutionary leaders] to send their refugees to populate lands abandoned by Turks and Kurds. I find this unacceptable, since it will make it difficult for us to reclaim lands occupied by Armenians or

prove that pieces of land do not belong to them, which is what happened in the aftermath of the Russo-Ottoman War [1877–1878].

Yudovich went on to recommend that the Russian government populate the “Eleşkirt, Diadin, and Bayazıt” valleys with Don and Kuban Cossack colonizers.⁸⁰

The Armenian rebellion in the Ottoman Empire began organically. There had arguably been politically rebellious trends among the Armenians since the end of the Russo-Ottoman War 1877–1878. As revolutionary organizations formed, attacks tended to increase in number and in scale, although they waxed and waned depending on numerous political factors. Many of these were isolated attacks that were inspired by revolutionary thought, although not necessarily directly connected to revolutionary organizations. Armenian attacks against Muslims increased after Russia entered the war against Germany on 4 August 1914.⁸¹ By December 1914, rebellions in the Van province had become more organized and methodical, as evidenced by the fact that Armenian rebels cut telegraph lines, killed postmen, and police officers.⁸² Ottoman authorities regularly uncovered caches of weapons at Armenian homes and churches indicating numerous plans for rebellion that probably did not become coordinated until WWI was underway.

The Armenian Rebellion at Van

In early February 1915, Armenians at Van declared victory in the city against the Ottomans in a piece of propaganda distributed to Russian military officers. They portrayed the feat as a religious victory much like the Crusaders taking Jerusalem:

Today Van is in the hands of the Armenians. The thirty-day rebellion under the leadership of Aram [Manoukian] has turned to victory ... This incident is reminiscent of the taking of Jerusalem by the people of the cross. Everywhere church bells bring news of these good tidings. Thus the city of Van has been saved from Turkish and Muslim domination.⁸³

For months after the declaration of victory, however, Armenian rebels in Van continued to struggle against Muslim groups. On 20 April 1915 Governor Cevdet Paşa of the Van province claimed that Armenian rebels opened fire at police stations and burn Muslim houses there. Four days later the governor reported that four thousand Armenian insurgents from the environs entered the Van area who engaged in highway robbery and attacked and burned villages leaving thousands of women and children homeless.⁸⁴

As a result of famine, combat with the Russian army and Armenian volunteers, conflict with local groups, and disease during the war, the following percentages of Muslims perished: sixty-two percent of the Van Province, forty-two percent of the Bitlis Province, thirty-one percent of the Erzurum Province, and twenty-six percent of the Diyarbakır Province.⁸⁵ From 1914 to 1915, about 128,000 Muslims died at the hands of Russian forces and Armenian volunteers, and an additional 40,000 died in areas that were occupied by Russian and Armenian forces 1917–1918.⁸⁶

Motions Toward Cleansing Muslims

Some Armenian rebels referred to their acts of rebellion as cleansing. In one Russian operative report, an Armenian rebel is described as saying:

on July 12[1916], our valiant soldiers occupied Erzincan, thus completing the Armenia’s cleansing of Turks [*ochishchenie Armenii ot Turok*]. Thirteen

numbers of troops continued to pursue the retreating Turkish army. In Erzin-
can there was another cache [of weapons] seized containing 500 hand grenades,
1000 shells, and 600 cartridges.⁸⁷

On 28 August 1915, a telegraph from Constanta Embassy to the Ministry of the Interior revealed an article from the Romanian newspaper *Diminencatze* that revealed the words of an Armenian committee member named Bosian describing what had happened in Van: “The Armenians occupied the arsenal. Turkish soldiers were repelled and the Armenian flag was raised. Armenians and Russian soldiers cleansed Turks from the city”.⁸⁸

A testament to the destructive force of the Armenian revolutionaries in Van in 1915 is the report of Captain Emory H. Niles and Arthur E. Sutherland Jr. who investigated Eastern Anatolia in 1919 for the United States Congress. According to their report, out of 6500 Muslim houses in Bitlis before the war, none were left intact. By contrast, out of 1500 Armenian houses before the war, 1000 were left intact in 1919. In the city of Van, 3400 Muslim houses stood before the war, but only 3 remained in 1919. On the other hand, 3100 Armenian houses stood before the war and 1170 remained in 1919. At Bayezid, where the Russians had a greater presence, a greater number of Muslim houses remained standing (960 before and 600 after compared with 190 Armenians houses and 90 after) than in Van and Bitlis. Nonetheless, the destruction of Muslim houses there was substantially larger in number and percentage than the destruction of Armenian houses. Niles and Sutherland also estimated the number of villages that remained intact in the Van province as yet another indication of the scale of Armenian destruction. Before the war, 1373 Muslim villages were intact, but 350 in 1919. A combination of 299 purely Armenian villages and mixed Muslim-Armenian villages were intact before the war, and 200 in 1919.⁸⁹ This suggests that as Armenians retreated, they sought to destroy Muslim houses as best as they could and erase whatever artifacts of Muslim culture they could from the region.

Armenians destroyed Muslim holy sites almost completely from the province of Van, even to a greater extent than did the Russian soldiers.⁹⁰ *Documents sur les Atrocités Arméno-Russe* contains dozens of eyewitness accounts of atrocities committed by Armenian and Russian soldiers in Eastern Anatolia in 1915.⁹¹ These included rape, pillage, plunder, forced removal, and horse theft. The evidence is strong that Armenian revolutionaries attempted a massive revolt in Van before the Ottomans forcibly deported Armenian intellectuals from Istanbul on 24 April 1915 and before Ottoman parliament passed on the 27 May 1915 *Tehcir Law*, which authorized the government to deport all Armenians from the Ottoman Empire.

Conclusion

The findings of this study are that many Armenians’ general impressions of the experience of the Christians in the Balkans led them to believe that Muslims naturally exhibited a propensity towards violence against Christians when they perceived a loss of power and that violence and armed resistance against Muslims was the only viable option to achieve freedom. It was hard for the leaders of Armenian revolutionary groups, who had become increasingly organized and nuanced in their thinking about means of achieving autonomy with Muslims, to restrain the visceral reactions of hostility of local Armenians towards Muslims. Rapid escalation of conflicts throughout the Ottoman Empire after the Young Turk revolution of 1908 left Armenian revolutionary leaders little time to try to harness the rapid changes in the collective emotions of many of their own lower-

ranking elements and non-affiliated Armenian rebels. Socialist idealism gave way to discriminatory ethnoreligious nationalism.

What underlay the propensity towards cultural cleansing against the Muslims among many Armenians were the following factors. (1) The idea that they were victims primarily of oppressive measures by dominant land-holding Muslims, (2) that the Ottoman administration was biased towards Muslims and against non-Muslims and therefore overlooked indiscretions and gave light sentences to offenders, (3) that non-Muslims were entitled to protections and equality (or even political superiority) and had to seek them from other non-Muslim states, (4) that non-Muslims were entitled to some degree of political autonomy, based on the models of Bulgaria, Montenegro, Greece, and Serbia, (5) that Muslim populations had to be thinned out in the region in order for non-Muslims to be able to dominate, (6) that Muslims would not relinquish control easily and might attack out of self-defense, (7) that the Ottoman administration, or other Muslim states such as Persia, would use non-Muslim anger as an excuse to reduce autonomy formerly granted to non-Muslims, and that (8) Muslim ire would grow increasingly stronger with non-Muslim attempts to gain power.

NOTES

1. I prefer the term cultural cleansing to ethnic cleansing in the case of the Muslims, since what separated many Muslims in the Balkans from non-Muslims was not linguistic, racial, or biological differences, but merely distinct cultural religious practices. Muslims throughout the Balkans spoke various Greek and Southern Slavic dialects as first languages. Their DNA exhibited similar haplogroup distributions to that of their Christian neighbors. In fact, in some communities in the Balkans, there appears to have been a mixing of religious and cultural practices. See Heath Lowry, *The Shaping of the Ottoman Balkans, 1350–1550: The Conquest, Settlement, and Infrastructural Development of Northern Greece*, Istanbul: Bahçeşehir University Publications, 2008, pp. 16–64. Nonetheless, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, Iran, and the Caucasus perceived Muslim and Christian cultural markers to be different enough for locals and foreigners to make clear distinctions along religious lines.
2. Aleksandra Vuletić, “Censuses in 19th Century Serbia: Inventory of Preserved Microdata”, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Working Paper, 2012, 7. (Available at: <http://www.demogr.mpg.de/papers/working/wp-2012-018.pdf>, accessed 11 February 2016).
3. The 17th Century Ottoman explorer Evliya Çelebi reports relatively large communities of Turkish- and Hungarian-speaking Muslims in Hungary during his visit there in the mid-1600s. See Evliya Çelebi, *An Ottoman Traveller: Selections from the Book of Travels*, eds Robert Dankoff and Sooyang Kim, New York; London: Eland Publishing, 2011; Zoltan Bolek, “The History of Islam in Hungary”, (Available at: <http://magyariszlam.hu/angol/kep2.html>, accessed 20 February 2016).
4. Natsionalen Statisticheski Institut, “2011 Bulgarian Census”, (Available at: http://www.nsi.bg/census2011/PDOCS2/Census2011final_en.pdf, accessed 31 January 2016).
5. Hakan Kırımlı, *National Movements and National Identity among the Crimean Tatars, 1905–1916*, Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996, p. 9.
6. The Crimean Tatars numbered 19.4% of the population of Crimea in 1939. Although they were reduced to .2% of the population in 1979, they began migrating back to Crimea with the collapse of the Soviet Union and now number 12% of the population. See http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_nac_39.php?reg=68, accessed 31 January 2016 for 1939 figures; Mari Drohobycky, ed., *Crimea: Dynamics, Challenges, and Prospects*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995, p. 73 for 1979 figures; and Kasparov, *Katastroficheskiy Faktor* [The Catastrophic Factor], 15 April 2014 (Available at: <http://www.kasparov.ru/material.php?id=552E31B8AFC23>, accessed 1 February 2016 for 2014 figures).
7. http://armstat.am/file/article/sv_03_13a_520.pdf, accessed 5 March 2016.
8. Von Hans Haider, “Gefährliche Töne im ‘Frozen War’” [Hazardous Tones in ‘Frozen War’], *Wiener Zeitung*, 2 January 2013, (Available at: http://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/welt/weltpolitik/513109_Gefaehrliche-Toene-im-Frozen-War.html, accessed 4 March 2016).

9. Wang Tonglin claimed the *heqin* system led to a “melting of races” (*ronghua zhongzhu*) in China. Uradyn Erden Bulag, *The Mongols at China’s Edge: History and the Politics of National Unity*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002, p. 83.
10. Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1979, pp. 30–42.
11. Hovann H. Simonian, “Preface”, in *The Hemshin: History, Society and Identity in the Highlands of North-east Turkey*, ed. Hovann H. Simonian, London: Routledge, 2007, p. xx.
12. Melkonyan notes various studies with differing estimates of “Crypto-Armenians” in Turkey from 80,000 to two million. Ruben Melkonyan, “The Problem of Islamized Armenians in Turkey”, *21st Century*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2008. Also see <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/turkiyede-yuz-binlerce-gizli-ermeni-yasiyor-1121498/>, accessed 15 June 2016.
13. George A. Bournoutian, “The Ethnic Composition and the Socio-economic Condition of Eastern Armenia in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century”, in *Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change: Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia*, revised ed., Ronald Grigor Suny ed., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, pp. 78–79.
14. Ivan Shopen, *Istoricheskiĭ Pamyatnik Sostayaniya Armyanskoi Oblasti* [Historical Manuscript of the Condition of the Armenian Province], St. Petersburg: Imperiatskoi Akademii Nauk, 1852, pp. 849–852.
15. http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/emp_lan_97_uezd.php?reg=566, accessed 31 March 2016.
16. Sir Austen Henry Layard to the Marquis of Salisbury, Therapia, 14 July 1878, FO 424/72, pp. 160–161, no. 211, cited in Şimşir, *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu Basımevi, 1982, 1: 182.
17. Mr. Layard to the Earl of Derby, Istanbul, 18 March 1878, FO 424/68, pp. 346–348, no. 639, cited in *ibid.*, 1: 160.
18. Sir Austen Henry Layard to the Marquis of Salisbury, Therapia, 19 September 1878, FO 424/74, p. 322, no. 503, cited *ibid.*, 1: 215.
19. *Mshak*, 1880, no. 112, cited in S.K. Poghosian, *Krtere yev Haykakan Hartse* [The Kurds and the Armenian Question], Yerevan: Hayastan, 1991, p. 71.
20. Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, p. 254; Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963, p. 85.
21. Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
22. The Hunchaks disassociated themselves from the Dashnaks in 1891 for being insufficiently socialist. Gerard Libaridian, *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004, pp. 103–106. The Dashnaks, however, formally adopted socialism as part their platform in 1907. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Baku Commune, 1917–1918: Class and Nationality in the Russian Revolution*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972, pp. 21–24.
23. Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question*, English translation of the revised second edition, Ankara: Documentary Publications, 1988, pp. 729–738.
24. Jacques Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge: The Armenian Assassination of the Turkish Leaders*, New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 53.
25. Armenian revolutionaries destroyed 158 Muslim villages while Azeris destroyed 128 Armenian villages with Azeris suffering higher casualties. Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan: A Borderland in Transition*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, pp. 39–40.
26. Uras, *The Armenians in History*, *op. cit.*, p. 833.
27. Varantian, *Hey Heghapokhakan Dashnaksutyun Patmutyun* [History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation], Paris: Imp. De Navarre, 1932, 2: pp. 10–13.
28. *Badmutyan S.D. Hinchakyan Gusagtsutyun*, 324–325 cited in Arsen Avagyan, *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ile Ermeni Siyasi Partileri Arasındaki İlişkiler* [Relations between the Committee of Union and Progress and Armenian Political Parties], trans. Ludmilla Denisenko, Istanbul: Aras, 2005, p. 87.
29. Ottoman Empire, *Aspirations et Agissements Révolutionnaires des Comités Arméniens avant et après la Proclamation de la Constitution Ottomane* [Revolutionary Aspirations and Agitations of Armenian Committees before and after the Promulgation of the Ottoman Constitution], Istanbul, 1917, pp. 50–53.
30. FO424/230/44, Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (Constantinople, 29 January 1912), enclosure 1, Consul McGregor to Sir G. Lowther (Erzerum, 15 January 1912), cited in Dikran Mesrob Kaligian, *Armenian Organization and Ideology under Ottoman Rule 1908–1914*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009, p. 140.

31. Migirdich Khrimian, “Lesson of the Iron Ladle”, in *Hayrig: A Celebration of His Life and Vision on the Eightieth Anniversary of His Death, 1907–1987*, ed. Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, New York: Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, 1987, pp. 23–24.
32. The Bulgarian and Macedonian are partially mutually intelligible Slavic languages that are classified under the Eastern Southern Slavic language group alongside Old Church Slavonic. During the nineteenth century, dialects of these languages with varying degrees of mutual intelligibility were spoken throughout what is now modern-day Bulgaria, Macedonia, Turkish Thrace, Kosovo, southeastern Serbia, and northern Greece.
33. Garabet Moundjian, “Rebels with a Cause: Armenian-Macedonian Relations and Their Bulgarian Connection, 1895–1913”, in *War and Nationalism: The Balkan Wars, 1912–1913, and Their Sociopolitical Consequences*, eds M. Hakan Yavuz and Isa Blumi, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2013, p. 136.
34. A brigand who engaged in various struggles for freedom.
35. Anahide Ter Minassian, “L’Arménie et l’Éveil des Nationalistes (1800–1914)”, [Armenia and the Awakening of Nationalities (1800–1914)], in *Histoire du Peuple Arménien* [History of the Armenian People], ed. Gérard Dedeyan, Toulouse: Privat, 2007, p. 508.
36. Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, pp. 168–169.
37. Bülent Yıldırım, *Bulgaristan’daki Ermeni Komitelerinin Osmanlı Devleti Aleyhine Faaliyetleri (1890–1918)* [The Activities of the Armenian Committees in Bulgaria against the Ottoman State], Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu, 1914, p. 41.
38. Bulgaria, Ministerstvo na Trgovia i Zemledielieto, *Bulgaria of Today*, London: Hazell, Watson, and Viney, 1907, p. 28.
39. Etnografski Institut s Muzei, *Armentsite v Bulgaria* [Armenians in Bulgaria], Sofia: Mezhdunar, 2000–2001, pp. 8–10.
40. Bülent Yıldırım, *Bulgaristan’daki Ermeni*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
41. Kaligian, *Armenian Organization*, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
42. Armen, “Hay Heghaphokhakan Dashnaksutyune Balkanneru Mej: Enger Asatur Petikiani Hushere” [The Armenian Revolutionary Federation in the Balkans: Memoirs of the Comrade Asatur Petikian], *Hayrenik* 12 (1933), p. 105.
43. Anahide Ter Minassian, “Le Mouvement Révolutionnaire Arménien, 1890–1903” [The Armenian Revolutionary Movement, 1890–1903], *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 14, no. 4, October–December 1973, p. 569.
44. “Dzhogh Tarreri Hamakhmpumn” [The Rally of Disgruntled Elements], *Droshak* 12, December 1906, p. 178, cited in Garabet K. Moundjian, “Armenian-Macedonian Relations”, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
45. ARF Archives, Document 1149–58, Hrach Dasnabedian, *Nyuter HH Tashnagsutian Badmutian Hamar* [Materials for the History of the Dashnak Armenian Revolutionary Federation], Beirut: Vahe Setian Publishing, 5: pp. 369–371, cited in *ibid.*, p. 153.
46. Anahide Ter-Minassian, “Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement (1887–1912)”, trans. A.M. Barrett, in *Transcaucasia, Nationalism, and Social Change: Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia*, revised ed., Ronald Grigor Suny, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, pp. 183–184.
47. *Armyanskii Vopros I Genotsid Arмянan v Turtsii (1913–1919): Materiali Politicheskovo Arkhiva MID Kayzerovskoi Germanii* [The Armenian Question and the Genocide of the Armenians in Turkey (1913–1919): Archival Materials from the Interior Ministry of Kaiser Germany], Yerevan, 1995, p. 136.
48. Avagyan, *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–110.
49. Leon Trotsky, *The Balkan Wars: 1912–13: The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky*, eds George Weissman and Duncan Williams, New York: Monad Press, 1980, p. 194.
50. *Kievskaya Mysl*, no. 306, 4 November 1912.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Makedono-Odrinskoto Opolchenie 1912–1913 g.: Lichen Custav po Dokumenti na Direktsiya ‘Tsentralen Boyenen Arxiv’* [Macedonian-Adrianople Corps, 1912–1913: Staff Document of the Directorate of the ‘Central Military Archives’], Sofia: Glavno upravlenie na arkhivite pri Ministerskiya suvet, 2006. Armenians volunteers came from Sofia, Bitlis, Yerevan, Izmit, Alexandria, Samsun, Adapazari, Muş, Hungary, Istanbul, Eğin, Ruse, Sivas, Afyon, Bucharest, Van, Arslanbey, Muğla, Bursa, Akşehir, Malatya, Amasya, Geyve, Tokat, Ovacık, Persia, Tekirdağ, Divriği, Erzincan, Silistra, Şebinkarahisar, Adana, Silivri. Throughout the list, the cities in Eastern Anatolia which were then under

- Ottoman control are followed by a comma and the title “Armenia”. See for instance page 190, in which the city of Erzincan is followed by “Armenia”. Not all of the volunteers’ names are followed by “Armenia”. Some are followed by “Ermenistan”, the Turkish word for Armenia. This suggests that the people compiling the list wrote down whatever the volunteer told them. This is revealing of the separatist nationalism of the volunteers who considered their places of origin to be part of Armenia. What is interesting is how the Armenians considered the city of Geyve, located 179 km east of Istanbul to be part of Armenia. By Mesrop Yeragopian’s name on page 257 is the “Arslanbey, Armenia”. Arslanbey was a predominantly Armenian village in the modern district of Kartepe, located 116km east of Istanbul. Nishan Hovannes is recorded on page 322 as being from “Sivas, Turkey”. A fair number were from Şabankarahisar, Andranik’s birthplace.
53. 350,000 from Bulgaria, 230,000 from Serbia, 125,000 from Greece, and 44,500 from Montenegro who fought against 336,742 from the Ottoman Empire. Edward Erickson, *Defeat in Detail: The Ottoman Army in the Balkans, 1912–1913*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003, pp. 52, 69–70; Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912–1913: Prelude to the First World War*, London; New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 16–18.
 54. 19 July 1913, *Kievskaya Mysl*.
 55. Mehmet Kanar, ed., *Ermeni Komitelerinin Emelleri ve İhtilal Hareketleri: Meşrutiyetten Önce ve Sonra* [The Acts of the Armenian Committees and the Occupation Activities: Before and After the Constitutional Period], Istanbul: Der Yayınları, 2001, p. 79.
 56. Leon Trotsky, *The Balkan Wars: 1912–13, op. cit.*, p. 330.
 57. Leon Trotsky, “Balkany I Balkanskaya Voyna: Andranik i ego Otryad” [The Balkans and the Balkan War: Andranik and his Detachment] *Kievskaya Mysl*, 197 (19 July 1913).
 58. 25 December 1912 Declaration of the SDHP’s Central Committee, published in *Hnchak*, no. 1, January 1913, pp. 1–2, cited in Raymond H. Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2011, pp. 137–8.
 59. “Preuves et Realités”, *Hnchak*, no. 3, March 1913, p. 6, cited in *ibid.*, 134.
 60. Azmi Süslü, *Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı*, p. 54, cited in Avagyan, *İttihat ve Terakki, op. cit.*, p. 87.
 61. Simon Zavarian: on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of his death, III, pp. 118–19, letter from S. Zavarian to the ARF’s Balkanian Committee, Constantinople, 10 October 1912, cited in Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide, op. cit.*, p. 137.
 62. Papazian, *Memoirs*, 2:181, cited in *ibid.*, p. 137.
 63. Uras, *The Armenians in History, op. cit.*, p. 867.
 64. Garo Sasuni, *Abrilyan Yegherne Kmagan Agnotsov* [The April Disaster through a Critical Lens], Beirut: Hratarakchutyun HHD Hrvantani, 1965, p. 32, cited in Avagyan, *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti, op. cit.*, p. 86.
 65. FO 195/2949, Molyneux-Seel to Lowther, Van, 17 February 1913.
 66. FO 371/1783, Molyneux-Seele to Lowther, Van, 4 April 1913.
 67. FO 195/2949, Molyneux-Seel to Lowther, Van, 17 February 1913.
 68. Kaligian, *Armenian Organization, op. cit.*, p. 216.
 69. Avagyan, *İttihat ve Terakki, op. cit.*, pp. 120–121.
 70. Kaligian, *Armenian Organization, op. cit.*, p. 220.
 71. Vahakn Papazian, *Hamashkharhayin Baderazmi yev Daroni Ashkharhi 1914–1915* [The World War and the District of Muş], p. 4, cited in Arsen Avagian, *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ile Ermeni Siyasi Partileri Arasındaki İlişkiler* [Relations between the Armenian Political Parties and the Committee of Union and Progress], trans. Ludmilla Denisenko, Istanbul: Aras Yayınları, 2005, p. 132.
 72. Decoded Message from Mustafa Bey, Governor of Bitlis dated 5 September 330 (18 September 1914), cited in *Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, 2:2.
 73. Hratch Dasnabedian, *History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Dashnaksutium 1890/1924*, Milan: Oemme, 1990, pp. 204–205.
 74. Richard G. Hovanissian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, p. 44.
 75. Simon Vratsian, *Hayastani Harapetutyun* [The Republic of Armenia], 2nd edition, Beirut, 1958, pp. 577–585.
 76. Djamil Gasanli, “Armyanskiye Dobrovoltsy na Kavkazkom Fronte 1914–1916”, [Armenian Volunteers on the Caucasus Front 1914–1916] <http://www.turkist.org/2015/03/armenian-terror.html>, accessed 20 March 2016.
 77. *Ibid.*
 78. *Ibid.*

79. *Ibid.*
80. Gabriel Lazian, *Hayastane yev Hay Date (Vaveragrer)* [Armenia and the Armenian Trial (Documents)] (Cairo, 1949), 198–201. It should be noted that Yudovich and the Don and Kuban Cossacks were among the most committed to maintaining the traditional tsarist order. They were staunchly against the communists. See, Vladimir N. Brovkin, *Dear Comrades: Menshevik Reports on the Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil War*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1991, p. 20.
81. See *Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, volume II, Ankara: Directorate General of Press and Information, 1983, III–IV.
82. Minister of the Interior Talat Paşa to the *Vali* of Van Cevdet Paşa BBA DH.ŞFR 48/85, 2 Sefer 1333/20 December 1914; Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti (The Directorship of General Security) to the Van Vilayet, BBA, DH.ŞFR 48/182, 10 Sefer 1333/28 December 1915.
83. Ergünöz Akçora, *Van ve Çevresinde Ermeni İsyamları* [The Armenian Rebellions in Van and its Environs], Istanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1994, p. 198.
84. Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran, and Ömer Turan, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006, pp. 200–201.
85. Hüdavendigar Onur, *Ermeniler: Milleti Sadıkdan Hayk'ın Çocuklarına* [The Armenians: From the Loyal Millet to the Children of Great Armenia], Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1999, p. 126.
86. J. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide, op. cit.*, pp. 82–83.
87. ЦГА Грузии ССР, Фю 1087, оп. 2, д. 25, л. 86, cited in A.O. Artyunian, *Kavkaski Front, 1914–1917*, Yerevan: Hayastan, 1971, p. 243.
88. Akçora, *Van ve Çevresinde, op. cit.*, p. 197.
89. Justin McCarthy, “The Report of Niles and Sutherland”, in *Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler: XI. Türk Tarih Kongresi* [Notes Presented to Congress: 9th Turkish Historical Congress], Ankara, 1990, pp. 1834–1839.
90. *Documents sur les Atrocités Arméno-Russes* [Documents on Armenian-Russian Atrocities], Istanbul: Société Anonyme de Papeterie et d’Imprimerie, 1917, p. 24.
91. *Ibid.*