

# The Dispossession of Ottoman Armenians during the World War I Genocide

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This paper traces the Turkish government's economic policies towards the Armenian population from the Young Turk coup d'état in 1913 to the fall of the regime in 1918. It will chart how this policy moved from boycott to discrimination, into confiscation and outright plunder, resulting in the mass pauperization of the victims. It identifies main currents and developments of this ruthless policy and how it affected Ottoman Armenian communities.

## The boycott movement

Well before the war, the hawks within the Committee of Union and Progress urged peremptorily for the nationalist ideology to be translated into real economic action. The CUP launched a boycott movement against Western businesses as well as Ottoman Christians. In the period 1911-1914, the scope of the boycott movement gradually expanded and intensified. Initially economic boycotts were initiated against Habsburg businesses, soon to be followed by boycotts of Greek merchants, and in early 1914 ultimately also employed against Armenians.

In a painstaking study of the boycott movement in the Ottoman Empire, Doğan Çetinkaya has concluded that the boycotts enjoyed the endorsement among wide circles of supporters, including port workers, immigrants, merchants, urban notables, low-ranking officers, professional classes, and peasants. The boycotts were truly a national project, a mass movement that transcended the antipathies and struggles that may have existed between classes. United in a tightly-organized empire-wide network, local trading networks and traditional guild organizations joined hands in the movement. But their different agendas also generated competition among themselves.<sup>1</sup> The very nature of politics was rapidly changing, for the CUP was assiduously mobilizing the masses through its nationalist organizations. 'Demonstrations, mass meetings in public squares, mass campaigns, spectacles, parades, pageants, activities of civil societies, and elections became common aspects of daily life in the Ottoman Empire'.<sup>2</sup>

The watershed event that affected the entire empire, including the boycott movement, was the Balkan war. It generated hundreds of thousands of destitute refugees that landed first in Istanbul, then across the western parts of the empire. Another process of political brutalization was the Young Turk coup d'état of 23 January 1913, which launched the Young Turks into increasingly dictatorial powers. The restraints under which the extremists had operated thus far were now lifted. Now, freed from past restraints, the mass movements were literally battled out in the streets, through banners, flags, drums, and posters, exciting the imagination of ordinary Turks as to the glories and opportunities of National Economy, and vilifying Ottoman Christians for their 'treason' and 'usury'. Ottoman public space became more and more Turkish-nationalist in the months leading up to the war. Refugees from Crete and the Balkans comprised the 'street muscle': organized gangs that picketed outside shops and committed violence against the proprietors and Turkish customers who wanted to enter the shops anyway.<sup>3</sup>

The boycott campaigns after the fallout of the Balkan wars were the most comprehensive and violent. Western observers declared that during the boycott, Armenian and Greek peasants were physically prevented from delivering their goods to the local markets. In Bursa, for example, Greek villagers were not allowed to sell their vegetables in the city, gathering mulberry leaves for their silk-worms. Turks patronizing Greek shops were assaulted and their goods taken by force, the packages torn and the goods damaged. In Bursa, police officers were interdicting anyone from entering Greek stores; one policeman was seen beating an Armenian boy who had just bought bread at a Greek-owned bakery. ‘Armed gangs in the city... torched shops and beat customers and merchants alike when found in violation of the embargo.’<sup>4</sup> Eye-witness accounts converge on one vital point: that the local CUP branches were the engine propelling the violent boycott campaigns from behind the scenes.

The propaganda for the boycotts emanated from the offices of the CUP. During one of the 1913 boycotts, the party spread a pamphlet entitled ‘A Way of Liberation for Muslims’ (Müslümanlara Mahsus Kurtulmak Yolu). It read:

Oh my God, how are we going to celebrate the day on which Turks and Muslims buy things from each other only and consume the goods produced in Turkey as much as possible. [Gentlemen,] we are not asking for a great sacrifice from you in order to reach that day... In the beginning this might seem difficult. However we shall eventually get used to it. The main task is to learn the addresses of those Muslim stores and Turkish shops that are selling products necessary for your household And we should not be too lazy to visit those shops even for the purchase of a tiny box of matches worth 10 pennies... The most important task is to consume Turkish products as much as possible.<sup>5</sup>

The pamphlet acknowledged that Turkish products were more expensive and of inferior quality, but this was the price to be paid for ‘our honor and pride’. It also scorned ‘the empty-headed ladies who are proud of their nice dresses and the elegant ribbons crowning their hair’, bought at Armenian and Greek shops. The boycott was fairly successful and raised awareness among different classes of Turks. Printed lists of the 500 newly established Turkish companies were circulated free of charge and readers were admonished to buy only at these shops. A certain xenophobic ostracism spread among the Turkish masses. At these moments of social closure and collective action, it was decided who was a loyal citizen and who was not.<sup>6</sup>

The consequences of the 1913 boycotts were disastrous enough. In a detailed study of the anti-Christian persecutions in the period 1913-14, Matthias Bjørnlund quotes Danish diplomats, themselves also businessmen, as arguing that the ‘boycott movement damaged the Empire’s economy even more than had the Balkan Wars’. One of the diplomats, Alfred van der Zee, detailed the level of devastation the persecutions impacted on almost every aspect of the economy in İzmir province. The production of barley, oats, beans, sultanas, figs, tobacco, gall nuts, opium, cotton, olive oil, sugar, rice, etc. all dropped considerably. For example, the campaign reduced the 1914 tobacco harvest by an estimated 40 %.<sup>7</sup>

The boycotts were the first actual policies that the ‘National Economy’ had generated. Turkish nationalists gloated over their triumph. Tekinalp wrote that ‘they have ruined hundreds of small Greek and Armenian tradesmen (hat hunderte griechische und armenische Geschäftsleute zu Grunde gerichtet)’. He concluded:

The systematic and rigorous boycott is now at an end, but the spirit it created in the people still persists. There are Turks who will not set foot in foreign shops unless they are certain that the same articles cannot be purchased under the same

conditions in the shops of men of their own race, or at least of their own religion. This feeling of brotherhood has taken firm root in the hearts of the people all over the empire.<sup>8</sup>

As these lines were being written, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were being dispossessed and robbed on a hitherto unimaginable scale.

### War and genocide

The destruction of the Ottoman Armenians can be seen as a complex result of four important factors: the development of Turkish nationalism, the loss of war and territory in the Balkans of 1912-13, the Young Turk coup d'état of 23 January 1913, and the outbreak of the First World War. These political forces converged in sparking a severe radicalization of anti-Armenian policy by the Young Turk political elite.

On 2 August 1914, one day after the German declaration of war against Russia, a written agreement foreseeing close cooperation and mobilization was signed between Germany and the Ottoman Empire. On 29 October 1914, without a formal declaration of war, Enver Pasha ordered the Ottoman navy to bombard the Russian shore, including the port city Sevastopol. Ottoman battlecruisers destroyed oil tanks and sunk fourteen vessels.<sup>9</sup> The fait accompli triggered declarations of war by the Triple Entente powers. From 11 November 1914 on, the Ottoman Empire was officially at war with Russia, France, and Britain.<sup>10</sup> World War I was not something that happened incidentally to the Ottoman Empire. Powerful cadres in the CUP's nationalist wing consciously headed towards armed confrontation, though not with one particular state. According to a recent study by Mustafa Aksakal, the CUP entrance into the war was 'part of a strategy to achieve long-term security, economic development, and, eventually, national recovery'.<sup>11</sup> In other words, by participating in the war it hoped radically to solve the perceived problems of the Empire. After the outbreak of the war, the Young Turk mouthpiece Tanin published bellicose articles, rejoicing that the war 'had come like a stroke of good fortune upon the Turkish people, who had been sure of their own decline. The day had finally come that the Turks would make an historical reckoning with those... whom they had been previously unable to do so'. The Turks would exact 'revenge, the horrors of which had not yet been recorded in history'.<sup>12</sup>

In the early winter of 1914, the groups began invading Russian and Persian territory to incite the Muslim populations to rise in rebellion and join the Ottoman forces.<sup>13</sup> Two operations were launched: into Persian Azerbaijan (North West Iran) and into the South Caucasus (current-day North East Turkey and Georgia). The former became a 'catastrophic success', the latter a monumental washout. The war on the eastern front gained momentum when Enver, driven by ambition and concerns of security and expansionism, attempted to attack the Russian army near Sarikamish on 29 December. Against all military advice from his strategists, Enver insisted on waging an encirclement campaign through the rugged Kars mountains. However, the Russian general Nikolai Yudenich (1862-1933) anticipated the outflanking manoeuvre, outsmarted Enver and delivered a heavy blow to his forces. Enver's attack failed miserably and the Third Army was effectively wiped out.<sup>14</sup> As a result, the eastern provinces were exposed to invasion and occupation by the Russian army.

The most immediate trigger of the genocide can be traced to the uncertainties of the Great War, but the genocide took on its own logic and momentum. The first phase was the genesis of the genocidal process: the threat of invasion by the British in the west and the Russians in the east. It is no exaggeration to state that the effect of these threats on the Ottoman political elite was nothing short of apocalyptic. It fueled a fear of disappearance that

already existed among them. It also spurred persecutions in the winter of 1914-15 when e.g. all Armenian civil servants were fired from their positions.<sup>15</sup> The second phase developed out of the delusional fear of an organized Armenian insurrection, which reached boiling point when Allied forces launched the Gallipoli campaign in the night of 24 April 1915. In the same night, Armenian elites were arrested across the Ottoman Empire. In Istanbul, 235 to 270 Armenian intellectuals, clergymen, physicians, editors, journalists, lawyers, teachers, politicians were rounded up and deported to the interior, where most were murdered.<sup>16</sup> Other provinces followed suit. This effectively decapitated a community of their political, intellectual, cultural, and religious leaders. A third phase followed when the regime on 23 May 1915 ordered the general deportation of all Ottoman Armenians to the Syrian desert. Recent research has demonstrated again that these orders served to render an existing policy of persecution more categorical and more violent, escalating into mass murder of about a million Armenians.<sup>17</sup> What made the massacres genocidal is that the killings targeted the abstract category of group identity, in that all Armenians, loyal or disloyal, were deported and massacred.

The genocide consisted of an overlapping set of processes: elite homicides, deportations, massacres, forced assimilation, destruction of material culture, and our current theme, expropriation. Although these dimensions of the genocide differed and were carried out by different agencies, they converged in their ultimate objective: destruction. By the end of the war, the approximately 2900 Anatolian Armenian settlements (villages, towns, neighborhoods) were depopulated and the majority of its inhabitants dead. This policy consisted of two pillars: confiscation and colonization. By confiscation I refer to the involvement of an extensive bureaucratic apparatus that perpetuated a legal façade during the dispossession of Armenians. I deploy the concept of colonization to denote the redistribution of their property as a form of internal colonization. These concepts are two sides of one coin and encapsulate the twin processes of seizing property from Armenians, and reassigning it to Turks.

The qualitative leap in the elimination of the Armenians from the Ottoman economy reached an important acceleration with the proclamation of war and the abolishment of the capitulations. The war disrupted international trade and production. The war requisitions, in particular, hit the peasantry hard. Disgruntled landowners whose harvests were virtually confiscated hid their crops, bribed officials, and resisted in ways locally reminiscent of the dekulakization campaign in the Soviet Union.<sup>18</sup> Şevket Pamuk has argued that the shortages caused by the war provided an opportunity to the Young Turks' economic nationalism. They eliminated the low rate ad valorem tariff structure in favor of higher specific tariffs on selected goods to support domestic industry; declared a moratorium on payments on the external debt, held by French, Germans, and Britons; and abrogated the capitulations and subjected all companies to 'Ottoman law'.<sup>19</sup> The abrogation of the capitulations was a unilateral breach of international law and a catalyst that channelized high levels of power into the Young Turks' hands. 'Turkification' could now be systematized into a comprehensive empire-wide policy of harassment, organized boycotts, violent attacks, exclusions from professional associations and guilds, and mass dismissals of Armenian employees from the public service and plunder of their businesses in the private sector.

### Confiscation: policy and process

The confiscation process began right after the deportation of the Armenian owners. As a rule of thumb, no prior arrangements were made regarding the properties. The CUP regime launched both the deportation and the dispossession of Armenians well before the

promulgation of any laws or official decrees. The categorical decree of 23 May 1915 and the deportation law of 27 May 1915 were issued after the deportations had already begun. Decrees and laws merely served to unite the hitherto diverse practices and render the overall policy more consistent. So too was the CUP's approach to confiscation. Telegrams to various provinces ordering the liquidation of immovable property were followed by the streamlined programme of 10 June 1915 that established the key agency overseeing the liquidation process – the Abandoned Properties Commission (Emvâl-ı Metruke Komisyonu). These were not yet christened 'Liquidation Commissions' but nevertheless mostly fulfilled that function.

Officially, there were 33 commissions across the country, and in towns without any, the local CUP chapter often took charge of the tasks. These consisted of inventorizing, liquidating, appropriating, and allocating Armenian property. The most detailed and reliable information we have about the commissions is from Germans stationed in the Ottoman Empire. For example, Deutsche Bank staff members recognized that the Ottoman Bank collaborated in the endeavour.<sup>20</sup> From its correspondence with the provinces, the German ambassador concluded that the confiscation process went through two phases: the direct liquidation of all unplundered Armenian property by the Abandoned Properties Commission, and the transfer of the revenues to the Ottoman Bank that held responsibility for the money.<sup>21</sup> According to André Mandelstam, in 1916 a sum of 5,000,000 Turkish Lira (the equivalent of 30,000 kilograms of gold) was deposited by the Ottoman government at the Reichsbank in Berlin. This astronomic amount of money was most probably the aggregate of all Armenian bank accounts, as well as the total sum gained from the liquidations in the provinces.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, German diplomats argued that the commissions worked in tandem with the Grand Vezirate, the Finance Ministry, and the Justice Ministry.<sup>23</sup> The entire operation was supervised by the Interior Ministry, which was tasked with an enormous amount of coordination and recordkeeping. These records have survived and I will draw on them extensively to outline the process of dispossession.

At the outset, the problem of property was a concomitant effect of the deportations and there was probably no blueprint for it written by Talaat and his consorts. Throughout 1915 and 1916, the Interior Ministry issued hundreds of directives, orders, decrees, and injunctions to provincial, district, and city authorities. When deportation came, it recorded the names, professions, and properties of Armenians, before expropriating them and liquidating their immovables. Several empire-wide decrees sketched the contours of the confiscation policy. Liquidation entailed auctioning and selling the property to the lowest, not highest bidder. To this end, on 29 August 1915 the Interior Ministry wired a circular telegram summoning authorities to auction Armenian abandoned property for the benefit of the local Turkish populations.<sup>24</sup> As this order sufficed for the ongoing deportations, preparations were made for future ones. On 1 November 1915, the Ministry ordered the drawing up of lists of 'Armenian merchants from provinces who have not yet been transported to other regions', including details on their trading firms, real estate, factories, the estimated worth of all their belongings, information on their relatives living abroad, and whether they were working with foreign business partners.<sup>25</sup> To preclude jurisdictional disputes from arising, the Ministry admonished that the only agency authorized to organize the expropriation was the Abandoned Properties Commission.<sup>26</sup>

Talaat and the Interior Ministry he presided over were soon facing two acute problems: ambiguity regarding the forms and provenance of property, and delimiting the scope of the expropriations. An example of the former trend was a question asked by the provincial authorities of Aleppo, namely whether only Apostolic Armenians were to be expropriated or also Protestant and Catholic ones. By then, the definition of the victim group had already transformed from a religious definition based on the millet system, to a national definition. Thus, the Ministry arbitrated that the targets were not only Apostolic Armenians

but all ‘Armenians’.<sup>27</sup> (The German consul of Trabzon remarked that under this law, technically, ‘an Armenian converted to Islam would then be deported as a Mohammedan Armenian’.<sup>28</sup>) Other provinces wondered what to do with the property of undeported Armenians, often military families. The Ministry ordered that for now, they would be allowed to keep their property.<sup>29</sup> In another case, three governors asked for advice how to handle the sowed fields of Armenian farmers. The Ministry admitted that the abstract decrees did not always correspond to the existing conditions on the ground and ordered: ‘These need to be reaped and threshed under the supervision of the Abandoned Properties Commissions and provided for by the funds for the expenses of the settlers. Report within two days how many soldiers or labourers from the population, and which kinds of machines and tools and utensils are needed to harvest the crops.’<sup>30</sup>

These prescriptive provisions were supplemented by prohibitive rules. Those Armenians who anticipated that the deportations were a temporary measure counted on renting out their houses, stables, barns, or shops to neighbors and acquaintances. But the Ministry prohibited this practice.<sup>31</sup> Those Armenians who attempted to sell their property to foreigners and other Christians (such as Greeks or Christian Arabs) were also counteracted. It issued a circular telegram prohibiting ‘decidedly’ (*suret-i katiyyede*) the sale of any land or other property to foreigners.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the government prohibited Armenians from a whole host of strategies to avoid seizure of their property. These included transferring property to non-Ottoman Armenians, sending it abroad to family members, giving valuables to American missionaries and consuls, mailing it directly to their new residences at their final destinations. It is these kind of prohibitions that shed light on the rationale behind the expropriations. They strongly suggest that there was no intention of either compensating Armenians fairly for their dispossession, or offering them any prospect of a future return to their homes. Hilmar Kaiser has rightly concluded that these restrictions were ‘a plain admission of official criminal intent’.<sup>33</sup>

A more precise explanation perhaps lays in a revealing telegram sent by the government to Balıkesir district. It read that the expropriation needed to be carried out to ‘ensure that the transported population will no longer have any connection to possessions and ownership’ (*nakledilen ahalinin alâka-ı mülkiyet ve tasarrufu kalmamasını temîn*).<sup>34</sup> In other words: the relationship between Armenians and their property needed to be definitively severed to bring about a lasting ‘de-Armenization’ of the land. Three years later, the German consul at Trabzon Heinrich Bergfeld correctly noted that the most important decision had been depriving the landowners of the right to dispose of their immovable property. At the end of the war he reflected on the fate of the Armenian deportees: ‘If one believes they cannot be allowed to definitively return to their old homes, one should at least give them the general permission to make use of their real estate through sale or rent, and temporarily allow them to go to their homelands for this purpose.’<sup>35</sup> This would turn out to be a naive proposition.

### Consequences for Armenians

For Ottoman Armenians, the outcome of these policies was fundamentally disastrous. The extraordinary taxation and requisitions carried out under the ‘War Taxes’ (*Tekalif-i Harbiye*) and ‘Procurement of Transport Vehicles’ (*Tedarik-i Vesait-i Nakliye*) decrees had already stripped all Ottoman citizens of many of their belongings. The measures generated scarcity and in some cases poverty among the population.<sup>36</sup> With the deportation orders, Armenians were now singled out and robbed of their right to own any property at the snap of a finger. In some places the notices were short, in other places Armenians were given more time to

prepare. In Kayseri, for example, promulgations on property were hanged in public places on 15 June 1915. The notice read:

Leave all your belongings – your furniture, your beddings, your artifacts. Close your shops and businesses with everything inside. Your doors will be sealed with special stamps. On your return, you will get everything you left behind. Do not sell property or any expensive item. Buyers and sellers alike will be liable for legal action. Put your money in a bank in the name of a relative who is out of the country. Make a list of everything you own, including livestock, and give it to the specified official so that all your things can be returned to you later. You have ten days to comply with this ultimatum.<sup>37</sup>

In Sivas, announcements were made at churches that Armenians should take as little goods with them as possible and make arrangements for simple modes of transportation, such as mules or small carts.<sup>38</sup> At this moment of announcing the deportations, personal jealousies would locally play up in an atmosphere of denunciations. John Minassian, a survivor from Sivas, noted in his memoirs: ‘If a Turk envied your success in business or did not like you, he reported a concealed weapon in your basement’.<sup>39</sup>

The notice given to Armenians differed from province to province. Elise Hagopian was from the town of Bandırma on the Marmara Sea coast and wrote her memoirs:

We were given a few days to take with us only what we could carry, leaving everything else behind. With the soldiers there came also a drove of scavenger gypsies, those who used to come to our homes for alms, to ‘buy’ our carpets, furniture, bedding, silverware and other items of value. And with them also came the riff-raff from the Turkish quarter. They had come not to ‘buy’, but in fact to plunder anything they could after we had left. It was all so pathetic, so humiliating to leave our beautiful, well-cared-for, precious homes and well-tended orchards to worthless scavengers, beggars, petty thieves and criminal elements...<sup>40</sup>

Erzincan is a city situated on the banks of the upper Euphrates. In 1915 it was home to 26,000 Armenians, mostly artisans, officials, merchants, and farmers. The fertile mud brought by the river makes good soil for growing the region’s famous apricots and grapes. In June 1915, the Armenians of Erzincan were deported and most were murdered in the Kemah gorge, a narrow and steep ravine downstream where the calm Euphrates of the plain gives way to a roaring river. A Red Cross doctor in Erzincan witnessed the plunder of the locals: ‘The Armenian women everywhere were sitting in front of the houses and offered all their household effects for sale. All went away for a song. Farmers and Kurds charged into the crowded Armenian quarter and dragged off household items by the donkeyloads, among which were highly-loaded oxcarts. Obviously, the buyers came from the all across the city. On 10 June the picture changed. The city was empty.’<sup>41</sup>

In Konya, the local authorities forbade the banks to disburse to their Armenian account holders the money they had deposited in the banks. Later the deposits were confiscated by the government under the familiar excuse that the accounts also fell under the rubric ‘abandoned property’.<sup>42</sup> The main object of plunder was a house, both in itself and for its furniture. In Merzifon, the houses of Armenian deportees were occupied by Ottoman government officials. The furniture was often stolen to furnish private homes as well as government buildings. Inasmuch as the Abandoned Properties Commission could function properly, it stored unlooted furniture in the Armenian church. ‘The more common things are thrown into an empty square and auctioned or sold for a song.’<sup>43</sup> So too was the process in Trabzon, where

approximately 1,000 Armenian households were being emptied of furniture by the police one by one. The operation was so large that procedures or systematic methods were often not adhered to. The American consul at Trabzon, Oscar Heizer, reported: 'The furniture, bedding and everything of value is being stored in large buildings about the city. There is no attempt at classification and the idea of keeping the property in "bales under the protection of the government to be returned to the owners on their return" is simply ridiculous. The goods are piled in without any attempt at labeling or systematic storage.'<sup>44</sup> The Ottoman author Ahmed Refik (Altınay) Ahmed Refik (Altınay) traveled through Anatolia during the genocide and witnessed the process in Eskişehir: 'Their valuable rugs and property was all in their houses. But the government was incapable of protecting even those. The abandoned houses were allegedly protected by the police. But at night the rugs and cattle, valuable possessions were all stolen.'<sup>45</sup>

Like private property, Armenian community property was confiscated too. The Interior Ministry ordered educational commodities to be assigned to Turks:

It is necessary to appropriate the schools of the towns and villages that have been emptied of Armenians to Muslim immigrants to be settled there. However, the present value of the buildings, the amount and value of its educational materials needs to be registered and sent to the department of general recordkeeping.<sup>46</sup>

This national order was a warrant for the seizure of all Ottoman-Armenian schools and their conversion into Ottoman-Turkish schools. School benches, blackboards, book cabinets, and even paper and pens were allocated to Turks. The Armenian priest Abraham Hartunian was living in Zeitun when this was ordered. Step by step he witnessed the expropriation process until he was evicted from his own house at the end of 1915. In his memoirs, Hartunian notes that the school in Zeitun (the same one that Ahmed Şerif had visited six years earlier) was confiscated by the government: 'The Armenians no longer had any right to education, and the campus was now filled with hundreds of Turkish children.'<sup>47</sup> Another example is the fate of Armenian libraries, an interesting and understudied theme. There is strong evidence that the CUP confiscated a large number of Armenian-language works. In October 1916 Talaat was informed that the library of the Armenian school in Sivas kept 'important volumes on the condition of the Ottoman Empire' in Armenian, French, German, English, Russian, and Kurdish and ordered 'the immediate seizure of these books and their dispatch to Istanbul by post.'<sup>48</sup> Five months later, when the books still weren't sent, he repeated his order, requesting the books to be sent 'urgently'.<sup>49</sup> Whatever happened to these books is unknown.

We need to bear in mind that the deportation itself also was an expropriation process. Ambivalent rumors had spread that Armenians had buried their gold in their houses or gardens, or that Armenians had taken their movable wealth with them and that the deportation convoys were walking goldmines. Empty houses of Armenian deportees were often searched, ransacked, and their gardens plowed through by Turkish neighbors. These forays yielded anything from kitchenware to bedding.<sup>50</sup> Those on the road were robbed to the last cent. Vahram Dadrian's wealthy family from the North-Anatolian town of Çorum had set out relatively comfortably, with cash, jewelry, foodstuffs, and an ox-cart. By the time they had reached Syria, most of their belongings had either been stolen or used as necessary bribes.<sup>51</sup> The young boy Vahram from the small town of Kiğı was deported and described what happened when his convoy had only traveled a small distance: 'Before I could catch my breath, a hefty Kurd appeared before me. He ordered me to take off my clothes and shoes and hand them over to him. I had no choice but to comply. I sat there dazed and shaken, but grateful that my life had been spared.'<sup>52</sup> Robbery was carried out before or after murder, and in many cases corpses were burnt to retrieve any swallowed gold pieces or diamonds.<sup>53</sup> The



plunder was so thorough that even the victims' underwear was often taken. But often the abyss was even deeper: having no financial means left, many survivors ended up indebted to both hostile and friendly local Muslims, or to their escorting gendarmes. When Çerkes Ahmed, a special operative who had murdered untold numbers of Armenians, was arrested, according to a state official, 'women's rings, bracelets, earrings, and jewelry were found when his bags were opened... this vagabond (*serseri*) had not sacrificed himself for any ideal, but it was clear they had committed murders to get rich.'<sup>54</sup> Fourth Army Chief of Staff Ali Fuat Erden too, remembered that 'among the personal belongings of the paramilitaries bloodstained gold coins were found'.<sup>55</sup>

Scholars of the relationship between scarcity and violence have suggested that famine is largely a consequence of politics, not exclusively of nature.<sup>56</sup> In a society suffering from critically underdeveloped transportation and communication networks, wartime circumstances can drive food prices beyond the reach of the most vulnerable segments of the population (e.g. the urban poor and landless peasants). These conditions of scarcity were structural factors exacerbating acquisitive competition in the country. An example is the famine in Syria and Lebanon. A combination of state terror, farmer resistance, and Allied blockade led to the great famine that caused half a million deaths in 1915 and 1916.<sup>57</sup> In Anatolia too, the proverbial, largely mythical but partially real image of the poor but hospitable peasantry transformed into the dog-eat-dog world that Ottoman society became in World War I.

These conditions weighed disproportionately heavily on the uprooted Armenian population. The process of pauperization was so immediate and thorough that hunger became a defining characteristic of the genocide. Ottoman Armenians had been collectively placed in a geographic and social compartment where access to food was limited by circumstance and restricted by government. The regime had pushed the Armenians into a socio-economic abyss, the bottom of which was reached in the absolute nothing of the Syrian desert. The most striking photographs of the genocide are those of impoverished deportees, nothing but skin and bones, begging for morsels. The regime's treatment of Armenians suggests the development of an ethnic distribution of food, a food pyramid with at the top urban and rural Turks receiving the 'best' treatment, most Ottoman citizens in the mid-section surviving, and Armenians starving at the very bottom. But in order to substantiate this claim, more research is needed into the phenomenon of famine.<sup>58</sup>

How much property was seized in total? It is unclear whether precise quantification is even possible at all. After all, the notebooks of the 33 Abandoned Properties Commissions are 'lost' and the state of the Ottoman Bank archives is unknown to us. Undoubtedly the spoliation was enormous. For example, Talaat Pasha's own notebooks contained the following table of 'The number of empty buildings abandoned by Armenians' (*Ermenilerden metruk boş haneler mikdarı*):

Table 4.1: Buildings confiscated from Armenians

<b>Name of province and district</b>	<b>Number</b>
Edirne	3133
Adana	699
Ankara	2540
Hüdavendigâr (Bursa)	14,856
Diyarbakir	1055
Sivas	3000
Mamuret-ul Aziz	3500
Konya	270
Urfa	250
İzmit	3589

Eskişehir	(missing)
Canik	614
Karesi	2870
Kayseri	3000
Karahisar-ı Sahib	341
Niğde	341
Maraş	1000
Menteşe	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,458</b>

Source: Bardakçı, 2008, p.91.

These buildings included private houses and community facilities. One can speculate about the numbers somewhat. For example, it is likely that the number in Urfa is the lowest because there, the Armenian quarter was bombed and razed after the resistance movement by the local Armenians. Why there is no figure for Eskişehir might be because of the rampant corruption in that city, or due to misreporting by the local Abandoned Properties Commission. Finally, some numbers are very precise, while other figures are rounded. All in all, a thoroughly quantitative study of the expropriations is needed but depends on the availability of more data.

The emotive impact of the deportations and expropriations can hardly be expressed in terms of economic value. Elise Hagopian's memoirs capture the sentiments of the dispossessed in a gripping way:

Most turned back for a last look at homes in which they had spent a lifetime rearing families, begetting children and grandchildren, cultivating gardens and farms... All was now being left behind: the cattle, fowl, precious rugs and silverware, mulberry trees, stores of food and drink... The uprooting was complete, the severing final. The destruction of life as we had known it – home, church, school, wealth, neighbors, vineyards laden with fruit, fields ripening for the fall harvest – was total.<sup>59</sup>

Besides replaceable property, the expropriations also robbed hundreds of thousands of Armenian individuals of highly personal items that had emotional value to them. People lost their ancestors' heirlooms, writers and artists lost their life work, children lost their favorite toys, women lost their precious wedding rings. In other words, the expropriations not only had quantifiable objective consequences, but also inestimable subjective effects.

From then on, Armenians would refer to the lost world of their old neighborhoods, towns, and villages as 'the old country'. Whether in Syria and Lebanon, in the West, or in the Armenian Republic, new businesses and quarters were named after the abandoned past with the prefix 'Nor' (New): Nor Tigranakert, Nor Adana, Nor Hadjin, Nor Marash, Nor Sis, Nor Tomarza. The old had passed.

### International responses

International responses to the expropriation moved from initial shock to subsequent protest to final resignation. A large number of Ottoman Armenians were tied to international firms, companies, governments, and non-governmental organizations. The severing of these ties, at once precondition for and consequence of the genocide, triggered the international responses.

As the Ottoman Empire's prime ally, Germany had a direct view of the day-by-day expropriation process. The economic crisis generated by the genocide was first noticed by

them. When the Ottoman Empire began suffering a serious shortage of manufactured goods, German diplomats warned for the impending economic catastrophe, for many of these goods were supplied by western companies to Ottoman-Armenian retailers. The German consul wrote that he had been receiving many complaints of suppliers and manufacturers who had not received payment for the delivery of their goods as a result of the deportation of their Armenian clients.<sup>60</sup> By the end of the year, the Germans' biggest problem was the rights of creditors, who were facing the prospects of losing all money they had lent to Armenians. The Deutsche Bank therefore offered the Ottoman government a set of adaptations and measures to compensate the creditors. The memorandum it sent to the German embassy read that 'these proposals interfere with the purpose of the law in no way' but instead attempt to 'eliminate the threat of formal deprivation of the rights of creditors.' The bank also admitted that the recommendations were 'only in the interest of the self-preservation of the creditors of Armenians' (lediglich im Interesse der Selbsterhaltung als Gläubiger von Armeniern). The office of the Reich's Chancellor concurred and in a circular strongly urged for the 'safeguarding of the threatened interests of the German business world' (Wahrung der bedrohten Interessen der deutschen Handelswelt).<sup>61</sup> In other words: whatever was happening to the Armenians was unfortunate but not a priority for the German state.

But the CUP simply rejected any compensation to anyone. In January 1916, Ambassador Wolff-Metternich wrote a bitter report to Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, recognizing the powerlessness of the German government: 'As the main reason for the rejection of the obligation to compensate, the Porte avails itself of the argument that the exercise of a right can not justify compensation.' Also, since the Russians had supposedly provoked Armenians into 'rebellion', the CUP fingered them as the main responsables for the losses. Wolff-Metternich rejected this argument and pointed out that the expropriation decree was a state law and therefore creditors were entitled to full compensation. He then listed a long series of atrocities committed by local authorities, even naming names, to prove the opposite.<sup>62</sup> In a later dispatch, the ambassador provided an estimate of Armenian debtors' outstanding balances:

Table 4.1: Armenian debts to German institutions in 1916

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Debt (in German Mark)</b>
Deutsche Bank	1,500,000
Orientbank	2,000,000
Deutsch-Levantinischen Baumwollgesellschaft	500,000
Anatolische Handelsgesellschaft	20,000
Individual companies	5,000,000

Source: PAAA, R14091.

These formidable sums suggest that the genocide and the expropriations severely damaged German interests. But the CUP not only rejected that compensation was due, but even the German government's right to appeal for it. Its response to Wolff-Metternich's protest was terse and dismissive: 'First of all, it is noteworthy that the measures taken against the Armenian population of the empire lie within the field of administrative acts inside the country, they can not therefore be the object of a diplomatic step.' Ultimately, Wolff-Metternich concluded that the only venue to settle the matter was possibly when the issue of German loans to the Ottoman Empire was discussed. He recommended a lump sum compensation.<sup>63</sup>

In the autumn of 1915, German humanitarians responded to the genocide by writing a joint petition to put pressure on the German government. The petition was signed by 49 professors, missionaries, reverends, priests, directors, superintendents, and made its way up to

the Chancellor. It argued that 'commerce and craftsmanship in the interior, that had almost exclusively been in the hands of Armenians, has been destroyed'. The petition urged the government to prevent the forthcoming deportation of Armenians in regions that had not yet been fully evacuated.<sup>64</sup> The petitioners did not appeal to purely economic arguments nor did they act exclusively on humanitarian principles. Rather, they noted that the genocide was negatively affecting Germany's reputation abroad, i.e. not only in the Allied press, but also in neutral countries. Intervention was necessary to prevent a blemish on Germany's political record.

Besides foreign institutional ties to Armenians, there were individual personal ties to them. Bagdadbahn-engineer Heinrich Janson was stationed in Konya during the war. In August 1915 he requested from the German embassy assistance as the government's measures had dispossessed his Armenian wife's family. Janson had married Alice Garabedian, daughter of the rich merchant Hagop Garabedian of Eskişehir, as an 'emergency wedding' (Nottrauung) to preclude the family's deportation. But the measure had failed to avert catastrophe and the family was deported after all. The embassy responded it was powerless and advised Janson to apply to the local Abandoned Properties Commission to register the family's property.<sup>65</sup> Self-interest, indifference and naiveté paved the way for victims such as the Garabedian family to walk straight into the trap.

American interests in the Ottoman Empire were related to diplomacy, business, charity, mission, and education. Many of these institutions, such as the missionaries in Kharpert/Harput and Diyarbekir were also dispossessed. For the Americans, the direct impact of the expropriations was that consulates lost qualified staff, firms lost their investors and commissioners, banks lost their debtors, and colleges lost their professors. Concretely, these included Robert College (now Bosphorus University), the American Girls' School, and Bible House, all located in Istanbul. In the interior of the empire, there were American missionary institutions, as well as companies such as Standard Oil and Singer Sewing Machine Company. Thus, the damage to American interests too, was considerable.

An interesting example is the deportation of the Armenian representatives of the Singer Sewing Machine Company. Many Ottoman Armenians worked in the textile industry, from the extraction of cotton, wool, and silk to their processing into textiles. It comes as no surprise that most representatives of the company were Armenians. Upon the commencement of the deportations, American diplomats requested from the Ottoman government their exemption from deportation, to no avail. The American consul in Mersin, Edward Nathan, for example, appealed in vain for the representative of Singer to be spared. In September 1915 he reported to the American embassy that the authorities continued to disregard his requests for exceptions in favor of teachers and merchants of American institutions and firms. Therefore he ultimately 'informed the heads of these institutions that it is useless to apply for some. The same applies to employees of American business corporations like the Singer Company.'<sup>66</sup> The CUP played into this inconvenience of Armenians with international ties and sent out orders to Abandoned Properties Commissions to obviate the problem. For example, the Interior Ministry wired the Kayseri commission on 16 September 1915:

Owing to the transfer of the Armenians of Anatolia to other regions, Armenians who worked in Singer Sewing Machine stores, after locking their shops, have surrendered the keys to the police department. Since the stores having been necessarily deserted by the Armenians, their protection has been demanded by the American Embassy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, therefore, directs that you take necessary steps, in the manner of directives issued on similar occasions, protect them in a manner not to leave any ground for the aforementioned company to demand restitution.<sup>67</sup>

This order demonstrates that the expropriations carried a wide fallout, or put metaphorically, the tumor had to be excised quite generously. If the genocide damaged the Singer Sewing Machines Company too, it was regrettable but taken for granted.<sup>68</sup>

Austria-Hungary also had many economic interests in the Ottoman Empire. Ambassador Johann von Pallavicini (1848-1941) named the deportations a 'total eradication' (gänzlichen Ausrottung) and a 'policy of extermination' (Politik der Exterminierung).<sup>69</sup> The Habsburgs had not forgotten the pre-war boycotts of their businesses and were keenly aware of their business interests. Pallavicini wrote on 30 August 1915 that the harsh measures had damaged Austro-Hungarian trade greatly, adding: 'The largest managing directors, like Sivrişsarian, İnplikdjian, Avedikian and cover their needs for the most part in Austria-Hungary, and with their storage they currently vouch for many thousands of pounds of our industry.'<sup>70</sup> Non-governmental organizations and individuals suffered from the genocide the most. Austro-Hungarian creditors saw the need to lobby the Habsburg Chamber of Commerce, which in turn pressured their government to raise the issue with the Ottoman government. The embassy had studied the law and its enactment thoroughly and concluded that it was causing extraordinary damage to Habsburg economic interests. Armenians indebted to Austro-Hungarian creditors had been unable to pay off their loans, there were no calculations and procedures in place to reimburse Austro-Hungarians who had incurred losses, nor any stipulations regarding persons with property in different locations. The Habsburg memorandum was a comprehensive legal critique of the confiscation law as well as a veiled protest against the CUP's policies.<sup>71</sup>

In principle, it was in the interests of the Great Powers to perpetuate their business ties to Armenians. However, the genocide was a force not to be underestimated. Habsburg and German officials realized this first, and ultimately decided that once it was a reality, then at least their own interests should not be damaged. One should bear in mind the importance of the development of the war and the Triple Entente alliance. As one bloody battle after the other failed miserably on the Western front, and Austria-Hungary became more and more dependent on its Germany ally, upsetting the Ottoman Empire too much could have risked it to sue for a separate peace. After the war, the United States, France, and Britain too forgot about their Armenian business partners and rushed to the resurrected Young Turk regime for economic rights and benefits. The position of these states was generally one of self-interest: they merely sought compensation for the financial losses caused by the Young Turk government's criminal policies. Their foreign ministries attempted to hold the Ottoman government liable for the financial damages caused to their citizens' companies. That this self-interest was incidentally beneficial to ordinary Armenians was a historical coincidence, not an intended objective.

### Colonization: private versus state ownership

The confiscation of Armenian property was followed and supplemented by the colonization by Ottoman Muslims of the empty spaces they left behind. As Armenians trudged along the deportation routes southwards, their property was being redistributed by the Ministry of Interior. Analytically we can distinguish two dimensions to this process: property that ended up in private hands, and property that stayed in possession of the state.

The CUP's new year's resolution for 1916 was 'Turkification'. It expanded its existing campaign to practically all sectors in Ottoman society. Starting with geography, the CUP began Turkifying place names. On 5 January 1916 Enver Paşa ordered the Turkification of all

Armenian, Greek, and Bulgarian place names, including cities, towns, provinces, districts, villages, mountains, and rivers.<sup>72</sup> This was an attempt to wipe out the geographical imprints of non-Turkish cultures. Although the decree was suspended for reasons of military practicability, the practice was picked up after the war and continued well into the 1980s and changed tens of thousands of Armenian place names.<sup>73</sup> The 2900 Armenian settlements were now not only emptied of their population, but also stripped of their names. It was as if Armenians had never lived there. A day after Enver's decree, on 6 January 1916, Talaat ordered an empire-wide decree about the businesses confiscated in the genocide. The order read:

The movable property left by the Armenians should be conserved for long-term preservation, and for the sake of an increase of Muslim businesses in our country, companies need to be established strictly made up of Muslims. Movable property should be given to them under suitable conditions that will guarantee the business' steady consolidation. The founder, the management, and the representatives should be chosen from honourable leaders and the elite, and to allow tradesmen and agriculturists to participate in its dividends, the vouchers need to be half a lira or one lira and registered to their names to preclude that the capital falls in foreign hands. The growth of entrepreneurship in the minds of Muslim people needs to be monitored, and this endeavour and the results of its implementation needs to be reported to the Ministry step by step.<sup>74</sup>

This order constitutes perhaps the most unequivocal document attesting to the intentions and policies of the Committee of Union and Progress. It encapsulates the ideology of 'Turkification' and 'National Economy' in a single, explicit, incontrovertible formulation.

The order was followed up by several other prescriptive ones ordering the redistribution of Armenian lands to Muslim merchants. The CUP sanctioned 'the complete transfer of business and industrial enterprises' to the upcoming Turkish middle class in each and every locality. Special care was to be taken that the workbenches, implements and furniture in the many stores and workshops were not dispersed but stayed in their places.<sup>75</sup> Other decrees were concerned with norms and rules for correct usage. For example, auctioning needed to be properly carried out for the long-term development of the businesses, according to the 6 January decree. During an auction in Kayseri, a Turk bought a formerly Armenian workshop for 200 Turkish Lira, only to sell it for 2000 Lira two days later and pocket the difference. The Ministry strongly condemned this act and instructed the Abandoned Properties Commission to rectify the situation.<sup>76</sup> After this event, a circular was wired to all provinces, prohibiting similar practices and underlining again the importance of 'Muslims' familiarization with commercial life and the 'buildup of Muslim-owned business enterprises in our country'.<sup>77</sup> Long-term goals had absolute priority above short-term benefits. Dilapidation, waste, and negligence was unacceptable too. The Ministry admonished the Abandoned Properties Commissions to take proper care and assist the new Muslim owners as much as possible. If any help was needed, the commissions should turn to the Ministry.<sup>78</sup> As a result of this policy, a whole generation of Turkish-owned firms, 'established in 1916', mushroomed across the empire.<sup>79</sup>

Before the Young Turks seized power in the 1913 coup d'état, hatred of Armenians (and Greeks) was particularly widespread in the commercial middle class. Curtailing the economic livelihood of Armenians was in their interests. 'Turkification', therefore, had particularly favourable economic consequences for these (lower) middle-class Turks, as the liquidation of Armenian middle-class enterprises relieved the pressure of economic competition. It foresaw the promotion of a new generation of Turkish businessmen who

enriched themselves from the vulnerability of the persecuted Armenians. The newspaper İkdam published an article openly exhorting Turks to ‘get rich’ in the ‘economic revolution’:

Pharmaceutics, grocery shops, dentistry, transportation, contracting is rapidly spreading among Turks. Our friends have begun competing with many nations in employment branches that are as yet new fields of activity in our country, like electricians’ work, engineering and similar... It is the revolution in this nation’s society and economy, rather than the political changes, that will save this nation (bu milleti kurtaracak) and will provide him with an eternal life.<sup>80</sup>

The government offered ordinary Turks incredible prospects of upward social mobility. With a giant leap forward, a nation of peasants, pastoralists, soldiers, and bureaucrats would now jumpstart to the level of the bourgeoisie, the ‘respectable’ and ‘modern’ middle classes. The groups who benefited most from this policy were the landowners and the urban merchants.<sup>81</sup> When shortages arose in 1916, the party leadership allowed that group of merchants close to the party to monopolize import, supply, and distribution. Defraudation and malpractice occurred in this alliance by individual party members and merchants who enriched themselves at the expense of the Istanbulites.

If the nascent bourgeoisie was colonization’s first recipient of private ownership of Armenian property, the Muslim settlers were its second. After the loss of the Balkan wars, hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees poured into the rump Ottoman Empire.<sup>82</sup> Istanbul was bursting with them, and the state was hopelessly overstretched in its attempt to cover the refugees’ needs. The Ottoman government had to allocate an enormous array of resources to transport, house, feed, educate, equip, employ, and clothe the refugees. Philanthropic associations such as the ‘Association for Muslim Refugees from the Balkans’ provided relief for the refugee community, which almost exclusively consisted of Muslims. Empty houses were requisitioned for the refugees, a part of whom slept in Istanbul’s depots and train stations. The government saw no other choice than to temporarily transform mosques into shelters. In Istanbul more than 90 mosques were initially furnished as sanctuaries: the Nuru Osmaniye Mosque, the Edirnekapi mosque, the Murad Pasha mosque, Sultan Selim mosque.<sup>83</sup> Prominent mosques such as the Aya Sofia and the Sultan Ahmed (the Blue Mosque) were not spared either. Additionally, thousands of people were sheltered in makeshift huts on the outskirts of Istanbul.<sup>84</sup> The misery these people lived in was a harsh blow to national pride and stood in sharp contrast with living conditions of the Istanbul’s Christian bourgeoisie. The Russian occupation of Erzurum, Trabzon, Van and Bitlis in its turn generated tens of thousands of refugees more. Together, the Balkan and eastern refugees were known as ‘refugee’ (mülteci) and ‘immigrant’ (muhacir). I refer to them as settlers since they were used by the CUP as settlers for the empty Armenian spaces.

The Ottoman state agency responsible for deportation and settlement was the ‘Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants’ (İskân-ı Aşâir ve Muhacirîn Müdüriyeti, İAMM), later renamed to ‘General Directorate for Tribes and Immigrants’ (Aşâir ve Muhacirîn Müdüriyet-i Umûmiyesi, AMMU). This bureaucratic apparatus was established in early 1914 and served two purposes: on the one hand, to advance the sedentarization of the many Turkoman, Kurdish, and Arab tribes, and on the other hand, to provide accommodation for homeless Muslim refugees, expelled from the Balkans and the Caucasus.<sup>85</sup> It would later be expanded to constitute four branches, namely Settlement, Intelligence, Transportation, and Tribes.<sup>86</sup> The most prolific name in the İAMM was Şükrü Kaya, the “Director of Deportation” (Sevkiyat Müdürü) who presided over the implementation of the deportations. The rationale of the organization was articulated by one of its leaders as ‘to settle the refugees in various

parts of the country, to give them land, and to find them work to make producers out of them'.<sup>87</sup>

The principles of this policy were laid out in the 1917 'Guidelines for the Distribution of Property and Land to Refugees'. One of its standing rules was the encouragement of equity between Turks. Young Turk population policy had not only established a new ethnic hierarchy, which favoured Turks over Kurds and Kurds over Armenians, but it also promoted more equality between Turks. The colonization process offered an opportunity structure in which this struggle could be expressed. In October 1916, the Interior Ministry made this explicit in a central decree: 'It is absolutely unacceptable that houses are given to the notables and the elites while there are so many refugees and immigrants out there needy of protection, so these kinds of houses need to be immediately evacuated and allocation to the refugees and immigrants, without taking into consideration the intervention and opposition of any party.'<sup>88</sup> The decree was made public and molded into one of the CUP's typical 'temporary laws', which stipulated precise numbers to be allocated to the refugees. Rich refugees such as Macedonian landholders were not entitled to compensations from Armenian property.<sup>89</sup> Instead, the poorest refugees were allocated all kinds of movable property from the central depots where confiscated Armenian property had been stored.<sup>90</sup>

As the genocide was raging in full force, the Muslim settlers were on their way. Local preparations were needed in order to lodge the settlers successfully. The Ministry iterated its request for economic and geographic data on the emptied Armenian villages. In order to send settlers to the provinces, the local capacities to 'absorb' them had to be determined. The Interior Ministry requested information on the numbers of Armenian households deported, whether the emptied villages were conducive to colonization by settlers, and if so, how many.<sup>91</sup> It also demanded data on the size of the land, number of farms, and potential number of settler households.<sup>92</sup> The books were kept precisely. According to Talaat Pasha's own notebook, in 1915 the amount of property allocated to settlers was: 20,545 buildings, 267,536 acres of land, 76,942 acres of vineyards, 7812 acres of gardens, 703,491 acres of olive groves, 4573 acres of mulberry gardens, 97 acres of orange fields, 5 carts, 4390 animals, 2912 agricultural implements, 524,788 planting seeds.<sup>93</sup>

Last but not least, the CUP elite took the cream of the crop of Armenian property for itself. Ahmed Refik observed the colonization process:

Silence reigns in Eskişehir... The elegant Armenian houses around the train station are bare as bone. This community, with its wealth, its trade, its superior values, became subject to the government's order, emptied its houses... now all emptied houses, valuable rugs, stylish rooms, its closed doors, are basically at the grace of the refugees. Eskişehir's most modernized and pretty houses lay around the train station... A large Armenian mansion for the princes, two canary-yellow adjacent houses near the Sarısu bridge to Talaat Bey and his friend Canbolat Bey, a wonderful Armenian mansion in the Armenian neighborhood to Topal İsmail Hakkı. All the houses convenient for residing near the train station have all been allocated to the elite of the İttihadists.<sup>94</sup>

Even Sultan Mehmed Reşad V had received his share. This process of assigning the very best property to Young Turks was intensified after 1919 by the Kemalists.

Possibly the most important recipient of the redistribution of Armenian properties was the state itself. We can analytically divide this process into civil versus military institutions that benefited from Armenian property. The properties were converted into prisons, police



stations, meeting halls, schools, and hospitals; they were also generously assigned to the army.

As the expropriation process proceeded, the Interior Ministry issued a general decree to convert to prisons any large buildings 'abandoned' by Armenians. In May 1916, it wired a circular ordering research to be conducted on the state of Armenian buildings suitable to be converted to prisons, and whether renovations were necessary on them.<sup>95</sup> Research was done in the provinces and the Abandoned Properties Commissions reported back to Istanbul. In Anteb, the Armenian church was converted to a prison that was in effect until the 1970s. In Maraş, the Armenian and Catholic churches were converted to prisons with the capacity to hold up to sixty persons. Every province reported the number of buildings convenient for conversion into a prison; the numbers ran from two to eleven in different provinces and districts.<sup>96</sup> The Directorate of Prisons screened these provincial reports and assigned funds to facilitate the conversion of the churches into prisons.<sup>97</sup> Another division of the Interior Ministry that received property was the police, as Armenian property was converted into police stations. An order, similar to the above relating to prisons, was wired to that effect. Only stone buildings were allowed to be made into police stations, not timber ones.<sup>98</sup> Buildings suitable for conversion into police stations were ordered emptied. İzmit in a case in point: at least three large Armenian community buildings were turned into police stations.<sup>99</sup>

Education was a crucial aspect of the CUP's Turkish nationalism. The confiscation of Armenian schools then offered a unique opportunity to the Ministry of Education to appropriate these structures for Turkish pupils and students. The 8 November 1915 instructions contained a clause that Armenian educational infrastructure was placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. Later, precise orders were given to various provinces to assess the regional educational infrastructure, and analyze whether it would be suitable to provide for Turkish students. Importantly, the Interior Ministry also notified that the Ministry of Education would have prioritized access to that property, and that no other directorate or Ministry was entitled to Armenians' educational buildings.<sup>100</sup>

For example, in Kayseri, the Interior Ministry ordered that 'of the properties abandoned by deported Armenians, the school buildings and articles... must be delivered to the Education Department for the benefit of Muslim children. We have been informed in writing that in certain localities the commission surrenders neither school nor articles. The Ministry of Education requests that you do what is necessary concerning this matter. As in our previous message, we advise again and again the surrender of the buildings and articles to the Ministry of Education'.<sup>101</sup> If reassignment was needed for an optimal match between supply and demand, that was carried out as well. In Ankara province, the government office was relocated to the secondary school, and the latter was reshuffled to the empty Armenian school.<sup>102</sup> Armenian schools were also allocated to Balkan refugees, whose children otherwise risked the prospect of falling behind in their education. The Interior Ministry ordered preferential treatment to be granted to these refugees in the allocation of Armenians' educational infrastructure.<sup>103</sup>

All in all, the various Ministries (Education, Health, Justice) greatly benefited from the colonization process. The Interior Ministry granted them permission to choose from Armenian property buildings it wanted to use as their offices. The state, led by the CUP, was lavished with property up to the highest levels. A famous example of confiscated Armenian property is the story of the Kasabian vineyard house in Ankara. In December 1921, amidst the Greco-Turkish war, Mustafa Kemal was touring the area when he noticed the splendid house of the wealthy Ankara jeweler and merchant Kasabian. The house had been occupied by the noted Bulgurluzâde family after the Kasabians had been dispossessed and deported. Mustafa Kemal liked the house and bought it from Bulgurluzâde Tevfik Efendi for 4500 Turkish Lira.

From then on, the compound has been known as the Çankaya Palace (Çankaya Köşkü), the official residence of the President of Turkey.<sup>104</sup>

The above discussion revolved around civil authorities as recipients of Armenian property. The military wing of the Ottoman government was also generously bestowed all kinds of movable and immovable property. The difference was that the army did not vie for Armenian property on the same level as the other Ministries. It had priority because of the immediacy of the war, but even then, the property did not fall into its lap.

Quite early in the confiscation process a general decree was sent through the provinces: ‘Property that the Armenians will be unable to take with them that is in particular necessary from a military perspective, such as shoes, headscarves, cow leather, sandals, sheep leather, and similar goods... need to be sent to Istanbul on account of General Supplies after being collected in a comprehensive way with special lists’.<sup>105</sup> In reality, the list of military necessities was more extensive and included bedware, kitchenware, and construction tools – for example shovels to dig trenches at the front.

In some cases entire factories were assigned to the army to exploit. In Manisa, the brothers Mardiros and Vartkes Sarian operated a textile factory when the deportations put an end to their professional lives. As a result of their deportation, the factory languished and its productivity sank to zero. The Interior Ministry ordered Muslim investors to resuscitate the factory so it could produce goods useful to the war effort.<sup>106</sup> Governor of İzmir, Rahmi Bey, and his ‘accomplices’ (avene) Ali Fikri Bey, Zeki Bey, and Ahmed Bey plundered the factory and enjoyed the financial benefits it brought them. The perpetrators kept the factory for four years, caused an estimated damage of 1,400,000 Turkish Lira, and in November 1918 fled to Egypt to evade prosecution.<sup>107</sup>

Considerable cooperation was needed between the War Ministry and the Interior Ministry for this operation to run smoothly. In Kütahya, the Interior Ministry inventoried Armenian properties and offered textiles, foodstuffs, and similar goods at low prices to the War Ministry. The objective was to deal with the army’s shortages and provide for them first and foremost.<sup>108</sup> Similar orders were issued for the Thracian region. The Ministry ordered a rough model for distribution: shops and stores would be given to settlers and the Muslim bourgeoisie; all other property would go to the army.<sup>109</sup> The Interior Ministry needed to cope with hungry soldiers and thus ordered all kinds of cereals and grains left by Armenians to be assigned to the army.<sup>110</sup> The Ministry of War, in short, was not forgotten during the transfer of wealth.

### Costs, contestation, and corruption

There are three important themes to the confiscation and colonization process that in fact deserve their own separate study. In this section I discuss them briefly: the costs of the deportation process, contention and competition over sought-after properties, and corruption during the redistribution process.

First of all, how much did the deportations cost? This is a question impossible to answer without a thorough quantitative study of the extant materials. There are some indications of parts of the process, and from them we might get a glimpse into the overall economy of the genocide. In September 1915, the government spent 1.7 million cents for the Armenian deportees of the provinces of Konya, Adana, Aleppo, İzmit, Ankara and Eskişehir. In March 1917, deportation expenditures for the whole country amounted to 6.640 million cents. These

sums suggest that the genocide was not cheap, and the government spent considerable sums on the deportations that it could have used in the war effort.<sup>111</sup>

The allocation of funds for the deportation and the deportees was organized from the Interior Ministry. At the outset of the deportation process, its responsables in the provinces were ordered to meet the needs of the deportees and requesting assistance if need be. Throughout the deportation process, the Ministry directly asked the provinces how much money was needed for the organization of the process. In its turn, provincial authorities would approach the Ministry and request more funds or other resources, in which case clear-cut directives were sent. Most of these directives have been preserved and they offer an important window into the process.

There is evidence that in the early phase of the deportations, Armenians were financially responsible for their own survival. In some regions this became policy, for example Konya province was ordered that during the deportations from Zeytun district, the local Armenians were not entitled to any government support. They would have to pay for all transportation and sustenance themselves.<sup>112</sup> This might have resulted from recommendations from below. For example, upon the suggestion of the upcoming Young Turk official Şükrü Kaya, Armenians were collectively to finance their own 'transportation'. In October 1915, Talaat responded to Kaya's proposal that 'your measure that Armenians can defray their own transportation costs is appropriate'.<sup>113</sup> This policy was changed, probably some time after the general orders of May or as a result of conclusions drawn from the feedback received from the provinces in the summer. After all, Armenians were becoming poorer and poorer during the deportation and could no longer sustain themselves. From then on, the state indeed began paying for the deportation, but it was still mostly financed through confiscated Armenian property.

As some regions were underfunded, reassignments of sorts had to be organized. This was necessary because the number of Armenians to be deported (and sustained), as well as the value of confiscated Armenian wealth varied from region to region. With the influx of tens of thousands of wretched Armenian deportees, Aleppo soon became a problem region. To mitigate the problem, Talaat used his commanding oversight to redistribute funding from provinces where the genocide had been profitable. The plunder in Eskişehir, for example, had yielded so much that it could easily sustain the deportations in other provinces. On 8 November 1915, the Ministry organized such a financial synchronization with regards to Eskişehir and Aleppo. It ordered the Eskişehir Abandoned Properties Commission 'an immediate wire transfer payment by bank of 200,000 cents from the revenue of Armenian property to the Aleppo Department of Revenues'.<sup>114</sup> It then ordered the Aleppo Abandoned Properties Commission to apportion 600,000 cents of the total 645,810 cents, gained from the sale of animals confiscated from Armenians, for the sustenance and transportation of the local deportees.<sup>115</sup> A final telegram to the governor of Aleppo ordered him to oversee the process: the governor was instructed to spend the aforementioned 600,000 cents exclusively on the Armenian deportees, he was informed of the 200,000 cents that was on its way from Eskişehir for the same purpose. If the funds turned out to be insufficient, the province was entitled to more funding.<sup>116</sup> Ultimately, deportation director Şükrü Kaya was notified of the maneuver. He was the bureaucratic middleman responsible for the executive management of the deportation.<sup>117</sup> Other regions had to contribute to the 'collective good' as well: on 17 November 1915, the Ministry ordered 8000 Lira from Bursa to be allocated to Aleppo to be spent only for the sustenance and settlement of Armenians. Again, the process developed in the same three-phase contact system: the governor was ordered and Kaya was informed.<sup>118</sup> This practice was necessary for an orderly development of the deportations, but fostered competition between provinces.

The redistribution of Armenian property or even the very dispossession itself became a bone of contention and a source of conflict during the process. Institutions and individuals competed to keep confiscated Armenian property for themselves and their constituency. In other words, competition within the perpetrator group existed at the institutional level as well as the individual level.

Institutional competition was the contestation between center and periphery, as well as at the meso-level within state institutions. Ministries, governorates, district governorates, cities, all had their eyes on the best property for themselves. An example of this form of competition were the clashes between the army and the Interior Ministry over Armenian land. In November 1916, the nationalist organization National Defense Society (Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti) proposed that the considerable stock of products at a textile factory in Bursa should be sent to the army. But the Interior Ministry objected on the grounds that the textile should be distributed among the needy Balkan refugees in that province.<sup>119</sup> Disagreements such as these were common. After the war, the army requested a 500 meter long strip of land, 'abandoned by Armenians' (Ermenilerden metruk), assigned to it for use as a military airfield. According to the Ministry of National Defense, the plot, 1.5 kilometres east of Giresun and 500 metres from the sea, was a strategically useful point in case of a future mobilization in the east. But the Finance Ministry rejected the request for legal reasons. The land was already in use for other purposes.<sup>120</sup>

Individual disputes were ubiquitous, possibly more widespread than institutional contestation. The regime had successfully eliminated the Armenians from the business world through ordinances which attempted to lend the process an appearance of legality. At its climax, the policy of 'Turkification' of Armenian property created a huge opportunity structure with irresistible incentives for plunder for ordinary people. Through its (wrongly assumed) initial appearance of impunity, it set off a race for personal enrichment which affected the behavior of both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of Armenian property. The orgy of plunder can perhaps be compared to the modern shopping frenzies when hundreds of people stream into department stores as they open for free shopping or extreme discount, in order to snatch up bargains. This was a reversal of how you were supposed to behave, as a neighbor, a friend, or a business associate. It was a collective transgression of existing cultural norms of modesty and altruism. The logic was simple: anyone not joining in the craze was missing out on a golden opportunity.

The local Young Turk party activists openly instigated and agitated for plunder. In Ankara, they reportedly distributed a pamphlet that described the alleged riches of Armenians:

Their houses are luxuriously furnished, and during the summer, every urban family is in beautiful country houses with every comfort, while the women dressed in silk and adorned in jewels enjoy all the refined pleasures, their husbands down the morning in town, by car or mounted on horses, and at night they return home, in the freshness of the twilight, their purse full of gold and a joyful heart, while you, poor peasants are condemned because of them, to a life of misery. You live in cottages, feeding on vegetables and black bread, dressed in rags, and while they have the luxury of visits to concerts with their glistening umbrellas, you and your women, are miserable slaves of the infidels.

The pamphlet then proceeded to champion getting rid of the Armenians 'once and for all', promising anyone who joined the CUP effort a share of Armenian property.<sup>121</sup> Such an inflammatory text could only be aimed at mobilizing Turkish sentiments and securing their participation in the genocide. The genocide was a form of acute social mobility, or what scholars of genocide have come to term 'immediate ennoblement'.<sup>122</sup>

The evidence of popular participation is overwhelming. In Konya, Turkish women ‘began to find great bargains and swarmed all about, getting the property of the Armenians at a tenth of its value, compelling them to sell, and finally it degenerated into robbing right and left. This all took place under the guard of the police.’<sup>123</sup> Another eyewitness reported that ‘great piles of baggage heaped up at the station, at least five or six hundred pieces, that had been abandoned, and was told that probably there had been three thousand in all; most of this property had been confiscated as ‘metrouk’ (abandoned) and had been partitioned among the officials or sold, while a good deal had been stolen by the Turks in the town.’<sup>124</sup> In Trabzon the scenario was virtually identical: ‘A crowd of Turkish women and children follow the police about like a lot of vultures and seize anything they can lay their hands on and when the more valuable things are carried out of a house by the police they rush in and take the balance.’<sup>125</sup>

The situation was even worse in the villages, where the bureaucratic arm of the cities did not reach. An Armenian account from the village of Govdun in Sivas province also employs the metaphor of vultures: ‘The Turkish mobs, like hungry ravenous vultures, descended on the Armenian villages, grabbing and loading their carts and animals with everything that was left behind – animals, furniture, utensils, clothing, carpets, farm implements, tools and even the beams of the houses.’<sup>126</sup> In Merzifon, ‘real estate was put up for rent at auction and was most of it bid in at prices ridiculously low by persons who were on the inside.’ The American missionary who reported this had heard it from a Turkish attorney who had done so himself, adding: ‘Turks moved out of their more squalid habitations into the better Armenian houses whose owners had been “deported”.’<sup>127</sup> In Bitlis, the very rumor that deportations would be launched in three days triggered collective action by the Muslim population. According to a German eyewitness, ‘without even waiting for the end of this period, the Turks after two hours began to invade and plunder the Armenian houses.’<sup>128</sup> The American diplomat Lewis Einstein was stationed in Istanbul and later remembered that ‘fresh consignments of rugs, which were really Armenian loot, reached the bazaars at Constantinople, where the more decent merchants regarded such articles with disgust.’<sup>129</sup> Others perceived their newly-found fortune with the Turkish proverb: ‘Eat the grape, don’t ask about its vineyard’ (*Üzümü ye, bağını sorma*).

The participation of women (and children) raises questions about the truly national dimensions of the genocide: not only did the process draw participation from different classes, but it also bridged the gender gap. Women were making themselves useful in the ‘national cause’. But with so much property up for grabs, conflicts and fights were just a matter of time. Baruir Nercessian was a young boy when he was deported from Shabin Karahisar. He was sold to a Turkish villager from Kuruçay, renamed to Ömer, and made to do household chores. After some time in the village, one day a group of armed, mounted Kurds rode into the town. The horsemen stopped in the middle of the village and yelled to the Turkish villagers that they were entitled to some of the Armenian property the villagers had stolen. After a few threats, they rode off.<sup>130</sup> Examples such as these abound in the memoir literature and the official correspondence.

The third and final theme is corruption, which was rampant during the confiscation process. All over the Ottoman Empire, local elites in small towns distant from Istanbul, saw opportunities to conspire among themselves to embezzle goods. What were the causes of the various forms of corruption? Apart from self-interest, there seemed to be two processes at hand. According to an American missionary, who spoke to the members of the local Abandoned Properties Commission, the staff was underfunded: ‘The work was in charge of a commission, the members of which I met personally a number of times. It was commonly said that the commission did not actually receive enough for the government purposes to cover its

expenses.<sup>131</sup> A perceived shortage of income may have generated the misappropriation of funds and goods.

Another triggering mechanism may have been the dynamic of the expropriation process itself, which engendered its own relative autonomy. The government's sweeping announcement that all Armenian property needed to be confiscated caused a sensation and created a fervor among officials. Interior Ministry officials began categorically confiscating all kinds of property of people outside the target group, including undeported Armenians, non-Armenians, and even non-Ottomans. They were, to use Stalin's term, 'dizzy with success'. Officials became intoxicated by the incredible fiats and the perceived impunity, and threw all reasonable sense of proportion overboard in favor of frontal and unplanned, arbitrary attacks on Armenian property. On many occasions, the Interior Ministry had to warn these officials to curb their fanaticism.<sup>132</sup> Several decrees were sent out to provinces admonishing them to follow procedures and not treat the process as a free-for-all plundering party.<sup>133</sup> (Incidentally, in Edirne the local officials, after allowing the local Armenians 30 minutes to assemble for deportation, had indeed organized parties in their empty houses, taking whatever they pleased.<sup>134</sup>)

In some cases, Armenians were forced to sell their property but the compensation they received for it was negligible. In Bursa, the local Young Turk committee cheated Armenians out of their property in a direct way. Armenians were taken to the office of the land registry and coerced to sign a document that stated they had sold their property voluntarily and that the compensation had been equitable. The buyers would then deliver the money to the Armenian owner but when the latter walked out of the room, a guard would take the money back from him and hand it to the committee again, to be used in a new round of fraud.<sup>135</sup> A similar racket was going on in the neighboring province of Eskişehir.<sup>136</sup> In the town of Mihaliç, the mayor had convened the city council during the night and an agreement was reached on forcing Armenians to undergo this form of extortion.<sup>137</sup> When these practices leaked out and reached the highest echelons in Istanbul, the Interior Ministry launched investigations. It inquired whether it was true that the merchants Karamanian and Hagopian had received the above treatment, and requested a list of the committee members who were involved.<sup>138</sup>

During the confiscation process, the German official Hugo Meyer reported that 'a large number of people here have earned an enormous amount of money as a result of the efforts to create a Turkish national trade and probably also as a result of the doubtlessly existing corruption among certain circles'.<sup>139</sup> He undoubtedly suggested that the corruption festered not only at the treetop but at the very roots as well. İsmail Canbolat (1880-1926), the right hand man of Talaat, was in charge of the Public Security Office (Emniyet-i Umumiye Müdüriyeti) from April 1914 on, the Prefect of the Ottoman Capital until April 1916, and later in 1917 when Talaat unconstitutionally worked his way up to the Grand Vizierdom, Canbolat became Interior Minister. Under his rule, corruption was so endemic that under pressure he was forced to resign in July 1918.

But Canbolat was not alone. The editor of Zhamanag newspaper, Yervant Odian (1869-1926), during his long deportation process to Der Zor, identified many cases of embezzlement of Armenian property. Odian witnessed several cases of extortion of Armenian deportees by Mustafa Sıdkı Bey, police commander of Der Zor. Mustafa Sıdkı would blackmail Armenians that he would have them killed in the desert unless they hand over cash or jewelry. In Sultaniye (new name: Karapınar) he met a certain Edirneli Ali Efendi, a relative of Talaat who had amassed a considerable fortune due to his position as financial director of the town.<sup>140</sup> In January 1919, the opposition newspaper Alemdar ran a series of articles on the problem of embezzlement. It fingered many CUP members as peculators: Erzurum's CUP delegate Hilmi Bey and his friend Cafer Bey had laid their hands on four Armenian trading

houses in Istanbul, worth 500 Turkish Liras, and were running the businesses with full impunity. The articles mentioned many gendarmerie commanders, police captains, and mayors who had not only enjoyed impunity, but were even promoted to comfortable places.<sup>141</sup>

The memoirs of the Armenian pastor Ephraim Jernazian open a most informative and compelling window on the rampant corruption. According to Jernazian, a liquidation commission for Urfa arrived from Istanbul in November 1915 and called him to translate into Turkish the Armenian-language account books of the merchants. The commission, headed by a Nebi Bey, settled in a government building and ‘furnished the rooms with valuable rugs and furniture taken from Armenian homes’. It then launched the procedure of announcing to the townspeople that anyone to whom payment was due by an Armenian needed to present their petitions directly to the commission. Jernazian claims that more than 2000 bills were presented, most of them false, but added that he was sure not a single creditor had been indemnified. The commission then commenced the huge task of auctioning the content of Armenian stores. Chairman Nebi Bey took two policemen, an auctioneer, and Jernazian and went from shop to shop to break its seal, examine any merchandise that had not been stolen yet, very roughly assess its worth, and keep account records. Jernazian then found out that Nebi Bey would take the books home, juggle the accounts, and pocket the difference. Jernazian ascertained that Urfa’s Abandoned Properties Commission also cleaned out Armenian bank accounts at the local branch of the Ottoman Bank. The approximately 140,000 gold pieces were seized and replaced with paper money that became more and more worthless.<sup>142</sup>

What did the Interior Ministry and especially Interior Minister Talaat Pasha do about this pandemic corruption? There is evidence of countermeasures as well as of impunity. On 3 August 1915, the Interior Ministry prohibited all state officials, including civil servants and military staff, from purchasing Armenian property. The officials had participated in the bidding during the open auctions by saving their incomes or taking loans.<sup>143</sup> An example was Bursa’s police captain Mahmud Celaleddin Efendi, who had bought considerable Armenian property, including houses and furniture, all adding up to 10,000 cents. When the governor summarily dismissed him from his position for the offense, Mahmud Celaleddin went over the governor’s head and secured his re-assignment to his old post. The Interior Ministry intervened and ordered the police captain hired again, because his conduct was not serious enough to merit dismissal.<sup>144</sup> The signal was suggestive: theft of Armenian property was a venial sin, not a mortal one.

Those officials who were committing mortal sins were dealt with through the ‘Investigative Commissions’ (Tahkikat Komisyonları), established by Talaat in September 1915. According to him, there were three commissions, whose jurisdiction was limited to investigating charges of corruption. The first commission covered the provinces of Ankara, Bursa, Eskişehir, İzmit, Karahisar-ı Sahib, Karesi, Kayseri and Niğde, and was led by the President of the Appeals Court, Hulusi Bey. The second commission, chaired by Appeals Court first clerk Asım Bey, covered the south: Adana, Aleppo, Maraş, Urfa, and Der Zor. The third commission was supervised by former governor of Bitlis, Mazhar Bey, and dealt with Erzurum, Diyarbakir, Sivas, Trabzon, Mamuret-ul Aziz, Bitlis, and Canik. In his order, Talaat made the objective clear: ‘To deliver to the court martial after necessary investigations... those officials and gendarmes who conducted themselves contrary to the laws and whose misappropriation (su-i istimalât) has been noticed during the dispatch of Armenians’.<sup>145</sup>

The general order was followed by several precise ones in which Talaat closely micro-managed the process. He ordered the officials in Bursa to put an end to civil servants’ purchases of Armenian property, declare null their contracts, and redistribute to refugees and the upstart Turkish bourgeoisie. The property, especially houses, were re-confiscated and dealt with accordingly.<sup>146</sup> The investigations in that province yielded compromising results: a

certain Albanian Numan Agha had appropriated the flock of sheep, worth 5000 Turkish Lira, by applying threats and terror to the original owner, an Armenian peasant named Haji Hagop. Investigations were carried out and the sheep were again taken by the government.<sup>147</sup> The Ministry also attempted to prevent monopolies to accumulate in the hands of certain men. In November 1915 it wired all provinces a circular prohibiting rich monopolists from buying up too much Armenian property at low prices and reselling them at higher prices. This was not equitable and therefore not acceptable.<sup>148</sup>

There is sporadic evidence that the investigative commissions were a weak form of control and did not produce compelling results. An instructive example is the case of the infamous district governor of Boğazlıyan, a town between Yozgat and Kayseri. Mehmed Kemal Bey was district governor of this town from 15 May 1915 to 23 April 1916 and was responsible for organizing the massacres in that region. Kemal Bey was known for his cruelty and was one of the very few district governors who personally participated in the mass killing in that region.<sup>149</sup> He also engaged in large-scale plunder and embezzlement of the victims' property. Together with the Abandoned Properties Commission men, Lütfü Efendi, Haydar Bey, commander of Yozgat's gendarmerie battalion Major Mehmed Tevfik, and several mayors, they were arrested and put on trial on 22 March 1917. Having studied the paperwork, the investigative commission concluded that Kemal Bey had turned a blind eye to embezzlement and self-enrichment by government officials. Moreover, he allowed the Turkish population to engage in plunder in exchange for kickbacks. The investigative commission found him guilty and on 7 October 1917, Kemal Bey was convicted of 'misappropriation' (*su-i istimalât*) to three years and four months of imprisonment and stripped of his position. He appealed and because of a shortage of meso-level government officials, he was acquitted on 25 July 1918.<sup>150</sup> It is important to realize that the investigations never called for restitution of property to Armenians and therefore were a travesty of justice from the outset.

To assess the level of corruption we cannot escape from engaging in some informed conjecture based on several examples. Hilmar Kaiser uses Austro-Hungarian sources to demonstrate the magnitude of embezzlement: in Trabzon, a major center of Armenian economic activity: the yield of the confiscation process was a mere 1200 Turkish Lira, 7500 Russian Rubles, some jewelry and a few rugs. In neighboring Giresun, according to the local authorities' official books, the value of all confiscated Armenian property was only 102 Turkish Lira, while the real value was approximately 10,000 Turkish Lira.<sup>151</sup> In other words: one percent was confiscated procedurally, 99 % was embezzled by local officials and notables. This figure may have been drawn from the extreme end of the spectrum of embezzlement, but in the early stage of the process, it is undeniable that a large majority of Armenian properties was simply stolen.

### Economic consequences

Like quantification and famine, pronouncing judgment on the economic consequences of the expropriations for the country is a difficult task. Contemporary observers, including many Ottoman Turks, were unambiguous about it: the dispossession of the Armenians and their subsequent destruction was a major social and economic catastrophe for the Ottoman Empire. Already in late June, the German vice-consul Kuckhoff reported: 'Through the extermination of the Armenian element, all trade and commerce in Anatolia will be destroyed, and any economic development of the country will be impossible for years to come, for all merchants, industrialists and craftsmen are almost exclusively Armenian.'<sup>152</sup> Habsburg officials noticed the same: 'Through the deportation of a large part of the Armenian population, whole areas of



Asian Turkey are deprived of their trader population and the economic life there is paralyzed.’ The Austro-Hungarians further speculated that the dispossession of Armenians served to feed and shelter ‘the numerous Turkish officials who are breadless as a result of the loss of Macedonia, Libya’.<sup>153</sup> Pomiankowski further added to this ascertainment that the loss of artisans, merchants, traders, and farmers was a major blow to the economy. According to him, the Ottoman army suffered greatly from this loss, because it resulted in shortages in grain, cattle, and basic foodstuffs.<sup>154</sup> The Ottoman Interior Ministry ultimately admitted in a circular the emergence of ‘an economic emptiness (*iktisâdî boşluk*), arising from the transportation of Armenian craftsmen’. Therefore, shops and tools left by Armenians needed to be taken by those Turks who had skills to continue the same crafts.<sup>155</sup>

By the late autumn and early winter of 1915, the results made themselves felt. The German consul Hoffmann of Alexandrette/İskenderun wrote a report of 8 November 1915, which can probably be counted among of the most cogent contemporary accounts of the genocide. Hoffmann discussed the initiation of the measures, the transportation itself, the massacres, the concentration camps, the German position, and the economy. He was surprised that, despite evidence to the contrary, many Turks supported the measures: ‘My Turkish friends hope that this heavy operation will affect the body of the Turkish economy positively in the end, and bring about a recovery of the empire in the Mohammedan and Turkish mind.’<sup>156</sup> Even Talaat denied or trivialized the self-destructiveness. Upon Morgenthau’s objections that the material losses for the country would be enormous, as Armenians were businessmen, industrials, and tax-payers, Talaat replied: ‘We care nothing about the commercial loss. We have figured all that out and we know that it will not exceed five million pounds. We don’t worry about that.’<sup>157</sup> Morgenthau himself concluded that the CUP had signed the country’s ‘economic death warrant’:

These were the people... who controlled her industries and her finances and developed her agriculture, and the material consequences of this great national crime now began to be everywhere apparent. The farms were lying uncultivated and daily thousands of peasants were dying of starvation. As the Armenians and Greeks were the largest taxpayers, their annihilation greatly reduced the state revenues...<sup>158</sup>

Since the majority of Ottoman Armenians lived in the eastern provinces, the largest destruction may have been in that region. A German report from Aleppo on 15 August 1916 summarized the social destruction of the deportation and expropriation process there:

Since 90% of trade in the interior is in the hands of the Armenians, the result is that the country is facing ruin... With few exceptions, in the evacuated areas there will not be left a single mason, blacksmith, tailor, carpenter, potter, tent maker, weaver, shoemaker, jeweler, pharmacist, doctor, lawyer or any other professional or trader, the country will actually be in a helpless state.<sup>159</sup>

The figures were astronomic: coal production declined by 75%, draught animals by 50%, sheep and goats by 40%, wheat production by 40%, the decline in the tobacco, raisins, hazelnuts, olive oil, raw silk, and cotton businesses was 50%, minerals suffered a fall of 80%, cotton textiles 50%. Overall, the economy shrunk up to 50%, the GDP 40%.<sup>160</sup> In short: as a result of war and genocide, the Ottoman Empire became almost twice as poor. Since requisitions had a hand in the sharp decline of production too, it is difficult to assess the precise damage of the genocide.

Contemporary observers saw the economic destruction first-hand. During his deportation to Der Zor, the Armenian priest Krikoris Balakian noted that ‘the Turks had begun to admit that the country’s blessings and abundance had gone with them’. Passing through Kayseri province, he wrote: ‘The fields of Tomarza, once full of ears of wheat, and the surrounding lands that had belonged to the Armenians now lay fallow and abandoned. There was neither plow handle nor plowman; there was neither plow nor ox fit for harness’.<sup>161</sup> During the war, Mehmed Celal Bey (1863-1926) had served as governor of Aleppo and Konya. For his resistance against the genocide he was demoted, removed from office, and marginalized. He wrote in a 1919 article that ‘a significant portion of overall wealth is in the hands of the Armenians, and they own close to half of the commercial enterprises in the country. To work for their ruination is a loss for the fatherland which will be impossible to compensate for ages.’<sup>162</sup> By October 1918 the Young Turk government was effectively bankrupt. Life had become prohibitively expensive, even for the wealthy. By October 1918, prices had been 15 times what they had been in October 1914.<sup>163</sup> The hangover came not much later. The agricultural vacuum on the countryside was a long-term result of the genocide. The former secretary of Cemal Pasha wrote that the destruction of the Christians unweaved the country’s economy at its very roots: ‘Everywhere the crops are damaged, or olive trees are becoming wild or are cut, fishing is dying, the bazaars were closed.’<sup>164</sup>

How successful then was the new Turkish bourgeoisie on the short term and long term? This question deserves much more research, but according to leading Young Turks, on the short term little was gained. A 1924 research commission chaired by Cavid Bey, concluded that the immense efforts and ‘exceptional permissions’ (*fevkalâde müsaadeler*) had backfired. The new proprietors had lacked the ‘economic education’ (*terbiye-i iktisadiye*) and ended up wasting their new wealth through ‘squander and debauchery’ (*israf ve sefahat*). They had not followed economic trends and lost most of their acquisitions by speculating for short-term gain.<sup>165</sup> It may be worthwhile to follow the fate of these ‘1915 businesses’ into the Turkish Republic.

### Return and restitution thwarted

After 2 November 1918, the flight of the seven CUP leaders caused a massive outburst of bitter invective against the CUP. Public opinion was enraged and blamed the CUP for the country’s misery. Although most Ottomans were relieved the war had finally come to an end, the opposition launched a witch-hunt against CUP leaders and loyalists. With censorship lifted, Armenian newspapers published detailed accounts of the massacres, exposing some of the CUP’s most esoteric outrages. When CUP bureaucrats denied the killings, the noted Circassian activist Hasan Amca published an article titled ‘Well who killed hundreds of thousands of Armenians then?’ Hasan’s article unequivocally condemned the genocidal persecution of the Armenians, shedding light on shocking events the public considered beyond belief.<sup>166</sup> The opposition journalist Refi Cevat wrote: ‘These men don’t even deserve the gallows. Their heads should be ripped off and paraded around on wood blocks for days as a lesson!’<sup>167</sup> As parliament reopened, outrage was also vented here. Member of parliament for Sivas, Dikran Barsamian, presented the government a declaration for the enormous damage done to the Armenian religious infrastructure in the Empire. Barsamian decried the fact that for example in Muş and Bitlis, home to many Armenian churches, monasteries and seminaries, ‘from monasteries with bells to valuable antiques in churches have been ruined and destroyed, all valuables seized’.<sup>168</sup>

The memoirs of Mehmed Celal Bey again shed light on the aftermath of the genocide. In 1919 the ex-governor reflected on the genocide in a long essay, which was published in

three instalments in the newspaper Vakit. Celal Bey admitted that when he received the deportation orders as governor of Aleppo, the thought that the measure was intended for the destruction of Armenians never even crossed his mind: ‘I did not deem likely that any government could destroy its own citizens and its human capital, the most valuable capital in a country (Hiçbir hükümetin kendi tebaasını ve memleketin en büyük serveti olan insan sermayesini imha edebileceğine ihtimal vermiyordum).’ The governor had truly believed that the measures were a benign attempt to temporarily remove Armenians from the war zones. He had naively requested from Istanbul funds to construct houses and settle Armenians in them. ‘But instead of those funds they sent an official named Director for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants, who was in reality on duty to deport the Armenians with their wives and children.’<sup>169</sup>

The CUP defended itself, denying the genocide, claiming that massive Armenian losses had never been official policy. Writing from Berlin where he had fled to, Talaat claimed in his memoirs there hadn’t been any systematic massacres and blamed the Armenians for everything that had occurred to them. In an interview he gave to a British agent after the war, he tried to absolve himself from blame, trivializing the atrocities and juxtaposing them with Armenian revenge acts.<sup>170</sup> Cemal Pasha wrote an article for the Frankfurter Zeitung in an attempt to rehabilitate his reputation. Cemal wrote that he had ordered the arrest, court-martalling, and execution of Çerkez Ahmed the very moment he had heard he had committed atrocities against Armenians.<sup>171</sup> This was a lie: Cemal conveniently left out the fact that he executed Çerkez Ahmed on direct orders of Talaat. Ziyâ Gökalp too, denied the genocidal nature of the crimes committed during wartime and refused calling them a ‘massacre’ (kıtâl), rather describing them as a ‘combat’ (mukatele).<sup>172</sup> It is noteworthy that during the armistice the massacres were only denied by CUP members and adherents.

The British government, whose ‘greatest concern was to punish officials responsible for mistreating British prisoners of war’, had occupied Istanbul and insisted on a trial for the dozens of CUP cadres who had been arrested and incarcerated.<sup>173</sup> On 5 February, the ‘Extraordinary Court-Martial’ was established in the capital Istanbul. The tribunal set about several series of trials in which the CUP was accused of ‘deportation and massacre’ (tehcir ve taktıl), in particular: ‘robbery of money and goods, burning of houses and corpses, mass murder, rape, persecution and torture’. The final verdict noted that ‘these were not sporadic incidents but prepared by the forces of a center consisting of the abovementioned persons and whose implementation was ordered through oral and secret orders and instructions’, and that ‘these militias were employed to murder and destroy the convoys that were subjected to deportation’.<sup>174</sup> For about a year the court-martial and its inquiry commissions tried to function as best as they could, as summarized by Vahakn Dadrian: ‘It was able to secure, authenticate, and compile an array of documents, including formal and informal orders for massacre, implicating the Ottoman High Command, the Ministers of Interior and Justice, and the top leadership of the Ittihad Party’.<sup>175</sup> Negligence, obstruction by pro-CUP elements in the bureaucracy, and the resurgence of the Young Turk movement in Anatolia, caused the last sitting to be held on 9 February 1920.<sup>176</sup>

In fact, the CUP’s grip on power had already been crumbling in October 1918, when the Syrian and Palestinian fronts collapsed and Bulgaria capitulated. Talaat’s government was forced to resign after and the government was taken over by Ahmed İzzet Pasha (1864-1937), ex-commander of the Second Army and now Minister of Interior. As long as it lasted, his government allowed the deported Armenians to return to their homes and tried its best to remedy the past wrongs. Ahmed İzzet Pasha ordered all local authorities ‘‘to deliver Armenian orphans to Armenian community organizations’’.<sup>177</sup> A week later he ordered several national decrees for all land and goods to be restored to their rightful owners in the case they had returned to their homes and demanded their property. These decrees aimed to evacuate

Armenian properties occupied by settlers, cover all transportation, accommodation, and sustenance costs, and maintain security.<sup>178</sup> Armenian returnees would be accompanied by gendarmes to secure their personal safety, they were given bread, cheese, and olives, and extra funds were allocated for their safe return.<sup>179</sup>

The well-intended operation soon ran into a predictable problem: Armenian returnees were confronted with the new, Turkish owners of their property. The unwelcoming of the survivors and competing claims for property predominated in Ottoman cities and on the Anatolian countryside. Despite the new government's efforts, many Armenians were chased out or, in the worst case, killed by the new proprietors. Those who did manage to re-possess their property, faced the unpleasant prospect of living door-to-door with the same neighbors who had robbed and killed their relatives. To preclude these kinds of incidents from becoming significant disruptions, the government intervened and ordered the settlers to evacuate the Armenian houses as soon as possible. Only houses that were not claimed back or surplus buildings could be rented from the Armenian owners. The decree was nationally announced on 18 December 1918.<sup>180</sup> In addition, the government began collecting intelligence from the provinces. It wired circulars around, asking: 'How many refugees have been left in the open after the return of the Armenians to their homelands? How many people are needy of settlement nowadays? Where are they located? Is there any land suitable for the settlement of the refugees? If so, where and how much?'<sup>181</sup>

This policy of evicting Turks three years after they were settled in Armenian houses inadvertently bred resentment against Armenian returnees. But since the Armenians were offered protection as Ottoman citizens again, violence against them was no longer followed by impunity. The Turkish settlers therefore resorted to writing angry or desperate letters to the government. A group of Balkan refugees who had been settled in Armenian houses in Bursa petitioned the Interior Ministry in July 1919, explaining their background as destitute and penniless Balkan refugees from Western Thrace. The settlers were now again dispossessed and powerless, wandering around the city. They requested help from the government.<sup>182</sup> But the Ministry's hands were tied: the first offense had been done to Armenians and they were the rightful owners of the houses and the land surrounding it.<sup>183</sup> From then on, protests and complaint petitions poured into the Interior Ministry. The Turkish settlers refused to evacuate houses they believed they had honestly bought from the Abandoned Properties Commissions.<sup>184</sup> Out of frustration and fear of loss, some settlers began burning and destroying beyond repair the houses they were living in. The government attempted to prevent and arbitrate these inevitable conflicts by issuing a national directive, prohibiting the damaging of the houses.<sup>185</sup> In these cases, the returnees were entitled to financial compensation. For example, in 1915 an Armenag Kurkjian from Edirne was stripped of his property for an insignificant amount of money. His house and household items were taken by a gendarmerie captain who was now dispossessed, and Kurkjian was additionally compensated for his losses.<sup>186</sup>

The government's policies on return and restitution opened a Pandora's Box and exposed the depth of the CUP's confiscation policies. For example, the Armenian Patriarchate as an institution had been abolished and moved to Jerusalem in 1916. In the interior, the entire infrastructure of the church had been usurped and confiscated. The Interior Ministry ordered all Armenian church property, including seminaries and houses, immediately returned to the church.<sup>187</sup> After all, the right to exist of the Armenian millet was a cornerstone of the structure of the Ottoman state. These collective social arrangements needed to be aligned again. The many factories of Armenians needed to be returned too. A general order was issued to that end and bit by bit some returnees were restituted. Some returnees wrote to the relevant authorities even before they embarked on their journey back from Syria. Two Armenian brothers from Ezine, for example, had lost two factories, a house, and land to the

confiscations. They applied to the local authorities and the property was restored to their rightful owners.<sup>188</sup>

The process was slow. In most cases, the government had to chase the local authorities and urge them to restitute property. Yervant Odian, who had survived the genocide because of a bureaucratic mistake, was on his way back from Der Zor to Istanbul when he met İzmit Armenians on the train. When he asked what happened to their fields and goods, the refugees answered: ‘They gave our houses back to us without difficulty... but in what state! They’d not left any glass, windows or tiles. There are houses whose staircases and shutters have been taken. And there’s no sign of any furniture whatsoever. As for the goods in our shops, everything has been sold.’ Odian asked about compensation and the family answered that there were no interlocutors and that no arrangements had been made.<sup>189</sup> This was in winter 1918, but by the spring the İzmit Armenians still had not been compensated. Due to footdragging by local authorities, the Interior Ministry had to order İzmit province expressly to push on and complete the process.<sup>190</sup>

Soon, other problems arose as well. Many Armenians had lost their title deeds and other relevant documentation, and could not always prove the property was theirs. For example, the brothers Levon Margosian and Puzant Margosian had owned a shop in Yozgat, worth 1000 Turkish Lira. The shop had been confiscated and ‘bought’ by the Abandoned Properties Commission for only 133 Turkish Lira. After the war, Puzant was the only one who returned to Yozgat as his brother Levon had been killed. Now, as the rightful heir Puzant petitioned the authorities to claim his shop back. But he was rebuffed because he could neither produce property documents, nor was there a law or regulation about inheritance questions such as this.<sup>191</sup> The Ministry now had to deal with this reality on the ground and issued the *ad hoc* directive that only the ‘real owners’ (*sahib-i hakikiler*) could reclaim property upon ‘appearance in person’ (*isbat-ı vücud*).<sup>192</sup> The same regulation came into force regarding movable property. For example, lumberman Melkon Garabedian from Kayseri was murdered in 1915 and his wife Gulezar was deported. Their workshop and the movable properties in it, including a printing press, a paper machine, boxes of printing paper, sofas, tables, and tools, had all been confiscated by the local CUP branch. In 1919, their son Sarkis returned to Kayseri alone and reclaimed his parents’ property. But the government refused to render him the property because none of it was registered in his name. Only after a profound background check was Sarkis Garabedian allowed to keep the printing press.<sup>193</sup>

The process of return and restitution bumped along for a while but would not last very long. Intra-state and inter-state developments would frustrate and ultimately terminate the process. First of all, the Young Turk movement had not collapsed but merely suffered a setback. When the Allies occupied Istanbul, the party cadre was forced to go underground. This was not a novelty for men who were used to operating clandestinely – they had done so for years before 1913. The party continued to operate secretly and the Anatolian infrastructure was still standing tall. It succeeded in launching to the interior several officers and officials who were not implicated in the genocide, such as Mustafa Kemal Pasha. As the movement gained strength, the Istanbul government could no longer exert its authority over the provinces and was effectively disempowered. The resurrected Young Turks, or ‘Kemalists’ as they would come to be known, obstructed any and all efforts of restitution to Armenians. The regime followed a policy of expulsion in peacetime and massacre in wartime to ‘mop up’ Armenian returnees.<sup>194</sup> In 1923, hegemony was theirs again when they abolished the Istanbul government and proclaimed a Turkish nation state.

External pressure also dwindled. The British High Commissioner in Istanbul reported the government’s studies on restitution of the abandoned properties and concluded that:

Owing to the weakness and neglect of the local authorities, arrangements for the restitution of Christian property appears to have come to a standstill excepting during the temporary presence of British officers. In several districts, owing to growing insecurity, the returned Christian refugees are now showing anxiety to leave again for the coast, rather than to be placed in possession of their lands and houses, and in some cases where the deportation and massacre of Armenians was carried out with special thoroughness, practically no survivors are forthcoming to claim restitution. Under these circumstances it is questionable whether, in the absence of any power to enforce obedience, insistence on the execution of these measures may not act merely as an irritant, but be productive of more harm than good to returned refugees.<sup>195</sup>

This was the fait accompli the Young Turk leaders had hoped for: in the face of overwhelming new realities on the ground, reversing the policy would be an obstacle to 'peace', unjust or not. Ultimately, 'believing reconciliation with the Nationalists necessary, the British government in early 1921 dropped much of its policy on war crimes'.<sup>196</sup> Subsequently, external pressure for restitution evaporated too.

But the story does not end there. Historians have propounded the thesis that a clear continuity can be observed between the Ittihadist regime of 1913-18 (the Committee of Union and Progress), and the Kemalist regime of 1919-50 (the Republican People's Party). As Bedross Der Matossian has argued, whereas the former pro-actively confiscated Armenian property, the latter retroactively appropriated it.<sup>197</sup> To be sure, the line between these two acts was thin. The Republican Archives offer material to assess how the cadre of the second regime dealt with the crimes of the first, including the genocide. It becomes clear that the Kemalists offered full impunity to the perpetrators, rehabilitated their reputations, and widely reimbursed their families, often specifically with Armenian property.

For example, the family of district governor of Muş, Servet Bey, who in 1915 had annihilated the Armenians of that city, was awarded a composite package of Armenian property. The family of Cemal Azmi, the murderous governor of Trabzon, was also assigned considerable 'reparation', specifically from Armenian properties.<sup>198</sup> Hafız Abdullah Avni, a hotel owner who had collaborated in the genocide in Erzincan, was executed for his crimes in 1920 by the Istanbul tribunal. His wife Hatice Hanım was compensated with a house and a field from the Armenian villages of Şuhe and Kani.<sup>199</sup> The fanatical district governor of Boğazlıyan, Mehmed Kemal Bey, had left behind a family in Yozgat. They received a large apartment and a house from the available Armenian property in that area.<sup>200</sup> Dr. Bahaeddin Shakir Bey's family received a house in the up-market Şişli district of Istanbul.<sup>201</sup> The former district governor of Urfa, Mehmed Nusret Bey, had played a key role during the genocide and was executed in 1919 for his crimes. His wife Hayriye Hanım was compensated with a shop and a house in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district, on Cadde-i Kebîr (the current İstiklâl Caddesi) on numbers 264 and 266. The property was located in the Aznavur Han and originally belonged to a merchant named Bedros.<sup>202</sup> Cemal Pasha's heirs and family was compensated with the property of Vicken Hokachian, a merchant in Istanbul. A shop and a strip of land in Beyoğlu across the French cemetery, as large as 1450 square meters, was assigned to his wife Senice, his daughter Kamran, his sons Ahmed Rüşdü, Hasan Necdet, and Hasan Behçet, his big sister Şaziye and little sister Bakire.<sup>203</sup> The list is long: the files contain details on the original owners and new recipients, as well as on the nature, size, and location of the property. All are signed by President Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his cabinet of veteran Young Turks, including Mustafa Abdülhalik Renda, Mahmud Celâl Bayar, and Şükrü Kaya.

From 1923 on, untroubled by restraints of any kind, the appropriation and colonization process continued behind the tightly closed curtains of national sovereignty. Turks who wanted to establish businesses and factories were assigned the necessary goods from Armenian ‘abandoned property’. For example, in Akhisar the local parliamentarian Reşad Bey had established the Tobacconists Bank to grow tobacco, a ‘Turkish Incorporated Company’ (Türk Anonim Şirketi). He was allocated 222 acres of formerly Armenian-owned land and a store belonging to the Armenian merchant Tomas Keserian. The store had been given to settlers but since it was necessary for Reşad Bey’s company, the settlers were moved out and the property transferred.<sup>204</sup> Reorganization of this kind to bring about an economically optimal distribution of property was ubiquitous after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. A major criterion was loyalty to the Young Turk movement during the Greco-Turkish war (1919-1922) and Turko-Armenian war (1920). Thus, a certain Ali Rıza Bey, resident in İzmir on Celal Bey Street number 5, was assigned an ‘Armenian house’ (Ermeni hânesi) for his ‘beneficial service to the national struggle’ (mücadele-i milliyede hüsn-i hidmet).<sup>205</sup>

During these wars, an important measure the fledgling Kemalist movement took was the cancellation of paying any dues or rent to Armenians for their property.<sup>206</sup> This too, was a signal that the property rights of Armenians were not to be respected. In this, the Kemalists did not differ from the Ittihadists. The continuity between the two regimes is demonstrated most clearly in the intentions of both governments. Two weeks after the devastating Greco-Turkish war was concluded with the burning of İzmir/Smyrna, the army asked the government to create a detailed inventory of all abandoned property in the territories then under Young Turk control. The declared objective was that Greeks and Armenians’ ‘material ties to Anatolia will be disconnected’ (Anadolu ile maddi alâkaları kesilmiş bulunacaktır).<sup>207</sup> A nearly identical order had been given in August 1915. The Turkish settlers had been dispossessed because of the return of the Armenians in 1918-19, but after 1919 Armenians were being dispossessed again. The Young Turks again re-assigned the properties, and the Turkish settlers had the last laugh.

Struggles over Armenian property, such as those in the summer of 1915, continued in the 1920s too. An interesting example is the correspondence between three ministries in 1925. On 22 January 1925, the Ministry of Defense appealed to the Interior Ministry to be given a plot of Armenian land in Urfa to construct a pavillion for the 14th squadron’s artillerymen. (Ironically, artillerymen had bombed the Armenian quarter to ruin in 1915.) When the Prime Minister’s Office checked with the Ministry of Economy whether this was possible, it received a negative answer. Abandoned property was not to be given away for free, even to the army, and property transfers needed to comply with the 20 April 1922 law. Consequently, the Prime Minister wrote to the Ministry of Defense that the land was not without cost but could be ‘transferred in return for a compensation amount’ (bedel miktarı mukabilinde temlik). In other words, Armenian property was no longer free of charge but could only be bought.<sup>208</sup> Finally, it is also noteworthy that ‘Turkification’ as known in 1914 before the war continued in the 1920s. The government attempted to have not just more, but exclusively Turks employed in the country’s labour market.<sup>209</sup>

Struggle and consensus over Armenian property complemented each other throughout the 1920s and 1930s. This was a period of economic crisis, international polarization due to the radicalization of politics across Europe, and domestic upheaval due to a series of violent Kurdish protest movements against the regime. The ‘rebellions’ were quelled with enormous levels of violence, including mass executions of elites, deportations, and continuing persecutions. In the wake of the repression, former governor of Bitlis and Aleppo, Mustafa Abdülhalik Renda (1881-1957), advised the government on issues of property and population policy. He wrote a letter to Prime Minister İsmet İnönü, arguing: ‘Based on my observations

and recent research, the Kurdish question can best be solved if we settle Turkish migrants in villages left by Armenians... Therefore, I am of the opinion that the lands of abandoned property in the provinces Diyarbekir, Siirt, Bitlis, Van, and Muş should not be sold...<sup>210</sup>

Renda also presented an elaborate report in Ankara on 14 September 1925. He had traversed the eastern provinces and had 'determined where the Kurds live and how many they are' and 'what language the population uses'. According to Renda, the registered population east of the Euphrates was 1,360,000 of which 993,000 were Kurds, 251,000 Turks and 117,600 Arabs. He charted the ethnic composition of the eastern provinces region by region, lamenting the 'dominant economic and linguistic position of the Kurds' and 'gradual growth of the Kurdish population' in most provinces, including Diyarbekir. Since 'the entire region was full of Kurdish villages and the Kurds were surging into Armenian villages', he rejected the idea of Kurdish-Turkish coexistence and deemed it 'necessary to settle Turks in strategic axes'. An axis of settlement needed to be carved out from Antep to Diyarbekir over the Urfa road. Moreover, 'it is possible to settle Turkish immigrants on the fertile land... of the Armenian villages' and prohibit Kurds from living there. Renda believed that the program of deportation would be easier to implement by building railways and declaring a decade of martial law. Besides using forced population transfer as a method of 'Turkifying' the eastern provinces, he called for forced assimilation and total disarmament 'to make Turks out of the Kurds'.<sup>211</sup>

By the 1940s, the problem of property confiscated during the genocide had become a non-issue domestically. Armenians suffered economic destruction twice more during the Republic. The first episode of dispossession was the discriminatory 1942 Wealth Tax (Varlık Vergisi), ostensibly levied on Turkey's wealthiest citizens to raise funds in the case of the country's eventual entry into World War II. But this was a pretext as non-Muslims (Jews, Greeks, Armenians, Levantines) were disproportionately targeted for dispossession. Those who were unable, approximately 2000 men, were deported to a forced labor camp near Erzurum.<sup>212</sup> Another climax of economic destruction was reached in the 6-7 September 1955 pogrom in Istanbul. A mob, carefully organized and instructed by a secret branch of the Turkish army, looted, trashed, murdered, and raped their way through Istanbul's Greek district. While the main targets were Greek shops, dozens of Armenian businesses were destroyed as well, and an Armenian priest was killed.<sup>213</sup>

If we accept this pogrom as the last in a long series of violence against Armenians, then our balance sheet is grim. Between 1895 and 1955, the time span of a human life, Ottoman Armenians have been comprehensively dispossessed and economically, culturally, and physically destroyed. The consequences of this spectrum and continuum of violence were irreversible. They also undoubtedly extended beyond the Armenian community and affected Middle Eastern and Caucasian economies more broadly over the long term.

## Discussion

The expropriation of Ottoman Armenians was a functionally necessary phase linking persecution to destruction. Dispossessed and uprooted, the Ottoman Armenians' chances of survival and maintenance gradually shrunk to a minimum. Every step in the persecution process contributed to the weakening and emasculating of Armenians. It robbed them not only of their possessions, but also of possibilities for escape, refuge, or resistance. The more they were dispossessed, the more defenseless they became against Young Turk measures.

The structure of this process can metaphorically be imagined like a three-pronged Matrushka doll. This is a design paradigm that can be analyzed at the macro, meso, and micro-levels, bearing in mind the relevant connections between the three levels. The macro-



level concerns the context and structure of the political elite that led the empire to war and genocide. They launched the policies out of ideological conviction: the war offered an indispensable opportunity to establish the 'national economy' through 'Turkification'. They created a universe of impunity in which every institution and individual below them could think of Armenians as outlawed and their property as fair game, up for grabs. If it is the opportunity that creates the crime, then Talaat created an opportunity structure in which ordinary Turks came to plunder on a mass scale.

Now the second Matrushka enters into force. Within the structure of national policy were nestled developments such as complex decision-making processes, the necessity and logic of a division of labor, the emergence of specialized confiscation units, and the segregation and destruction of the victim group. This level was characterized by competition, contestation, and clashes over coveted property. Local elites and state institutions such as the army, several ministries, the fiscal authorities, the provincial government, and the party, collaborated for their own reasons. The main agencies were the police, militia and civil administration. Several ministries were involved in the expropriation process and benefited greatly from it, most notably the Ministries of Education, Justice, Finance, Health, and Interior. The Ottoman Bank and the Agricultural Bank exploited the process unscrupulously for their own ends. The effects of the economic war against the Armenians raises questions about the implication of these institutions.

At the heart of the Matrushkas tucked away lays the smallest but most venomous doll: the mass mobilization that the upper echelons have brought on. At the micro-level, the process facilitated hundreds of thousands of individual thefts of deported victims, carried out by ordinary Turks. The mechanisms that propelled plunder were horizontal pull-factors and incentives (zero-sum competition with other plunderers), and vertical pressure (the beginning of the process did not contain precise decrees but was open for liberal interpretation). Thus, ordinary Turks profited in different ways: considerable sections of Ottoman-Turkish society was complicit in the spoliation. Whereas in the countryside a Hobbesian world of unchecked power was unleashed, in the cities, the CUP launched a more careful, restrained path due to firmly established and complex social and bureaucratic structures. This level is in particular important to study the material benefits that accrued to figures within the Young Turk party. In an in-depth study of the phenomenon of class in Turkey, Keyder concluded that 'there was usually one-to-one correspondence between the roster of the Committee of Union and Progress local organization and the shareholders of new companies'.<sup>214</sup> Yusuf Akçura too, reflected after the war on the CUP's economic policies in the past decade and concluded that in Anatolia, 'the Muslim real estate owners and business elite have completely embraced the Committee of Union and Progress'.<sup>215</sup> These arbitrary, corrupt, and nepotistic activities took place behind the juridical façade of government decree. Obviously the criminality of the process was denied by the Young Turks. For example, Cavid Bey said in his 1917 budget speech that their wartime economic policies might not have been by the book, but they nevertheless generated the desired result of an increase of capital owned by Turks.<sup>216</sup>

But history is full of unforeseen and unintended consequences of policies and ideologies. The great unintended consequence of the Young Turk government's dispossession of Armenians was the opportunity it offered local Turks for self-enrichment. To the Interior Ministry, this was not acceptable nor accepted: individual embezzlers were punished by having their rights to Armenian property revoked. Those with ties to local Young Turk party bosses or enough social status and potential to mobilize people got away with their 'crime within a crime'. One can perhaps even conclude that the Young Turk government bought the domestic loyalty of the Turkish people through these practices – initially irresponsible, then outright criminal. The Armenian genocide was a form of state formation that married certain classes and sectors of Ottoman society to the state. It offered those Turks a fast-track to

upward social mobility. So the knife had cut both ways, for the Young Turk movement represented the drive to couple social equality with national homogeneity and political purity.

As Armenians went from riches to ruins, Turks went from rags to riches. But Armenian losses cannot simply be expressed in sums, hectares, and assets. The ideology of ‘National Economy’ did not only assault the target group economically, but also in their collective prestige, esteem, and dignity. Apart from the objective consequences of material loss, the subjective experiences of immaterial loss was inestimable. Proud craftsmen, who had often followed in their ancestors’ footsteps as carpenters, cobblers, tailors, or blacksmiths, now lost their livelihoods. The genocide robbed them not only of their assets but also of their professional identities. Zildjian, world’s largest cymbal producer, was headed by two brothers who escaped persecution because during the war they happened to be in the United States.<sup>217</sup> The Zildjians are world famous and renowned. But entire generations of other famous artisan families disappeared with their businesses, extinguishing the name and quality of certain brands. Gone were the Dadians, Balian, Duzians, Demirjibashians, Bezjians, Vemians, Tirpanjians, Shalvarjians, Cholakians, and many other gifted professionals.

The assets of these and other Armenians were re-used for various purposes: settling refugees and settlers, constructing state buildings, supplying the army, and indeed, the deportation program itself. This leads us to the conclusion that the Ottoman Armenians have inadvertently financed their own destruction.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Doğan Çetinkaya, Muslim Merchants and Working-Class in Action: Nationalism, Social Mobilization and Boycott Movement in the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914 (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Leiden University, 2010), p.134ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp.283-4.

<sup>4</sup> Ryan Gingeras, Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1912-1923 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.40, 197.

<sup>5</sup> Zafer Toprak, ‘İslâm ve İktisat: 1913-1914 Müslüman Boykotajı’, in: Toplum ve Bilim, vol.29-30 (1985), pp.179-99, at p.181.

<sup>6</sup> For a contemporary account see: Ahmed Emin (Yalman), Turkey in the World War (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1930), pp.107-43.

<sup>7</sup> Matthias Bjørnlund, ‘The Persecution of Greeks and Armenians in Smyrna, 1914-16’ (unpublished book chapter, 2010), forthcoming.

<sup>8</sup> Tekin Alp, Türkismus und Pantürkismus (Weimar: Verlag Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1915), pp.39-40.

<sup>9</sup> Paul G. Halpern, A Naval History of World War I (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 76.

<sup>10</sup> John Keegan, The First World War (New York: Vintage, 1998), 217.

<sup>11</sup> Mustafa Aksakal, The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.191.

<sup>12</sup> Tanin, 14 November 1914.

<sup>13</sup> For one of the first official Turkish histories of these campaigns see: Fevzi Çakmak, Büyük Harpte Şark Cephesi Hareketleri: Şark Vilâyetlerimizde. Kafkasyada ve İranda (Ankara: Genelkurmay Matbaası, 1936).

<sup>14</sup> Edward J. Erickson, Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), pp.51-74.

<sup>15</sup> Uğur Ümit Üngör, ‘When Persecution Bleeds into Mass Murder: the Processive Nature of Genocide’, in: Genocide Studies and Prevention, vol.1, no.2 (2006), pp.173-96.

<sup>16</sup> Recently several important survivor accounts have been translated into English, see e.g.: Mikayel Shamtanchian, The Fatal Night: An Eyewitness Account of the Extermination of Armenian Intellectuals in 1915 (Studio City, CA: H. and K. Majikian Publications, 2007); Teotig, Monument to April 11 (London: Gomidas, 2010); Aram Andonian, Exile, Trauma and Death: On the Road to Chankiri with Komitas Vartabed (London: Gomidas, 2010); Yervant Odian, Accursed Years: My Exile and Return from Der Zor, 1914-1919 (London: Gomidas, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Raymond H. Kévorkian, Le génocide des Arméniens (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Feroz Ahmad, ‘The Agrarian Policy of the Young Turks, 1908-1918’, in: Jean-Louis Bacque-Grammont & Paul Dumont (eds.), Economie et société dans l’Empire ottoman (Paris: CNRS, 1983), pp.275-88.

<sup>19</sup> Şevket Pamuk, ‘The Ottoman Economy in World War I’, in: Stephen Broadberry & Mark Harrison (eds.) The Economics of World War I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.112-36.

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- <sup>20</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 98, Bl. 1-3, Deutsche Bank Istanbul branch to Germany embassy, 17 November 1915.
- <sup>21</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 96, Bl. 98-105, Hohenlohe-Langenburg to Erzurum, 3 September 1915.
- <sup>22</sup> André Mandelstam, *La Société des Nations et les Puissances devant le problème arménien* (Beirut: Association Libanaise des Universitaires Arméniens, 1970), pp.489-3.
- <sup>23</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 98, Bl.4, Vice-Consul Ziemke to Istanbul Consulate, 16 November 1915.
- <sup>24</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 55/330, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 29 August 1915.
- <sup>25</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/241, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 1 November 1915.
- <sup>26</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/61, Interior Ministry to Eskişehir, 17 October 1915.
- <sup>27</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/37, Interior Ministry to Aleppo, 16 October 1915.
- <sup>28</sup> Quoted in: Ara Sarafian (ed.), *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2004), p.154.
- <sup>29</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 70/79, Interior Ministry to Diyarbakir, 23 November 1916.
- <sup>30</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 54/301, Interior Ministry to Sivas, Diyarbakir, Mamuret-ul Aziz, 5 July 1915.
- <sup>31</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 56/269, Interior Ministry to Canik, 3 October 1915.
- <sup>32</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 55/280, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 28 August 1915.
- <sup>33</sup> Kaiser, 'Armenian Property', p.68.
- <sup>34</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 55/66, Interior Ministry to Karesi, 17 August 1915.
- <sup>35</sup> PAAA, R14104, Trabzon consul Bergfeld to Reichskanzler Hertling, 1 September 1918.
- <sup>36</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *The Ottoman Empire in World War I* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2006), pp.286-93.
- <sup>37</sup> Mae M. Derdarian, *Vergeen: A Survivor of the Armenian Genocide* (Los Angeles: Atmus, 1996), p.38.
- <sup>38</sup> Shahan Derderian, *Death March: An Armenian Survivor's Memoir of the Genocide of 1915* (Studio City, CA: H. and K. Manjikian, 2008), p.10.
- <sup>39</sup> John Minassian, *Many Hills Yet to Climb: Memoirs of an Armenian Deportee* (Santa Barbara, CA: Jim Cook, 1986), p.48.
- <sup>40</sup> Elise Hagopian Taft, *Rebirth: Veradzoun* (Plandome, NY: New Age, 1981), p.36.
- <sup>41</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 96, Bl.66-68, report by a Red Cross doctor in Erzincan, 29 June 1915.
- <sup>42</sup> NA, RG256/Special Reports and Studies/Inquiry Document 809, William S. Dodd, 'Report of Conditions Witnessed in the Armenian Deportations in Konya, Turkey', 21 December 1917.
- <sup>43</sup> NA, RG59/867.4016/252, Frances C. Gage, 'Report of Difficulties in Armenia'.
- <sup>44</sup> NA, RG59/867.4016/128, Trabzon consul Oscar Heizer to ambassador Henry Morgenthau, 28 July 1915.
- <sup>45</sup> Ahmed Refik, *Kafkas Yollarında: İki Komite İki Kıtâl* (Istanbul: Temel, 1998), p.166.
- <sup>46</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 54/101, IAMM to provinces, 22 June 1915.
- <sup>47</sup> Abraham H. Hartunian, *Neither to Laugh nor to Weep: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), pp.68-9.
- <sup>48</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 69/75, Talat to Sivas province, 23 October 1916.
- <sup>49</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 76/243-14, Talaat to Sivas province, 24 May 1917.
- <sup>50</sup> İsmail Arıkan, *Mahalleimizdeki Ermeniler* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001), pp.28, 92ff.
- <sup>51</sup> Vahram Dadrian, *To the Desert: Pages from my Diary* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2003).
- <sup>52</sup> Donald E. Miller & Lorna Touryan Miller, *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p.11.
- <sup>53</sup> Antranik A. Enkababian, *From Slaughter to Survival* (Catonsville, MD: Aladdin, 1999), p.22.
- <sup>54</sup> Falih Rıfki Atay, *Zeytinadağı* (Istanbul: Bateş, 1981), p.66.
- <sup>55</sup> Ali Fuat Erden, *Birinci Dünya Harbi'nde Suriye Hatıraları* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2003), pp.268-9.
- <sup>56</sup> Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, 'Environmental Scarcity, Mass Violence, and the Limits to Ingenuity', in: *Current History*, vol.95, no.604 (1996), pp.359-65.
- <sup>57</sup> L. Schatkowski Schilcher, 'The Famine of 1915-18 in Greater Syria', in: John P. Spagnola (ed.), *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honor of Albert Hourani* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1992), pp.229-58.
- <sup>58</sup> Studies of 'famine crimes' can offer analytical templates for the Ottoman case, such as the 1932-33 Soviet famine in Ukraine, also known as 'Holodomor'. Stephen G. Wheatcroft, 'Towards Explaining the Soviet Famine of 1931-1933: Political and Natural Factors in Perspective', in: *Food and Foodways*, vol.12, no.2-3 (2004), pp.104-36.
- <sup>59</sup> Hagopian Taft, *Rebirth: Veradzoun*, p.37.
- <sup>60</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 99, Bl.6-8, Dähnhardt to Bethmann Hollweg, 2 October 1915.
- <sup>61</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 99, Bl.87-92, Deutsche Bank official Schultz to Foreign Secretary Jagow 22 November 1915; Kriege to German embassy, 23 December 1915.
- <sup>62</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 99, Ambassador Wolff-Metternich to Reich's Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, 31 January 1916.
- <sup>63</sup> PAAA, R14091, Ambassador Wolff-Metternich to Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, 3 April 1916.
- <sup>64</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 171, Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg to Ambassador Neurath, 10 November 1915.
- <sup>65</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 96, Bl.194-197, Heinrich Janson to the German embassy, 26 August 1915.
- <sup>66</sup> NA, RG59/867.00/783, Edward Nathan to Henry Morgenthau, 22 September 1915.
- <sup>67</sup> Interior Ministry to Kayseri Abandoned Properties Commission, 16 September 1915. The original document is reproduced and translated in: Aris Kalfaian, *Chomaklou: The History of an Armenian Village* (New York: Chomaklou Compatriotic Society, 1982), pp.166-7.
- <sup>68</sup> The contemporary Turkish website of Singer relates the company's growth story in the Ottoman Empire but has no mention of Armenians in its webpage on company history. <<http://www.singer.com.tr/Icerik/Kurumsal/Default.aspx?ID=1>>
- <sup>69</sup> Artem Ohandjanian, *Österreich-Armenien: 1872-1936: Faksimilesammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke* (Vienna: Ohandjanian, 1995), vol.VI, 1914-1915, p.4666.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.4711.

<sup>71</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 99, Bl. 39-44, 57, 60, Ambassador Neurath to Reich's Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, 28 February 1916, appendix 3.

<sup>72</sup> Murat Koraltürk, 'Milliyetçi bir refleks: Yer adlarının Türkleştirilmesi', in: Toplumsal Tarih, vol.19, no.117 (2003), pp.98-9.

<sup>73</sup> Kerem Öktem, 'The Nation's Imprint: Demographic Engineering and the Change of Toponymes in Republican Turkey', in: European Journal of Turkish Studies, vol.7 (2008), at: <<http://ejts.revues.org/index2243.html>>

<sup>74</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 59/239, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 6 January 1916.

<sup>75</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 60/129, Interior Ministry to Trabzon, 26 January 1916.

<sup>76</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 60/275, Interior Ministry to Kayseri, 8 February 1916.

<sup>77</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 61/31, Talaat to all provinces, 16 February 1916.

<sup>78</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 64/39, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 16 May 1916.

<sup>79</sup> According to one study, the CUP's economic 'Turkification' official Kara Kemal set up 70 firms during the war. Osman S. Kocahanoğlu, İttihat-Terakki'nin Sorgulanması ve Yargılanması (Istanbul: Temel, 1998), p.33.

<sup>80</sup> 'Ey Türk! Zengin ol,' in: İkdam, 11 January 1917.

<sup>81</sup> Çağlar Keyder, 'İmparatorluk'tan Cumhuriyet'e Geçişte Kayıp Burjuvazi Aranıyor', Toplumsal Tarih, vol.12, no.68 (1999), pp.4-11.

<sup>82</sup> Ahmet Halaçoğlu, Balkan Harbi Sırasında Rumeli'den Türk Göçleri (1912-1913) (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995).

<sup>83</sup> Alemdar, 27 October 1912, p.3.

<sup>84</sup> Osmanlı Hilâl-i Ahmer Cemiyeti 1329-1331 Salnâmesi (Istanbul: Ahmed Ihsan ve Şürekâsı Matbaacılık Osmanlı Şirketi, 1915), p.220-5.

<sup>85</sup> İkdam, 29 December 1913 (no.6052), p.3.

<sup>86</sup> Cengiz Orhonlu, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Aşiretlerin İskânı (Istanbul: Eren, 1987), p.120.

<sup>87</sup> Zekeriya Sertel, Hatırladıklarım (1905-1950) (Istanbul: Gözlem, 1977), p.82.

<sup>88</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 68/155, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 3 October 1916.

<sup>89</sup> Tasvir-i Efkâr, 3 October 1916.

<sup>90</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 61/247, Interior Ministry to Trabzon, 3 March 1916.

<sup>91</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 53/113, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 25 May 1915.

<sup>92</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 59/107, Interior Ministry to Ankara, Bursa, Kayseri, Konya, and Sivas, 27 December 1915.

<sup>93</sup> Murat Bardakçı, Talât Paşa'nın Evrak-ı Metrûkesi (Istanbul: Everest, 2008), p.95.

<sup>94</sup> Ahmed Refik, İki Komite İki Kitâh, p.136.

<sup>95</sup> BOA, DH.MB.HPS 49/31, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 14 May 1916.

<sup>96</sup> BOA, DH.MB.HPS 25/15, 49/31, various provinces to Interior Ministry, 14-27 May 1916.

<sup>97</sup> BOA, DH.MB.HPS 49/22, Interior Ministry Directorate of Prisons to various provinces, 6 January 1916.

<sup>98</sup> BOA, DH.EUM.MH 118/80, Interior Ministry to İzmit, 9 September 1915.

<sup>99</sup> BOA, DH.EUM.MH 118/80, Interior Ministry to İzmit, 23 January 1916.

<sup>100</sup> BOA, DH.UMVM 151/4, Interior Ministry to various provinces, 11 October 1917.

<sup>101</sup> Interior Ministry to Chairman of the Abandoned Properties Commission of Kayseri, 21 September 1915. The original document is reproduced and translated in: Kalfaian, Chomaklou, pp.168-9.

<sup>102</sup> BOA, DH.MB.HPS 24/23, Interior Ministry to Ankara, 15 August 1916.

<sup>103</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 54/101, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 22 June 1915.

<sup>104</sup> Soner Yalçın, 'Çankaya Köşkü'nün ilk sahibi Ermeni'ydi', Hürriyet, 25 March 2007.

<sup>105</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 54-A/390 and 391, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 13 August 1915.

<sup>106</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 53/287, Interior Ministry to İzmir, 8 June 1915.

<sup>107</sup> BOA, DH.EUM.AYŞ 38/62-46, Aydın governor to Interior Ministry, 27 August 1919.

<sup>108</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 55-A/143, Interior Ministry to Kütahya, 9 August 1915.

<sup>109</sup> BCA, 272.12/36.9.7, Interior Ministry to Tekirdağ, 26 December 1915.

<sup>110</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 55/210, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 25 August 1915.

<sup>111</sup> Bülent Bakar, Ermeni Tehciri ve Uygulaması (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Marmara University, Department of Turkish Studies, 2003), p.103ff.

<sup>112</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 52/292, Interior Ministry to Konya, 9 May 1915.

<sup>113</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/54, Talaat to Şükrü Kaya, 18 October 1915.

<sup>114</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/350, Interior Ministry to Eskişehir, 8 November 1915.

<sup>115</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/342, Interior Ministry to Aleppo, 8 November 1915.

<sup>116</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/349, Interior Ministry to Aleppo, 8 November 1915.

<sup>117</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/348, İAMM to Şükrü Kaya in Aleppo, 8 November 1915.

<sup>118</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 58/24, Interior Ministry to Aleppo, 17 November 1915.

<sup>119</sup> BCA, 272.11/9.14.16, National Defense Society to Interior Ministry, 11 November 1916; Interior Ministry to National Defense Society, 20 November 1916.

<sup>120</sup> BCA, 30.10/140.1.27, Minister of National Defense to Prime Ministry, 31 August 1925; Prime Minister to Ministry of National Defense, undated.

<sup>121</sup> Pierre Merdjimékian, Les Arméniens d'Angora Déportés et Massacrés: Pourquoi??? et Comment??? (Cairo: Hindîé, 1920), pp.7-8.

<sup>122</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p.295.

<sup>123</sup> NA, RG59/867.4016/137, Konya consul William S. Dodd to ambassador Henry Morgenthau, 15 August 1915.

- <sup>124</sup> NA, RG59/867.4016/251, Wilfred Post to W. Peet, 25 November 1915.
- <sup>125</sup> NA, RG59/867.4016/128, Trabzon consul Heizer to ambassador Morgenthau, 28 July 1915.
- <sup>126</sup> Vahan Hambartsumian, Village World: Kiughashkharh (Paris: Daron, 1927), pp.157-8.
- <sup>127</sup> NA, RG256/Special Reports and Studies/Inquiry Document 818, Statement by George E. White, President of Anatolia College, Marsovan (undated).
- <sup>128</sup> PAAA, Botschaft Konstantinopel 171, Notes by Consul Mordtmann, 6 November 1915.
- <sup>129</sup> Lewis Einstein, A Diplomat Looks Back (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), p.136.
- <sup>130</sup> Baruir Nercessian, I Walked Through the Valley of Death (New York: n.p., 2003), pp.18-9.
- <sup>131</sup> NA, RG256/Special Reports and Studies/Inquiry Document 818, Statement by George E. White, President of Anatolia College, Marsovan (undated).
- <sup>132</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 58/158, Interior Ministry to Karahisar-ı Sahib, 29 November 1915.
- <sup>133</sup> BCA, 272.12/36.12.6, Interior Ministry to various provinces, 9 February 1916 and 8 March 1916.
- <sup>134</sup> Kaiser, 'Armenian Property', p.67.
- <sup>135</sup> NA, RG256/Special Reports and Studies/Inquiry Document 809, William S. Dodd, 'Report of Conditions Witnessed in the Armenian Deportations in Konya, Turkey', 21 December 1917.
- <sup>136</sup> Ahmet Refik (Altınay), İki Komite İki Kıtıl (ed. Hamide Koyukan) (Ankara: Kebikeç, 1994), p.179.
- <sup>137</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 59/196, Interior Ministry to Eskişehir, 4 January 1916.
- <sup>138</sup> BOA, DH.EUM.KLH 2/16, 12 June 1916.
- <sup>139</sup> Quoted in: Christian Gerlach, 'Nationsbildung im Krieg: Wirtschaftliche Faktoren bei der Vernichtung der Armenier und beim Mord an den ungarischen Juden', in: Hans-Lukas Kieser & Dominik Schaller (eds.), Der Völkermord an den Armeniern und die Shoah: The Armenian Genocide and the Shoah (Zürich: Chronos, 2002), pp.347-422, at p.386.
- <sup>140</sup> Odian, Accursed Years, pp.140, 279.
- <sup>141</sup> Alemdar, 4, 8, 9, and 11 January 1919.
- <sup>142</sup> Ephraim K. Jernazian, Judgment unto Truth: Witnessing the Armenian Genocide (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1990), pp.93-5.
- <sup>143</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 54-A/259, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 3 August 1915.
- <sup>144</sup> BOA, DH.EUM.MEM 71/53, Interior Ministry to Bursa, 10 December 1915.
- <sup>145</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 56/179, Talaat to Mazhar, 26 September 1915.
- <sup>146</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 56/207, Interior Ministry to Bursa, 28 September 1915.
- <sup>147</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/208, Interior Ministry to Bursa, 31 October 1915.
- <sup>148</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 54-A/388, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 11 August 1915.
- <sup>149</sup> For a discussion of Mehmed Kemal's trial see: Vahakn N. Dadrian, 'The Turkish Military Tribunal's Prosecution of the Authors of the Armenian Genocide: Four Major Court-Martial Series', in: Holocaust and Genocide Studies, vol.11, no.1 (1997), pp.28-59.
- <sup>150</sup> Nejdet Bilgi, Ermeni Tehciri ve Boğazlıyan Kaymakamı Mehmed Kemal Bey'in Yargılanması (Ankara: KÖKSAV, 1999), p.86 footnote 25.
- <sup>151</sup> Kaiser, 'Armenian Property', p.67.
- <sup>152</sup> PAAA, R14086, Ab.22101, attachment, report by vice-consul Kuckhoff, 4 July 1915.
- <sup>153</sup> Ohandjanian, Österreich-Armenien, vol.VI, p.4727, report dated 27 August 1915.
- <sup>154</sup> Pomiankowski, Der Zusammenbruch des Ottomanischen Reiches, p.165.
- <sup>155</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 57/261, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 2 November 1915.
- <sup>156</sup> PAAA, R14090, Aleppo consul Rößler to ambassador Wolff-Metternich, 3 January 1916.
- <sup>157</sup> Henry Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau's Story (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas, 2000), pp.224-5.
- <sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.256-7.
- <sup>159</sup> PAAA, R14093, Valentini to Bethmann-Hollweg, 10 September 1916.
- <sup>160</sup> Vedat Eldem, Harp ve Mütareke Yıllarında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Ekonomisi (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), pp.33-9, 75ff..
- <sup>161</sup> Krikoris Balakian, Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide (New York: Vintage Books, 2009), p.180.
- <sup>162</sup> Vakit, 29 November 1919.
- <sup>163</sup> Eldem, Harp ve Mütareke, p.131.
- <sup>164</sup> Falih Rıfkı Atay, Çankaya (Istanbul: Doğan Kardeş Basımevi, 1969), p.450. The situation in the Caucasus was horrific too. The many Armenian refugees who fled to Russian territory were living in absolutely wretched conditions. Totomianz, 'Armenia's Economic Position', in: Review of International Co-operation, vol.12 (1919), pp.119-22.
- <sup>165</sup> Zafer Toprak, Türkiye'de 'Millî İktisat' (1908-1918) (Ankara: Yurt, 1982), p.422.
- <sup>166</sup> Çerkez Hasan, 'Peki yüzbinlerce Ermeni'yi kim öldürdü?', Alemdar, 5 April 1919.
- <sup>167</sup> Alemdar, 12 March 1919.
- <sup>168</sup> Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi (Ankara: TBMM Matbaası, 1992), period 3, vol.1, assembly year 5, meeting 23, 9 December 1918, pp.257-8.
- <sup>169</sup> Vakit, 1 December 1919.
- <sup>170</sup> Alpay Kabacalı (ed.), Talât Paşa'nın Anıları (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2000), pp.49-79, 159-60.
- <sup>171</sup> Frankfurter Zeitung, 9 March 1919.
- <sup>172</sup> Osman S. Kocahanoğlu (ed.), İttihat ve Terakki'nin Sorgulanması ve Yargılanması (Istanbul: Temel, 1998), p.41.
- <sup>173</sup> James F. Willis, Prologue to Nuremberg: The Politics and Diplomacy of Punishing War Criminals of the First World War (London: Greenwood Press, 1982), p.154. British officials also applied pressure on the new government to return all confiscated Armenian and Greek property to their rightful owners. See the correspondence in: BCA, 272.65/6.2.11, 17 February 1919.

- <sup>174</sup> Takvim-i Vekâyi, no.3604, enclosure dated 22 July 1919.
- <sup>175</sup> Dadrian, 'The Turkish Military Tribunal's Prosecution'.
- <sup>176</sup> The trials are extensively discussed in: Taner Akçam & Vahakn N. Dadrian (eds.), Tehcir ve Taktik Divan-ı Harb-i Örfi Zabıtları: İttihad ve Terakki'nin Yargılanması 1919-1922 (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008).
- <sup>177</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 95/163, Ahmed İzzet to all provinces, 18 January 1919.
- <sup>178</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 95/256, Ahmed İzzet to all provinces, 26 January 1919; DH.ŞFR 96/195, Ahmed İzzet to all provinces, 15 February 1919; DH.ŞFR 96/248, Ahmed İzzet to all provinces, 20 February 1919.
- <sup>179</sup> BCA, 272.12/38.24.17, 15 February 1919. See also: Alemdar, 27 December 1918.
- <sup>180</sup> Hadisat, 16 December 1918.
- <sup>181</sup> BCA, 272.11/14.50.12, Interior Ministry to various provinces, 28 June 1919.
- <sup>182</sup> BCA, 272.11/14.51.3, Mehmed Şevki Bey to Interior Ministry, 5 July 1919.
- <sup>183</sup> Ibid., Interior Ministry to Bursa, 10 August 1919.
- <sup>184</sup> BCA, 272.11/14.51.2, various letters dated 8-19 August 1919.
- <sup>185</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 93/31, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 5 November 1918.
- <sup>186</sup> BCA, 272.11/15.57.2, Interior Ministry to Edirne, 11 March 1920.
- <sup>187</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 93/108, Interior Ministry to all provinces, 9 November 1918.
- <sup>188</sup> See the correspondence in: BCA, 272.11/13.42.4, various letters in mid-December 1918.
- <sup>189</sup> Odian, Accursed Years, p.304.
- <sup>190</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 97/155, Interior Ministry to İzmit, 16 March 1919.
- <sup>191</sup> BCA, 272.11/13.47.10, Puzant Margosian to Interior Ministry, 1 May 1919.
- <sup>192</sup> BOA, DH.ŞFR 99/35, Interior Ministry to Bitlis, 4 May 1919.
- <sup>193</sup> See the correspondence in: BCA, 272.11/14.52.15, various letters dated 17 August and 22 October 1919.
- <sup>194</sup> Levon Marashlian, 'Finishing the Genocide: Cleansing Turkey of Armenian Survivors, 1920-1923', in: Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1998), pp.113-45.
- <sup>195</sup> Quoted in: Bilal Şimşir (ed.), British Documents on Atatürk (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1973), vol.I, p.57.
- <sup>196</sup> Willis, Prologue to Nuremberg, p.161.
- <sup>197</sup> Bedross Der Matossian, 'From Confiscation to Appropriation: Historical Continuity and the Destruction of the "Armenian Economy" in the Ottoman Empire', in: The Armenian Weekly, 73:16 (24 April 2007), pp.22-3, 27.
- <sup>198</sup> BCA, 30.18.1.1/25.38.4, file 137-78, number 5331, decree dated 15 June 1927.
- <sup>199</sup> BCA, 30.18.1.1/23.7.1, file 137-74, number 4699, decree dated 2 February 1927.
- <sup>200</sup> BCA, 30.18.1.1/23.7.12, file 137-75, number 4710, decree dated 2 February 1927.
- <sup>201</sup> BCA, 30.18.1.1/23.7.18, number 4716, 13 February 1927.
- <sup>202</sup> BCA, 30.18.1.1/27.70.3, decree dated 25 December 1927.
- <sup>203</sup> BCA, 30.18.1.1/25.49.8, decree dated 30 August 1927.
- <sup>204</sup> BCA, 30.18.1.1/11.45.11, decree dated 21 September 1924. The Ministry of Economy assigned two large 'abandoned' buildings to the İzmir Stock Exchange Administration (İzmir Borsa İdaresi), and the Armenian-owned Fındıklıyan Flour Factory in Edirne was rented out to the municipal authorities for ten years. BCA, 30.18.1.1/13.20.12, Decree, 29 March 1925; BCA, 30.18.1.1/18.26.9, Decree, 6 April, 1926. The same ministry offered Armenian property to the Industrial Enterprises Turkish Joint-Stock Company (Teşebbüsat-ı Sana'iyeye Türk Anonim Şirketi), which provided electricity to support the state in producing canned food, textile and alcohol factories. To support this firm, the Cabinet sold many Armenian properties in August 1928. BCA, 30.18.1.1/30.48.15, Decree, 5 August 1928.
- <sup>205</sup> BCA, 272.11/18.87.3, Minister of Population Exchange, Public Works, and Settlement to Governor of İzmir, June 1924.
- <sup>206</sup> BCA, 272.11/17.74.15, decree dated 29 January 1924, signed by İsmet Pasha.
- <sup>207</sup> BCA, 30.10/218.472.11, Chief of Staff Field Marshal Fevzi Çakmak to Cabinet, 27 September 1922.
- <sup>208</sup> BCA, 30.10/140.1.26, Ministry of National Defense to Prime Ministry, 22 January 1925; Ministry of Economy to Prime Ministry, 28 October 1925; Prime Ministry to Ministry of National Defense, undated.
- <sup>209</sup> Murat Koraltürk, 'Yabancı sermayeli imtiyazlı şirketlerde işgücünü Türkleştirme uygulamaları (1923-1930)', in: Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar, vol.7 (Summer 2008), pp.61-99.
- <sup>210</sup> BCA, 30.10/80.529.20, Mustafa Abdülhalik Renda to Prime Minister İsmet İnönü, 2 August 1925.
- <sup>211</sup> Transliterated and reproduced in: Mehmet Bayrak (ed.), Kürtler ve Ulusal-Demokratik Mücadeleleri: Gizli Belgeler - Araştırmalar - Notlar (Ankara: Özge, 1993), pp.452-67.
- <sup>212</sup> For an Armenian account see: Zaven Biberyan, Babam Aşkale'ye Gitmedi (Istanbul: Aras, 2000).
- <sup>213</sup> Speros Vryonis Jr., The Mechanism of Catastrophe: The Turkish Pogrom of September 6-7, 1955 and the Destruction of the Greek Community of Istanbul (New York: Greekworks, 2005).
- <sup>214</sup> Çağlar Keyder, State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development (London: Verso, 1987), p.63.
- <sup>215</sup> Yusuf Akçuraoğlu, Siyaset ve İktisat Hakkında Birkaç Hitabe ve Makale (Istanbul: Yeni Matbaa, 1924), p.27.
- <sup>216</sup> Toprak, Türkiye'de 'Millî İktisat', p.68.
- <sup>217</sup> See: <<http://www.zildjian.com/en-US/about/timeline.ad2>>