CATASTROPHE WITNESSING: PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE DEPORTATION OF OTTOMAN ARMENIANS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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Catastrophe Witnessing: Photography and the Deportation of Ottoman Armenians

During the First World War

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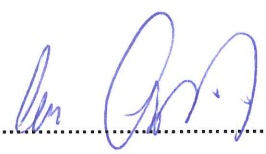
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ABSTRACT

Catastrophe Witnessing:

Photography and the Deportation of Ottoman Armenians During the First World War

This thesis examines the photographic archive of the deportation of Ottoman Armenians during the First World War. The central objective of the thesis is to approach the photographs in question not solely as historiographical tools standing in as evidence for the truth of the event, or representing the totality of it, but in the comprehension of photography's affective power and persuasive capacity, that could enhance the understanding of trauma and memory of the Catastrophe. Through this intention, it uncovers the connection amid different sources to demonstrate that the evidential value of photography played a crucial role in representation, memory and remembrance. In this regard, through examining the dissemination and circulation of these photographs in the European and American press, it aims to comprehend the capacity of photography that is effectively used for propaganda and the legitimization of violence. The diplomatic correspondence between the German vice-consul of Erzurum, the German embassy of Istanbul and the local authorities, as well as third hand and victim testimonies provide a historical context for the analysis of the photographs from the deportations in Erzurum. As these photographs were rarely utilized for the representation of the deportations, this thesis explores the problems of conventional aesthetic standards in iconic representation and suggests to look at these images through a theoretical conception of time and death for a wider understanding of its connection to the Catastrophe.

ÖZET

Felaket Tanıklığı:

Birinci Dünya Savaşında Osmanlı Ermenilerilerinin Fotoğrafları ve Tehciri

Bu tezin amacı, I. Dünya Savaşı sırasında tehcir edilen Osmanlı Ermenilerinin fotoğraf arşivini incelemektir. Mevcut tarih yazımı, söz konusu fotoğraflara sadece felaketin bütünlüğünü temsil eden delil niteliğindeki tarihsel araçlar olarak yaklaşırken, bu tez felaketin travma ve hafıza üzerindeki etkisini daha iyi anlamamızı sağlayacak şekilde, fotoğrafı, duyuşsal gücü ve ikna etme kapasitesi bağlamında ele almaktadır. Bu niyetle, fotoğrafın kanıtsal değerinin temsil, anma ve hafızada önemli bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymak için farklı kaynaklar arasındaki bağlantıyı açığa çıkarmaktadır. Birinci bölümde, fotoğrafların Avrupa ve Amerikan basınında dolaşımı ve yayılması incelenerek, fotoğrafın propaganda ve şiddetin meşrulaştırılması için nasıl etkin olarak kullanıldığını kavramayı amaçlamaktadır. Bunu takiben, tehcir temsillerinde nadiren kullanılan Erzurum bölgesi tehcir fotoğraflarının tarihsel bağlamı, Erzurum'daki Alman konsolosluğunun diplomatik yazışmaları ve mağdur tanıklıklarıyla sağlanmaktadır. Son bölümde, ikonik temsilin geleneksel estetik standartları sorunsallaştırılmakta ve bu imajların felaketle ilişkisinin daha iyi anlaşılması için kuramsal bir zaman ve ölüm anlayışının gerekliliği önerilmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, bu tez mevcut tarih yazımına ve fotoğraf kuramına bir katkı niteliğindedir.

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the way we turn every unfortunate moment into laughter became our very own way of survival – or rather a way to make the best of the day. He was the only reason I was able to see every shade of blue during our sleepless nights at Abdullah Kuran library and the only reason I could keep up with my studies accompanied by excessive emotional support and endless drinks.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> To be able to doubt what we see, we must know how to keep looking, how to see in spite of everything. Despite the destruction, the erasure, of all things. We must know how to look as an archaeologist looks. And it's by way of such a gaze – such an interrogation – directed toward what we see that things begin to look at us from their concealed spaces and bygone time.
>
> Georges Didi-Huberman, *Bark*

Panoramic landscapes of people marching, children and women starved to death, mass graves and cadavers are the most generic images that cross one's mind when thinking about the Armenian genocide. The photographs that have been captured during the First World War (1915-1918) in eastern Anatolia and the Mesopotamian region regarding the deportation and extermination of the Ottoman Armenian population were limited in number, due to the harsh climate and health conditions in the war zones, the low number of neutral and Entente State representatives in the region as well as the prohibition of photography in deportation zones. In the after-war period, both the number and the variety of images increased as humanitarian organizations started to raise funding for the treatment of the survivors still struggling with famine and various diseases.

In the last decade, images of the Armenian genocide became more and more visible, profoundly as a result of the growing academic interest in genocide scholarship.[1] Discussions on politics of denial and the recognition of the

[1] Yükseker & Yenal, New Perspectives on Turkey 53; Journal of Genocide Studies, 2015, Vol 17, No:3; Kévorkian, Ternon, & Bensoussan, *Se souvenir des Arméniens, 1915-2015.* Demirdjian, *The Armenian Genocide Legacy.* Bozarslan, Duclert, & Kévorkian, *Comprendre le génocide des Arméniens: 1915 à nos jours;* Becker, Bozarslan, & Duclert. *Le génocide des Arméniens: Cent ans de*

extermination of Ottoman Armenians during the First World War, advancements in memory and trauma studies, and emerging scholarship on the impact of the Holocaust over other atrocities have contributed to the expanding studies of the Armenian genocide.[2]

Consequently, photographs of the Armenian Catastrophe started to come more frequently to the front in commemorative websites, virtual archives, publications, and exhibitions. The increase of visual projects and the digitalization of museum archives generated the access to visual materials of the genocide, which had previously been limited to the use of the diaspora, remaining under individual and institutional collections. Leshu Torchin, a scholar of film studies specialized in the relation of cinema and its role of bearing witness, points out that the increase of these virtual archives enhanced "the activation of Armenian memory and stimulated political actions to transform remembrance into recognition".[3]

It could be argued that archives that do not limit their scope to images of atrocities but expand it to the representation of Ottoman Armenians and their historical homeland have led to the democratization of our historical imagination.[4] On the other hand, this can hardly be argued for the commemorative websites,

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recherche, 1915-2015.

[2] LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma;* Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*; LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz*; Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive;* Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, narrative, and history.*

[3]. Leshu Torchin, "Since we forgot: Remembrance and Recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Trauma and Memory" in *The image and the witness trauma, memory and visual culture*: 2. Torchin emphasizes the importance of virtual archives as a potential for animating memory, hailing publics and forging political transformation. In her analysis, she frames the claim making process as the translation of memory into action. While it is important to say that there are not many contributions regarding to the virtual archives of the Armenian genocide, her standpoint does not really focus on the images itself but rather on the potential activism these images can provide.

[4] Websites that are rich in their content https://www.projectsave.org/, https://www.houshamadyan.org/home.html, http://www.bnulibrary.org/

publications and public appearances attributed specifically to the Armenian genocide. Photographs that are utilized for the purpose of representing the genocide are based mostly on a selection of images that intend to represent the whole catastrophe in a single image.

The reproduction and remediation of photographs that appear nowadays as part of the visual representation of the Armenian genocide conform to a format of genocidal imagery derived from the excessive image production and circulation of the Holocaust, which very much shaped the way atrocities are apprehended. As Holocaust imaginary has determined the perception of how to comprehend violence and suffering, the Armenian genocide, which predates the Holocaust, has been demarcated and configured in relation to the representation of the Holocaust. The comparatively limited number of images that conform to this genocidal imagery affirm the genocidal will summarized by Jean Marie Carzou, a French-Armenian intellectual, in the last line of his book *Un Genocide Exemplaire*; "So? This genocide, did we dream it? No. It's a perfect genocide. It did not happen."[5] According to Carzou, the genocidal will annihilates every form of recording and every trace of the extermination of the Ottoman Armenian population, which turns the genocide into a "non-event," a calumny of something that "did not happen", that "did not take place".[6] Marie-Aude Baronian, who authored the book *Memoire et Image: Regards sur la Catastrophe Arménienne* eloquently summarizes the problem of genocide imagery;

> The lack of accessible images, added to the dialectic of the archive (inscription-destruction), discredits the ability of the image to "function" as a vector of memory. In reality, these photographs do not need a legend or an explanation: they "represent" the horror and they

[5] Carzou, *Un genocide Exemplaire.*

[6] Baronian, *Mémoire et image: Regards sur la catastrophe arménienne*, 11.

> undergo, simultaneously, a lack of contextualization that reduces their historiographic authority. In other words, our collective imagination is "sufficiently" constructed by the atrocities of concentration camps related to the Holocaust to glimpse the Armenian Catastrophe. At the same time, when it comes to the Armenian genocide, it must be constantly explained, legitimized, illustrated - proven.[7]

This essential need to explain, legitimize, illustrate and prove through historical evidence is not limited to the study of photography but extends over the historiography of the Armenian genocide. As the Turkish government maintains its denialist position regarding the extermination of the Ottoman Armenians, traditional historiography focuses primarily on official and diplomatic documents that function as historical evidence for the recognition and reparation of the Armenian Genocide. However, this endeavor is intrinsic to the fact that the Armenian genocide scholarship is constrained by the Holocaust, as it is taken as a prime example, both methodologically and in definition. Thus, the intention to prove the "genocide" even in the most innovative forms of discussion such as cinema and literature is based on theoretical approaches adapted from Holocaust scholarship. Notwithstanding, the politics of denial and the comparison of the genocide in regard to the Holocaust, are linked to a meta-problem – the discipline of history.

Marc Nichanian in *The Historiographic Perversion* explains how history, from its very existence, is always on the side of the sovereign. According to Nichanian, writing the history of the genocide is not very different from writing the history of how it is *not* a genocide. It presupposes a fact that needs to be proved or disproved, meaning that these facts are validated – or invalidated by a narrative, which presupposes a consensus.[8] This means that it accepts the existence of an

[7] Baronian, 34. This is my own translation.

[8] Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion*, 25.

authority that has the power to decide whether there was a genocide or not. This decision of the authority is the consensus of the modern recourse of the archive supported by a narration –that is history.

The issue of the hegemony of history is carried out to another level by Walter Benjamin, who emphasized in his famous essay *Theses on the Philosophy of History,* the relation of history to culture. Benjamin realizes that culture is not capable of praising the oppressed because culture in its very essence always turns into hegemony.[9] This hegemony that he defines as barbarism is impossible to be grasped in the making of cultural treasure because of the progress-oriented character of historicism.[10] According to Benjamin, this causes history to position itself always at the side of the victorious.[11] Since historicism does not open space for pain and suffering, history writing cannot escape its sovereign characteristic. It is closed to the history of the ones beside the sovereign – to those who suffer – because such kind of history is outside the linearity and does not follow the progression that is followed in the making of the cultural treasure of the sovereign. This criticism of the hegemony of history is not only fundamental to rethink the politics of denial in relation to the construction of national historiography, but also how historiography is produced against negationism, as well as revisionism, within the same mechanisms of its denier.

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[9] Hegemony as understood in Gramsci as the political power that is based on cultural subordination. See, Gramsci, *Letters from Prison*.

[10] Historicism does not question the hegemonic character, because what is important is how it progresses. As long as culture is developing, culture is taken positively. Benjamin perceives the conventional methodology of history writing as historicism and thus critizes it harshly. For him historicism understands past in relation to itself, isolated and linear. Instead, he suggests historical materialism as a concept, which is different than the Marxist one. He takes it out from its progressive characteristic and tries to think history folded into different moments of time.

[11] Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations, Walter Benjamin Essays and Reflections*, 253-264.

Following the criticism, this thesis aims to look at photographs of the Armenian genocide not solely as historiographical tools (either standing in as evidence for the truth of the event, or representing the totality of it), but seeks to think along photography's affective power and persuasive capacity, with the hope of enhancing an understanding of the trauma and the memory of the Catastrophe. Despite the argument brought by Marie-Aude Baronian that "most Armenians themselves did not grow up with explicit images that aided them in imagining or having access to the catastrophic past," I will demonstrate, as in the epigraph by Georges Didi-Huberman, that despite the perfection of the genocide which destructs and erases all things, we have to keep looking to that, which "did not happen," so that "they begin to look at us from their concealed spaces and bygone time."[12]

It is through this intention that the photographs remaining from the Armenian Catastrophe can attain full meaning, function as prosthetic memory, and open a field of discussion beyond the limits of image-as-evidence through their protean nature that opens space for pain and suffering.[13]

1.1 Previous studies on Armenian atrocity photography

The first research regarding the photographs of the Armenian atrocities has been put together by Tessa Hofmann and Gerayer Koutcharian, who founded *the Center for Armenian Information and Documentation* in Berlin in 1985. They aimed not only to

[12] Didi-Huberman, *Bark*. Didi-Huberman, a French Art Historian of Jewish descent, is widely known for his article on the four photographs in the exhibition *Mémoire des cam*ps (2001) at Hotel de Sully in Paris, an exhibition on four photographs of the Nazi extermination and concentration camps taken by the Sonderkommando. Jew prisoners in Nazi extermination camps who were forced to work in the gas chambers and the crematoria. After working for a few months, they were executed. This article created controversy among a number of intellectuals in France, as Didi-Huberman emphasized the reality embedded into these photographs in regards of the Shoah.

[13] Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*.

collect textual documents but also visual documents, of which they sought for their first captions.[14] Many of the photographs had inadequate or manipulated captions that were either lost due to massive reproduction or deviation over time. It was in 1992, that they published "Images that Horrify and Indict: Pictorial Documentation of the Persecution and Extermination of the Armenians from 1877-1922" in *the Armenian Review,* where they very briefly covered the shortcomings of the field of photographic documentation as well as the methodological steps that had to be observed while working with these materials. This very concise but foundational article aimed to put emphasis on the importance of accurate information that accompanied images in order to function as historical documents, as well as to give a brief picture on the collected images by classifying them chronologically and thematically. This article was the first initiative to think of images of the atrocities beyond their status as mere representations of their violent historical conjunctures, as it followed the emerging interest on photojournalism in regard to the documentary value of photography.

Thirteen years later, in 2005, another article was published in *Les Cahiers de la Shoah* by Dzovinar Kévonian named "Photographie, Genocide et Transmission".[15] While this article is very much based on information gathered from the article of Tessa Hoffmann, it was a formative essay that gave brief information on the multiple utilities of the images in the last century. She stressed two vital problems in the study of the photography of the Armenian genocide. First, the reduction of the photograph to the status of evidence and second, the limited number of photographs that produced in comparison to the scale of the event. The same year Kévonian published

[14] It was founded in 1985 in Berlin under the name Informations- und Dokumentationszentrum Armenien (IDZA). This institute aimed to gain recognition for the Armenian genocide in Germany.

[15] Kévonian, *Photographie, Génocide et Transmission: L'exemple Arménien.*

a much more detailed article "Fotografie del genocidio degli armeni e poste in gioco della storiografia" in the Italian journal *Memoria e ricerca: Rivista di Storia contemporanea*.[16] In this article, she elaborated on the mediation of the images within the socio-political conditions of their time. She investigated publications in France and Lebanon, two countries with strong Armenian diasporas. She emphasized two crucial periods in the dissemination of photography; 1915-1922, which she categorized under propaganda and the aesthetics of violence and 1960-1970, defined by the political struggle for the recognition of the genocide. Following these periods, she argues that photographs are not only primary sources of the event but also "objects of history of an unfolding memory of the event".[17]

The study of Benedetta Guerzoni; *Cancellare un popolo: Immagini e documenti del genocidio armeno* published in 2013 is known as the most comprehensive study on images of the Armenian genocide. Her research covers the archives of the United States, France and Germany, in which she provides an extensive work on the representation of the massacres and the genocide in the European and US media. She starts with the images of the years 1894-1909, moves to genocide images and later on to photographs taken by humanitarian organizations. Her motivation derives from the paucity in the study of accurate information on photographic sources as well as the challenge brought by the testimonial value of images. In this regard, she analyzes different motivations of image production, dissemination and mediation such as illustrations of the depiction of sexual violence in relation to war propaganda and testimonies, photographs of humanitarian

[16] Kévonian, *Fotografie del genocidio degli armeni e poste in gioco della storiografia.* Dzovinar Kévonian kindly shared with me her personal copy that she had written in French. The French manuscript was never published.

[17] Kévonian.

organizations that were not only utilized for fundraising but also a means of communication among the diaspora.

Last but not least, the article of David Low "Photography and Empty Landscape: Excavating the Ottoman Armenian Image World" in which he revisualizes the Ottoman past by looking at the photographic production in Armenianphotographic studios of the Ottoman provinces and follows the circulation of these photographs within and outside the Empire, as well as Marie-Aude Baronian's monograph *Image et Memoire: Regards sur la Catastrophe Armenienne* on the study of contemporary Armenian artists and film directors Atom Egoyan, Gariné Torossian and Mekhitar Garabedian are signficant contributions to the understanding of the Armenian image world.[18]

Despite the increase in the mediation of photography and the flourishing interest in Armenian genocide scholarship, the study of photography is confined to a number of studies alluded above. This limitation is related to the dominant trends in genocide scholarship, that not only prioritize the study of textual documents over visual materials, but also limits visual material to mere representations.

The scholarly interest towards the Armenian genocide is at a level that constrains the academic production into predetermined arguments to which many academics position themselves. The persistence on evidence-oriented methodologies and marginalization of the study of material objects has restrained more nuanced studies that foster interdisciplinary dialogues.

[18]Low, *Photography and the Empty Landscape: Excavating the Ottoman Armenian Image World*; Baronian, *Mémoire et image: Regards sur la catastrophe arménienne*
All previous studies have become useful guides and reference points for this research due to the physical conditions that inhibited my access to most of the archives abroad.

In this respect, the thesis deals with the challenges of photographic representation, indexicality and performativity in regard to the mediatization of atrocities. By putting the authority of diplomatic documents and iconicity into question, it challenges the weight and impact of the Holocaust over other atrocities. Through the investigation of complex dialogues between text and image the thesis explores the agency of material objects, most specifically photography in relation to violence, trauma and memory. Regarding the challenge to work with belatedly mediatized images, it also seeks for novel approaches in media archaeology. While the most recent studies on photography of violence tend to concentrate on the theorization of still landscape photography taken after the events or family photography taken years before, the unique case study that is introduced in the thesis focuses on a number of unstudied photographs taken as snapshots in the course of the traumatic events. As their neither still landscape photographs taken belatedly, nor family portraits taken for the sake of personal memories, the study brings new challenges into the field of photography. The lack of violence that is present in the images followed by their uncanny immediacy contributes to a novel theorization of the photography of violence.

1.2 Thesis Outline

In the thesis, I not only use photography as primary source but also integrate press articles, diplomatic correspondences such as telegraphs as well as witness and victim testimonies. It is the core of my methodological concern to distinguish and combine different sources for a coherent and sensitive historical approach. Nevertheless, it is essential to point out the various obstacles I faced in the process of writing this dissertation.

At the very beginning of this research, I started to seek for photographs taken during the genocide. As I encountered mostly photographs of Armin Wegner – who will be discussed further in the thesis – I decided to look for less iconic images that could initiate discussion for memory and trauma studies. However, as I started to talk with people from the Armenian community in Istanbul and academics from the Armenian diaspora, I realized that – apart from the photographs of Wegner – photography was neither in their discussion nor in their memory very present. Thus, I noticed that the study of photography could only be possible through the unarchiving of unstudied photographs. Being aware of the fact that during the First World War, Germany was an ally of the Ottoman Empire, I took the chance to ask the Federal Foreign Office of Germany for photographs remaining from the period. Astonished from the material I received, the third and fourth chapter were shaped by the photographs and diplomatic correspondences of German officals in the Ottoman Empire. However, as these images never circulated in the course of war, it lead to the question of which images were actually present at that time. This part was extremely challenging as most of the archival material was abroad. Dzovinar Kévonian and Benedetta Guerzoni's studies were extra-ordinarily helpful for finding my way through the images circulating in media. In this regard, the thesis was shaped around the obstacles I experienced and the questions that emanated throughout the process of research. The following outline is this process.

In the first chapter, I investigate the limited dissemination and remediation of photographs of the deportation and extermination of Ottoman Armenians during the First World War published in the European and American press. I argue that the alliance between Germany and the Ottoman Empire prompted the Entente states to utilize photography as an ideological state apparatus. Such a position not only

denounced Germany as an enemy but also stigmatized it as the main responsible agent of the ongoing Armenian atrocities while representing the violence perpetrated by the Ottoman government through an already established Orientalist rhetoric. The Ottoman government utilized photography to legitimize its actions against the Armenians with a similar intention. In this regard, I argue that the use of photography as ideological apparatuses derives from the persuasive capacity of photography. Based on the dominant perception about photography as unmediated reflections of reality that has empirical scientific claims, this capacity is intrinsic to the photographic index. Nevertheless, the complex set of relations between the participants (the photographer, the photographed), the camera and the multiple encounters of different spectators suggests a performantivity in the production of the photograph.

In the second chapter, I examine the official correspondence network related to the deportations in Erzurum extending between the German consulate in Erzurum, the German Embassy in Istanbul and the local and central authorities of the Ottoman government. I demonstrate that despite Germany's complicity, individual officers and in particular Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, the German vice-consul in Erzurum who served from late 1914 to autumn 1915, took his own initiative to improve the deportation conditions and prevent massacres in his own region. However, in regard to the nature and adequacy of official documents as historical evidence, I argue that catastrophic events can attain full meaning through the entanglement of both neutral witness testimonies and victim testimonies. Built upon the historical framework presented here, the next chapter will be devoted to the analysis of photographic documentation of the event.

The last chapter focuses on nine photographs placed in the Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin that were taken by the German consulate employees of Erzurum in May 1915. I examine why these photographs were never integrated into the historiography of the representation of the Armenian atrocities. I argue that because of the lack of violence depicted, these images do not conform to the stereotypical genocide imagery. As these images are taken from the early stages of the deportation order, I seek to understand how the absence of violence in these photographs can be linked to the catastrophe through a theoretical conception of time and death.

CHAPTER 2

PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE GREAT CATASTROPHE

IN DISSEMINATION AND MEDIATION

Whilst mass deportation starting from 1915 to 1916 was ongoing, news feed was limited but still existing in the European, American and Russian press. These publications were mostly politically loaded and targeting the denouncement of Germany and the Ottoman Empire. Guerzoni interprets this as a "symptomatic dichotomy of the typical polarization in the atmosphere of war"[19]. However, this polarization did not emerge in the atmosphere of war. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Armenian question became an important instrument of interference for Britain and Russia with the internationalization of the situation in the Balkans.[20] Along with the alliance between Germany and the Ottoman Empire in 1914, Germany – who was already in great dispute with the other Great Powers – was inevitably situated as a co-conspirator for its indifference towards the extermination of the Christian population.[21] Despite the neutral position the United States took at the beginning of the war, the previous tension between Germany and the United States gave the Entente press the opportunity to position Germany as an open target as a result of its invasive and aggressive politics both in Europe and the Ottoman territories. The British press was keen to employ Germany's complicity as an instrument to convince the United States to join the war. The French press, on the

[19] 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,*51.

[20] Küçük. Osmanlı diplomasisinde Ermeni meselesinin ortaya çıkışı: 1878-1897, Deringil. ""The Armenian Question Is Finally Closed": Mass Conversions of Armenians in Anatolia during the Hamidian Massacres of 1895–1897, 344-71

[21] See: Vahakn N. Dadrian, *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide: A Reviewof the Historical Evidence of German Complicity*.

other hand, was actively propagating against Germany's position as part of its imperial ambitions that was implicit in its ideological framework of a "superior" civilization.[22] In this period, the production and dissemination of photography was almost limited to the Van resistance (April-May 1915), which was an armed struggle that took place between Ottoman armed forces and Armenian "National Committee of Self-Defense" in the city of Van, and the refugees of Port Said, who were Armenian villagers from the foots of the Mountain of Moses resisting to the forced deportation orders from July 21 to September 1915 until they were evacuated by British and French naval ships and were disembarked at Port Said. [23] It was only after the Russian occupation of certain regions that more images of the survivors started to circulate.

In the second half of the Great War, the dissemination became more complicated as various individuals, mostly witnesses and workers of humanitarian organizations came into the picture. Volunteers, health officers, missionaries that were able to remain in the empire – or those that were in the occupied territories of

[22] In German philosophy, *Kultur* was perceived as the real essence of human that distinguished itself from *Zivilisation* (Civilization), which was rather linked to form and appearance.

[23] Cora, Revolutions and Rebellions: Van Resistance as Rebellion online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, historical background of the Mount Moses resistance in: Hatice Bayraktar: The Forty Days of Musa Dagh (novel), in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War.
This local armed struggle escalated with growing tension between the local government (to which Cevdet Bey - the brother in law of Enver Pasha was appointed as the governor) and the Armenians. With arriving news that Armenians were massacred in the eastern region of Van, in addition to the news that 4000 disarmed Armenians were going to be send to the labour battalions, followed by the arrest of a number of ARF (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) and the attack of Cevdet Bey's irregular troops resulted in an organization of the self-defence committee, which aimed to prevent potential massacres. It turned into a serious "destructive urban guerrilla warfare" that lasted until Russian regular troops entered the city. A similar resistance occurred also in the Mountain of Moses (Musa Dağ – a mountain on the Turkish-Syrian border that was on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea), when the order to evacuate six villages from the base of the mountain came. The villagers decided to escape to the mountain with their weapons and livestock and resist against the Ottoman armed forces. The struggle continued for weeks as the Armenians started to run out of supply. As a way to get freed from the siege, the Armenians raised two enormous banners in the hope to receive the attention of the Entente powers. After they took the attention of French cruisers, British and French naval ships evacuated around 4000 Armenians to Port Said.

the Entente States – risked their lives to take photographs and disseminate them. In the camp zones, humanitarian organizations were actively producing photographs and circulating them for endowment. Subsequently, from the end of the war to the Treaty of Lausanne (24 July 1923) the Armenian diaspora outside the homeland became extremely active in the publication and dissemination of the Catastrophe.[24] The post-genocide agenda of the diaspora that was ranging from seeking justice to the reintegration of the survivors and the formation of an Armenian nation also diversified the different employments of photography. Nevertheless, with the Treaty of Lausanne, the visibility of the Armenian massacres drastically decreased as "the Armenian question *was* finally closed" within the international context.[25] The frustration of the establishment of a non-independent Armenian state, as well as the invalidation of the Treaty of Sevres, resulted with the drastic enclosure of the Armenian diaspora.[26]

In the post – Shoah period, the involvement of the Armenian diaspora in the recognition and reparation of the atrocities committed against the Ottoman Armenian population during the First World War actively increased. This emanated from political discussions on crimes against humanity which derived from the Shoah

[24] Tölölyan "Armenian Diaspora" in Encyclopedia of Diasporas. A great number of Armenians were already living outside the homeland before 1915. Armenian diasporas were formed over the centuries in India, Eastern Europe, Russia, Georgia, Persia which also formed further diasporas through migration. In the nineteenth century, small communities were established in United States, France, Britain, Egypt, Bulgaria that derived from economic and also political purposes. The Armenian National Delegation founded in Paris by Boghos Nubar in 1912 was very active.

[25] Deringil states that he took this quotation from Abdülhamid II to British Ambassador Sir Philip Currie, cited in Roy Douglas, "Britain and the Armenian Question, 1894-7," The Historical Journal 19 (1976): 113-33: quote d. 132. The Treaty of Lausanne had set the borders of the Turkish Republic and reconfigured the Treaty of Sevres, which was rejected by the Turkish National movement. For more information on the impact of the Lausanne Treaty, see: Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians*.

[26] This chapter does not deal with the discussions of the Great Catastrophe in the Armenian diaspora. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in first half of the twentieth century, the diaspora produced a variety of publications. In order to follow the discussions on the Great Catastrophe a good level of Armenian is inevitable.

experience. Consequently, the remediation of the photographs of the Armenian massacres exceeded the limits of the diaspora, redefining representation in relation to the Shoah literature.[27]

2.1. Co-conspirator: Germany and Ottoman Empire as instruments of war propaganda

In February 1916, René Pinon, a French historian, and journalist specialized on the "Orient", who later became the director of the Franco-Armenian journal *la Voix d'Armenie*[28], published an article in *Revues des Deux Mondes* on the extermination of the Armenians and its relation to the German politics.[29] It is one of the earliest examples of a detailed analysis on the Armenian massacres. The title "La suppression des arméniens: Méthode allemande, travail turc" (The suppression of the Armenians: German method, Turkish work), significantly demonstrated the French stigmatization of Germany's participation in the Armenian massacres. Citing from Armenian journals[30], using third-eye testimonies of German nurses and American consuls, this 30-page long article stood as an important example of how the Armenian massacres were analyzed as part of Germany's complicity. Adverting the Hamidian massacres and the Adana massacres as well, the author referred to an

[27] Some of the examples that I am giving, were already mentioned in Dzovinar Kevonian's articles: Kévonian, "Photographie, Génocide et Transmission: L'exemple Arménien, 119–49; Fotografie del genocidio degli armeni e poste in gioco della storiografia », *Memoria e Ricerca, Rivista di storia contemporanea, Fotografia e violenza: Visioni della brutalità dalla Grande Guerra ad oggi*, 20/ settembre-dicembre 2005, 93-110. The difficulty to find international publications here in Istanbul has striven me to look after examples that I could find online.

[28] La Voix d'Armenie was a bi-monthly French journal published between the years 1918-1919 as the successor of Pro-Armenia.

[29] Pinon*, La suppression des arméniens: Méthode allemande, travail turc.* 531-560.

[30] Pinon, *La suppression des arméniens: Méthode allemande, travail* turc, 559. The article gives citation from the Boston based Armenian journal Azk on the response of the German chancellor Benthmann-Hollweg regarding the situation of Armenia.

omnipresent hatred within Turkish society. Although systematic orders were coming from Constantinople, he argued that it was through the complicity of Enver and Talat Pasha that Germany was able to exploit Turkey[31], which resulted in the plundering of Armenian property by the Bosnian and Macedonian Muslims[32], the conversion to Islam and the massacres of thousands of Armenians. Donald Bloxham states that most of the information in the article was provided by Boghos Nubar, the chairman of the Armenian National Assembly, who confessed to the Armenian Catholicos, that the stress upon Germany was rather for the sake of the relations with France.[33]

A month after this article, a pamphlet by the abbot Eugene Griselle "L'Arménie martyre: une victime du Pangermanisme" was published.[34] Depicting the Armenians as the victims of the "insatiable appetite" of Germany,[35] the matter was strolling on an ambiguous ground, where Germany's presence somehow took precedence over the tragedy itself. Newspapers such as *l'Illustration, the Times, Harper's Weekly, New York Times* openly demonstrated Germany's indifference as the actual cause for the increasing losses of the Armenian population in the empire. The articles were not only indicating the complicity of Germany but also suggesting that the United States could be the only solution for this tragedy. Examples of this could be seen in the New York Times,

> Not the allied powers at war with Turkey. Only one power can take action for that purpose. It is Germany. Would not the expression of American public opinion, voicing the conscience of neutral nations, lead Germany to check the Turkish government?[36]

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[31] Pinon, 560.

[32] Pinon, 554.

[33] Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism and Destruction*, 130.

[34] Griselle, *Armenie martyre: une victime du Pangermanisme.*

[35] Griselle, Armenie martyre, 9.

[36] New York Times, September 21, 1915.

Similarly, Harper's Weekly published two weeks later,

> If Germany would speak a word to the government of Turkey the policy might be changed in an instant. Lord Bryce and others think the United States is the only hope. (…) It is possible, though by no means certain, that a protest of some kind from us would have direct influence on Turkey. The only thing that is certain is that any protest from Germany would settle the matter at once.[37]

While the life-threatening conditions of the non-Muslim communities recruited for western European governments as legitimate causes to interfere into the state operation of the Ottoman Empire throughout the nineteenth century, the press, working as an ideological state apparatus, was covering the excessive violence faced by the Armenian community in relation to the "implicit barbarity" of the Turks and their of "level of civilization".[38] However, with the alliance of Germany and the Ottoman Empire, these apparatuses shifted from the specificity of "eastern/Muslim barbarism" to a "civilized barbarism".[39] As it is possible to observe, Germany's stance opened for the Entente states a field to instrumentalize the exterminations as part of Germany's greater *Kultur* project. Despite Germany's self-identification of "being a superior civilization", France' and Britain's reception was rather cynic, elaborating it as an ideological apparatus serving for its imperial project. Thus, expressions of "barbarity", "civilization", "Christian victims" were used with interchangeable references to the Ottoman Empire and Germany. Correspondingly, the press did not limit itself to articles but was mediating images that were functioning in the same manner. According to John Tagg, photography's "status as a technology varies with the power relations which invest it. Its nature as a practice

[37] Bill and the Armenians. (1915, October 9). *Harper's Weekly,* p.337.

[38] Althusser. "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses (notes towards an investigation)." *The anthropology of the state: A reader* 9, 86-98.

[39] It is important to note that the bombardment of Belgian civilians was the initial reason for the propaganda against Germany.

depends on the institutions and agents which define it and set it to work. Its function as a mode of cultural production is tied to definite conditions of existence, and its products are meaningful and legible only within the particular currencies they have."[40] As photography operated within institutions of knowledge which were part of a new economy of power, photography functioned in these defined contexts and became meaningful within these specificities.[41]

In autumn 1915, the first photographs of deportation were traced in several French journals such as *J'ai vue..., Mirroir, l'Illustration*.[42] Following these publications, the earliest examples of atrocity images entered the Russian press. While the practice of photography very much depended on the conditions of the war zones[43], the frame in which they were disseminating was designated by state ideology. Most of the printing press of the nineteenth and early twentieth century functioned as ideological state apparatuses in international conflicts despite their differentiating political orientations. The publicity of the Great War was no exception in this. As a matter of fact, the disseminating images of the extermination of the Armenian population were operating in accordance with the dominant discourses of the states.

On October 2, 1915, the weekly illustrated magazine *J'ai vu...* published a one-page collage of images (Fig.1) with the caption "Five thousand Armenians were saved by the French cruiser 'Foudre'."[44]

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[40] Tagg. "Evidence, truth and order: a means of surveillance" In Jessica Evans & Stuart Hall (eds.), *Visual Culture: The Reader*, 246.

[41] Brothers, *War and Photography: A Cultural History*, 16.

[42] Kévonian*, Fotografie del genocidio degli armeni e poste in gioco della storiografia.*

[43]While the order of the prohibition of photography in camp zones came much, territories occupied by Russia were more fertile for image production.

[44] J'ai Vue.., 2 October 1915. This illustrated journal was specifically published for war news between the years 1914-1920. In each issue, a small section was devoted to the announcement that J'ai vue… would pay any amount for interesting documents reporting the war or the actualities of the world.



Fig. 1 Five thousand Armenians saved by the French cruiser

These three images were accompanied by a paragraph-long explanation, stating that the five thousand Armenians of which three thousand were women and children were saved by the French cruisers from a mountain near the cost of Antioch. In fact, the Armenians mentioned in the article were those of the Mountain of Moses, who resisted against the evacuation orders of the Ottoman government. However, the article did not mention a single word on their struggle but covered only how they were rescued. The expression “saviors of Christian victims”, was continuously reproduced, in almost all publications covering the Armenian massacres of the time.

Collecting photographs from readers became a common practice during the Great War, as mentioned in the previous chapter, illustrated war journals became highly popular in almost every country.

The articles created a dichotomous relation between the "victim" and the "savior", as well as the "victim" and the "perpetrator". According to this expression, the victims were "eastern" Christians, who were saved by "western" Christians, from the "barbarous" Muslim Turks. This rhetoric was not novel in the European context. The images of the Hamidian massacres were disseminated in a similar manner. This was not only creating a dichotomous relation between Christianity and Islam but was also supporting the dominant contemptuous discourse of the nineteenth century regarding the level of "civilization" of the Ottoman Empire.[45]

The Russian newspaper *Iskri* published an article (Fig.2) on 18 October 1915 entitled "The annihilation of Armenians in Turkey" with three accompanying images. Two of them were the earliest examples of atrocity images that could be traced in the printed press.[46] They were captioned as "Tormented Armenian woman with her child", depicting dead bodies on the ground close to the caravans. Neither a location, nor a specific date was given, but the complicity of "Kulturträger German officers" who were carrying out the extermination systematically was explicitly noted.[47] While these timeless and placeless images do not distinguish themselves from the ferocities of the Hamidian massacres, it is the presence of the caravan next to the body (the second image) that brings forth the fact that these were deported people massacred on the road.

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[45] It is important to note that this discourse was not restrained to the massacres of the time. The treatment of the Christian subjects, the dominating methods of social control and discipline, economic deficiency, technological developments etc. were all part this narrative that was intrinsic to the Orientalist discourse. For a more versatile discussion on the Ottoman Empire and its relation to civilization see: Ussama Makdisi; Ottoman Orientalism, *The American Historical Review*, 768 - 796, Selim Deringil; "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45.

[46] I came across this image in the book: Hayk Demoyan, *Armenian Genocide: Frontpage Coverage in the World Press*, ed. Svetlana Danielyan, Tigran Kalayjyan, and Lusine Abrahamyan (Armenian Genocide Museum institute, 2014). Unfortunately, I was not able to find the newspaper online. Therefore, my interpretation remains within the limits of the book.

[47] Demonian, 202.



Fig. 2 *Iskri* publishing massacred Armenians

Only the specificity of this second image attributes a temporal-spatial marker and an accurate context to which the reader could relate. It is remarkable that even in the earliest examples of the extermination, the persuasive capacity of photography makes it inessential to state an exact location and time; whereas the article is supported with a narration that brings rather the "perpetrator" into the forefront, than the "victim".

All along the war, immediate publications regarding every aspect of the Great War were quite popular. One example of these publications was *The Times History and Encyclopaedia of the War*, which was a series in Britain annually published since the beginning of the war. In July 1916, in its 8th volume, a chapter under "The Extermination of the Armenians" appeared. This 40-page long article, which contained around 40 photographs and a few illustrations, ranged from the Armenian

resistance in Van, to the French cruiser, to the refugees in Port Said, the advancement of Russia into Ottoman territory, and the deportation camps in Ottoman Syria. This article explained in detail "who the Armenians were" and "what their relation to the Turks were,"[48] taken it from the narrative of the historical homeland to their relations with the Ottoman state, explaining their socio-economic importance in the Empire. According to the article, the social and political transformations in the ruling body of the government were perceived as the internalization of nineteenth-century European political ideas by the triumvirate. However, in the sequel of the Adana massacres, "equality in front of the law," that not only comprised the Muslim community but also the Christians, left itself from being part of a progressive agenda to an absorption of European chauvinism.[49] The deportations and massacres were delineated in detail, stressing upon the technological efficacy that was carried through telegraph and railway as a combination of German conceptions and Young Turk government's interest. By emphasizing the testimonies of "neutral" witnesses such as Danish and German nurses, the narration of the dreadfulness of the deportations were supported.[50]

On the other hand, the photographs were not organized directly in relation to the text. Scattered across, these images were accompanied with captions that were only thematically in relation to the context. The photographers were unknown and most probably regarded as irrelevant since the selection of images demonstrates an intention to draw familiarity with the Armenian people and their tragic situation.

[48]The Times History of the War Vol. 8, *The Times*: 351

[49] *The Times History of the War,* 358-359. By European chauvinism, the article refers to German progressiveness.

[50] *The Times History of the War*, 363.

2.2 Photography as performance

2.2.1 From spectacle to propaganda

The *Times History and Encyclopaedia* article continues with a story of a discovered bomb that most probably dated to the Hamidian era. The officers tortured a number of Armenians while ordering them to give up all arms. Those who did not own any, bought them from others to be able to stop the violence they were exposed to. However, they were photographed as they were handing them first to their Turkish neighbors and later on to the authorities. According to the article, these photographs were published in an album by the Ottoman government to demonstrate them as a justification for the deportations and crimes against Armenians.[51]

This book, which is known as the *White Book* or *Ermeni 'Amâl ve Hareket-i İhtilâliyesi*[52] was published in 1916 in four languages, French, German, English and Turkish, and distributed to the governments mainly as a reaction to the *Blue Book* or *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-1916,* that the British government published a few months earlier that year.[53] While this state publication became soon one of the foundational sources for the denialist and "mythicized Turkish historiography" that was produced and reproduced throughout the twentieth century, it was not an unprecedented state apparatus.[54] In fact, during the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913 and the following years, publications regarding the atrocities

[51] *The Times History of the War*, 365.

[52] *Ermeni amal ve hareket-i ihtilaliyesi:* tasvir ve vesaik accessed via TBMM Open Archive Collection

[53] James Bryce and Great Britain. The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallondon. HM Stationery Office, 1916. This book was reprinted by Gomidas Institute in 2000 as an uncensored version. See: Bryce & Toynbee. The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916*: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce*. Gomidas Institute, 2000.

[54] Göcek, "The Turkish Historiography on 1915" in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire*, 42-54.

committed by Bulgarians and Greeks against the Muslim population were published and circulated. These were not only published by the state but also by civil society organizations.[55] It is a striking example of how the Ottoman government found it necessary to produce a publication that would support its argument. A great part of this compilation was composed of documents and photographs collected from Armenian journals, publications of political organizations, as well as photographs from different occasions. Although the armament of the Dashnaktsutyun party increased especially during the alliance with the CUP, these were nevertheless demonstrated as the threat against the integrity of the Empire. Illustrations of the Armenian motherland[56], compiled arms – mainly rifles and hand bombs – of which some were already obtained during the Hamidian massacres,[57]portraits of revolutionary leaders, corpses of executed "Muslims" were demonstrated.[58] Leslie Davis, the American consul of Harput, wrote to the State Department; "Looking at the matter in the light of subsequent events and comparing it with what happened in all others parts of Turkey at the same time, I think it is probable that in many cases the bombs, which were found in the backyards of the people accused, were actually buried there by the police, so as to manufacture evidence against the Armenians."[59] According to *the Times*, arms that were collected from Armenian families were photographed and demonstrated in the publication as evidence for Armenian

[55] Çetinkaya. "Atrocity Propaganda and the Nationalization of the Masses in the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars (1912–13).", 759-778.

[56] The concept of "motherland" became especially significant during the second of the nineteenth century in education.

[57]Suny states that most of the documents dated to period of the 1894-1896 Hamidian massacres, collected by Abdülhamid II's interior minister for the justification of the massacres. However, this documentary collection was published in 1916, unlike affirmed by Ronald Grigory Suny as 1917.

[58] I will return to the photographs of executed Muslim later.

[59] Cited from Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*, 285.

insurrection. The unarming of Armenian soldiers and households had started as early as the autumn of 1914 along the Russian border and continued throughout 1915 in all six vilayets.[60] Most significantly, after the defeat in Sarıkamış, Armenians serving in the army at the Caucasian front were not only ordered by Enver Pasha to be unarmed but also to be sent to labor battalions.[61] Thus, the collecting of arms – or the demonstration of "uncovered" arms – served for the justification of the violence exposed to Armenians.[62] In *Fragments of a lost Homeland: Remembering Armenia,* a similar instance was recalled through the memoir of Aram Dildilian.

> One day in the morning, we saw a big crowd of soldiers in the Armenian cemetery across the valley, supposedly digging out a coffin full of guns, rifles, hand grenades, powder, and knives. They held a parade in the streets each soldier carrying a gun or something high above his head so that the people would see… Later they called us to take the picture of the display (of weapons) in city hall (all fake). They must have buried the coffin full of guns themselves became both the coffin and the guns or swords had no trace of rust, rot or tarnish.[63]

Although the Dildilians did not keep a copy of this photograph Marsoobian assumes that it was one of the photographs (Fig.3) published in the *White Book*.[64] This photograph from Merzifon, where the Dildillian were active, was one among many others that was published in the *White Book.* They were all framed in a similar

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[60] Rasch, *The Storm of Life: A Missionary Marriage from Armenia to Appalachia*, 122.

[61]Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else: A History of the Armenian Genocide*, 244. For more detailed information on labor batallions, see: Zürcher "Ottoman Labour Battalions in World War I" in *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah*, 187-196. More on conscription and desertion in the Ottoman army, see: Mehmet Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War: Between Voluntarism and Resistance*, The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage. Labor battalions (amele taburları) were unarmed units in the army, that were mainly working on the construction of railroads and roads. Most of the Armenians were conscripted to these units and were executed in various methods.

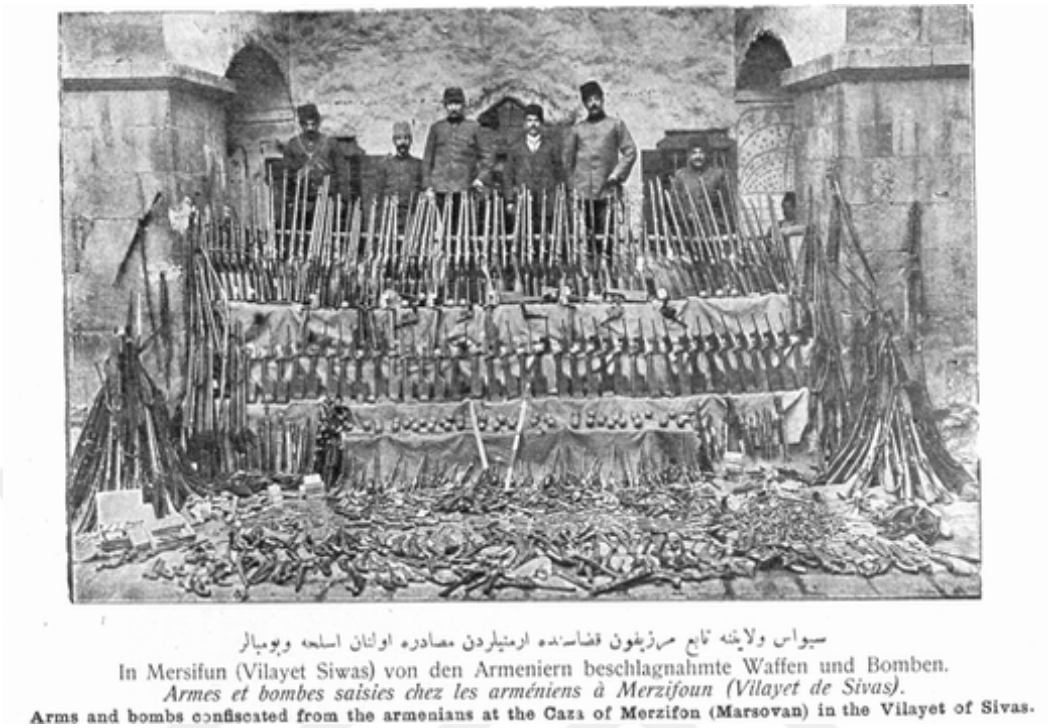
[62]Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else: A History of the Armenian Genocide*: 273 Talat's telegram on 24 April 1915

[63] Marsoobian, *Fragments of a Lost Homeland: Remembering Armenia*,199.

[64] Marsoobian cites Talat Paşa, Ermeni Vahşeti (1916), Istanbul: Örgün Yayınevi, 2005. This book was another edition of the many versions of *Ermeni amal ve hareket-i ihtilaliyesi.* It is not a book specifically published by Talat Pasha but as explained earlier a state publication.

Image taken from *Ermeni amal ve hareket-i ihtilaliyesi, 35.*

composition, where guns and arms were exhibited in the front, whereas either accused Armenians or Turkish soldiers were aligned behind.



سیواس ولایتنه تابع مرزیفون قضاسنده ارمنیلردن مصادره اولنان اسلحه وبومبالر
In Mersifun (Vilayet Siwas) von den Armeniern beschlagnahmte Waffen und Bomben.
Armes et bombes saisies chez les arméniens à Merzifoun (Vilayet de Sivas).
Arms and bombs confiscated from the armenians at the Caza of Merzifon (Marsovan) in the Vilayet of Sivas.

Fig. 3 Arms and bombs in Merzifon

It remains ambiguous, whether the author of *the Times* personally sought for a story that would legitimize the presence of these weapons or whether he/she was aware of the fact that some of these photographs were collected two decades earlier by Abdülhamid as justificatory documents for the Hamidian Massacres in 1894-1896, or whether he personally received this information from Armenian victims. Nevertheless, what is possible to say is that the persuasive capacity of photography plays a particular role in these reciprocal recriminations. As the indexicality of the photograph opens up a ground to claim for what *has been there,* it is evident that this capacity is very intrinsic to the production of the publication. In fact, the Ottoman government not only documented the "uncovering" but turned the "uncovering" into a spectacle. Each uncovered arm and weapon was brought to the courtyard of a

building in the city – mostly the municipality [65]– and exhibited singularly while either the Turkish soldiers who "discovered" them or the Armenian "traitors" who "owned" them were aligned. It is possible that a photographer – who was presumably the local studio photographer of the city[66] – was ordered to capture the images. The composed scenery, which was framed through the camera lens was captioned and situated in the print as the "evidence" for "Armenian treachery".

This whole process that is performed by people – the soldier, the convict, the photographer, the officer–, suggests that as much as it is the composition of the image per se that could be understood as a spectacle, it is also the production of photography that could be regarded as such.[67] On the other hand, for the British press – putting aside the truth-value of the story – the effort to reframe these photographs with a causal explanation, that would legitimize the very presence of the armament depicted in the photographs that the Ottoman government uses as an accusation against the Armenian population, could function as another demonstrative for the injustice Armenians were subjected to. The very fact that the Ottoman government utilized photography as evidence and the British press tried to falsify it through its non-authenticity demonstrates how the notion of photography as empirical truth was put into question through these reciprocal recriminations. However, the effort to falsify images was not limited to *the Times*. In 1919, Thomas K. Muguerditchian[68], who was a dragoman and the vice consul of Britain in Diyarbakır until late 1914,

[65]http://www.houshamadyan.org/mapottomanempire/vilayetofmamuratulazizharput/harputkaza/political-life/ottoman-constitution.html

[66] Most of the studios were owned by Armenians or Greeks around the early twentieth century. Therefore, it is possible to that most of the images were taken by the Armenian studios themselves.

[67] Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*. Azoulay for the performative dimension.

[68] Mugerditchian was a Protestant Armenian minister. As he was accused of working as a spy for the British government he fled from the Ottoman Empire in the outbreak of war. For more information on Mugerditchian, See: Michael John Rettig, Armenians in British Intelligence during World War I: A case study of Thomas Mugerditchian.

published a book of his personal experience along with the testimonies of three witnesses, Levon Kasabian, Thomas Donjian, Julia and Selma Ispir.[69] He argues that Armenian victims were dressed by Union members in Muslim clothes and photographed to be distributed all over the Empire and Germany.

> A very large number of Armenian exiles having been killed in the usual brutal manner by the militia and the Kurds at Kozandere, a place on the Mardin road, five miles from Diyarbekir, the Committee of Union and Progress had inspiration to gather all the corpses, dress those of men in Hoca's uniform with turbans on their heads, and those of women with Muslim women's clothing, veil etc. and take several photographs, thousands of copies of which were distributed and sent all over Turkey and Germany to prove most shamefully that the Armenians were to blame for all that had taken place.[70]

Despite of being part of a greater perpetrator narrative,[71] Uğur Ümit Üngör argues that Kurdish testimonies coincide with the narrative in Mugerditchian. It continues:

> (..) While these photographs were being distributed to the Kurds, Arabs and other Muslim races, the most slanderous reports were also put into circulation to excite and provoke all the anger and hatred of those fanatical race against the poor Armenians, who still happened to survive.[72]

The *White Book* not only compiled images of Armenian revolutionaries and "uncovered" arms but also of mass graves, identified corpses that were located and

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[69] Mugerditchian, *The Diyarbekir Massacres and Kurdish Atrocities.* This book was republished in 2015 by Gomidas Institute. According to Kévonian, the first edition which was published in Cairo was accompanied with images unrelated to the testimonies and lacked exact information on their date and location. Ara Sarafian mentions that Mugerditchian sent his manuscript to the State with a separate batch of photographs that were related to the treatment of the Armenians in 1915 in the Ottoman Empire. However, as they seemed extremely staged and lacked authenticity, they were not reproduced in the Gomidas edition. Still, it is possible to see six of the photographs in the Gomidas edition that did not have an authentication problem.

[70] Mugerditchian, *The Diyarbekir Massacres and Kurdish Atrocities,* 47. This information was first mentioned by Kévonian in Dzovinar Kévonian, Photographies du génocide arménien et enjeux d'histoire,

[71]On the memory of genocide in Kurdish testimonies see: Çelik, "Cent ans de malédiction! La confrontation symbolique relative au génocide des Arméniens dans les « contre-mémoires» des kurdes" in *Le génocide des Arméniens*; Adnan Çelik and Namık Kemal Dinç. *Yüz yıllık ah!: Toplumsal hafızanın izinde 1915 Diyarbekir*.

[72] Mugerditchian, *The Diyarbekir Massacres and Kurdish Atrocities*, 47.

dated. Unlike the photographs of the Armenians published in the Western press, their cause of death was described precisely along with the location and date. Two examples (Fig.4 and Fig.5) from the *White Book*, published on the same page, are located in the surroundings of Diyarbekir. It is very probable that Thomas Mugerditchian referred to these images that are particularly defined as Muslim victims.[73] In his account, Muguerditchian argued that the corpses in the photographs were not of Muslim people but of the Armenians themselves, dressed in distinctive local and religious costumes and then photographed as "victimized Muslims". This rhetoric of "victimized Muslims" was carried and actively promulgated since the Balkan wars, while many Muslim were persecuted in the course of war.[74]



اردودن تبديل هوا ايچون ترخيص‌اولنان و١٠ تموز ١٣٣١ده ديار بكرك ليجه قضاسنه تابع قوم و چوم قريه‌لرى جوارنده اللرى، آياقلرى باغلانمش
ارمنى قوميته‌لرى طرفندن شهيد ايديلن عسكرلرك محل وقعه‌ده آلنان فوتوغرافى

Photographie, an Ort und Stelle aufgenommen, einer Gruppe beurlaubter türkischer Soldaten, die am 23. Juli 1915 durch die armenischen Banden in der Nähe der Dorfer Kum und Tschum, Vororte von Lidsche im Vilayet Diarbekir, ermordet wurden.

Photographie, prise sur place, d'un groupe de soldats turcs en congé, assassinés par les bandes arméniennes le 23 Juillet 1915 après avoir été ligottés près des villages de Koum et Tchoum, dependants du Caza de Lidjé, Vilayet de Diarbekir.

Photograph, taken on the spot, of soldiers belongig to the Imperial Army and disbanded on account of their ill-health who, on July 23rd, 1915, were willfully murdered by the Armenian Bands near the Villages of Koom and Tchoom, dependances of the Caza of Lidjé.

Fig. 4 Dead bodies around Diyarbekir

[73] *Ermeni amal ve hareket-i ihtilaliyesi, 47.*

[74] Çetinkaya, *Atrocity Propaganda and the Nationalization of the Masses in the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars (1912–13),* Kévonian, *Photographies du génocide arménien et enjeux d'histoire.*



دیاربکرك شرق ناحیه‌سنه تابع اولوب ارککلری عمومیتله تحت سلاحده بولنان خضر الیاس قریه‌سی قادین و چوجقلرینك ۱۰ تموز ۱۳۳۱ده مرسه‌ئی دره‌سنده هونو اسمنده‌کی ارمنیلرك تحت ریاستنده بولنان چته طرفندن خنجر و قورشونله جانوریجه‌سنه شهید ایدلمکلری محلده آلنان رسمی

Photographische Aufnahme von Frauen und Kindern des Dorfes Hisir Iliss (in der Nähe von Schark im Vilayet Diarbekir), die trotz ihrer Hilflosigkeit infolge der Einberufung der gesamten männlichen Bevölkerung des Dorfes unter die Waffen, durch die Bande des armenischen Banditen Hono am 23. Juli 1915 bei Merseni-Dere durch Kugelschüsse und Dolchstösse ermordet wurden.

Photographie des femmes et des enfants du village de Kidir Ilias (Chark Nahiéssi-Diarbekir) dont toute la population mâle se trouve sous les armes, assassinés le 23 Juillet 1915, à Merseny Déré, à coup de balles et de poignards par la bande du bandit arménien Hono.

Photograph of a group of Mohamedan women and children belonging to the Village of Hizir Illias, Shark Nahiessi, Diarbekir, helpless and defenseless on account of the absence of their husbands and male relatives serving in the Army, were, on July 23 th, 1915, slaughtered, at Mersenx Déré, by means of daggers and shot by rifles in a most pitiless and horrible way by an Armenian Band under the notorious and well known bandit Hono.

Fig. 5 Women in front of a pile of dead bodies

2.2.2 Performance as a strategy of survival

Thomas Mugerditchian's assertion on the photographs of "Muslim victims" circulating in the Ottoman Empire is striking in regard to the way it coincided with his personal experience. As Michael Rettig's research demonstrates, Thomas Mugerditchian and his family escaped from the Empire by disguising in different dresses and adopting multiple identities throughout their journey.

Thomas Mugerditchian was able to convince the guardian of his hotel room in Beirut through his British look – the homburg he wore – and proficiency of Kurdish language. Following this he replaced his homburg with a fez, as he went to

an old Turkish friend, who gave him the opportunity to flee from Beirut to Cairo.[75] Likewise, his family in Harput disguised from one identity to another in various circumstances. When the family was sought due to Thomas Mugerditchian's affiliation with the British intelligence, they presented themselves in their Armenian identity as "Mugerditchian". Leslie Davis, the American consular of Harput, was entrusted the family's protection after Thomas Mugerditchian left the empire. While Davis, managed to protect them for a while, it soon became impossible to remain in town.[76] On 2 August 1916, they left the city in "Kurdish" clothes. Alice Shipley Mugerditchian, who was one of the daughters of Thomas Mugerditchian, recalls in her interview, how they dressed in "Kurdish beggar outfits and walked out the city".[77] With the help of Kurdish guides, the family managed to reach Russian territories.[78]They settled then to Tiflis, where they were fascinated by the appearances of the people who wore "mandarin collared jackets button up to their chins".[79] They took shelter by an old acquaintance of Thomas Mugerditchian, to whom they were not "the family of K.M. Thomas Mugerditchian, Vice Consul and Dragoman for the British Empire" but "five pitiful-looking refugees expecting a handout".[80]As the family developed a performative survival strategy by going back

[75] Rettig, *Armenians in British Intelligence during World War I: A case study of Thomas Mugerditchian*, 43-47.

[76] Michael John Rettig is a graduate student at California State University, Fresno. His MA thesis focuses on Thomas Mugerditchian, who is also his great great grandfather. Michael kindly shared with me Alice Shipley's memoir and information from his family archive.

USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive Online, Alice Shipley

[77]Alice Shipley, *We walked then Ran*.

[78]Alice Shipley, 112-154.

[79] Alice Shipley, 156.

[80] Alice Shipley, 156.

and forth between Kurdish clothes and modern dresses, Kurdish, Armenian and British identities, they were also transiting between different social classes.[81] There are two vivid examples from the family archives, captured only one month apart, demonstrating their transitive identities.[82]

The first one (Fig. 6) is a family photograph taken in late October 1916 in Tiflis, shortly after they arrived safely to the city. According to Rettig, this photograph was sent along with a letter. When the family decided to leave the city without Davis' approval, he informed Thomas via telegraph of his family's decision.[83] Alice Shipley recalls in her memoir how they kept their "refugee" dresses all along and took a photograph with them shortly after they arrived[84] Most probably taken in a photography studio, the family was lined in front of the camera fully dressed in their refugee clothes. This photograph was then, sent to Thomas, as the first image he received since he left the empire.

The second one (Fig. 7), was taken in November 1916, again in Tbilisi. Unlike the first one, the clothes in this image were in modern western style. The photograph was captioned in Alice' memoir as, "Our family in normal dress after we arrived in Tiflis.".[85] Thomas, who stayed in Cairo at the time, printed it as a postcard and dated it as "Cairo 1917".[86] Rettig states that the family took occasionally photographs as such and sent them to Thomas Mugerditchian until they reunited again in California.

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[81] Rettig, 43-47.

[82] The first one is from the Shoah foundation archive http://sfi.usc.edu/gallery/thomas-muggerditchian-family-photos, The second is from Michael Rettig's MA thesis, 47.

[83] Alice Shipley :155

[84] This information was shared by Michael Rettig.

[85] Alice Shipley, 155.

[86] USC Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive Online, Alice Shipley.



Fig. 6 The Mugerditchian family in their refugee clothes



Fig. 7 The Mugerditchian family in Tbilisi

This photographic exchange also reveals in some aspect what photography meant for them and how they were relating to it. Through the first photograph, the family not

only assured the father that they have survived but also demonstrated through which means they were able to survive. While they transited in-between multiple identities depending on the level of hazard, this transition was not restricted to a single performance but involved multiple performative identities. As they continued to send family photographs they were holding an inventory of these multiple identities and communicating with Thomas by attesting that it is these performative identities that kept them alive. Thus, for the family, photography was an evidence of their survival and a way to keep their memory vivid, an instrument to fill the absence. David Low demonstrates in his work how the communication between emigrated Armenian men, mostly fathers/ lovers, was kept alive through photographic exchange. Studio photographs were sent to each other to fill the absence of the emigrants and separated family members. While keeping photographs of lost ones was a common practice for mourning, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century this became a common practice among emigrants and remaining family members. Through this exchange emigrants were "allowed to maintain a presence in the family home from which they were absent"[87], while the photographs of the remaining family members carried "a plea that the family not be forgotten".[88]Thus, it is very possible that this practice was carried among survivors through the urge to "not be forgotten" and the urge to attest their survival through the material presence of the photograph.

[87] Low, *Photography and the Empty Landscape: Excavating the Ottoman Armenian Image World* , 31-69.

[88] Low; After the subjecthood code of 1896, the Ottoman government decided that Armenians who wanted to immigrate to the US had to renounce their Ottoman subjecthood and deliver their photographs to the state in order to ensure that migrants were not coming back. This was called terk-i tabiiyet. (This information was shared by Hazal Özdemir) Through this code families were separated. Thus, what David Low defines as the "plea that the family not be forgotten" became even more significant in these definite family separations in which photography

Apart from the social relation they build with the materiality of the photograph, another way to comprehend how the Mugerditchian family and many other survivors got in relation with their own being could be understood through the duality in photography. Marianne Hirsch describes the photograph of Frieda Wolfinger, her husband's aunt, who had sent a photograph of herself to the family members outside the camps as the following "She is the survivor who announces that she has literally "sur-vived", lived too long, outlived her intended destruction."[89] Marc Nichanian, on the other hand, argues that "The survivor is the reverse of the subject (…) Because she denies himself as a survivor. More simply: the survivor is nothing but the dead witness; she whose life is no more "than the return," as Maurice Blanchot would say, she who has returned dead."[90] For both, Hirsch and Nichanian there is the threshold of death that defines the survivor. While for Hirsch the survivor is who transcends the threshold, for Nichanian it is who returns from it. Although these definitions seem to be quite contradicting to one another, as for the one the survivor is a subject, while for the other it is the reverse, it might be possible to understand their definition of the survivor in the concomitant presence of death and life in photography.[91]

Another practice that can be traced through the Mugerditchian family is how personal photographs were turned into postcards. Although this practice was neither novel for the mass-market nor for missionary organizations around the empire, it is

[89] Hirsch. *Family frames: Photography, narrative, and postmemory*, 19.

[90] Nichanian,*The image and the survivor,* Manifesta Journal, 2013 accessed online: http://www.manifestajournal.org/issues/regret-and-other-back-pages/image-and-survivor#

[91] Barthes.

interesting to follow the practice during the genocide and afterward not only through benevolent organizations but also among surviving family members. [92] Postcards in the souvenir market were mostly images of Armenian quarters, churches, schools, craftsmen and ateliers taken by local photography studios.[93] As Elizabeth Edwards indicates that postcards can be thought in relation to the democratization of photography since technological and economic developments made the production and dissemination of photography more available to a wider audience.[94] This could also be evaluated within the history of migration where photography played a particular role in the politics of memory.

After the genocide, survivors and separated families turned their own photographs into postcards and used it as a way to communicate with each other.[95] This postcard exchange was most probably similar to the practice of the Armenian emigrants but embodied not only the separation of the family but also its survival (and the loss of some members). Thus, the genocide imagery was not restricted to the publications of the Western press and humanitarian organizations but extended to family and intercommunal photographic exchange.

To that extent, the proposal of Thomas Mugerditchian, whether it has a truth-value or not, is seminal. He argues that in order to make photography an "evidence"

[92]British and French carpet and kilim companies were capturing photographs in textile ateliers and sending them as postcards to their customers as a gratitude. (This information was shared by Tolga Yasar Cora). The souvenir market was also dominated by this medium. Photograph studios in Istanbul as well as those around the empire were not only taking photographs but also selling postcards from their own studios. Another way postcards were circulating was through missionary organizations that were sending postcards to donators both for gratitude and to demand more donation. (this was most probably a widespread practice in the United States.)

[93]Examples for postcards can be seen in the compilation of Köker, *Armenians in Turkey 100 Years ago*.

[94] Edwards, *Little Theatres of Self: Thinking about the Social, 27-28.*

[95]After the Hamidian massacres, some family members migrated to the United States, Britain or France. Even though communication was limited, letter exchange existed.

serving for the state, the rhetoric is carried on through a performative strategy of transition between identities that moves the indexicality of the image (dead people who wear Muslim clothes) beyond its empirical truth (deported Armenians killed/died on the road).

On July 29, 1916, *l'Illustration* published a photograph (Fig. 8) with the caption "The Armenians hunted on the streets of Trabzon".[96] The caption did not include an exact day for the photograph but stated that it was taken before the Russians entered the city and was communicated by their correspondent Ernest Simais.[97] According to the short article, obtaining precise information on the fate of the Christian Armenian population had become more difficult since Turkey entered the war. Referring to the two articles as sources on the persecution of the Armenians, it stated that official reports were compiled and interviews with "neutral" witnesses, mostly consuls, had been made. The article was accompanied by a detailed description of the photograph, in which the plundering of Armenian houses and the maltreatment of the civilians by the soldiers was emphasized. Unlike other vilayets, Armenians in Trabzon were not systematically arrested. On May 2, 1915, in order to find "deserters, arms and "Russian spies" Armenian households were searched."[98] While some were immediately deported and killed, others were put on a boat to be sent to Samsun for an investigation, in which they got killed.[99]

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[96]While there is no information on whether Ernest Simais himself had taken the photograph, in one of the historical picture archives it is stated that the photograph was taken secretly from one of the hotel rooms of Hotel Suisse.

[97]Arrest of German Spy, *Queensland Times* 23 March 1920, 6. Interestingly, according to the Australian newspaper Queensland Times, four years later, the same war correspondent is arrested and charged for giving "intelligence to the enemy". The caption states that he was a German spy who worked as a Belgian war correspondent on the Russian front. However, I was not able to find further information on this instance.

[98] Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: 468-469.*

[99] Kévorkian*: 468-470*.



Fig. 8 A view from a window in Trabzon

The angle and distance make it difficult to identify civilians individually, but the intervention of soldiers is grasped at a glance. Compared to most of the circulating images at the time – or as we shall see subsequently, compared to those that will circulate – the location is uncommonly identifiable. The photograph is very possibly taken from a window of Hotel Suisse that is located in a haunting and decent street of Trabzon. The wide boulevard suggests that it was one of the major streets near the shore frequently used by pedestrians and very probably by carts as well. It is one of the rare examples in which on one side, the caption and article saturate the dominant rhetoric and on the other side, by the specifity of the location and time, it interferes beyond this rhetoric. It is worth mentioning that this image was not remediated as

often as other atrocity photographs. Nonetheless, whenever it was published, its primary caption in *l'Illustration* was always carried with it as the distant angle of the image might miss the "chasing of Armenians".

Henry Barby, the war correspondent of *Le Journal*[100], published in 1917 *Au pays de l'épouvante. L'Arménie martyre*, a book of his personal testimony and interviews he made with missionaries and diplomats.[101] Barby entered Erzurum in March 1916 with Russian soldiers and traveled across the territories occupied by Russia. His book was accompanied by photographs and photogravures, of which some were taken by himself during his travel in March and August and others were gathered to strengthen his narration.[102] The photographs, which were mostly composed of people, were accompanied by captions that were almost entirely lacking an exact location or time. Nevertheless, images of the Armenian resistance and volunteer units formed in Russia were predominant in his selection. Barby tried to support his narration with several mis-en-scenes all along the book. One striking example was during his interview with Robert Stapleton when a four-year-old girl entered the room and throwing herself into Stapleton's arms.[103] Barby had cut his interview immediately and noted down her traumatic experience that Stapleton was extracting.[104] Such interventions were not peculiar but utilized all over the book. From time to time, he even did not hesitate to use circulating rumors as first-hand

[100] *Le Journal* was a daily newspaper that was published from 1892 to 1944. It was one of the major daily newspapers in France in during the war.

[101] This book was later on published in various languages. In 2015, the Yerevan State University reprinted it with a preface by Varoujean Poghosyan, who argues that the book was also published in Constantinople, in 1919, in Armenian.

[102] Kévonian, "*Photographie, Génocide et Transmission: L'exemple Arménien*."

[103] Stapleton was an American reverend who lived in Erzurum for a long time and wrote down his testimony.

[104] Barby.

accounts. For most of the journalists and statesmen of the Entente states, the literary portrayal of the gruesomeness of Germany and the Ottoman Empire extended the limits of "ferocious narration". Most of the authors did not prioritize the verification of the information that they were transmitting as long as it was fitting to the greater narration. This was also the case for Barby's work. Regarding his close relations with the government of the time, it is not a surprise that Paul Deschanel, who was the President of the Chamber of the Deputies wrote the preface. According to Deschanel, the extermination of the Armenians was an ongoing project and was asserted by Germany for its own advantage.[105] Indeed, this rhetoric was part of the official discourse and had found its way into the vernacular quite often. Thus, Barby seized the opportunity to recall the popular phrase of Pinon "méthode allemande, travail turc" denouncing Germany and its complicit role in the deportations. He intrinsically used the official discourse, denouncing Germany, supporting his narration with eyeful accounts. Kevorkian emphasizes that despite the problem of authenticity in Barby's account, the principal importance of his observation lies in the fact that even after six months of the event, there were still remnants of dead bodies and mass graves as well as ruins of churches and houses all over the region.[106] Outstandingly, the captions under the photographs suggest that a sensitivity towards authorship may have been developed. Unlike his statements regarding circulating rumors and testimonies, each photograph of his own was specified.

[105] Deschanel wrote that government in Constantinople only changed its name and not its methods after the Abdülhamid regime, emphasizing that the Young Turk government was formed with the same people under a different etiquette.

[106] Preface of Henry Barby, *Au pays de l'épouvante. L'Arménie martyre.*

This was a novel sensitivity, as in most of the publications regarding the Armenian massacres, photographers remained mostly anonymous.[107] In the new economy of war photography, illustrated war journals and newspapers made public announcements for the contribution of readers. Thus, not only war correspondents but also soldiers and ordinary people were able to contribute their own photographs. While articles of war correspondents were read with enthusiasm, the empowering feature of the camera might have made "authorship" less important than the photograph itself.

2.3 The catastrophe at the center: first publications after World War I

Au pays de l'épouvante. L'Arménie martyre was one of the first illustrated books that were published specifically on the Armenian Catastrophe. A year later, the ambassador of the United States to the Ottoman Empire, Henri Morgenthau, who served until the end of 1916 in Constantinople, published his testimony as *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. This was serialized into nine articles in *The World's Work* between April 1918 to January 1919.[108] *The World's Work* was a New-York based monthly magazine covering contemporary issues on business, international relations, and the American society. The series of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* was adopted to the general concept of the magazine.[109] The articles were accompanied with various selections of photographs expanding from Ottoman sultans to the Armenian clergies. None of them were directly related to the

[107] Those that were not taken by Barby remained anonymous.

[108] Morgenthau, *The World's Work, April 1918 – January 1919*

[109] Nevertheless, considering the fact that the magazine was an active supporter of Woodrow Wilson and Morgenthau dedicated his book to him, it might be possible that it was published in the favor to Wilson.

text, but mostly supportive representations, that were associated through their captions. Some of these captions were accompanied by explanations seeking to give general information on the Ottoman Armenian population, but neither included a specific time nor a location regarding the images.[110] In the seventh article, which was devoted to the Armenian massacres, two images of atrocity were published. According to Dzovinar Kévonian, the selection was similar to the publications of wartime, as the captions were generalizing the atrocities and underlying mostly the extermination methods.[111] The photographers were anonymous, but Kévonian argues that one image depicting piles of bones had been published in Armenskii Vestnik in 1917.[112] Captioned as "Relics of the Armenian Massacres in Erzingan: Such mementos are found all over Armenia."[113], the mentioned relics were composed of bones and skulls that were piled on the ground.

On the same page two randomly placed images, one of Abdülhamid II, the other of a ruined building were published as well.[114] While it is through the caption that the reader got to know who the victims in the image were and where this image had been taken, the text gave a more general background on the changing politics against the Christian population in the empire. This randomness in the installment of the photographs did not prioritize any image over another and did not provide an opportunity for the reader to saturate the image confronted. Although images of violence were not novel for the European and American press, they were still not ubiquitous. The shock effect was of the image was discarded, leaving it to a mere

[110] Only landscape photographs and images of the Van resistance were specfically identifiable.

[111] Kévonian, *Fotografie del genocidio degli armeni e poste in gioco della storiografia.*

[112] Kévonian.

[113] The World's Work, November 1918, Vol.37, 94.

[114] Low, *The Ruins of Armenia: Cultural Documentation and Destruction in the late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century*.

representation as ordinary as the image of the new bombing plane in the following article or the image of the Mongolian nomads in the article on Japan.[115]

Only a page further, another image (Fig.9) covered full-page. Captioned as following:

> THOSE WHO FELL BY THE WAYSIDE. Scenes like this were common all over the Armenian provinces, in the spring and summer months of 1915. Death in its several forms---massacre, starvation, exhaustion---destroyed the larger part of the refugees. The Turkish policy was that of extermination under the guise of deportation.[116]

The caption says nothing about the image but makes a very generalizing statement, neither specifying its location nor the exact time. The various possibilities for the cause of death remain uncertain from this angle. Nevertheless, the unnatural way in which people are aligned and the bodies covered in shrouds indicate that they were either brought there after they died or they were executed altogether. The cloths of these bodies indicate that there were multiple genders and they were barefoot. On the right lower corner of the image, another body covered in shrouds is to be seen. It is very possible that it was another row of dead people who did not enter the photographic frame.

In almost none of the images from the Armenian genocide is it possible to see so many trees, as most of the images were taken along the desert towards Der-Zor. The plane area covered with trees raises a curiosity of where it possibly had been taken. The photographer is unknown, but the tree that appears in front of the camera gives him a non-conventional agency.

[115] The World's Work, 95.

[116] The World's Work, 95.



Fig. 9 Dead bodies all over the ground

Through the blurriness of the tree that disturbs the composition, the observer is reminded that this photograph was captured by a photographer, a person who was not fully in control of the camera. It is not clear whether the photographer stood behind the tree to achieve a wider angle, or whether he was precautious. What is possible to say that is that the blurry tree in front of the objective and the sharpness of the rest adds a disturbing realism to the image.

A widely mediated photograph (Fig. 10) from the Armenian genocide captioned as “Armenian men being marched out of Harput.”, came first to light in the 1920s. This image derived from the diary of Maria Jacobsen, a Danish missionary nurse, who became one of the most celebrated missionaries in the Armenian diaspora.



Fig.10 Armenian men being marched out of Harput

She not only witnessed the Armenian genocide as she continued to work in Harput, but also became actively involved in the recovery of children and women in Beirut. As a member of the Women's Missionary Workers association which was found in 1900, she came to Harput in 1907 and remained there until 1919. While working as a head nurse for twelve years, she wrote about her experiences in the region where she got interacted with many Armenian and Kurdish people and children.[117] Starting from 1915 on, she wrote her testimony on the massacres and deportations and the poor conditions of the orphans. According to the Danish historian Matthias Bjornlund, this photograph was first publicized in a pamphlet by Amalia Lange, "A Page from Armenia's History: K.M.A (Women Missionary Workers) 1910–1920" that was published in 1920.[118] As this pamphlet was published to demonstrate the missionary activities of the K.M.A. of the last ten years, he argues that the emphasis

[117]http://www.houshamadyan.org/mapottomanempire/vilayetofmamuratulazizharput/harputkaza/religion/missionaries.html

[118] Balakian, "Photography, Visual Culture, and the Armenian Genocide", *Humanitarian photography: A history*, 93.

was most probably not specific to the Armenian massacres but the missionary activities in general. The same image was published five years later, in 1925, in a book dedicated to the Armenian people. *Armenia – the life and struggle of a people through 2000 years* was a book published by Aage Meyer Benedictsen, a Danish humanist and ethnologist who remained in Ottoman territories throughout the war. Aage Meyer Benedictsen traveled in 1901 across Russia and Iran and passed through Urfa where he saw an American station of mission and aid directed towards Armenian children.[119] After returning to Denmark he started to give lectures on the problems of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire. It was the first book on the history of Armenia and was composed by various images, including those of Armin Wegner (born in 1886), a voluntary nurse who was sent to the Ottoman Empire as a member of the German Sanitary Corps after the Ottoman-German alliance.[120]

Peter Balakian assumes from the location that this photograph was taken from the window of the U.S. Consulate in Mezre.[121] At a glance, the image resembles the photograph taken in Trabzon. The photographer remains unknown but according to Abraham Krikorian and Eugene Taylor, the photographer could be the US consul in Harput, Leslie A. Davis, his wife, the pastor Ehmann or Maria Jacobsen herself.[122] It

[119] This mission and aid was led by Miss Corrina Shattuck and aimed to take care of the orphans since 1890. See: Danish reactions to the Armenian Genocide.

[120] Armenian et folks liv og kamp gemmen to aartusinner. Med kort og billeder, Copenhague, Danske Armeniervenner, 1925.

[121] Balakian, *Photography, Visual Culture, and the Armenian Genocide*, 95. Peter Balakian's article is significant in relation to the photography of the Armenian genocide as it is one of the rare examples in which the image in itself is analyzed.

[122] Abraham D. Krikorian and Eugene L. Taylor have published an article named "Achieving Ever-Greater Precision in Attestation and Attribution of Genocide Photographs" in *The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks*. In this article, they tried to trace exact information on the image. According to Krikorian and Taylor the exact location was the American consulate in Mezreh, Vilayet of Mamuret-ul-Aziz. They also argue that it was taken in June/July 1915 and not April 1915 as it was believed. This argument derived from the statement of Ruth A. Parmelee, an American missionary nurse and

is very probable that this was also taken in the secrecy of the Turkish authorities, where the photographer watched the march-out from a distance. Although the date of the photograph remains controversial, it is possible to assume that it was captured between April and end of June when all Armenian men were arrested stage by stage. Not only were these people arrested for the possession of arms but also of looking "suspicious".[123] Dozens of Armenians were walked out to prisons on daylight surrounded by armed soldiers. Riffles in their hand directed to the arrestees, they seemed to march like in a parade. On the left side, people, some who look child-like, walk freely to the opposite direction. It is not clear why they seem to be ignorant, but it seems as if they were totally dispersed from what was happening.

In 1924, Ernst Friedrich, a German anarchist, and pacifist published a photo book named *Krieg dem Kriege!* (War to war!)[124] Friedrich was a conscientious objector and actively worked for anti-militarism and youth anarchism. As his activities escalated he published this four-language anti-war propaganda book. He did not target a specific state, but any of those which participated in the war. His aim was to discourage people from supporting the war by demonstrating the most violent photographs taken in the course of the war. He included images received from German soldiers and medical archives that were censored during the war. Starting with toy soldiers and cannons, the selection was composed of harshly wounded soldiers, people who became disabled after wars, ruins, slaughterhouses, and finished with images of cemeteries.[125]

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relief volunteer that she gave to the James Barton of the American Board. According to her statement, men were gathered and imprisoned in June 1915.

[123] Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*.:385-388.

[124] Friedrich, *Krieg dem Kriege! (War to war!).*

[125] Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 14-15.

While each photograph was accompanied by highly manipulative and sarcastic captions, three photographs taken most probably by Armin Wegner were also included. [126] Without indicating a specific time and location, these were images of children in the deportation camps who starved to death. Another three images of hanged men that are known today as part of the Armin Wegner collection were also placed in a series of photographs of hanged men throughout the first World War.

In the captions of those three photographs taken by Wegner starvation was not only linked to the cause of war but to the fact that they were deported from their homes and left on the road to starvation.[127] Anouche Kunth highlights that Friedrich did not emphasize the systematic extermination of Armenians, but that he demonstrated these photographs solely as a result of deportation.[128] It is not known to what extent Friedrich was aware of an extermination against the Armenian population, although it is implicit that he was aware of "the thousands" who died on the road. [129] However, this was not necessarily a result of his ignorance but part of his narrative to condemn war. It is worth mentioning that a great part of these photographs was taken for military or missionary purposes and were repurposed and recontextualized through Friedrich's captions. As Sontag said, "Friedrich did not make the mistake of supposing that heartrending, stomach-turning pictures would simply speak for themselves."[130] He captioned each of them and utilized it for his own endeavor, condemning war.

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[126] Kunth, *Traces, Bones, Desert: The Extermination of the Armenians through the Photographer's Eye*, 76.

[127] Friedrich, 158-160.

[128] Kunth, 76.

[129] Friedrich highlights that thousands of people died because of starvation.

[130] Sontag, 15.

In the same period, two important publications written in Armenian were emphasized by Dzovinar Kévonian. In 1922, "Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1918", which was written by an Armenian bishop, Grigoris Balakian, this book foremost targeted the Armenian diaspora. It contained images of corpses captured outside Ankara and images of the Halis bridge. In the later versions, images from the Armen T. Wegner collection and the portraits of the genocide perpetrators were included.[131] The other publication, that included photographs, was Aram Andonian's book *Documents officiels concernant les massacres arméniens* also known as *The Memoirs of Naim Bey: Turkish Official Documents Relating to the Deportation and Massacres of Armenians.* As he was in Aleppo, Aram Andonian, who was one of the most important intellectual figures of the early twentieth century Armenian community, received an important compilation of telegrams and documents gathered by a Turkish officer working in the deportation office named Naim Bey, in the exchange of money. While Andonian wrote his book Medz Vojırı (The Great Crime) with the documents he received in Armenian, they were immediately translated into French and English. In 1920, both in Paris and London, the translated versions were published. The Armenian version was published in 1921, which had a critical epilogue on the jurisdiction of the CUP members. This epilogue and the introduction were neither published in the French nor in the English version. While the book included the testimony of Naim Bey and Andonian's own commentary, it contained also a small number of photographs of converted orphans.

[131] Kévonian. I'd like to thank Peter Balakian for this information. As I did not have the chance to look at the first edition, Balakian kindly compared the images in the first and later editions.

2.4 Image as evidence?

With the end of war, the attempt to use photography in diplomatic and juridical contexts became part of the contemporary debates in the global context as well as the Armenian case. The initial aim was to "prove" the atrocities committed by the Young Turk government with the signifying power of images. It is assumed that the first time these images were used as evidence within an international context dates back to 1919, during the Paris Peace Conference. In this conference, the Armenian National Delegation prepared a compilation of a number of documents, including photographs that aimed to convince the Great Powers to rule over the territory that they regarded as their historical homeland. [132]. The publication launched in 1917 by the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief was also included into the file given to the Conference commission. It was a survey held by James L. Barton on the persecution of the Christian population in the Ottoman Empire sent to American missionaries who returned from the Ottoman Empire to the United States.[133] This survey didn't include any images but was composed of testimonial accounts that documented the extermination of the Ottoman Armenian populationin eastern Anatolia.[134] While the delegation didn't include photographs in the submitted publication, Marc Nichanian argues that Zabel Yesayan added herself images that are

[132] This delegation was formed in 1912 and was leaded by Boghos Nubar. The aim was to defend the interest of Armenians while the Great Powers were focusing on reforms towards Christian populations. Throughout the after-war period it employed diplomatic activities and played role in the Treaty of Sevres.

[133] Barton (compiled by), *Turkish atrocities. Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915-1917.*

[134] Barton, *Turkish Atrocities: Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915-1917.*

assumed to have been taken by Russian officers[135]. However, as the file of the conference is still missing, the selected photographs cannot be traced.[136]

Two years later the attempt to use photography as evidence was made at the tribunal of Soghomon Tehlirian, the 21-year-old Armenian student who shot Talat Pasha in Berlin. While there are some controversial debates on who Tehlirian was, the most accepted version is that he was born in the Ottoman territories, witnessed the genocide as he lost all members of his family, and finally ended up in Berlin.

In 1921, during the tribunal of Soghomon Tehlirian, the defense council of the trial subpoenaed twenty-two experts and witnesses of whom five were in medical service in the Ottoman Empire and two were former German consuls of Erzurum and Aleppo.[137] While they requested three days of court hearings for all twenty-two witnesses, it was limited to one and a half days in which only nine of the twenty-two witnesses were listened. Armin T. Wegner was also one of the eyewitnesses who were going to testify. For his testimony, he prepared a file composed of photographs he took and collected during his stay in the Ottoman Empire. Although Kévonian argues that this case was the first time when images were used as evidence for mass extermination, it remained rather as an unfulfilled attempt.[138] Neither the stenographic report of the trial nor the several articles published on the tribunal indicate that Wegner was called to testify, as the evidence that the tribunal collected

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[135] Kunth, *Traces, Bones, Desert: The Extermination of the Armenians through the Photographer's Eye,* 74.

[136] Kunth, 74.

[137] These two consuls were Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, the vice consul of Erzurum and W. Rössler the consul of Aleppo. Both are known as the two German diplomats who took initiative and tried to help Armenian individually. Scheubner-Richter will be discussed later on in detail.
See the court report in, *Der Prozess Talaat Pascha: stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlung gegen den des Mordes an Talaat Pascha angeklagten armenischen Studenten Salomon Teilirian*.

[138] The Nuremberg trials were the first-time photography was used as evidence at a mass extermination case.

were already deemed sufficient to give a verdict.[139] Nevertheless, the attempt of Armin Wegner to use photography as evidence in a juridical context deserves attention. Although the photographs were not related to Soghomon Tehlirian personally, Wegner's aim was to use image-as-evidence for the crimes perpetrated by the Turkish government and inevitably by Talat Pasha himself. As he brought the photographs to the court, he must have been convinced that each of them could be used as a representation of the totality of the extermination.

The Armin Wegner collection is the most extensive archive that covers the extermination of the Ottoman Armenian population. After hearing countless rumors about the Armenian massacres, Armin Wegner decided to walk along the Euphrates river and take pictures despite the prohibition from the Ottoman government. This prohibition was ordered by Ahmed Cemal Pasha, the commander of the fourth army in Syria, and sent by Ali Pasha on 28 August 1915 to the chief engineer of the Baghdad railway's Third Building Department, in which the German railway workers were strictly banned from taking photographs.[140] Anything that was produced in the region – photographs, films or prints – had to be handed over to the Turkish officials within forty-eight hours. According to the enclosed copy that Walter Rössler, the German consul in Aleppo had sent to the ambassador in Istanbul on 27 September 1915, taking photographs of the Armenians was going to be treated by the Ottoman government the same as taking photographs of the battlefield without permission.[141]

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[139] See court report; Kunth, 85; Hofmann, *Talaat Pascha Prozess*

[140] Alloa, *Afterimages: Belated Witnessing in the Photographs of the Armenian Catastrophe,*52.

[141] Hofmann, *Talaat Pasha Prozess,* 54, Notes, Emmanuel Alloa, *Afterimages: Belated Witnessing in the Photographs of the Armenian Catastrophe,* 52. 27.09.1915 Rössler to Hohenlohe-Langenburg

In a conversation with Martin Rooney, Wegner argued that many soldiers of the German troops did not go to the refugee camps because they were foremost afraid of infection and diseases, and secondly, they wanted to ignore the existence of these camps.[142] In many of his public lectures as well as in his diary he mentions how he hid the photographic plates under his belt throughout his sojourn in the Ottoman empire, which he later on managed to convey to Germany.[143]

While he was in the empire, Wegner used a large-format camera of Walter Talbot, Berlin – a German camera dealer.[144] Only thirty-two photographs from the whole collection, that were taken in the camps of Mesopotamia and North Syria, are believed to be taken by Wegner personally.[145] The people from whom Wegner received the other negatives are still unknown. While Wegner did not leave any clear record on the sources of these photographs, he slightly mentioned that they were soldiers and nurses that he encountered in the region. However, according to Tessa Hofmann and Gerayer Koutcharian, some of the photographs got lost during Wegner's arrest in 1933,[146] or during his emigration to England in 1934, since some images that were published in the volume of Age Meyer Benedictsen in 1925 are absent in any collection and did not appear anywhere after 1933.[147]

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[142] Hofmann, *Armin Wegner,* 55.

[143] Armin Wegner, 37.

[144] Alloa, *Afterimages: Belated Witnessing in the Photographs of the Armenian Catastrophe,* 54. Although there is almost no information on Walter Talbot, he is supposed to be the son of Romain Talbot, another known camera dealer from the end of the 19th century.

[145] Hofmann, *Armin Wegner*, 55.

[146] In 1933, Wegner wrote an open-letter to Adolf Hitler concerning the anti-Semitic boycotts. However, none of the German newspapers wanted to publish his open-letter, so he sent it to Adolf Hitler, personally. As someone who was in the blacklist of the Nazi government and whose books were burned, this resulted with his arrest by the Gestapo. Martin Rooney (2000) A forgotten humanist: Armin T. Wegner, Genocide Research, 2:1, 117-119.

[147] Hofmann, 55.

Wegner's position, from his return until the lifting of the military censorship in Germany, was more like a supporter of the German-Turkish relations. While some scholars interpret this as a result of the pressure over him due to censorship,[148] which is also claimed by his biographer, other scholars argue that he was not really aware of the severity of the situation, but made sense of it retrospectively.[149]

The contradictory attitude of Wegner is especially visible at the end of the war and the following year. On January 26, 1918, during his lecture to the German-Turkish society in Breslau, it is believed that he demonstrated some of the images he had carried, presenting the Armenians as rebellious groups that had committed treacherous activities in the Ottoman-Russian border, mainly the regions of Van and Erzurum. While he underlined that the Turkish government was very careful in the undertake of care of the deportees, his statements confirming the Turkish official history suggest that the German government may have put him under high pressure.[150]

Right after the lifting of the military censorship, his book *The Way of no Return: A Martyrdom in Letters,* a collection of letters on his experience in the Ottoman Empire was published (January 1919).[151] The book was a compilation of letters sent to various friends and family members on the atrocities he witnessed throughout his sojourn.[152] Following his book, Wegner decided to publish an open letter to the US president Woodrow Wilson in the "Berliner Tageblatt" dated 23

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[148] See Tessa Hofman

[149] Alloa.

[150] Hofmann, 57. While Alloa mentions a lecture in February 1918, it is possible that Tessa Hoffman and Alloa are mentioning the same lecture. According to Alloa this lecture was named as "With the Staff of General Field Marshall Goltz in Mesopotamia". Alloa states that there was a screening of photographs during the lecture, which Wegner argued to have taken in person. Emmanuel Alloa: 55

[151] Wegner, *Der Weg ohne Heimkehr: Ein Martyrimu in Briefen.*

[152] Wegner, 37.

February 1919.[153] The letter not only aimed to explain the atrocious events that were censored throughout the war period,[154] but also to demand justice in the forthcoming Paris Peace Conference for the Armenian nation, who faced, in Wegner's words "the greatest injustice of all times".[155] As Alloa states in his article, the tone of the letter emphasized his "exceptional status as an eyewitness",[156] stating that his testimony was not an exaggeration, that it was similar to the documents collected by Lord Bryce and Johannes Lepsius.[157] In one of his lectures entitled "The Deportation of the Armenian People into the Desert: A Slide Lecture" that took place on 19 March 1919, in Berlin, he showed the photographs he had shot and collected back in the Ottoman Empire. [158] As some of the photographs he captured were destroyed in the heat, it appeared that not all images he used were captured and collected during his sojourn, but some were images from the previous massacres.[159] He clearly underlined the real face of Armenian atrocities and also criticized the German government for their non-interventionist politics throughout the deportations.[160] Although this

[153] Wegner, Offener Brief an den Prasidenten der Vereinigten, Staaten von Nordamerika, Woodrow Wilson, über die Austreibung des armenischen Volkes in die mesopotamische Wüste, 124.

[154] It is important to note that the press and print media was under the control of War Press Office, that introduced immediately censorship on coverages the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian question was of the main censored subject, words like Armenia or Turkey was strongly forbidden. Heinrich Vierbücher, a translator in the Ottoman Empire during the war years claimed that the war press office censored any coverage concerning the deportations in order to keep the alliance with Ottoman Empire at its best. See: Hofmann, *From Silence to Remembrance;* Aloa, 56. Wegner, on the other hand, was emphasizing the importance of being an eye witness.

[155] Armin T. Wegner, Offener Brief an den Prasidenten der Vereinigten, Staaten von Nordamerika, Woodrow Wilson, über die Austreibung des armenischen Volkes in die mesopotamische Wüste, Journal of Genocide Research, 2000, 2:1: 124.

[156] Alloa, 56.

[157] Armin T. Wegner, Offener Brief an den Prasidenten der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika, 123.

[158] Original Title: "Die Austreibung des armenischen Volkes in die Wüste: Ein Lichtbildvortrag", Lichtbild is the oldest version to describe photography. In German, the meaning of *Licht* is light and the meaning of *Bild* is picture.

[159] Alloa, 55.

[160] Hofmann 57, Kunth, 76.

conference was not well received and resulted with demonstrations of many Turkish and German students,[161] he continued to give lectures in various cities all over Germany.[162] The contradictory attitude of Wegner one year apart suggests that there might have been multiple reasons to take measures as such. The military censorship of the German state may have created pressure on Wegner. It is also possible that the scenes he witnessed became to him more evident, only after he returned and discussed it with other people. In any case, Wegner risked his life by not only taking images but also by carrying the glass negatives that he shot and collected all along the empire. While the use of photography as evidence in Soghomon Tehlirian trial remained as an unfulfilled attempt, it is nevertheless, a good example to understand photography's status in relation to truth regime.

Apart from this attempt, it is noted as an important trial as it was acknowledged that human rights violations incurred by other governments could face jurisdiction without directly inferring into the internal affairs of the country.[163] While the mental health of Soghomon Tehlirian was brought forth in the decision making, the outcome was, nevertheless regarded as a victory among many Armenians and Armenophiles.[164]

2.5 Humanitarian organizations

As early as May 1915, the first deportees arrived in Ottoman Syria.[165] While the deportation orders were continuing, local Armenians and the church community

[161] Kévonian

[162] Alloa, 55.

[163] Tessa Hofmann, 51.

[164] Hofman, Talaat Pasha Prozess.

[165] See. Kevorkian "The Armenian Genocide" for detailed information..

started to gather food supply for the arriving deportees. This self-organized relief, formulated by Khatchig Mouradian as "humanitarian resistance network" was the first initiative taken directly for the first arrivals.[166]

The most widely known organization was the Near East Relief that was founded by the American ambassador Henry Morgenthau.[167] This organization was earlier named as American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief but changed to Near East Relief due to political reasons.[168] Right after ACASR was installed into the Mesopotamian region in 1915, the organization published a pamphlet on their first impressions. However, it was the religious press that was publishing the information on the condition and activities sent from the organization.[169] According to the Report of Near East Relief to the Congress of the United States, the religious press scattered across the country was their main humanitarian aid ally.[170] Starting from 1916, they published monthly bulletins that reported on the harsh conditions of the region. Both Benedetta Guerzoni and Peter Balakian stress upon the role of the image of women in media representation of humanitarian organizations, such as the ACASR. They argue that these organizations were putting women in the center of the image in order to appeal to the Western audience. Images of children and women portrayed in their most vulnerable conditions, suffering from malnutrition barefoot and even sometimes almost naked or with shabby clothes. These images were also published as the "Before and After" series, in which two images of the child, first in

[166] Mouradian, "Genocide and Humanitarian Resistance in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1916.

[167] http://www.neareast.org/who-we-are/timeline/

[168] In order to keep the relationship with the Ottoman Empire at a neutral level, the name was changed in 1919.

[169]On the activities regarding the NER, see: Watenpaugh, Bread from stones: the Middle East and the making of modern humanitarianism, 91-123.

[170] Guerzoni.

his state before receiving aid and the second after he was treated by the NER, were also effectively used as part of the campaign.

Griselda Pollock argues that images that are iconic "are marked by a deeper and more mythic cultural freight that already associates death with the feminine. This mythical dimension within cultural memory makes a historical encounter with the death in the image "bearable".[171] Elizabeth Bonfen even argues that the death of the feminine in the image "deflects the masculine subject's confrontation with his own mortality".[172] Thus, the death, as well as the suffering of the feminine image, fitted well into the scheme of religious activities, especially those of the Protestant missionaries.

The activities of humanitarian organizations and the religious press were both important for the production and the dissemination of the images. These images were captured by volunteers or professional photographers hired by the humanitarian organizations.[173] Therefore, the publication of images inescapably increased after the war. The construction of many orphanages and the ongoing activities in the camps were documented and used as exemplary material. While non-Armenian organizations aimed to get recognition and financial support from Western countries, Armenian organizations' intention were much more ambitious.[174] The ultimate aim was to rebuild an Armenian nation that would derive from the rehabilitation of Armenian children and women.[175] In this regard, a great effort was put for health and education and the reintegration of orphans into the community. Hundreds of

[171] Pollock, Photographing Atrocity: Becoming Iconic? In *Picturing Atrocity,* 66.

[172] Pollock, 68.

[173] Peter Balakian: 90.

[174] The activities of NER was based mostly in the United States.

[175] For more information on the Armenians in Turkey in the early years of the republic see, Lerna Ekmekcioglu, *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey*.

photographs were taken at this period in the deportation camps and orphanages that were then followed by group photos taken at schools.

What was common in all of the publications was that each individualized the person in the image by asking direct questions to the audience regarding the person in the picture. Benedetta Guerzoni interprets this as an aim to appeal to the "West", in order to create empathy. A widely remediated photograph of a girl captioned as "Has this little girl a home in your heart? She has no other!" was commonly used for these campaigns[176] Giving the child or the woman an identity was not only creating empathy but it was also building a secure relation with the donors. Posters with illustrations accompanied by slogans became also part of the agenda. "Give or we perish!", "Lest we perish", They shall not perish" were only some of these advertising publications.[177]

2.6 The post Shoah period – Holocaust imagery

The re-emergence of Armenian atrocity photographs is significant to understand to what extent the Holocaust imagery had an impact on other atrocities. Dzovinar Kévonian explains in her article "Photographie, Génocide et Transmission: L'exemple Arménien" that from the 1960s on, an essential need to struggle for the recognition and reparation of the Armenian genocide started.[178]

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[176] Benedetta Guerzoni, 281.

[177] Guerzoni, 282-283. Peter Balakian: 90. Unfortunately this part is depending on the research oh Benedetta Guerzoni who worked in the Western archives. It is impossible to reach out both humanitarian and religious organizations' publications.

[178] Kévonian. Many of the examples mentioned in this part are from Kévonian's research. Due to the difficulty to access these materials, I used Kévonian's diverse sources to demonstrate the re-emergence of Armenian genocide photography. As the Holocaust became the prime example for atrocity representation, the remediation of these photographs were built upon the Holocaust imagery. It is also crucial to mention that there were many books, testimonies printed by the Armenian diaspora individually. In the library of the Armenian Aposolic Cathedral of Paris, I came across publications that were printed in the 1970s in Lebanon and Paris. These were mostly testimonies and family stories that were published by survivors or the children of the survivors. A further study on these personal

While the Turkish government was still keeping its negationist position, in the post-Shoah period, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide turned into central discussions both on international and academic level. Respectively, the expression of the resonance between the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide occurred not only verbally but also with photography. Extensive multiplications of images, considerable productions of testimonies of survivors as well as the publications of diaries from the deportations and years of exile came into the prominence of the diaspora. Memoirs that were published in Cairo and Beirut a few years after the genocide were republished, translated and redistributed. Kévonian argues that many of the images that were integrated into these publications derived from the Near East Relief collection, periodicals in Tbilisi and Moscow, and the early after-war period book publications.[179]

In 1964, "Le deuil national Arménien" was published.[180] For each article of the *The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*[181], supportive documents and photographs from the genocide were placed into the book.[182] Images were directly associated with the content of the articles with the intention to use each photograph as evidence for crimes defined in the articles.

The London based periodical *Aregak* published a special issue for the 50th commemoration of 1915. This issue opens with a very small reproduction of the

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publications and their possible circulation would contribute much to the transmission of memory within the diaspora.

[179] Kévonian, "Photographie, Génocide et Transmission : L'exemple Arménien.", For more information on Armenian refugees in Armyanskiy Vestnik, see: Louisine Abrahamyan, "The Condition of Armenian Refugees and Orphans as Reported in Armyanskiy Vestnik" in *Mass Media and the Genocide of the Armenians - One Hundred Years of Uncertain Representation, Stefanie Kappler.*

[180] Donikian, Nazarian & Solakian, Le deuil national arménien, Gardanne.

[181] This convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 and entered into force in 1951.

[182] Kevonian.

painting of Vasily Vereshchagin "The Apotheosis of War" placed into a cross and described as Armenia on the top and a same sized swastika positioned next to it. The painting of Vereshchagin is composed of a mountain-like pile of skulls placed in a desert. Despite the symbolic similarities in regards to Der Zor and Ararat, this painting was made in 1871, while Vereshchagin worked as a war artist traveling across central Asia. This composition of the cross and swastika was accompanied by the almost identical orders of Talat and Hitler, in which Hitler's Armenian genocide reference was also placed.[183]

The new protocols released in 1967 by the United Nations to the convention of 1951 lead to the escalation of the use of extreme violent photographs.[184]
A well-cited publication in the English genocide scholarship is James Nazer's book "The First Genocide of the 20th Century: The Story of the Armenian Massacres in text and pictures".[185] This book was published in 1968 in the United States with a mention to the international year of Human Rights. The book had been published as a compilation of the preceding books published on the subject, compiled by disturbing images and document extracts of the atrocities committed by the Young Turk government. The book had a tendency to emphasize the holiness of the Armenian nation while putting the cruelty of the atrocities at the center. Although it is part of almost every bibliography concerning the publications on the recognition campaigns in the 1960s, as Nazer has underlined in the preface, the book was not aimed to be a literary or political work. As a result, there is neither a bibliography

[183] Aregak, Special Issue: *Dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Martyrdom of the one million and a half Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, 1915-1965.

[184] Kévonian. According to this new protocol the geographic and temporal limits of the protocol of 1951 was abolished. Previously it covered only events happened before 1951 within Europe with this modified version the limitations were world-wide abolished. http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.pdf

[185] Nazer, *The first genocide of the 20th century; the story of the Armenian massacres in text and pictures*.

nor references to the documents and images. The whole book is comprised of extracts from memoirs, testimonies commentaries of important people and documents that were published after the genocide. The selection of the extracts mostly focuses on women who had been raped, women who had to leave their children or testimonies of starving children.

The images that are used are not selected according to these writings but selected with an intention to depict the cruelest and ferocious moments. The complimentary sentences under the images are good examples of how captions and information got lost over the mass reproduction and publication. Almost none captions remained as in their first publication and they do not include any specific information, but very general or denunciative expressions towards Turks.[186] A photograph in which three ecclesiastics and two Armenians are holding the bones they took from the bone pile in front of them is captioned as following: "The bones of hundreds of thousands of Armenians whom the Turks murdered, by gathering them together, pouring gasoline on them, and then setting them to fire alive. No pen can truly depict the horrors inflicted by the Turkish monsters."[187] Another image that Nazer used in his book was once again "The apostheose of the war" by Vassili Vereshchagin. It was adopted into the book in black and white as if it was a photograph of a skull pile. There was no information that was indicating that it was a painting of Vereshchagin. The same painting was used a few years later in the reedition of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* with the caption "A mound of Skulls of the murdered and starved Armenians in Der Zor gathered from the desert at the end

[186] Nazer, 77.

[187] Nazer, 78.

of the World War 1.[188] Another image of screaming naked women harassed by gunned men in a hellish scene was captioned as "Torture and degradation of Armenian women: A unique picture, photographed on the road from Treibzon to Erzinga by a German officer."[189] It is possible that the German officer they mention is Carl Schlimme, as he took the same road. Nevertheless, the image was in black and white, it seems very obvious that the picture is not a photograph but a painting. Apparently, this image was previously used in the first volume of *Houshamadyan* of 1965.[190] However, the selection of images did not only cover the images of the genocide but also the preceding massacres and executions without giving any reference. Similar to the journal published in France, the Holocaust was boldly underlined. An emphasis on Hitler's statement was made, and a harsh denouncement towards Germany and its corporation with the Ottoman Empire was present.[191]

In 1972, a book by Dickran H. Boyajian was published in the United States named *Armenia: the case for a forgotten Genocide.* According to Kévonian, this book carried a number of photographs depicting half-naked women together with and starving children with bloated stomachs who marched. The captions for these images were once again written in comparison to the images of the Holocaust. Death marches and deportation camps were highlighted as a similarity to the concentration camps.[192]

These examples of the post-Shoah period demonstrate that the urge for the recognition and reparation was carried to another dimension by redefining and

[188] In Benedetta Guerzoni, 13; See, Morgenthau, viii.

[189] Nazer, 77.

[190] Houshamayan 1965, 48.

[191] Nazer

[192] Kevonian.

repositioning the Catastrophe in relation to the Holocaust. This comparison sought to bring the Catastrophe into the political and juridical agendas of states with strong Armenian diasporas. In this regard, the Holocaust was crucial for the reemergence of the discussion of the Armenian Catastrophe. However, its function as a prime example is problematic, as it tries to affirm itself within the defined excesses of the Holocaust.

CHAPTER 3

ERZURUM PROVINCE: REGARDING THE DEPORTATIONS THROUGH A VICE-CONSUL'S CORRESPONDENCE

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, diverse motivations among states, families, humanitarian organizations governed the dissemination and mediation of the photographs of Armenian deportations and exterminations in the Ottoman Empire. While a number of photographs were published in the course of the First World War, most of them were mediated only afterward, through humanitarian and missionary organizations and individuals. During the war, photographs were taken unprofessionally, mostly by people who were in the Ottoman territories for diplomatic, missionary or humanitarian purposes.[193] Today, it is evident that these were captured in "impromptu moments", either for evidentiary purposes or for governmental/organizational reports concerning the regions. On the other hand, images taken in the deportation camps were captured by volunteers and professional photographers who were hired by humanitarian organizations with the effort to collect relief funds for refugees and orphans.[194]

With the ratification of the alliance of the Ottoman Empire and Germany in August 1914, Germany became the major power operating in the region apart from the Ottoman government. Thus, through the German diplomatic network that was spread all over the empire the information on the escalating violence against the Armenian population was flowing from the local consulates towards the embassy in

[193] There were most probably exceptions like Henry Barby who was a member AFP (Agence France-Presse, but the majority were unprofessional.

[194] Balakian, "Photography, Visual Culture, and the Armenian Genocide," in *Humanitarian Photography: A History*, ed. Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno, 90.

Istanbul. While the central government of the German Reich was keen in acting according to their own military and economic interests, as well as that of the Ottoman state, some German diplomats located in the Anatolian and Syrian region got individually involved in the effort to change the flow of events. Nevertheless, traces of these individual efforts are hardly unearthed or solely limited to the efforts of more popularly known missionaries or volunteers such as Johannes Lepsius or Armin Wegner.

As Ronald Grigor Suny emphasizes in his book *They Can Live in the desert but nowhere else*, that the word *Mitschuld*, which is translated in to the English as complicity, is an appropriate way to explain Germany's position at that time.[195] It is not a direct participation that Germany could be accused of but the conniving and indifferent position the government preferred and insisted to take concerning the extermination of the Armenian population. However, it is also important to mention that on the local level, different modes of relationships operated between the local government and the German consulates, the German state, and the central government, as well as between the central and the local administrative bodies of the empire.

Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, who was the German vice-consul of Erzurum between December 1914 to September 1915, was among the rare figures who tried to utilize his position to prevent the extermination of the Armenians in the region of Erzurum. Born in 1884 as Max Richter, he married the daughter of an aristocrat industrialist and took the last name of his wife "von Scheubner". Although he received chemistry and engineering education, he was well known for his

[195] Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else: A History of the Armenian Genocide*, 298.

equestrian skills. At the break of the war, he enlisted himself as a volunteer to the Bavarian regiment of light cavalry.[196]

Over the course of his duty he maintained regular telegraphic communication with the German Embassy in Istanbul. Along these correspondences, nine photographs sent by him to the German Embassy in Istanbul in May 1915 are situated in the *Political Archive of the German Foreign Ministry*.[197] These photographs are among the rarest examples where it is possible to see an active engagement between the deportees and the German officials. However, before concentrating on these images in-depth, it is necessary to consider the correspondences of the German vice-consul of Erzurum in order to understand the political circumstances in which these photographs were taken.

In this regard, this chapter will provide the historical context for the following chapter that dwells specifically on visual material. It follows the traces of German complicity through the official correspondence network spanning between the German foreign office and the Ottoman local and central authorities. Many documents used in this chapter are either the transcribed online versions or the original documents from the *Political Archive*, yet the preliminary work of Hilmar Kaiser on the German correspondence, "A Scene from the Inferno," published in *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah*, a book composed of diverse articles on the Armenian genocide and the Shoah, forms the basis of this chapter.[198]

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[196] Leverkuehn & Kaiser. A German officer during the Armenian genocide: a biography of Max von Scheubner-Richter: vii.

[197] This information was provided to me by the library staff of the Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin.

[198] Kaiser, "A Scene from the Inferno," in *Der Völkermord an Den Armeniern Und Die Shoah – The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah.*This work deserves much attention in the comprehension of the situation of the Erzurum region the understanding of the complicity of the German state.
The majority of the diplomatic documents that are mentioned in this chapter are taken from http://www.armenocide.net/, a website dedicated to documents from the German archives. Although I went to the Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office, received the documents and transcribed

While the telegraphic correspondences between the consulate in Erzurum and the embassy in Istanbul contribute to the understanding of the operation of the deportations and massacres, information circulating between the German consulate and the embassy, the local Ottoman government and the consulate, as well as the local and the central Ottoman government reveal much about the volatile mechanisms of military intelligence. Through the manifold correspondences among the intelligence, it is possible to comprehend to what extent the Ottoman government tried to cover the massacres, what kind of pretexts it used to support the deportations, as well as to what extent "mass extermination" can or cannot be archived. Nevertheless, it is necessary to acknowledge that these correspondences reveal the political, economic and military mechanism that operated for the destruction but do not reflect the experience of the Catastrophe itself. Respectively, beyond the correspondence of Scheubner-Richter and the specifics of the Erzurum case, this chapter also factors third hand and victim testimonies for the understanding of the experience and its affection on memory and trauma. The interrogation of the nature and adequacy of official sources as evidence is significant for a coherent and sensitive historical approach.

those regarding Scheubner-Richter's iniative, nevertheless, I used the document transcriptions of the website very frequently. Before this website they were also published by Lepsius (although it is known that he changed its content) and Wolfgang Gust.

3.1 Understanding German Complicity

The German complicity in the Armenian genocide is grounded on the alliance of Germany and the Ottoman Empire during the First World War.[199] The endeavor of the Ottoman Empire to regain the territories that were lost in the nineteenth century, national uprisings within the empire, economic bankruptcy and the already exhausted army from the Balkan wars made it inevitable to look for an alliance within the growing tension among the European powers.

On the other hand, the alliance with the Ottoman Empire was already under the agenda of Germany since 1898, when the Middle East became a key region for their imperial project.[200] The extension of the Orient Express to Baghdad was an important step for Germany as the city was geographically at a very promising location because of its closeness to the Basra port on the Persian Gulf that could lead to Colonial India. Although the poor status of the Ottoman army created conflict among the diplomats located in the empire and German central government, the possibility of an Ottoman attack to Russia was regarded from the capital as a convincing motivation.[201] The German-Ottoman alliance was secretly signed on August 2, 1914. Opposing the Triple Entente, Germany, Austria and the Ottoman Empire formed the Center Powers in the First World War.

The telegraph correspondences from the years 1915-1917 indicate that there was a constant flow of information towards the higher ranks of the German Reich on

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[199] For more information on the Germany participation in the Armenian genocide, see: Kaiser, "A Scene from the Inferno."Wolfgang Gust, The Armenian Genocide: Evidence from the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915-1916, Lepsius, Deutschland und Armenian 1914-1918, Dadrian *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide. A Review of the Historical Evidence of German Complicity*.

[200] Lüdke, "The German Empire and Its Failed Propaganda Campaign in the Near and Middle East, 1914–1918 and Beyond," in *Jihad and Islam in World War 1*:71.

[201] Lüdke.73.

every activity that took place in the Ottoman Empire. However, the information concerning the deportation and the massacres of the Armenian population was kept in great secrecy from the general public in order to maintain the alliance with Ottoman Empire and prevent any reaction from the public.[202] The citizens of Germany were left ignorant to the flow of events due to the military censorship that was introduced to the press and print media by the *Kriegspressam*t (War Press Office). Through this office the press received thousands of instructions on censorship that were not shared with the public[203] This office was united with the office of propaganda under Walter Nicolai, an intelligence officer lieutenant colonel, who pursued a strict censorship towards the words 'Armenia' and 'Turkey' in order to keep the 'Armenian question' out of the news.[204]

The aim was to prevent any accusation of German complicity. In this regard, two conferences were organized on 7 October and 23 December 1915 to discuss the scope of censorship and the strategy to be followed in cases of possible accusations. It was of primary importance to reproduce the Ottoman discourse of 'disloyal Armenians', and emphasize the effort the German government had put to moderate the conditions of the deportees.[205] A. Zimmermann, the undersecretary of State to the Foreign Office, went as far as to demand documents that demonstrated the necessity of the suppression of the Armenian people by the Sublime Porte as a result of the

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[202] Dadrian, *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide: A Reviewof the Historical Evidence of German Complicity*.

[203] Demm: Censorship (Version 2.0), in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson.

[204] Hofmann, "From Silence to Re-Remembrance: The Response of German Media to Massacres and Genocide against the Ottoman Armenians," in *Mass Media and the Genocide of the Armenians*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Genocide, 97. Under the alphabetical German censorship orders of 1917, these two words were listed.

[205] Hofmann, 97-98.

treacherous activities they were carrying out in the empire.[206] The censorship strategies not only indicate that there was an effort to "silence" but also an effort to produce "material justification" for the "disloyalty of the Armenians". Nevertheless, it is evident that from time to time, the violence exposed to Armenians became a question of discussion in the German parliament despite the censorship implemented into the press. As Zimmermann comments to the Budget Committee of the German parliament:

> The Foreign Office and the Imperial representatives in Turkey have, from the beginning of the Armenian crisis, done everything possible with diplomatic instruments to alleviate the fate of the Armenians. This is a fact which is unknown to the public and for the time being should remain unknown, the Imperial government has gone to the utmost limit with its pressure on the Turkish government. The Imperial government did and does not feel justified to break with the alliance on account of the Armenian question. Because, although it is most regrettable from a Christian and from a generally humane point of view that, apart from the guilty, also hundreds of thousands of innocent people are having to perish under the Turkish hand, more important to the German government than the Armenians are the sons of Germany, whose sacrificial and bloody battle in the west, east and south is considerably facilitated with the help of the weapons of the Turkish allies. The responsibility for weakening the south-east flank of our position arising from our global conflict by breaking with Turkey on the grounds of the Armenian question, could not be borne by any German government and the less so since the Armenians would not save themselves from further persecution through taking this step, but would be particularly delivered up to Turkish acts of revenge.[207]

These statements not only demonstrate that German diplomats in the Ottoman Empire, as well as the government in Berlin, were aware of the severeness of the atrocities carried out against the Armenian population, but also that they themselves from despite the dispute they had with the Ottoman government from time to time,

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[206] Hofmann, 98-99.

[207] In Hofmann, "From Silence to Re-Remembrance", 98 the explanation of Zimmermann is emphasized. I took the English translation from http://www.armenocide.net/armenocide/armgende.nsf/$$AllDocs/1917-05-09-DE-001

they were keen to preserve the alliance for their self-interest.[208] On the other hand, as it was demonstrated in the first chapter, the Entente press adopted an attitude that was actively accusing Germany of the massacres. Instead of highlighting the atrocities exposed to the Armenian population, propaganda against Germany became the dominant rhetoric.

Starting from May 1915, consulates of Erzurum, Adana, Aleppo, and Mosul informed diplomats of higher rank on the deportations and massacres. In a timespan of a week, German diplomats of the eastern provinces started to inundate the Ambassador in Istanbul. The very first telegraph concerning the deportation was sent by the Consul in Aleppo, Walter Rößler, on 10 May 1915 as following: "While so far only Armenians from Zeytun and surrounding villages have been banished, families from Maraş are now being led away; among them a harmless elderly Protestant pastor Badveli."[209] That was followed by the report of Scheubner-Richter, the vice-consul of Erzurum, on 16 May 1915. Another telegraph was sent by Eugen Büge the consul in Adana, on the spreading of fear among the Armenian citizens that was caused by the "barbaric procedure" the local government was enacting.[210] Hans Freiherr von Wangenheim, the German ambassador in Istanbul, on the other hand, responded that it might be possible to alleviate the form of measures but not hindering it since the existence of the empire was under threat.[211] On June 10, the consul in Mosul, Walter Holstein, reported his detestation towards the crimes that were committed.

> (...) For a few days, corpses and human limbs have been floating here in the river. The same fate is imminent for the transport of Armenian

[208] Gust, 26.

[209] AA-PA Türkei 10.05.1915

[210] AA-PA Türkei 18.05.1915

[211] AA-PA Türkei 31.05.1915 Wangenheim to AA

> "emigrants" on their way hereby. I have expressed my deepest disgust to the government here; the governor expressed his regret by stating that the governor of Diyarbekir bears responsibility. [212]

Only within a month's time, the consuls started to report atrocious scenes of corpses they witnessed. The frequency of these reports demonstrates how drastically the situation escalated in these regions and how the higher ranks continued to remain indifferent to the situation in order to keep the relations with the Ottoman government in balance.

In the following days, the same consuls, Rößler and Holstein wrote on the emergency to stop the massacres: "If the central government does not change its program of the persecution of Christians, we will soon have the brightest uproar everywhere. The Armenian massacres must be prevented at all costs." [213] Along the deportation and extermination of Armenians, consuls constantly emphasized the persecution of Christian subjects to their higher ranks. Apart from whether they were innocent or not, what occurred for the consuls as the solely legitimate argument was their "Christianness".

It was only on June 17, that Wangenheim decided to send a long report to the Imperial Chancellor Bentham Hollweg in Berlin. Commencing his words with these following words "The expulsion of the Armenian population from their residences in the Eastern Anatolian provinces and their resettlement in other regions is being carried out with relentlessness."[214] He continued to explain for the first time the despair of the Armenians and the ferocity they were subjected to. He also gave

[212] AA-PA Türkei 10.06.1915 Holstein Botschaft

[213] AA-PA Türkei 12.06.1915 Rösser Botschaft, AA-PA Türkei 13.06.1915 Holstein - Botschaft

[214] AA-PA Türkei 17.06.1915 Wangenheim to Hollweg

information on the massacres and cited the words of Dr. Mordtmann, the General Consul of Istanbul, who had a conversion with the Interior Minister Talat Pasha.

> The Porte is intent on taking advantage of the World War in order to make a clean sweep of internal enemies - the indigenous Christians - without being hindered in doing so by diplomatic intervention from other countries. Such an undertaking will serve the interest of the Germans, the Allies of Turkey, which thus in turn could be strengthened.[215]

The consuls continued to send reports to Wangenheim. He, however, preferred to keep his distance, advising them not to intervene in the situation and started to send fraud information on the insurrections. The only thing that he considered problematic was the possibility that Germany would be accused for the exterminations, as the general opinion was that the Sublime Porte could not do anything without the consent of the German government.[216]

Johannes Lepsius, a German Protestant missionary, and an Armenophile, who was a witness of the earlier Hamidian massacres, decided to make a visit to the Ottoman Empire in early June 1915 after hearing about the atrocities. Throughout his journey, he secretly collected evidential material from German, Swiss and American missionaries, as well as the American Embassy, and even organized a meeting with the War Minister Enver Pasha, whom he believed to be the actual responsible agent for the deportations and massacres. Although he was allowed to move around the empire, his presence became the subject of a number of diplomatic exchanges among the German Embassy and the German government. The mobilization of Lepsius was regarded as a threat against the relations with the Ottoman Empire.[217]

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[215] Cited from AA-PA Türkei 17.06.1915 wangenheim to hollweg

[216] Gust, 267.

[217] AA-PA Türkei 09.06.1915 Wangenheim to AA

After he returned to Germany, he compiled all documents and his personal testimony in a special report. Despite the difficulties of finding a publication house, he managed to print it in Potsdam, Germany, where he made 10.000 to 20000 copies and distributed them to German parliament members and publicly known figures.[218] However, after the protest of the Turkish ambassador in Berlin, the Foreign Minister Gottlieb von Jagow declared to the ambassadors that the report was 'confiscated'. Lepsius had to agree not to say anything that would contradict the German foreign policy and would be against their Ottoman ally. As a result, he left Germany and dedicated himself to the treatment of survivors. In 1919, he published *Deutschland und Armenien 1914-1918*, which was supposed to be a reprint of his report in 1916. According to Vahakn N. Dadrian, who authored *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide* in this edition, the German responsibility was neglected by censoring some important parts and manipulating major texts. In this text, the role of the Turkish government was demonstrated to be of primary importance, while Germany's complicity was not present.[219]

The eastern province of the Ottoman Empire, *Vilayet-i Erzurum*, was strategically an important area both for Ottoman and the German government. Not only did it share a border with Russia, but also with Iran, in which, alongside Russia and Britain, Germany had an interest. Therefore, taking the region under control was highly crucial for both empires. This geopolitical importance nevertheless did not coincide with the harsh living conditions, the increasing atrocities and the rough countryside, which gave to many people in the border region the opportunity to escape to Russia. While the increase of Armenians joining Russian troops became

[218] Lepsius, *Bericht über die Lage des Armenischen Volkes in der Türkei.*

[219] Dadrian, *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide,* 155.

one of the alleged reasons for the deportations conducted by the Ottoman government, for Germany the importance of the Eastern provinces suggested a full collaboration with the Ottoman government.

In such an environment, the correspondence between the German vice-consul of Erzurum, Scheubner-Richter and the German embassy reveals the tumultuous dynamics within German diplomacy. Many of the telegraphs in the German and Ottoman archives uncover the mechanisms of the deportations in Erzurum. It gives an idea about how it was received by the local government, and how the German embassy reacted to them. Likewise, it demonstrates the personal efforts of a German consul to intervene in the inhumane conditions.

Max Scheubner-Richter, came to Erzurum in December 1914 as the secretary of the consul Paul Schwarz. While Schwarz joined the 3rd Army, Scheubner-Richter took over his duties and requested a position for vice-consulship. He stayed in Erzurum from the very beginning of the deportations, until the 25th of September, the time Schulenburg took over his duties. Since the German consulate was at the time the only foreign consulate in Erzurum, most of the information regarding the area was restricted to his correspondence. After September 1915, Scheubner-Richter became part of the detachment headed by Ömer Naci Paşa for a joint raid into Persia. His aim was to proceed operations behind the Russian frontlines supported by the 3rd army, and then to pursue German propaganda in Iran.[220] After he started his journey he passed through many cities such as Bitlis and Mosul where he witnessed the complete annihilation of Armenian men.[221]

[220] Leverkuehn, Alasdair Lean, and Hilmar Kaiser, *A German Officer during the Armenian Genocide: A Biography of Max von Scheubner-Richter*, London: Gomidas Institute, 2008: lxxxiv-lxxxv.

[221] Leverkuehn, lxxxvi.

Although it is thought that the initial plan involved a secret mission concerning the Baku oil industry and Russian infrastructure, during his presence in Erzurum, Scheubner-Richter was able to establish a certain kind of independency, that he, later on, tried to use for the well treatment of deported Armenians.

3.2 Deportations in Erzurum through diplomatic correspondence

The 3rd army was based in the Erzurum fortress. When the Ottoman Empire declared 'Holy War' against Russia, the irregular troops, composed of Kurdish tribesmen, released prisoners and volunteers, became part of the Ottoman 3rd Army.[222] Nevertheless, the battle of Sarıkamış, resulted with the defeat of the Ottoman army. Garegin Pastermadjian known as Armen Garo, the deputy of Erzurum in the Ottoman parliament, was accused by the Ottoman government of being the primary reason for the defeat. In fact, after serving for four years in the Ottoman parliament, Armen Garo joined the organization for the establishment of Armenian volunteer units in the Russian army.[223] During the Caucasus campaign, his commander got wounded so he became the leader of the front and fought against the Ottoman Empire until March 1915.

After the defeat, Liman von Sanders, the German commander was expected to be the general of the new 3rd army that was planned to be established. Being aware of the fact that one third of the soldiers had been fallen ill and the other one third was

[222] Kaiser, "A Scene from the Inferno.":30. Zürcher, "Introduction: The Ottoman Jihad, the German Jihad and the Sacralization of War", *Jihad and Islam in World War 1*.

[223] Garo & Tuygan, *Osmanlı Bankası: Armen Garo'nun Anıları*, Belge Yayınları. Yaşam ve Anılar Dizisi (İstanbul: Belge Uluslararası Yayıncılık, 2009).

on the escape, he rejected this proposal. This resulted in the appointment of Mahmud Kamil, an important Young Turk figure, as the general of the Third Army. [224]

The desertion of many Armenian soldiers and the two Armenian battalions that fought in alliance to Russia were alleged as reprisal actions for the massacres in the Ottoman and German diplomatic correspondence and state documents.[225] In nationalist Turkish historiography, desertion during the first World War was a much-neglected issue or directly related to non-Muslim and "non-Turkish" subjects. However, recent studies demonstrate that desertion was not limited to the "non-Turkish" subject but a matter regarded in almost every ethnic and religious group.[226] According to Mehmet Beşikçi, the motivation of excessive desertion (17% of all enlisted men) during the Great War derived from multiple reasons that changed throughout the war. In the broadest sense, Beşikçi regards this stance that was neither religiously nor culturally approved, as a reaction towards the failure of the contractual relationship of the state and the enlisted men. The fatal cold, the lack of provisioning of basic needs such as food and clothing, bad treatment, and the harsh living conditions within the army resulted with many deserters.[227] While it is difficult to come to a concrete number due to the lack of statistical date, Beşikçi's comparative research through personal accounts, archival documents and intelligence reports suggests that almost the one-sixth of the enlisted men – around 2 850 000 men – in the army had deserted.[228] More specific examples can be traced in the

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[224] Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else*:178.

[225] Ermeni Komitelerinin Amal ve Harekat-ı İhtilaliyyesi, 240.

[226] Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War: Between Voluntarism and Resistance*, The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage, 248.

[227] Beşikçi, 248 ; Erik J. Zürcher, "Between Death and Desertion : The Experience of the Ottoman Soldier in World War I," *Turcica*, vol. 28 (1996): 235–258.

[228] Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War*: 251. Yalman, *Turkey in Great War,* Erickson, *Ordered to die*.

reports of the German consul that demonstrates the extremeness of the conditions of the 3rd army in Eastern Anatolia at the time. The defeat in the Caucasus resulted with the desertion of one third of the army in Summer 1915. By the winter 1916 the number reached 50000, which makes almost half of the army itself.[229]

By the end of 1914, Paul Schwarz reported some atrocities that had taken place against Armenian villagers and the execution of an Armenian priest by irregulars.[230] These created a certain level of insecurity and uneasiness among the Armenian community which was also reported by Schwarz as a concern for further massacres.[231] He reported from a confidential source that, after Armenian men were arrested and became prisoners in some villages, women demanded help from the priest of the village. This demand resulted with the meeting of the Armenian priest and the governor Tahsin, in which Tahsin promised to end the massacres. Schwarz also underlined the fact that many of the Armenian population believed that these atrocities were mostly planned by the CUP. He ended his report with the accusations made by Turkish officials who regarded the Armenians as the main reason for Russia's success in the region.[232] After that, the governor did not hesitate to send guards for the protection of the families. Yet, they were part of the released convicts.[233]

The arrest of two Catholic priests and the atrocities in the villages of Tortum valley, followed with the execution of the second director of the Ottoman Bank, Setrak Pastırmacıyan in the middle of a street in Erzurum by two soldiers in February

[229] Zürcher, "Between Death and Desertion: The Experience of the Ottoman Soldier in World War I: 244; Beşikçi, 252.

[230] Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*:320.

[231] Kévorkian, 355.

[232] AA-PA Türkei Schwarz to Hollweg

[233] Kaiser, 130.

1915 tensed the atmosphere from day to day.[234] The Armenian population became more anxious about a forthcoming massacre, which was perceived by the German consul "not without foundation."[235] Security became the core issue of the villagers, when not only the political situation left them in a quandary, but also the fact that the epidemics that killed many soldiers started to spread among civilians.[236] With the augmenting accusations that Ottoman soldiers were attacked by armed Armenians, the disarmed Armenians were sent to work at labor battalions.

At the end of April, the Armenian population of Van started a resistance against the Ottoman authorities. This resistance aroused from attacks and massacres to which the Armenian population was subjected to. After the assassination of some community leaders, the community decided to resist with barricades against the Ottoman arms. The three-week-long resistance was finalized with many losses from both sides. This conflict created anxiety and fear among the Armenians of Erzurum, who believed that they could be soon victims of further massacres. Among the Muslim community, it was believed that the maintenance of the Armenian population would increase the possibility that Russians overthrow the region.[237] Following this tension, bishop Smbat Saadetian went to the German consul to request protection and demanded from the same consul, Scheubner-Richter, to inform the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople about the current situation in Van.[238] The German embassy became aware of the fact that the response of Turkish authorities to the resistance of the Armenians in Van reached a level of seriousness in

[234] Kévorkian, 407.

[235] Kaiser, "A Scene from the Inferno.", 132.

[236] Kaiser, 131.

[237] Kaiser, 134.

[238] Leverkuehn, and Kaiser, *A German Officer during the Armenian Genocide: A Biography of Max von Scheubner-Richter*, 22.

which it was impossible to turn a deaf ear to the general anxiety of the eastern provinces.[239] The ambassador advised the consul of Erzurum to calm down the Muslim population and to remind the Turkish authorities the importance of prosecuting Armenian suspects according to law in order to prevent further massacres and plundering. However, he suggested to keep the conversation with Turkish authorities on a friendly level.[240]

Nonetheless, the increasing arrests made it more difficult for the German consul to receive information on the circumstances in Van as many of his informants were local Armenians, who were arrested. Scheubner-Richter was aware of the fact that the information coming from the Turkish authorities was mostly unfounded. It was obvious that the governor of Erzurum, Tahsin Bey, was not willing to act similar to the officials of Van since the presence of Armenian population was highly important for the economy of the region and craftwork depended very much on local Armenians. In this regard, he tried to keep it at a "moderate level", whereby the houses of Armenians were searched for evidence of conspiracy.[241]

While two hundred people were arrested during the house searches, the central government ordered to remove and deport all Armenian officials employed in the local financial administration who belonged to a political party or were proved to be disloyal to non-Armenian villages.[242] In the meanwhile, the German consul feared that the deportation of thirty people under arrest would result in a massacre on the

[239] Kaiser, 133.

[240] AA-PA Türkei 04.28.1915

[241] Leverkuehn, Lean, and Kaiser, *A German Officer during the Armenian Genocide*..22

[242] BOA. DH. ŞFR, nr.52/249, Kaiser, 133.

road. It became evident that nobody was involved in a conspiracy as the house-searches were futile. So, the governor Tahsin Bey released most of the arrestees.[243] The individual incidents that took place in Erzurum were perceived by the German consul as understandable for a region in warfare. They could not be compared to the insurrections in Van and he regarded them foremost as part of self-defense.[244] In this regard, the consul perceived the attitude of the governor in the city of Erzurum to be moderate. However, according to a telegraph from May 9, the governor was personally involved in the planning of the deportations from the southern districts of Erzurum and Bitlis. The measures were taken with the military and central authorities, as well as the governors of Van and Bitlis.[245]

It is important to note that there are various opinions regarding the planning of the deportations. According to Kévorkian, the plan of the deportations in Erzurum were planned ahead, by starting first from the eastern part of the region and then from the nearer countryside of the city of Erzurum. From March, deportations started from the outermost regions with the excuse of being too close to the Russian border.[246]

The deportation community was formed with the return of Bahaeddin Şakir Pasha from Istanbul on 21 April 1915. However, the telegrams of Scheubner-Richter suggest that the governor Tahsin was unwilling to fulfill the plans taken by the military authorities mostly for his own concerns.[247] Nevertheless, despite some

[243] AA-PA Türkei 09.05.1915 Scheubner Richter zu Botschaft, Kaiser, 134.

[244] AA-PA Türkei 15.05.1915 Scheubner Richter zu der Botschaft

[245] BOA. DH. ŞFR, nr. 52/282 Kaiser:134.

[246] Kévorkian, 291. Kévorkian based his argument on the information he gathered from the Armenian archives, however Hilmar Kaiser believes that this argument is problematic.

[247] Kévorkian.

postponement, these decisions were actualized regardless of the economic ruin the area would face.

In the Telegraph of May 15, 1915, Scheubner-Richter, indicated that the situation of the Armenians of the city of Erzurum remained calm, whereas the news spread that the surrounding villages were about to be sent off to military camps.[248] The next day Scheubner-Richter noted in his telegraph that these commands were given by the supreme command for militaristic reasons and that they were sent off to Mamahatun and the Tercan plain, which were around six to eight days away from Erzurum. He came to the assumption that the deportees should be mostly women and children since the men of the villages were already sent to labor battalions. Having said that, he pointed out that the local administration undertook no responsibility for the decision of deportation, but mentioned that the governor promised in a conversation to protect the living and material properties of the deportees. [249]

In the following days, Scheubner-Richter continued to send telegraphs concerning the situation of the deportees who were camping around the city of Erzurum. He was informed that the first deportations from the region were from the Pasin plain. Later on, he found out that the command was given by the 3rd army commander. After spending some time around the deportees who camped in the surrounding areas of Erzurum, he undertook a meeting with the bishop and some notables of the town, to collect bread and distribute it to deportees in places that were as far as ten kilometers from the city center. Since Armenians were not allowed to leave the city without permission, Scheubner-Richter decided to pursue this mission

[248] AA-PA Türkei 15.05.1915 Scheubner zu Wangenheim

[249] AA-PA Türkei 16.05.1915 Scheubner zu Wangenheim - According to the notes of Mordtmann, that in Mamahatun there are app. 200 Armenian houses and it takes two days from Erzurum., AA-PA Türkei 17.05.1915

with his own crew.[250] Robert Stapleton, who was an American Missionary located in Erzurum discussed the situation with Scheubner-Richter and supported his relief efforts.[251]

He notes down that the bread distribution made a good impression among the Armenian population.[252] Although it is not possible to trace how many times and in which frequency these distributions had been carried out, the correspondence reveals that it was not a onetime event and possibly continued as long as the people were camping at the visible surroundings of Erzurum. In the images that will be discussed in the following chapter, the encounter between the deportees and the German officers are visible. In this regard, Scheubner-Richter's demand for financial support also makes sense. According to a report, some American missionaries and the consul made a request for relief funds from the American Bible House in Istanbul. Following this, William M. Peet, who was the Treasurer of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Constantinople decided to create a fund for the Armenians immediately and transacted a fair amount of money.[253]

In a telegraph on August 5, in which he made a brief summary of the previous months, he noted down that around ten to twenty thousand people from these first deportees were killed on the road in Mamahatun, Sansar, the Euphrates bridge and Paraz by Kurds and Turkish irregulars. However, the official number given by the Ottoman government was 3-4000. Parallel to these atrocities, the deportees of the Erzincan plain were attacked around Kemah. While many were robbed and later on

[250] AA-PA Türkei 20.05.1915

[251] Gretchen Rasch, *The Storm of Life: A Missionary Marriage from Armenia to Appalachia* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2016: 139.

[252] AA-PA Türkei 22.05.1915

[253] Kaiser, 136.

killed, most of the women were abducted. As far as Scheubner-Richter could learn, the gendarmes were also involved in these attacks.[254] In the meanwhile, the governor expressed his discontent with the situation.

The response of Wangenheim to Scheubner-Richter issued on 19 May 1915 deserves attention. He gave the allowance to discuss the amelioration of the treatment of deportees, however, he underlined that a meeting should be arranged under personal circumstances and should not represent the official position of the German consulate.[255] A similar attitude was adopted by the Anatolian Railroad Company. The director of the company, Franz J. Günther had sent a telegraph to Arthur Gwinner, the management board member responsible for business, on 30 October 1915, attaching a photograph in which 800 people were transported in 10 carts, to which he wrote sarcastically "an upholder of civilization in Turkey". While Günther received money from the bank, he was advised not to give the impression that the bank was hostile to the allied government.[256]

In a telegraph sent two days after, the occupation of the Armenian villages by "Muhacirs" – Turkish immigrants from the war zone – and the immediate plundering became a matter of discussion. There, he expressed his suspicion towards the replacements. He believed that creating space for Muslims was possibly the primary motivation for the deportations.[257] When Wangenheim met the interior minister he

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[254] AA-PA Türkei 05.08.1915

[255] AA-PA Türkei 22.05.1915 Wangenheim zu Scheubner

[256] In original: "Einliegend sende ich Ihnen ein Bildchen, die Anatolische Bahn als Kulturtraegerin in der Türkei darstellend." In Kaiser, The Baghad Railway and the Armenian Genocide 1915-1916: A Case Stduy in German Resistance and Complicity in *Remembrance and Denial,* 75.

Starting from the deportations in Zeitun, the railway was introduced for deportation by the Turkish government. Huge concentration camps next to the stations had been constructed. These places were full of epidemic and various illnesses. Many died in these camps, while waiting for the next stop to be deported.

[257] AA-PA Türkei 22.05.1915

was informed that deportations were realized in order to hinder further massacres, since evidences of bombs and planning were found. Scheubner did not linger for a response. He asserted immediately to Tahsin Bey that the mentioned bombs were not found in Erzurum and its surroundings.[258] However, the confirmation of the false charge did not change the deportation decision of the central government. Talat, the interior minister, ordered the governors of Erzurum, Bitlis and Van to deport Armenians of the provincial regions to the southern district of Mosul and the south of Urfa. He also demanded the dismissal of all Armenians in the Postal and Telegraph Service.[259]

By the beginning of June, the German consul had the chance to talk with the 3rd army commander Mahmud Kamil. In his conversation, however, he found out that all deported people, including the ones of the surrounding areas were sent to Der Zor and not Tercan. He also discovered that further deportation would be carried out because of the conflict in Van and that only those who convert to Islam would be exempt from this procedure.

According to the Ottoman archives, this order was given right after the people were deported. Those who were sent to Sivas over Erzincan were urged to change their direction and be sent to the south of Urfa and Mosul, to the Sancak of Zor.[260] This meant for Scheubner-Richter that most of the deportees would be victims of massacres and many would not have the chance to reach the destination since they were mostly old men, women and children.[261] On May 23, the Interior Ministry issued the governors of Van, Erzurum and Bitlis to give the permission to the

[258] AA-PA Türkei 02.06.1915

[259] Kaiser, "A Scene from the Inferno.", 136.

[260] BOA. DH. ŞFR, nr.53/48 18.05.1915

[261] AA-PA Türkei 02.06.1915

deported Armenians to carry their belongings. In the same telegraphs, the responsibility for the protection of the deportees was given to the local government.[262]

On May 27th, asserting the proximity to the Russian frontier, the Interior Ministry ordered the deportation of all Armenians in Erzurum.[263] This decision was brought into attention in the report of the Armenian bishop to the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople. According to this report, all Armenian villagers in the district of Hınıs were massacred by irregular Kurds, while some women and children were either forced to marriage or to cheap labor. He also gave information about the upcoming deportation of 160 wealthy Armenian families towards Mosul and on the many deportation orders that were on their way. An imploration to stop the violent forced migration orders was also made to the patriarch.[264]

Nevertheless, the interesting correspondence between Scheubner-Richter and the ambassador Wangenheim regarding the telegrams of the bishop in Erzurum to the Patriarchate in Constantinople in which the current atrocities were explained in detail, suggests that the tension on the subject was augmenting between the consul and ambassador. The ambassador strictly underlined that the German consulate should not act as a mediator for the Armenian clergy. Thus, he rejected to hand out the telegrams to the Armenian Patriarchate.[265]

[262] BOA. DH. ŞFR, nr.53/93

[263] BOA. DH. ŞFR, nr.53/129

[264] AA-PA Türkei 04.06.1915

[265] AA-PA Türkei 04.06 1915 - no 10

The order for the deportation of the Armenians in the city of Erzurum came immediately. The people of the first convoy were forced to leave in two weeks.[266] This convoy was not targeted to business families but to families of lower income.[267] The Interior Ministry declared that the value of the belongings was going to be paid by the state to their owners and that the deportation of incapable women and those who work at the army factory was postponed.[268] After this decision, the Armenian bishops and Armenian Catholic bishops requested protection from both the German and the Austrian consulate. However, the response was given according to the instructions of Wangenheim, who pointed out the importance of keeping the goodwill of Germany in front of the government and was therefore not in favor of an intervention. [269] In this regard, it became evident that the German embassy did not want to contradict with the politics of the Ottoman government.

Since Scheubner-Richter couldn't provide any personal help, he demanded the governor for protection. Yet his fear that the deportees of 15th of June would be victims of irregular bands was not unfounded. After a little while, it became evident that the majority of men and children were killed, while many of the women were abducted. With much frustration, the consul turned to the ambassador for the allowance of a meeting with the local governor. In this conversion, the governor Tahsin Bey assured him that he would take care of the deportees since he expressed that he personally regretted to send them without protection, but also underlined that it was Mahmud Kamil's insistence that they were sent immediately without securing

[266] AA-PA Türkei 04.06.1915 - no 11

[267] AA-PA Türkei 10.06 1915 – no.18

[268] BOA.DH. ŞFR, nr. 53/303

[269] AA-PA Türkei 10.06.1915 - no.18

the roads.[270] The telegraph issued on 14 June by the Interior Ministry deserves attention. It is declared that a convoy of five hundred people sent from the Erzurum province were massacred on the road between Erzurum and Erzincan by Kurds. In this regard, the importance of taking precautions for the protection of the deportees was strictly underlined, while those who intended to escape or opposed the authorities should be punished.[271] On June 16, the first convoy of notables left the town for Urfa over Harput with fifteen accompanying gendarme officers.[272] However, it came out that they were attacked on their way to Harput. While the official accounts claimed that 14 people were killed, Scheubner-Richter learnt from personal accounts that the majority of men and children were killed and the women were raped. Once more, he highlighted that the government undertook no responsibility for the incidents, which created frustration in the German consulate.

3.3 Testimonies from the city

Most of the testimonies from the Erzurum region are the witness accounts of city notables. This may have derived from a number of reasons. First of all, the Armenians of villages close to the border were deported immediately. The mountainous region made it even more difficult to move and left mostly women and children unprotected. Another possible reason was that the governor Tahsin provided guards for some of the convoys and allowed them to move forward with their carts.

[270] AA-PA Türkei 10.06 1915 - no.19, Kaiser:139.

[271] BOA. DH. ŞFR, nr. 54/9.

[272] According to the testimonies Kévorkian is referring, the number of gendarmes was either 30 or 50. The number of deportees were 150. Kévorkian, 294.

3.3.1 Testimonies of residents of the city of Erzurum

A testimony by Manuşak Harutyun Ter-Stepanian, born in 1908, from the city of Erzurum reveals details about the first convoy of notables who moved from the city.[273] According to this account, at the beginning of June, the government declared their deportation. They had only three days for preparation for a month-long journey. Without anything to eat and drink they continued their journey until they were permitted to rest. Right after that, a whistle came and some Turks and Kurds brigands started to attack them. Their clothes were taken off but they continued to walk until a second whistle came. This resulted in the slaughtering of everyone who just appeared in front of them. As they ordered to move those who survived the attack, people started to search for their relatives but the gendarmes did not permit them to do so. So, they moved forward until they reached Harput. A few days after they arrived, it was declared that all non-habitants of Harput would be exiled from the city. In the light of their previous experience, they supposed that this meant to be taken away and slaughtered. Right in front of the public, an Assyrian woman who was a Harput inhabitant suddenly pretended as if Manuşak and her sister were her own children. After saving them, later that night she managed to send them to their mother who was working as a washer in households. They remained there until the city was occupied by the Russians.[274]

Other testimonies from Erzurum deportees are from Şuşanig M. Dikranian and Adelina Mazmanian.[275] While their testimony is much more in detail, it is

[273] This collection of testimonies was made by the ethnographer Verjine Svazlian, who compiled 700 eyewitness accounts in *Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors*. She started to record testimonies of survivors starting from 1955 on and included songs and photographs of the survivors. In this work, eight testimonies were dedicated to the Erzurum region.

[274] Svazlian, 222.

[275] Kévorkian, 295.

interesting to catch that the traumatic experience of these people was very similarly engraved into their memory even after half a century. Şuşanig Dikranian memorizes that, when they arrived at the plain of Harput, the people of a borough called Hussenig had not yet been deported. After seeing the condition of the survivors of Erzurum, the people of the city became aware of the severity people are going through.[276]

Henry H. Riggs, the American missionary who was the president of Euphrates College wrote his testimony as exiles from Erzurum, Trabzon, Bayburt, Arapgir passed through Harput.[277] In one part, he noted down his encounter with the deportees from Erzurum. According to their testimony, the conditions of deportation differed in each convoy. While the first deportees who arrived at Harput attested that they came without trouble and were very well treated and even given food and special protection by the guards to whom they gave good amount of money. Three women from another convoy, on the other hand, explained that they were attacked on the road by brigands. Although the governor Tahsin Bey appointed them guards who were in charge of their protection, after the attack of a number of brigands these guards left the convoy to their own. As the defense of the convoy was not sufficient, all men were killed. However, a boy who arrived later on to Harput in a dress was the only exception. While the brigands kidnapped some of the women, they tore the clothes of the remaining women. After the brigands left, the guards reappeared and gathered clothes from nearer villages for the women. While Riggs noted down that he questioned the liability of this story told by a wealthy woman from a prominent family, he, later on, came to the conclusion that this was one of the "less horrid"

[276] Kévorkian, 295.

[277] Riggs, *Days of Tragedy in Armenia: Personal Experiences in Harpoot, 1915-1917*.

stories one can witness. The initiation that the governor had taken for the safety of the deportees was once more emphasized and regarded as an outstanding act for a Turkish official.[278] Yet, according to a reliable source, the convoys that came from Erzurum and Erzincan with a fair amount of men under safe circumstances would be killed before they left the province of Harput.[279]

After Scheubner-Richter became aware of the situation, he demanded instructions for the prohibition of further massacres from the embassy in Istanbul.[280] Wangenheim, in response, recommended him to arrange a meeting with the governor Tahsin, in which he should underline the importance of a good reputation in front of the neutral governments and bring out the possible damage that incidents as such would cause.[281]

On the 19th and 20th of June, the second convoy, around 300 families, 3000 people, were driven out of the city towards Bayburt with the support of 100 gendarmes. In Bayburt, the men of the convoy were separated from the group while women continued without trouble until Erzincan. Scheubner-Richter suspected that all of them were killed because he couldn't obtain any further information on their situation.[282] In the meanwhile, it became evident that Tahsin Bey declared his dissatisfaction concerning the security of the roads, however, the commander was insisting on this immediate order of deportation regardless of any protection.[283]

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[278] Riggs, 120.

[279] Riggs, 138-139.

[280] AA-PA Türkei 1915-06-18-DE-013 - The word "geraubt" both means to steal and to be raped. It is unclear in which meaning he is using this word, but according to the context, it is possible that he meant the word "rape".

[281] AA-PA Türkei wangenheim 21/06 n.12

[282] AA-PA Türkei 22.06.1915 - no.39, AA-PA Türkei 05.08.1915 Hohenlohe

[283] AA-PA Türkei 22.06.1915 - no.42

On June 23, an interesting visit was made to the consulate. Garabed Hacıoğlu Georgian, an Armenian peasant at the age of 55 escaped from the massacres in Mamahatun, where he was shot from his left hand. He enlightened the consulate on the situation of the first deportees from the villages of Pasin and the Erzurum plain. They were inhabitants of the villages Padişvan, Umudum, Şipen, Kiselkilise, Erginis, Çamşkavank, Kirsinkos, Irdarzur from Erzurum plain. According to this testimony, around 9-10 000 people left their homes with 600-700 carts. They passed through Yeniköy to Mamahatun and passed the Euphrates bridge without any incident. In Mamahatun, the kaymakam, 10 gendarmes on foot and around 20 gendarmes and irregulars escorted them. After they crossed the Euphrates, they reached the Çividağ mountain, where they were attacked by Kurds who surrounded them. Most of the men were shot and many women were robbed. Garabed was shot as well, but after they were convinced that he was among the dead, he escaped and made his way back to Erzurum to reach the German consulate. After hearing his story, Scheubner-Richter introduced him to the governor Tahsin, who after Georgian's story, removed the kaymakam from his office.[284]

The telegraph of Talat Paşa issued on June 26, 1915 was stating that after the deportation command has been given, delays in the deportation process were not tolerable. "The deportation should continue as before, but yet, whether with the existing force or in times of need with the support from there, they should be carefully protected."[285]

As a result, on the same day, the third convoy, again around 300 families left the city. As it was reported by governor Tahsin to the German consul, these three

[284] AA-PA Türkei 05.08.1915

[285] BOA.DH. ŞFR, 54-156 Minister to Erzurum Province

convoys were going to wait either in Harput, Erzincan or Bayburt until the roads were secured. However, Tahsin Bey declared that after they leave these cities, he would not take further responsibility. Nevertheless, they reached Erzincan safely. As Scheubner-Richter became aware of the situation in Bitlis, he tried to calm the Armenian population to prevent possible resistance movements.[286]
Mahmud Kamil, the commander of the 3rd army, declared that all Armenians in the city of Erzurum would be deported. Scheubner-Richter interpreted this as a pure "race-hate" and regarded this as a troubled decision within an army that was full of Armenian craftsmen.[287] On 30 June 1915, Scheubner reported that the Ottoman officials declared the number of people killed on the road as high as three thousand.[288] In Scheubner's eyes Hulusi Bey, the director of Erzurum police, was the main suspect for the massacres.[289]

The arrest of the landlord of the German consulate, Sarkis Solikian on the first of July was received with surprise. Scheubner-Richter immediately asked for his release, but it was rejected by the governor. Still, the consul insisted to give them time for preparation before the deportation. Hilmar Kaiser interpreted the rejection of the local government as a sort of demonstration of the incapability of the German consul.[290] In the time being, the situation in Tercan escalated tremendously. According to the consul, anarchy ruled in the streets of Bayburt-Erzincan which was explained by the governor as the result of insufficient gendarmes.[291]

[286] AA-PA Türkei 26.06.1915 - no. 46

[287] AA-PA Türkei 26.06.1915 - no .47

[288] AA-PA Türkei 30.06.1915 - no. 50

[289] AA-PA Türkei 01.07.1915

[290] Kévorkian, 315.

[291] AA-PA Türkei 06.07.1915 - no.60

Only a few days after, following the order of Mahmud Kamil, the fourth convoy departed. They were mostly craftsmen families who had received a residence permit at the beginning, but whose permission was taken away with the order of the supreme commander.[292] After a week of preparation for the deportation, they were accompanied by gendarmes and a general. They arrived at Erzincan safely without any trouble.[293]

According to the report of Scheubner-Richter to the ambassador in extraordinary mission Hohenlohe-Langenburg on August 5, 1915, the second, third and fourth convoy remained in the camp region of Erzincan until the beginning of August. Scheubner-Richter also stated that he visited them personally, to make sure that the measurements were proceeded as planned. At the beginning of August, they were sent further to Urfa crossing the ravine of Kemah. The question, however, of how many of them reached their given destination is left in doubt.

On July 15, almost all Armenians were deported with the exception of people with special relations, doctors, pharmacists. In the absence of Scheubner-Richter and the governor Tahsin Bey, their residence permits were taken away with the order of the army's Supreme Command. They had to leave Erzurum immediately, not having the chance to make any preparations. As it was transmitted, later on, they were robbed in Aşkale, while the doctors and pharmacists were shot in Bayburt. On July 27, the German consul reported a huge massacre in Bayburt and Kemah. The victims were

[292] While Kévorkian argues that they were deported on the July 18, the reports of Scheubner-Richter suggest that the fourth convoy was sent on a date between 26 June -15 July, most probably closer to 15 July. The small group of people and the fourth convoy were regarded as one convoy, which is most probably why Kévorkian noted it as July 18. Nevertheless, this was probably wrong. The small group, who were not part of the fourth convoy left the city after July 15.

[293] AA-PA Türkei 05.08.1915

from the Vilayet of Trabzon and Erzincan. Since all men of Trabzon were killed, women moved to Erzincan by themselves.[294]

By July 28, all Armenians of Erzurum had been deported with the exception of 70 craftsmen and bricklayers who were working for the government. They remained in Erzurum until February 1916, when they were sent to Erzincan, gathered together and shot to death. [295] Scheubner-Richter wrote a long report on the changing circumstances in the region that he described as the "impact of a side-government", indicating the interventions of Mahmud Kamil.[296]

One important accomplishment that was emphasized by Scheubner-Richter on his report to Wangenheim was the permission they gained with the director of the Ottoman Bank, to surrender the belongings of the Armenians of Erzurum in the Ottoman bank for their liabilities toward the government. In this regard, the belongings were stored in the Armenian church under the protection of the Ottoman Bank. The same telegraph included an important appendix from Carl Schlimme, the assistant of Scheubner-Richter. He was sent by Scheubner-Richter for a mission to Trabzon. On his way, he accompanied an Armenian family and encountered several convoys from the surrounding regions. In his report, he emphasized the dreadful conditions of women and children he witnessed, the offers made by gendarmes to them to slaughter the deporting Armenians and the difficulty of transmitting reports to the German consulate he experienced. In his testimony, he explained that he was so horrified by the attitude of gendarmes towards women and children that he could

[294] AA-PA Türkei 27.07.1915

[295] Gust, 41.

[296] AA-PA Türkei 28.07.1915 Scheubner-Wangenheim

only describe it as “treating like animals”. He concluded that as far as he could observe, the best treated deportees came from Erzurum.[297]

The telegraphs concerning the situation of deportees ended on August 10, 1915. A month later, Scheubner-Richter made his way to the raid in Iran. According to Kévorkian, in February 1916, apart from the few remaining people, 33 000 people who were mostly from the Sancak of Beyazid had fled to the Caucasus. In total 120 men and 5000 women and children, of whom 1600 were in Musul, 300 in Urfa, 1000 in Aleppo, and 2200 were spread over Syria and Mesopotamia survived.[298] While it is evident that the numeric information of any document and testimony is never exact, it still suggests that there was too much of loss, that few people survived and that the death of deportees expanded over months.

3.3.2 Erzurum under Russian occupation

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Henry Barby’s *Au pays de l’épouvante, l’Arménie martyre*, is an important testimonial account for the post-deportation period of the Erzurum region as he entered the city after the Russian occupation.[299] Although most of his accounts are limited to a common propaganda discourse that was dominant among the Entente States in order to stigmatize German militarism and its violence, it nevertheless reveals much about the common narratives that were circulating around the region after all Armenians were deported.[300] A dialogue between the German consul and the Armenian community of Erzurum is extracted as

[297] AA-PA Türkei 05.08.1915

[298] Kévorkian, 317.

[299] Barby, Au pays de l'épouvante, l'Arménie martyre.

[300] Kévorkian.

following: “You have only to take it upon yourself of what happens. The conduct of the Turks in your regard is perfectly logical.”[301]

This citation is not only an example of how he perfectly took over the circulating rumor that the German consul was ignorant to the massacres, but is also a significant example of how any German official was portrayed publicly at that time in the French media. Moreover, it is possible that such individual initiatives did not spread around. The testimony begins with a photograph (Fig.11) captioned “The head slaughterers of the Erzurum massacres”. [302]



Fig. 11 German and Ottoman officials in Erzurum

[301] Barby, *Au pays de l'épouvante, l'Arménie martyre,* 22.

[302] Original in French : « Les Chefs des Massacreurs d’Erzeroum », Barby, Au pays de l'épouvante, l'Arménie, 17.

Henry Barby did not give any source for this photograph, but he demonstrated the officers present in the photograph as the major responsible figures for the Erzurum massacres. Each person is numerated and identified, either with his name or his title, with the exception of Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, who was identified as "The chief of the Turkish bandits responsible for the deportations of the Armenians and their massacres along the way. His official status was: Vice-Consul of Erzurum to Germany."[303] It is possible that Scheubner-Richter was the only German diplomat around the table – although a commander named Stanger was also indicated – and since the denunciation of Germany was a more common rhetoric, a detailed commentary on the other higher rank officials sitting around the table was not necessary. Moreover, Barby may have misidentified some of the officials, such as the one marked with number one, noted as the interpreter of Kouzi Bey who was most probably Mahmud Kamil, the 3rd army commander appointed in February 1915. Thus, it is very possible that this photograph was taken after February, when the commander arrived in the city. While Barby was an advocate of the denunciation of Germany, he was even more eager in the condemnation of Scheubner-Richter. One of the most extreme examples was the following:

> The only occupation of the German officers at Erzurum was to lead a joyous life. The Muslim population and the Turkish officers themselves saw with pleasure these arrogant and cynical Teutonic officers, whose military aid was insignificant, and therefore the only pastimes consisted of provocations and orgies. A few young Armenians of the best families of the city were seized, and forced to submit to their desires. On leaving Erzurum they took away many of these unhappy women.[304]

[303] Barby,17.

[304] Barby, 27-28.

Interestingly, this image of "men fulfilling sexual desires with young women" was mostly used as part of the Orientalist discourse and attributed to an assumed "Middle Eastern" reality. However, as part of the contemporary rhetoric in the French media, German *Kultur* was demonstrated as a pseudo "superior civilization." Thus, the collaboration of the German and Ottoman Empires gave the Entente states another opportunity to degrade German civilization to the level of "the East."

3.4 Conclusion: Beyond official documents

While the narrative acquired through the telegraphic correspondence from the *Political Archives of the Federal Foreign Office* served as a background for the images that will be discussed in the next chapter, it is important to keep in mind the weight and authority these archival sources carry with them. The positivist perception of the 19th century gave great importance to empirical evidence in the writing of history. Archival documents, that were treated as authentic sources became *the* empirical evidence for the 19th century national history writing tradition. As this history writing practice was embedded in the nation-state ideology, states produced, controlled, filtered and organized these archives. This strictly determined structure of national history did not provide any space to read documents 'against the grain'. [305]

[305] The Armenian genocide scholarship neglected for decades the use of victim testimonies as they were regarded to be biased, non-objective documents. Only testimonies of people from "neutral" states were regarded as eligible sources for the writing of the history of the genocide.
This emphasis on the mediation of "neutral" testimonies was also dominant throughout the First World War.As demonstrated in the previous chapter, in various publications such as l'Illustration or the Times, only testimonies of neutral witnesses were thought to affirm the reliability of the source. See, See: l'illustration, the Times, James Bryce and Arnold Joseph Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-1916: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon by Viscount Bryce*.

It was only in the 1990s that the use of victim testimonies became a source of interest for a number of new generation historians. Parallel to the new approaches that were enhanced in genocide studies, and the emerging interest to oral history and ethnography, these historians started to use first-party

Diplomatic correspondences in general, but the correspondence between Erzurum and Istanbul as well, cannot give the reader the capacity to understand the traumatic and tragic experience that more than a million people went through. Telegraphs as archival sources give us the opportunity to understand how state apparatuses operated, how state officials disseminated information, how crime is legitimized, and how the operating system of the perpetrators worked. Testimonies, contrary to archival sources, are narratives of experiences that can never be fully grasped, that are fragmented and not based on empirical knowledge. They are first-hand and third-hand narratives of survivors and eye witnesses, giving the opportunity to approach the catastrophe beyond statistical and highly descriptive accounts. Through the incorporation of testimonies into historical documents is it possible to write history, that does not only speak through the sovereign's language but opens up space for pain and suffering.[306]

testimonies in the writing of the history of the genocide. Raymond Kévorkian's magnum opus *The Armenian Genocide* is seminal not only for using diplomatic documents and state archives, but also testimonies of survivors collected by the Aram Andonian and the collection of the Armenian General Benevolent Union. It is the first work that aimed to write the history of the Armenian genocide not only through documents from diplomatic/state archives and "neutral" testimonies but also through integrating the experience of survivors derived from testimonies compiled in the first years of the post-war period. Interestingly, many of these testimonies were put down on paper immediately after the war. Until the Lausanne Treaty, a great effort was undertaken to collect testimonies, records of the number of people who died, their names and their origins, the number of people that survived, their family and their journey, along with lists of the individual murderers. Many of these testimonies were compiled to be used as evidence in the making of various diplomatic decisions, such as the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Sevres. In their article "Témoignages de rescapés et connaissance du genocide de 1915-1916", Raymond Kévorkian and Boris Adjemian emphasize three different corpuses of testimonies that were collected after the end of war until the Lausanne Treaty. Between the years 1918-1922, the First Republic of Armenia collected testimonies from the survivors of Yerevan and Tblisi for the use of evidence in the negotiation of the treaty of Sevres. In Constantinople, testimonies were collected starting from 1918 by the reestablished Armenian Patriarchate, which had been dissolved in 1916, and by Aram Andonian between 1918 and 1919 in Aleppo. However, most of these testimonies were kept in archives after the Lausanne Treaty and were excluded from any historiographic research. See, Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*.; Adjemian & Kévorkian, « Témoignages de rescapés et connaissance du génocide de 1915-1916 ».

[306] Nichanian. The Historiographic Perversion; Benjamin. "Theses on the Philosophy of History.

CHAPTER 4

WITNESSING THE CATASTROPHE

> Some events attain full meaning only in retrospect – or to use Freudian terms, nachträglich or belatedly, and such belated apprehensions can either facilitate or block remembering or forgetting.[307]

On May 22, the vice-consul Max Erwin von Scheubner Richter sent a telegraph to the ambassador of Germany in Istanbul, Hans Freiherr von Wangenheim, accompanied by nine photographs and an annexed letter addressed to the Bishop Smbat Saadetian of Erzurum signed by six priests of the deported villages. These nine photographs, located in the photography collection of the Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office, were dated between 18.05.1915 - 20.05.1915.[308] They were captured in relation to the several telegraphs sent to the embassy in Istanbul regarding the deportation orders of the Pasin plain.

The telegraphic correspondence between Scheubner-Richter and the German Embassy in Istanbul in the previous chapter demonstrated how Scheubner-Richter was extremely concerned with the general situation of the Armenian population in the empire and how he tried to use his own initiative to change the course of events in the region for which he was responsible. These diplomatic correspondences gave an aspect of how some German diplomats – mainly the vice-consul of Erzurum – took individual initiatives for the prevention of atrocities and the amelioration of the deportation conditions despite the fact that Germany was an ally of the Ottoman Empire and had a complicit role in the Armenian atrocities.

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[307] Baer, *Spectral Evidence,* 181.

[308] Nr. 5393-5401, Unlike argued by Hilmar Kaiser, not all photographs were dated as 19.05.1915 but each was dated individually.

Nevertheless, these photographs, which are rare examples demonstrating the early stages of deportation produced by consulate employees as the first deportees of the Erzurum province started their journey to the Tercan plain, were neither integrated into the historiography of the representation of the Armenian atrocities, nor into the historiography of personal initiatives taken by some German individuals. This chapter seeks to understand through which measures these photographs did not conform to the genocidal imagery, by looking at the relations between photography, trauma and iconicity. By analyzing these images, I will not only seek for their belated "careers", but also try understand how the absence of violence can be linked to the broader narrative of the catastrophe.[309]

4.1 Genocidal imagery: The representation of the Armenian genocide

The second chapter demonstrated how photography of the deportation and extermination of the Ottoman Armenian population was dispersed with different motivations; such as state propaganda, anti-propaganda, humanitarian aid, jurisdiction as well as family memory. Both in propaganda and humanitarian aid, photography functioned as ideological apparatus supporting the diverse rhetorics in the atmosphere of war.

Most of these publications were produced by the European and American press for an exclusively Western audience. There were also several attempts to use image-as-evidence for the recognition of the crimes perpetrated by the Ottoman government on international level. In each situation, photographs in use were

[309] Susan Sontag argues in "Regarding the pain of others" that "The photographer's intentions do not determine the meaning of a photograph, which will have its own career, blown by the whims and loyalties of the diverse communities that have use for it.". *belated* in regards of Ulrich Baer, who argues that "some events full meaning only in retrospect".

significantly atrocious and mediated with inductive captions. Photographs circulating among family members, on the other hand, suggested a more protean capacity of performance, memory, and indexicality.[310] Nevertheless, with the Lausanne Treaty, the political struggle for justice and an independent Armenian state was dissolved, leaving the discussions on the Armenian atrocities in the Armenian diaspora within enclosed circles.

As mentioned earlier, this changed in the post-Shoah period. Starting from the 1960s a great number of testimonies, diaries, monographs, biographies, and books were published by the Armenian diaspora all around the world, in which Armenian atrocity photographs were remediated over and over. The selection and repetition of the remediated photographs demonstrate a significant resemblance with the images of the Holocaust. While the Armenian genocide predated the Holocaust nearly three decades, the pictorial resemblance of the circulating images after the 1960s suggests that it could be linked to an image format created by the Holocaust which had a great influence over the representation of other atrocities.[311]

The discussion on how Holocaust has articulated the historical memory of other atrocities over the century has been an escalating topic since the beginning of the twenty-first century[312] Millions of photographs that were taken after the liberation of the camps by amateur and professional photographers from the United Kingdom and

[310] Low, *Photography and the Empty Landscape: Excavating the Ottoman Armenian Image World.*

[311] For a detailed analysis of the Holocaust in the mediation of the genocides of the 20th century, see: Rebecca Jinks, Representing Genocide: The Holocaust as Paradigm?, 2013.

[312] David B. MacDonald, *Identity Politics in the Age of Genocide: The Holocaust and Historical Representation* , Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization,* Scott L. Montgomery, 'What Kind of Memory? Reflections on Images of the Holocaust', *Contention* 5:1 (1995), 71-104, Eng, D. L., Kazandjian, D., & Butler, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Loss: The politics of mourning,* Le témoignage des victimes dans la connaissance des violences de masse, Etudes arméniennes contemporaines, 5, 2015.

the United States circulated in the European and American press for years, becoming part of a collective visual memory. It is nowadays widely acknowledged that the "Holocaust imagery" defined people's perception of atrocity images and therefore had a great influence on the remediation and recirculation of many images predating the Holocaust, as well as on the photographic production and selection processes of many massacres, wars, and genocides that have taken place after the Holocaust.
In her article "Since we forgot: Remembrance and Recognition of the Armenian Genocide," which concentrates on the importance of virtual archives as a potential for animating memory, Leshu Torchin, argues;

> Images of emaciated bodies, mounds of corpses, barbed wire and box cars – images that saturated the public, political and juridical arenas – have crystallised into a set of universalised symbols for the Holocaust, functioning as a kind of genocidal imaginary. These images provide an interpretative frame through which other genocides are produced and understood.[313]

With the variety of publications that started to be published from the 1960s on, many images of the Armenian atrocities were reproduced and remediated. Dzovinar Kévonian indicates that as they were reproduced, the initial captions and sources got lost over time.[314] A great part of images whose sources and captions could not be identified were categorized under the "Wegner collection" for a "convenient way to validate its identity".[315] These widely disseminated images that could neither be located nor dated due to intensive processes of reproduction and remediation were described by Dzovinar Kévonian as the "icons of the event." Similarly, Barbie Zelizer argues in her book *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye,* in which she investigates mediated images of Holocaust and their

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[313] Torchin, Since we Forget in *The image and the witness: trauma, memory and visual culture,* 91.

[314] Kévonian, 132.

[315] As mentioned earlier, the Armin Wegner collection is constituted from multiple sources. While some were photographs that he collected personally, others were handed ovee Kévonian, 128

affect on memory, that "little attention was given to the place where the photographs had been taken, leaving the photographs to function as a generalized spot of Nazi horror."[316] She continues, "(…) horrifying for the visual portrayal they offered about death and suffering, they generally omitted any definitive detail about the victims, about which camp had claimed their lives, or about the circumstances by which they died."[317]

Images of women and children in deportation camps, images of mass graves, piles of corpses and children who starved to death became the typical representations of the Armenian genocide. The photographs that were once utilized for humanitarian campaigns were now deprived of their individuality. According to Kévonian, the demonstration and distribution of photographs of the most vulnerable ones, those who were depersonalized and decontextualized, turned the shock-images into the icons of the absolute victims. The attribution of a precise identity, a location, a date or a particular context would, in this regard, reduce the value of the icon and degrade the destiny of an entire population into the destiny of a single person. This motive of decontextualization and depersonalization is what Cornelia Brink regards as "icons of terror". She argues;

> The only pictures of dead concentration camp victims that are classified as icons are those that provide no hint of any specific time and place and "anonymize" human beings, depriving them of their individuality as much as possible and placing them within aesthetic pictorial traditions.[318]

The paradox of iconic representation lies under the fact that, on the one hand, by not individualizing the image, the aim is not to degrade the destiny of one person to an

[316] Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust memory through the camera's eye*, 94.

[317] Zelizer, 118.

[318] Brink, *Secular Icons. Looking at Photographs from Nazi Concentration Camps*. 138.

entire population, and on the other hand, by decontextualizing and depersonalizing the image, the representation of the whole tragedy is dampens into one image.

In 1944, members of the Sonderkommando of the crematorium V in Auschwitz received a camera that was smuggled by a civilian worker. As it was almost impossible to escape, they took the risk to snatch photographs from the crematorium. As a result, four photographs were taken from the inside of the gas chamber by a Greek Jew Sonderkommando named Alex, whose surname is still unknown. Georges Didi-Huberman argues in *Images in Spite of All* that there are two ways of "being inattentive" towards these images. The first one is a way of subjecting them to hypertrophy. This is the tendency of what Huberman describes as "wanting to see everything in them," the will to see the atrocity in a single image as an icons of horror. The second way Huberman describes consists in reducing, desiccating the image. This is the way in which the image is regarded only as a document of horror.[319]

In both cases of inattentiveness, the representation of violence is demoted to the level of visual evidence. Although it is acknowledged that photographs are limited representations which only capture partially the consequences of the catastrophe, nevertheless, the *photographed event* confirms through its indexicality the truth-value of the tragedy. [320] From the supposition that every photograph assumes a photographer and thereby a photographed one/thing, the photographic index of the *photographed event* also gives the viewer the supposition of bearing witness. However, as they are taken out of their context and deprived of their individuality, these images lose their testimonial nature. For Marc Nichanian,

[319] Didi-Huberman, *Images in spite of all: Four photographs from Auschwitz.*

[320] Zelizer, 87.

photography is born in the modern space of testimony. Therefore, making the archaeology of the photograph means making the archaeology of testimony. However, if the photograph is taken out of its context, if the person, the place and time is unidentifiable, then it is not possible to talk about the making of the archaeology of testimony.[321] As the photograph can no longer function as the testimony of the event, it becomes merely the symbol of the event.

It was not until 1992 when Tessa Hoffman and Getrayer Koutcharian published their article *Images that horrify:* that these nine photographs from the Political Archive of Federal Foreign Office were uncovered and publicized.[322] Even after their publicity, they were cited generically as exemplars from the "German Archives", as their unsettling, fluid and living nature, whose indexicality was far from being atrocious, pushed them outside the boundaries of iconic representation.

4.2 Uncovering the archive

Starting from May 15, Scheubner-Richter not only tried to inform the German authorities about the deportation order but also explained in his "secret" telegraphs the current situation in the region regarding the arrests of Armenians, the attitude of the governor Tahsin Bey, Russia's influence on the Armenian community, as well as the reception of Germany by the Armenian community.[323] On May 20, Scheubner-Richter indicated that the order "to clean" all Armenians from the Pasin plain and send them to the Tercan plain came right after "the unrest in Van" and the unsteady

[321] Nichanian, Le Sujet de l'histoire.

[322] Hofmann & Koutcharian, *Images that Horrify and Indict: Pictorial Documents on the Persecution and Extermination of Armenians from 1877 to 1922*

[323]While these telegraphs were noted as "Geheim" (secret), I was not able to find information on how much information could circulate without the control of the Ottoman government. Nevertheless, the flow of information suggests that on a certain level these consulates were capable of giving detailed information as well as include criticism.

situation in Erzurum. When Scheubner-Richter went to governor Tahsin to acquire more information, the governor stated that he was personally not pleased with the decision but had to obey, since it came from the army. Nevertheless, he assured Scheubner-Richter that he would try to ameliorate the situation and protect the properties of the deported Armenians. Afterwards, the German vice-consul received information from "personal accounts" that the governor had even sent a telegram to Constantinople to request the cancellation of the order but was ordered to proceed anyway.[324]

In a very short report sent to the embassy on May 18, he indicated the miserable conditions of thousands of women and children camping around the city without nutrition. He regarded the measures of deportation as "pointless" that were only exacerbating the situation.[325] According to Scheubner-Richter the majority of people affected from this deportation order were women and children and elders as the eligible male population (from 17 to 48 ages) was already sent to the labor battalions and those that sympathized with Russia had already left. The lack of transportation and the commencing rain season was a major problem as most of the deportees had to start their journey on foot moving and camping for at least six to eight days.[326]

Three photographs (Fig.12, 13, 14), dated May 18, were most probably taken during the first visit of Scheubner-Richter to the deportee camp around the city. While the photographer is unknown, it is possible that it was one of the consulate officers or Scheubner-Richter himself.

[324] AA-PA 20.05.1915 Scheubner-Richter to Wangenheim

[325] AA-PA 18.05.1915 Scheubner-Richter to the Embassy

[326] AA-PA 20.05.1915 Scheubner-Richter to the Embassy



Fig.12 Deportees of the Pasin plain[327]

These three images are snapshots taken from a short distance. The hazy nature of the photograph, Figure 12, creates a carnivalesque atmosphere, while it actually suggests that it was taken on the move, most probably as the photographer walked through the deportees. The distance between the camera and the deportees is defined through the hazy meadow-like ground. The crowd in the background is not identifiable, but the silhouettes of the garments reveal that they are men and women of all ages. The clothing and the head scarf of the three people in the middle suggest that they were women carrying a bundled parcel of their belongings (or their children). While the woman in the middle is directed towards the photographer, the third person is looking over her shoulder to the back as if she is directing her gaze to those who are behind her.

[327] Nr. 5393



Fig. 13 Deportees moving around [328]

Figure 13 is a much closer snapshot, in which women of different ages are recognizable. Unlike in the Figure 12, the distance between the photographer and the deportees is not apparent and the photographer attains no attention from the deportees. The background seems chaotic, while those foggy silhouettes suggest that there was a crowd on the move exceeding far beyond the limits of the frame.

With the bundled parcels on their backs, these people captured by the frame seem to be moving around, while the photographer is approaching toward them. The person in the foreground holding a stick in his hand is most probably an adolescent. There is something outside the frame that catches his attention. His look seems unsecure, yet it catches the viewer immediately. At the background, where the stick of the boy ends, two women are to be seen. The gesture of the woman proposes that she is talking to the woman in front of her. This small detail that only appears at the

[328] Nr. 5394

background ascribes the image something ordinary, even banal that would not fit into a story of a tragedy. Figure 14[329] is another photograph where the distance is more vivid. Similar to Figure 12, both women and men as well as children of different ages, are recognized. In the middle of the image a family is to be noted. A young boy, a woman, two little girls – which could also be one girl – and a man. As the silhouettes on the background look more like a gravure than a photograph, one wonders whether they took intentionally a step further.



Fig.14 Armenian deportees of every age

Two days after this encounter, Scheubner-Richter recalled how "women and children throw themselves in front of his horse and begged for help." He described the "moaning poor people" as "pitiful and embarrassing", especially as he was not able to help them.[330] Looking at the images one by one, it seems as if the photographer

[329] Nr. 5395

[330] AA-PA 20.05.1915

was walking over the hazy ground through the crowd, coming face to face with the deportees. Scheubner-Richter wrote in his report that "the Armenian population considers the representative of the German Reich to be its only protection at present and expects assistance from him."[331]

Figure 15[332] was taken on May 19 most probably during the second visit of Scheubner-Richter or his employees. There is a small distance between the photographer and the deportees. Among the nine images, this is the only photograph in which the confrontation is highly vivid and sharp.



Fig. 15 Women and children on the road

It is one of the rare photographs in which the deportees, who are for the greater part children of different ages, seem to stand still and look directly into the camera. The uneven perspective and the skewed horizon line suggests that the photographer may

[331] AA-PA 20.05.1915

[332] Nr. 5396

have been above the ground, possibly riding on a horse. On the right, an animal packed with the deportees' belongings is to be recognized. Scheuber-Richter mentioned that the deportees took their livestock but had to leave their provision of fodder, which meant that they were going to starve to death.[333]

Figure 16, which is dated May 20, is a panoramic photograph of the deportees from the Pasin plain. Captioned as "Camp of the deported Armenians," it is an early example of a panoramic documentation of the camping deportees.[334]



Fig. 16 The convoy of deported Armenians

The point of junction between the bright horizon and vast ground is drawn through the deportees, animals and carts. With their cattle and belongings, these people were the first deportees of the Erzurum region. As most of them were camping around the city of Erzurum, this image was taken most probably while the consulate officers were heading towards the deportees to distribute bread. As most panoramic camp

[333] AA-PA 20.05.1915

[334] Nr. 5397, Originally captioned as: "Lager der vertriebenen Armenier".

images that remained today are from the Mesopotamian region, this image is an exceptional example of the documentation of the early stages of deportation in the eastern regions. The presence of the animals in the photograph is also very significant. During the First World War, the utilization of animals was excessive. Cattle were used for the transportation of guns and weapons, horses served in the front lines with soldiers. However, few researchers focus on the victimization of the animals in war zones. During the deportation of the Armenian population, the companionship of animals depended very much on the measurements taken by the local government. When it was possible, cattle were taken as livestock and pack animals. However, as many Armenians starved to death or were massacred on the roads, these animals also died on the roads.

After the devastation and embarrassment, Scheubner-Richter arranged the bishop of Erzurum and the notables of the city to collect bread for the deportees.[335] The following four photographs (Figure 17, 18, 19, and 20) are dated as May 20 and were captured most probably by a consulate worker while they were distributing bread. It is possible to trace from various accounts that it was strictly forbidden to leave the city without special permission, however, the vice-consul did not count this rule for himself as valid.[336] Thus, the consulate workers were sent out for the distribution of bread as far as ten kilometers. The photographer took the photographs from a close distance in which both the deportees and the consulate workers were captured. In all of these images, the focus of the camera is directed towards the consulate workers and the consulate cart is surrounded by male deportees waiting for bread. Each photograph was taken from a different angle as if the photographer

[335] AA-PA 20.05.1915

[336] Rasch, *The storm of life: A missionary marriage from Armenia to Appalachia* 139.

encircled the consulate cart and the people around it. The focus and the angle suggest that they were taken with a specific intention most probably to demonstrate the initiative the vice-consul had taken after witnessing their desperate condition.

The documentary quality of Figure 17 is significant. The photographer positioned himself at a point where he could capture the consulate cart that is full of sacks, as well as the consulate workers and the deportees surrounding it. As the caption indicates, the image was taken at a moment when the consulate worker was trying to take out the bread from the sacks. Although the cart was surrounded by deportees who most probably waited for the bread, the presence of the camera overtook the attention. From one far end to the other anyone who recognized the camera directed his gaze to it.



Figure 17 Consulate employees distributing the bread [337]

[337] Nr. 5398, "Konsulatsangestellte des Konsulats beim Vertreilen des Brotes".

In Figure 18, the photograph is taken from a different angle. The camera is focused on the consulate workers. They are in conversation with one of the elder deportees. Despite the poor quality of the photograph and the non-focused objective, the hesitating yet curious look of three young deportees is seized in the frame. Between the catching gazes and the people waiting for bread, the body of a horse can be discerned.



Fig. 18 German officers speaking with the deportees [338]

Only a few meters further and the photographer captures another photograph.
In Figure 19, the camera continues to direct its focus to the employees and the people surrounding them. However, what strikes the viewer in the snapshot is the proximity of the grey horse. Through its undirected gaze and dark hair, it carries a sort of

[338] Nr. 5399 Captioned in German "Angestellte des Konsulates beim Verteilen des Brotes".

gentility with himself. The presence of the horse contributes to its realism not only aesthetically but also emotionally.



Fig 19 The white horse and deportees waiting for bread [339]

The last photograph, Figure 20, is taken from a more distant angle, in the opposite direction of the previous image. The camera continues to capture the consulate workers, as the horse becomes invisible. Once again, the deportees direct their gaze towards the photographer. The photographer is above ground level, most probably on another horse. Among the gazes of smile, curiosity and seriousness, there is only one person in the front who does not look into the camera. Although she must have been aware of the camera, she seems to be taking shelter behind the young boy. From the

[339] Nr:5400, captioned in German as "Wagen des Konsulats beim Verteilen des Brotes".

four photographs of the bread distribution, she is the only female that is seized by the camera.

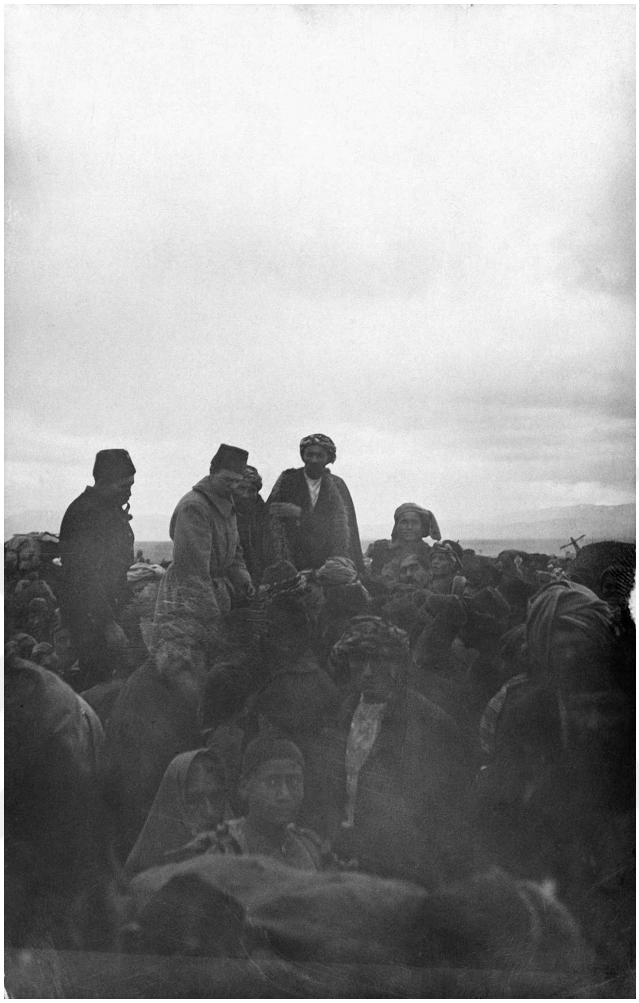


Fig.20 Consulate employees surrounded by deportees [340]

From their unstudied composition and impromptu exposure, all nine photographs fall into the category of snapshots.

> The snapshot belongs to the order of the event because it makes us aware that we are looking at a photograph that has snatched a fragment from reality and has abruptly frozen it while time continues to flow outside the frame. Time exposure, in contrast, is conceived as a picture that represents an autonomous image, which gives the impression that it no longer refers to anything outside the frame and the reality from which it was removed.[341]

[340] Nr. 5401, Captioned in German "Brotverteilung durch Angestellte des Konulats".

[341] Wigoder, *The Acrobatic Gaze and the Pensive Image in Palestinian Morgue Photography,* 276.

Icons of the Armenian genocide are snapshots of good quality; however, they are not treated as such. Through the several indexical features they contain, they are taken out of the order of the event and got related only symbolically to the event.

One of the most famous photographs of the Armenian genocide, the photograph of an Armenian woman carrying her baby (Fig. 21) – captured by Armin Wegner – is an image of comparatively good quality. Despite of being taken at a spontaneous moment, the presence of a mother dedicated to carry her baby situated at the center of the image is received as adequate in content and in aesthetic standards for the representation of the genocide.



Fig. 21 Woman with her child in the desert

On the other hand, these nine photographs continue to be "snapshots" of the order of the event from which they were frozen, as they lack any level of aesthetic standard that could attest them the quality of a time exposure.[342]

[342] For discussion on snapshot and time exposure see De Duve *Time Exposure and Snapshot: The Photograph as Paradox.*

In his short telegraphic report of May 22, to which he also attached the photographs, Scheubner-Richter stated that the distribution of bread made a good impression among the Armenians. While he underlined that no one from the local government interfered, he believed that he achieved unintentionally a successful political result. He most probably referred to the circulating rumors in Erzurum, that the deportation decision was given through the advice of the German government. The intention of Scheubner-Richter to enclose photographs into a telegraph (which both includes the gratefulness of the deported Armenians towards the bread distribution and the desperation of the priests of the deported regions) suggests that these images functioned as a visual documentation of his actions. Nevertheless, in his four months of duty, there is not a single word within the correspondence that mentions these photographs. It might be possible that this was an intentional choice of Scheubner-Richter and Wangenheim, in order not to be caught by the attention of the Ottoman government. Furthermore, it is also very likely that the endeavor to convince the German embassy that these actions do not contradict with the interest of Germany was to keep the relations with the embassy on a calm standard. In fact, only two days before he had sent these photographs, he acclaimed that the initiative of bread distribution would continue. As it was demonstrated in the third Chapter, Scheubner-Richter prolonged to use his own power to change the course of the events.

Nevertheless, as these deportees continued their journey, Scheubner-Richter found out that the deportees of the Pasin plain were supposed to continue to the desert of Der Zor and not remain in Mamakhatun. In the following weeks, he received information from Garabed Hacıoğlu Georgian, a peasant who escaped the massacre and returned to Erzurum, that the majority of the men deported from the

Pasin plain were already massacred in Çividağ and the women were robbed.[343] As he managed to escape at the very first stage of the massacres, the aftermath remains unknown. The statistics of Raymond Kévorkian suggests that before the First World War, the population of the Pasin plain was around seventeen thousand.[344] Scheubner-Richter assumes that those that were killed on the way to Erzincan, in Mamakhatun, Sansar, the Euphrates bridge and Perez reached up to ten to twenty thousand.[345] However, as there is no testimony of the deportees from the Pasin plain, Kévorkian assumes that almost no one must have survived.[346]

4.3 The event of photography

Through another testimony recorded in the French Diplomatic Archives, it is possible to understand that *the event of photography* was not limited to the deportees of the Pasin plain, but that Scheubner-Richter or other German officers attempted several times to capture photographs of the Armenian deportees of the region. On March 17, 1918, in Basra, Monsieur Roux charged in the consulate of France in Mesopotamia sent to Stéphen Plehon, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a document annexed with a testimony of an Armenian woman.[347] Although the young Armenian woman didn't want her name to be published, it is assumed that she belonged to one of the prominent families of Erzurum.[348] It was a testimony she gave to a second lieutenant named Poidebard, after they had a long conversation regarding the conduct of German officers towards Armenians. According to the testimony, the family

[343] 05.08.1915 Scheubner-Richter to Wangenheim

[344] Kévorkian, 277.

[345] 05.08.1915 Scheubner-Richter to Wangenheim

[346] Kévorkian 289.

[347] Beylerian, *Les Grandes puissances, l'empire ottoman et les Arméniens dans les archives françaises (1914-1918),* 529.

[348]It is possible that this young woman was from the Abrahamian family as she mentions the brother

departed on 17 July, with seven carts, a hundred-fifty gendarmes and a Turkish general. She recalled that after a five months long journey, when they arrived in Mosul, out of eight thousand only three hundred survived. However, during her stay in Mosul, where she gave French lessons to the daughters of the governor's nephew, Ali Bey, she got typhoid. "While I was in my recovery, sitting in the balcony, I saw the German consul of Erzincan with two German officers. He was the same person who took our photographs while we were in Erzincan." In her testimony, she mentioned that they arrived at Ilıca on July 22. Fifteen days after they arrived in Erzincan and stayed there for about eight days.[349] While the dates and numbers remain confusing, the memory of a German officer taking their photographs is significant. The destiny of the photographs remains unclear, leaving a number of questions behind. Were they able to develop them? Was it Scheubner-Richter himseld or some other German officers in Erzincan? If it was Scheubner-Richter, did he try to send those photographs to the embassy as well? If so, was it intercepted by the Ottoman postal service? Or did he keep them for personal memory?

Ariella Azoulay, argues that there is a distinction between the photographed event and the event of photography. The photographed event is the outcome of what the spectator sees in the frame captured by the photographer. The event of photography, on the other hand, is not only the end product of the "event" that was captured but the complex relations between the participants (the photographer, the photographed), the camera and the multiple encounters of different spectators.[350] From this small testimony of the young Armenian woman, it can be understood that the event of the photograph is not limited to the photographed event. On the contrary,

[349] Beylerian, 529-532.

[350] Azoulay, *Civil Imagination,* 227-231.

as the Armenian woman was probably never going to see the photograph, her encounter with the photographer and the camera, the very setting and time is the way she relates to the photograph.

The questions that were asked above, presuppose that a photograph has been taken since photography "always constitute[s] a potential event."[351] However, even in the case of the absence of the photograph, or in cases in which the subjects never get to see the image, the event of photography is not negated and the potential that the event "might continue to be played out at different times and circumstances" is carried on.[352] The event of photography attained from a short testimony of a young woman from a well-known family of Erzurum gets connected with these nine photographs from the German archives. As the event quality of Scheubner-Richter's photographs first starts in the moment of encounter with the deportees, the gaze of the deportees coincide with the presence of the camera, the deportees envision a potential event of their photographed self. This potential event engenders "a picture that they will never see".[353] Azoulay argues that this is the case for most encounters with the camera and specifically with those in disaster zones.[354] As the eventuality of Scheubner-Richter's photographs extent from the very first encounter to the potential engagements with its circulation and mediation, it builds up a relation with the potential photographs of the Armenian woman through the prospective of being charged as evidence of the catastrophe.

[351] Azoulay, 22.

[352] Azoulay, 23.

[353] Azoulay, 20.

[354] Azoulay, 19.

4.4 Belated witnessing

In *Afterimage: Photography in the nineteenth century India,* Zahid Chaudhary looks at the photographs of Robert and Harriet Tytler, which were taken at the barren sites of the Sepoy Revolt after the events and asks the question: "Must we be bound to the truth regime that the index-as-evidence constructs in order to be legible?" in response to Christopher Pinney's reflection on the techno-material insufficiency of the images to act as evidence for the event.[355] Chaudhary continues: "Although these photographs do not depict the violence that they are meant to invoke, they continue to beat an indexical relationship to the scenes of violence for several reasons."[356] Similarly, in none of the images of Armenian deportations examined here, sufficient evidence of an implicit violence against the Armenian population was captured. The lack of violence in the photographic index prevented it from being directly associated with the extermination of the Ottoman Armenian population. However, it is through the accompanying narrative that the photographs start to become meaningful. Susan Sontag argues in *On Photography* that understanding is based on how something functions. As function takes place in time, it is also explained in time. Thus, she argues that "only which narrates can make us understand."[357]

As the narration gets us to understand how the photographs fit into the larger narrative of the extermination of Ottoman Armenians, another question occurs: How can the photographic index construct a relation with the catastrophe? While Chaudhary builds the indexical relationship between Tytler's photographs and the violence of the Sepoy Revolt upon the 'absence as presence', I suggest constructing

[355] Chaudhary, 38.

[356] Chaudhary, 40.

[357] Sontag, *On photography*, 18.

this indexical relationship upon Barthes's second conception of *punctum*: time.

In the second part of Camera Lucida, Roland Barthes takes the *punctum* a step further by treating it not as a 'detail' of form but of intensity. This new punctum he describes is time. For Barthes, the punctum is the very fact that the person in the image is going to die. He gives the example of the photograph of Lewis Payne, who tried to assassinate the United States Secretary of State W.H. Seward. Payne was photographed by Alexander Gardner in his cell while he was waiting to be sentenced to death. Barthes describes it as following:

> The photograph is handsome, as is the boy: that is the *studium*. But the *punctum* is: he is going to die. I read at the same time: This will be and this has been; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake.[358]

The *here and now* and the *then and there* of photography creates through the second punctum another duality: *this will be* and *this has been.* This "anterior future" that Barthes describes proposes two conclusions for our photographs. On the one hand, through the *here* and *now* one can say "They are going to die.", on the other hand, through the *then* and *there* one notes that "They are dead already." This duality in the photograph – that they are already dead and they will die – is the "defeat of time" embedded in the photographs. While Barthes argues that this *punctum* is "vividly legible" for historical photographs, I suggest that this *punctum* is even more distinctive for images of atrocities.[359] Thus, what Chaudhary regards as the allegory

[358] Barthes, 96.

[359] By images of atrocities I do not mean icons of atrocities but images that belong to the narrative of atrocities, like these nine photographs.
Pelin Aytemiz proposes two concepts: bi-prensences and uni-presences. Bi-presence is when the person who is photographed is in reality alive and in the photograph to be seen. Uni-presence on the other hand, is when the person seen in the photograph is deceased. This is when the bi-presnece shifts to uni-presence. Aytemiz argues that historical photographs as defined by Barthes have uni-presences as they are directly related with absence. However, the photographs in this chapter, as historical as they are, even at the moment they were captured, they never have a by-presence. Images that are

of the photograph in the images of the Tytlers'– absence as the object of the frame, is in these photographs "death".[360] Death is the object of the frame, no matter whether the subject is already dead. However, what is so striking about these images is that the quality of spontaneity in these snapshots does not give the photographer a conscious agency to" capture" these photographs within an "object of frame". The very instant of a spontaneously captured image evokes death. As they were deported from their homes, marching to the unknown, under a command that is linked to a more complex aim of the annihilation of the Ottoman Armenian population, they were already part of the Catastrophe. At the moment these photographs are snatched, they are dead in time, today but also yesterday. For over three decades – and another eight decades abandoned in the archives – these photographs were neglected as representations of the Armenian genocide due to the weight and authority of iconicity that prioritized images of atrocity. It is through the inquiry of the telegraphic correspondence and the event of photography that these photographs attained meaning and became part of the Catastrophe narrative.

linked to a wider catastrophe are produced within the state of uni-presence. Aytemiz, *Representing Absence and the Absent One: Remembering and longing through Mourning Photography,* 144-145.

[360] Chaudhary, 38-40.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In *The Intolerable Image*, Jacques Rancière re-elaborates the discussion of the four photographs taken by the Sonderkommando that arouse much controversy among the French intelligentsia.[361] In this debate, Gérard Wajcman opposes to the argument that these photographs represent a sort of reality in which they were produced. He claims that "The gas chambers are an event that in itself constitutes a kind of aporia, an unshatterable reality that pierces and problematizes the status of the image and jeopardizes any thinking about images."[362] Rancière regards this as a problem that appears through the definition of the image. According to Rancière, Wajcman's opposition argument postulates the fact that photographs have the capacity to represent the totality of the event. However, these photographs are for those who risked their lives to take them, as well as for Huberman, the commentator, a "testimony to the reality of an extermination whose perpetrators did everything they could to erase any trace of it".[363] While it is taken for granted that testimony is fragmented and unable to represent the totality of the event, which gives it the power it has, the image is paradoxically expected to represent the absolute reality. Any fragmented representation of the horror in regards to the reality of the Shoah is perceived as the deficiency of photography's capacity. Opposing to this presupposition, Rancière argues,

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[361] Rancière, The Emamcipated Spectator. As mentioned earlier, these photographs were exhibited at the exhibition *Mémoire des cam*ps (2001) at Hotel de Sully in Paris. Georges Didi-Huberman wrote an article on these photographs *Imagine, in spite of all*, to which Elisabeth Pagnoux and Gérard Wajcman responded with two essays in *Les Temps modernes*.

[362] Cited from Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 89.

[363] Rancière, 90.

> Representation is not the act of producing a visible form, but the act of offering an equivalent – something that speech does just as much as photography. The image is not the duplicate of a thing. It is a complex set of relations between the visible and the invisible, the visible and speech, the said and the unsaid. It is not a mere reproduction of what is out there in front of the photographer or the filmmaker. It is always an alteration that occurs in a chain of images which alter it in turn.[364]

By looking at a particular case of photographic evidence, this thesis challenged the paradigm intrinsic to the study of genocide photography. Through "complex set of relations", it tried to demonstrate that despite the comparatively few images that were captured, the study of photography, through its evidential and testimonial capacity, proposes a distinctive comprehension of the experience of the Catastrophe "between the visible and the invisible, the visible and speech, the said and the unsaid." [365]

In this regard, in the first chapter, I looked at images of the Armenian genocide that were disseminated and circulated, both during the First World War and afterwards. As I tried to understand the various apparatuses that played role in the mediation as propaganda images, I intended to look at them beyond the context in which they were represented. I uncovered that many narratives of the time got connected through the knowledge of performative strategies in the production of photography. Nevertheless, I demonstrated that performance exceeded beyond the photographic frame, became in itself an event and even a strategy of survival.

The second chapter in which I looked at the correspondence of the German vice-consul of Erzurum between local authorities and the German Embassy of Istanbul aimed to provide the historical context for the following chapter. Despite the complicity of the German government that abstained from a tension with the

[364] Rancière, 93.

[365] Rancière, 93.

Ottoman government regarding the Armenian atrocities, I demonstrated that individual initiatives were taken by diplomats and missionaries for the amelioration of the deportation conditions. As these correspondences gave an aspect of how the political and military mechanisms of extermination operate, the integration of third hand and victim testimonies were essential in the understanding of the genocide experience.

The fourth chapter concentrated on nine photographs taken by the German consulate of Erzurum during the deportations in the region. Following their lack of visibility among the circulating photographs, I argued that because these images do not conform to the aesthetic standards of the genocidal imagery, they are not utilized for the representation of the genocide. Following this, I argued that these photographs build an indexical relationship with the Catastrophe through a conceptual relationship between time and death.

Overall, this thesis contributes to the broader study of photography by challenging photographic representation and indexicality inherent to the paradigm of photography as truth-claim. It demonstrated that photography is never solely an end product, but an event of complex sets of relations, performance and materiality. It is the contribution of this thesis to approach, what Rancière points out as the problem in the definition of photography, through a specific and critical take on genocide scholarship.

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