

Knowing and Doing

The Armenian Genocide in Official Swedish Reports

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Objectivity as Creditable Factor

Objectivity, or rather the lack of it, is one of the main arguments in the Armenian Genocide denial. Our knowledge of the Armenian Genocide is nowadays based on rich witness accounts and archive sources from the Major Powers involved in the First World War – WWI – namely Great Britain, France, USA but also Germany, Austria and Turkey. Notwithstanding, in substantiation of the Armenian Genocide denial, it is often argued that the underlying information found in Entente archives and media were unreliable since they were rather war propaganda, exaggerated and even untrue. The numerous witness accounts and reports by missionary workers, e.g. the Swedish Alma Johansson, have been dismissed due to their religious compassion for the Christian victims. It is in the light of similar accusations, although mostly unfounded and misleading, the diplomatic and military reports of neutral Sweden emerge as highly interesting and important source to the events of WWI. This provided Sweden with a wide network of intelligence gathering, diplomatic as well as military, not only from the Ottoman Turkey and its allied Germany, but also from other neutral states, the Entente powers as well as the representatives of the affected minorities in the Empire.

Up to 1920 and its entry into the League of Nations, Sweden adhered to a strict rule

of neutrality in regard to its foreign policy. Nonetheless, Sweden was considered Germanophile while conducting strict neutrality towards other warring states.¹ The Swedish anxiousness for neutrality can be observed in an appeal by the Foreign Ministry to the Publishers' Club during early stages of the war. The Swedish Press was encouraged to report "fully objective and without taking sides for or against any of the warring parties as well as avoiding any perceived offensive judgment."² The trade and industry actors were also active in this regard, urging major newspapers to display restraint in their foreign reporting. "If the Swedish press would act inappropriate, Swedish economic relations with the insulted state could be harmed for years to come, thereby damaging the country's economy at large."³ The realpolitik interests were already at work.

The Swedish Press was, however, not immune to external encroachment. Among others, a special bureau was created to provide the Swedish countryside papers with articles from the German press. "About 50 papers were among the receivers, mostly conservative organs, but also a number of liberal papers."⁴ In order to further influence Swedish opinion, Germany secretly purchased the majority of the shares in the newspapers *Aftonbladet* and *Dagen*. Having a total of 92,000 in circulation, this meant

that the newspapers equalled the circulation of the Entente-friendly *Dagens Nyheter* and *Social-Demokraten*.⁵ In spite of the fact that such a large number of newspapers were under German influence, which could have affected the reporting of events in Turkey, the reports about the ongoing massacres and deportations were many in Swedish press. In the light of this information, the diplomatic dispatches from the Swedish Embassy in Constantinople gain even more credibility and value. Almost overwhelmingly marked as “Confidential” or “Strictly Confidential,” the reports were meant for the Foreign Ministry only. This implied that the author enjoyed the liberty of informing Stockholm about the non-censured or sugar-coated version of the events in the Ottoman Empire.

Up to their entry into the war, the American presence in Turkey was probably the foremost source for reports about the Armenian fate. The reports by US diplomats, teachers and medical personnel throughout the Ottoman Empire account for an important part of our knowledge about the Armenian Genocide.⁶ However, once USA abandoned its neutrality in the spring of 1917, joining the Entente Powers against the Ottoman Empire, this source of information ceased. As a matter of fact, the Swedish Embassy in Constantinople was entrusted with the task of handling American interests in the Ottoman Empire in the absence of American envoys. To this end, the Swedish legation expanded its staff with an additional chargé d'affaires, Envoy G. Ahlgren.⁷

Military Reports

That the neutrality of Sweden matters in this context is evident in the often cited Swedish military testimony by Major Gustav Hjalmar Pravitz, even though it is used by the genocide deniers. He was actually stationed in Persia, not in the Ottoman Empire,

a member of the Swedish military mission invited to improve Persia's gendarmerie and police operations. Upon his return to Sweden he published an article (April 23, 1917) in *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*,⁸ denouncing the reports about an ongoing annihilation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. His remarks were based on his observations during the journey by car (with a Turkish chauffeur assigned by the Turkish government) from Constantinople to the Persian border. Pravitz admitted that he had seen dead bodies and dying people begging for a piece of bread, but, with the exception of one case, he did not see the alleged violence used against the Armenian “emigrants.”⁹ He also mentions meeting an Armenian in a concentration camp (*koncentrationsläger*), itself an interesting choice of word in the context of this study.¹⁰ However, in order to be able to put Pravitz's observations and interpretation into perspective, it is necessary to also reflect upon his personal view in regard to the Armenian people as such. In his book,¹¹ Pravitz renders his views regarding Persia, the Persians and the minorities living in the country. His description of the Armenian element was hardly flattering and Jews and Armenians were described as “lying merchants” and Armenians as “highly untrustworthy.”¹² In general, the “bloody” measures of the Turkish Government towards the “disloyal” Armenians were quite justified, even though innocent people had suffered, too.¹³

Unlike Pravitz, there was another Swedish military witness on site, namely Captain (later Major) Einar af Wirsén, the Military Attaché at the Swedish Embassy. He arrived to Constantinople in late 1915 and stayed in Turkey until 1920. As an officer of neutral Sweden he was able to travel around in Turkey, visit different fronts and be informed about both Turkish and Ger-

man military intelligence and data. In one of his earliest reports, af Wirsén described the situation in Turkey and the spreading of epidemics, mainly typhus, and remarked that the “Armenian persecutions have highly contributed to the spreading of the disease since those deported have died in hundreds of thousands due to hunger and other hardships along the roads.”¹⁴ Even though he mentioned the treatment of the Armenian population in several of his reports to the General Staff in Stockholm, it is in his memoirs we find the most illuminative depiction of the Armenian Genocide. In this book, *Memories from Peace and War* (1942) af Wirsén dedicated an entire chapter to the Armenian Genocide, entitled *The Murder of a Nation*.¹⁵ He wrote: “During the first year of my stay in Turkey an incredible tragedy occurred which belongs to one of the most horrible events which has taken place during the world history. I refer to the destruction of the Armenians.”¹⁶ The subsequent deportations were nothing but a cover for the extermination: “Officially, these had the goal to move the entire Armenian population to the steppe regions of Northern Mesopotamia and Syria, but in reality they aimed to exterminate [utrota] the Armenians, whereby the pure Turkish element in Asia Minor would achieve a dominating position.”¹⁷ af Wirsén points out that the orders were given with utter cunning. The communications were generally given verbally and in extreme secrecy in order to give the government a free hand in the implementation of the massacres.¹⁸ af Wirsén continued “Those who were not murdered, perished due to intentionally evoked hardships under the most revolting circumstances.” af Wirsén’s observation is especially important in regard to the Turkish denial of intent, a central issue in regard to the applicability of the definition of the UN Genocide Con-

vention, arguing that the deportations were rather “relocations” and for the sake of the Armenian population’s safety. However, as Taner Akçam points out, the issue of intent to kill becomes evident once we consider the implemented deportations were done in spite of the total lack of necessary preparations and resources for such an operation.¹⁹ The deportations were simply equal to death.

af Wirsén estimated that around one million Armenians were murdered or perished due to “authority measures.” Keeping this number in mind, one could conclude that at least half the Ottoman Armenians lost their lives, while if the Turkish claims about the pre-WWI Armenian population being less than two million are true, then the losses were even greater proportionally. af Wirsén concludes his chapter with the following words:

The annihilation of the Armenian nation in Asia Minor must revolt all human feelings. It belongs without a doubt to the greatest crimes committed during the recent centuries. The manner by which the Armenian problem was solved was hair-raising. I can still see in front of me Talaat’s cynical expression, when he emphasized that the Armenian Question was solved. And I concur with the words of the German Military Plenipotentiary in Constantinople, General von Lossow, who, even though to some degree defended the Turkish measures, uttered to me in private: “The Armenian massacres are the greatest bestiality in world history.”²⁰

An Ongoing Annihilation:

The Diplomatic Reports 1914–1920

The Swedish Ambassador in Constantinople at this time was the career diplomat Per Gustaf August Cosswa Anckarsvärd, who had been in office since 1908 and would remain there until 1920, when he was trans-

ferred to Warsaw as the new ambassador to Poland.²¹ His numerous reports during this period unambiguously confirmed the genocidal nature of the massacres and deportations sanctioned by the Ottoman government.

Anckarsvärd's reporting about the ominous development in the Ottoman Empire started already in December 1914, when he dispatched a note stating that "the Turkish Parliament has as today been reduced to simply and alone approve the decisions of the ruling party."²² This was an ill-boding premonition of what was about to happen, since the *Union and Progress Party* (Turkish *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), better known in West as *Young Turks*, was in total control over the Empire. The power had in the 1913 coup d'état been concentrated in the hands of a very small clique within the party, led by the triumvirate consisting of Interior Minister Talaat Pasha, the War Minister Enver Pasha, and the Marine Minister and Governor of Aleppo Cemal Pasha. The process, as described in the Swedish reports, reminds strongly of how the Nazis consolidated their power during the 1930s. This was evident in a lengthy report that envoy G. Ahlgren sent on September 10, 1917. In this detailed report, Ahlgren analysed the policy of the *İttihatists* and the means for the consolidation of the power. Initially, they had attempted the policy of "Ottomanization" of the Empire's population in order to homogenize what was left of the Ottoman Empire when the Christian nations on the Balkan had emancipated themselves from Turkish rule and gained their independence. The reform was welcomed by all inhabitants, but the *İttihatists* soon discovered the potentially dangerous aspects of the reform since the minorities started demanding same rights as the Turks, among others

Security for life and property, access to civilian and military offices, yes, even to the government. Such equality would undeniably entail the destruction of the Turkish element's supremacy, which supported itself on neither superior quantity nor intelligence, but has rather came about as the right of the victor.²³

The rulers soon realized that the only solution for maintaining the Turkish hegemony was to attain not only qualitative supremacy, but also a quantitative:

They attempted to make the Turks qualitatively superior by implementing the provisions of the new constitution regarding the civil rights only for themselves and by favouring their intellectual education through all means, while the other nationalities were held at bay as much as possible. They tried to make them quantitatively superior by assimilating other nationalities and, once it failed, soon enough through political persecutions and extermination. It is against this background that one might view the measures against the Armenians and potentially similar actions against the Greeks.²⁴

The similarities with Nazi Germany are striking in regard to the Young Turk's seizure of power by establishing a reign of terror in which there was no room for neither opposition, nor questioning government actions. Since the coup d'état in 1913, the *İttihatists* were ruling the empire with a rod of iron: the political opposition was suffocated and numerous "inconvenient" individuals were apprehended, jailed and "disappeared in one way or another." The result was the transfer of Sultan Abdul Hamid II's unrestricted power to the *İttihatists*. Talaat Pasha supervised the entire composition of the parliament and the appointment of key administrative positions by "loyal followers." The police corps and the army were reorga-

nized, becoming secure tools in the hands of the government. Ahlgren concluded:

An unrestricted power rests now in the hands of a few persons, who are ruthlessly abusing it for implementing their plans and for their own gain, their friends' and their protégés'. The ruthlessness is exercised primarily against the non-Turkish elements of the population.²⁵

The stage was set to get rid of the inconvenient Armenian Question, emerged at the San Stefano Conference in 1878.²⁶

There was, however, one major obstacle left, namely the danger of foreign military intervention, i.e. similar to those which had earlier resulted in the independence of Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania. The golden opportunity would present itself in the shape of World War I.

One of earliest reports by Anckarsvärd on the subject dates to April 30, 1915, in which he talks about the so-called *Hamidian Massacres* during 1894–96²⁷ and the 1909 Adana massacre, but also the arrest of numerous Armenian journalists, doctors and lawyers who had been sent to Angora awaiting trial.²⁸ What he described was the initial phase of the genocide when around 250 Armenian leaders and intellectuals were arrested on the night towards April 24 (thus, the annual commemoration day), sent to the interior of the Empire where the majority of them were executed within 72 hours.

About one month later Anckarsvärd reported about the delivered joint ultimatum by Britain, France and Russia (May 24, 1915) to the Turkish Government, stating that:

In regard to this new crime against humanity and civilisation, the allied governments declare openly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold each member of the Turkish government per-

sonally responsible, as well as those who have participated in these massacres.²⁹

This very first usage of the term “crimes against humanity” in history and its related prosecution within international law would come to be enforced in the 1920 Sèvres Treaty.³⁰

On July 6, 1915, Anckarsvärd sent the first of his six reports that year entitled “The Persecutions of the Armenians.” He wrote:

The persecutions of the Armenians have reached hair-raising proportions and everything points to the fact that the Young Turks want to seize the opportunity, since due to different reasons there is no effective external pressure to be feared, to once and for all put an end to the Armenian Question. The means for this are quite simple and consist of the extermination [utrotandet] of the Armenian nation. /.../ It does not seem to be the Turkish population which acts on its own accord, but the entire movement originates from the government institutions and the Young Turks' Committee which stands behind them and now displays what kind of ideas they harbour. /.../ The German Ambassador has in writing appealed to the Porte, but what can Germany or any other of the Major Powers do as long as the war continues? That the Central Powers would threaten Turkey is for the time being unthinkable, and Turkey is already at war with the majority of the remaining Major Powers.³¹

This report alone confirmed three central issues in the Armenian Genocide. First and foremost, the massacres were planned and sanctioned by the central authorities and not a question about a civil war between Muslims and Christians. Secondly, in regard to the essential issue of intent, the ultimate aim was the “extermination of the Armen-

ian nation”. And finally, the factor of the ongoing war, presenting the splendid opportunity to get rid of “the Armenian Question” without fearing external intervention.

Allied Germany was, however, not entirely indifferent, even though their protests seemed rather a precaution against potential accusations about German complicity. On July 14, Anckarsvärd notified about the German official note to the Ottoman Government in which the German Ambassador protested against the “persecutions of the Armenians.” Even though the actions might be justified from military point of view, the extent and the unnecessary excessive violence would put Turkey in an unfavourable light and open up the opportunity for European intervention in Turkey’s internal affairs as soon as the war ended.³² Germany, however, did hardly anything to stop the massacres other than issuing protest notes.

A new report one day later, on July 15, cited the Armenian Patriarch’s appeal to the Turkish government that

[I]f the aim is to annihilate the Armenian nation, in which case he would be ready to initiate a movement to organize a mass exodus to e.g. South America. In this way the Turks would get rid of the Armenians and they would suffer less than now.³³

One week later Anckarsvärd dispatched a new report fearing that the annihilation policy towards the Armenians would also be implemented towards the Greek population of the Empire.³⁴

The massacres had reached their peak during the summer of 1915, forcing the German Embassy to yet again openly protest the treatment of the Armenians. The tone was sharper this time. The German Ambassador made it clear that

Germany can no longer remain a silent witness to how Turkey, through the Armenian persecutions, was going downhill, morally and economically. Furthermore, they protested against the Porte’s course of actions, based on which her ally Germany becomes suspected of approving these and, finally, Germany renounces any responsibility for the consequences.³⁵

Some weeks later Anckarsvärd noted that the German protests have had little effect and they have only served the purpose of “decreasing the accusations towards Germany’s part in the responsibility.” He continued:

It is considered here that more than half a million Armenians have disappeared, killed or died as a result of diseases and hunger after the deportations. /.../ It is evident that the Turks are taking the opportunity to, now during the war, annihilate [utplåna] the Armenian nation so that when peace comes the Armenian Question no longer exists. /.../ It is noteworthy that the persecutions of Armenians have been done at the instigation of the Turkish Government and are primarily not a spontaneous eruption of Turkish fanaticism, even though this fanaticism is used and plays a role. The tendency to make Turkey inhabited only by Turks could in due time come to appear in a horrifying manner also towards the Greeks and other Christians.³⁶

Thus, Anckarsvärd repeated his earlier conviction that the measures were centrally planned and implemented with the intent to annihilate. This was a genocidal campaign.

In his last report during 1915 entitled “The Armenian Persecutions” Anckarsvärd confirmed the estimation of the Armenian Patriarch about the disappearance of half of the Armenian population, even though he questioned the Patriarch’s mentioned two million.³⁷

During the spring of 1916, Anckarsvärd reported about the potential Arab revolt within the Empire and the fear of the implementation of the measures against the Armenians:

Only thanks to the war could such an ultra-terroristic dominion such as the present one be able to sustain. This dominion's true nature has surfaced in such a pregnant manner in and through the Armenian persecutions. That the same violent methods are still being used is evident by the latest intelligence reports about the measures to suppress the threatening fermentation among the Arabs.³⁸

Only foreign intervention could have prevented the ongoing annihilation and the war had given the most excellent opportunity to implement the governmental plan, inconceivable during peace time.

In January 1917, reporting on the general situation in Turkey, Anckarsvärd made the following remark in regard to prevailing distress and shortage of provisions: "Worse than this is, however, the extermination of the Armenians, which could have been prevented if German advisers had in time been granted power over the civilian administration as the German officers in fact enjoy over army and navy."³⁹ Half a year later, envoy Ahlgren sent a detailed report about a war-torn Turkey. His thorough rendering of the strained economic situation and the prevailing high prices are explained by the following:

"[o]bstacles for domestic trade, the almost total paralysing of the foreign trade and finally the strong decreasing of labour power, caused partly by the mobilisation but partly also by the extermination of the Armenian race [utrotandet af den armeniska rasen].⁴⁰

Thus, until 1920, the reports by the Swedish diplomatic and military presence spoke clearly and unanimously about the fate of the Armenian nation: it was an extermination campaign, a genocide. The Turkish Government had taken the opportunity given by the cover of the war to once and for all solve the Armenian Question through physical extermination. Once the war was over, the international community should intervene and punish the perpetrators and for a short while it seemed that justice would prevail as stated in the Sèvres Treaty: punishment of war crimes and the creation of an independent and united Armenia.

Realpolitik Interests and Denial

However, the tone of the Swedish diplomatic reports changed diametrically in 1920 once the new envoy Gustaf Oskar Wallenberg arrived in Constantinople. He was the former Swedish envoy to Japan, half-brother to the former Foreign Minister K.A. Wallenberg. Gustaf Wallenberg differed from the traditional diplomatic corps: he was not a career diplomat, but a businessman, a trademark of his entire family background, one of the wealthiest in Sweden. Despite his wealthy background, he was not an aristocrat which was otherwise the normal for Swedish diplomats.⁴¹ Beginning his diplomatic career in Tokyo during 1906 (later being accredited to Beijing as well), he was a strenuous advocate of Swedish trade interests, within existing markets but especially in emerging ones.⁴² This would become abundantly evident in his reporting from Turkey.

Wallenberg's arrival to Constantinople coincided with the peace negotiations between Turkey and the Entente and the concluding of the Sèvres Treaty which also envisioned a united independent Armenia. To this end, the League of Nations wanted a mandate power for ensuring the security of

Armenia, entailing the deployment of peace-keeping forces. However, both France and Great Britain declined such a responsibility with reference to their already accepted mandates in the Middle East and North Africa. The League then turned to the three neutral states of Netherlands, Sweden and Norway, hoping that one of them would accept the responsibility for the operative part, while USA would finance the operation.⁴³ But, by this time the Kemalist (after the future founder and president Mustafa Kemal “Atatürk”) Nationalistic Movement had gained momentum in Turkey and the Entente powers would soon engage frenetically in securing their own interests in the new emerging Turkish Republic, abandoning all previous calls for punishment of war crimes as well as support for Armenia.

Sweden was no exception in this regard. Wallenberg’s very first dispatch from Turkey was his recommendation that Sweden should not accept the mandate of Armenia. He stated most clearly that Armenia had nothing to offer Sweden and went on quite far in smearing Armenians and their cause. Not only was the “Armenian national character highly unreliable, which, by the way is no surprise regarding a people whose politics has since centuries been limited to the fields of intrigue,” but the Armenians would always blame the mandate power for any possible scandal in the future. More important, if Sweden should ever accept such a role, Armenia was the least interesting subject in the entire region compared to Anatolia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. “Since we Swedes would scarcely be regarded to have any specific moral responsibility towards any of the Black Sea nations, there is hardly any reason for us to specialize on those who are least interesting from our own perspective.”⁴⁴ Not only did Armenia offer nothing to Swedish interests, but siding with Armenia would

also risk damaging Sweden’s prospects of establishing contacts with Armenia’s neighbours. It was pure business and *realpolitik*.

This complete turnaround would prevail during the entire period until the disappearance of the Armenian Question from the international agenda once the Lausanne Treaty was signed in 1923.⁴⁵ Wallenberg continued his negative and partly derogatory tone towards Armenia with the obvious ambition of defusing any attempt of support for Armenia. Instead, he was highly praiseful of Mustafa Kemal and his movement. Indeed, for a brief period of time before Anckarsvärd moved to Poland, there were totally contradictory accounts about Armenians and other minorities in Turkey: while Anckarsvärd reported of renewed massacres, now by the hand of the Nationalists, Wallenberg refuted any such occurrences, dismissing them as propaganda, instead praising Mustafa Kemal as the saviour of Turkey and its minorities.⁴⁶

Wallenberg continued this negative attitude in his coming reports as well. On March 17, 1921, he compared the Armenian nationalists in the “diaspora” with the Zionists as a “rather rootless phenomenon, at least mainly subsidized by individuals who themselves would not for a moment reflect upon settling in the dreamed ‘fatherland.’”⁴⁷ Furthermore, according to Wallenberg, Armenians as a nation had barely any future. Those inside Turkey were rather Christian Turks who spoke Turkish as their mother tongue, while those in the Soviet Union would be Russified. The only Armenians aspiring for an independent Armenia were those among the Western Diaspora.⁴⁸ The Armenians in Turkey, in spite of the “unfairly treatment,” would prefer a Turkish government before the colonial rule of foreign powers. “We are Turks, and would like to remain so,” he quoted approvingly a prominent Armenian lawyer he had encoun-

tered in Constantinople. However, the most conspicuous remark in his report was the following:

The blame for the unfortunate events of 1915 – the evacuation of the ‘suspect elements’ behind the Caucasus front and the subsequent long death marches to Mesopotamia and Syria – seems generally amongst the local Armenians to be put less on their Mussulmen countrymen (except of course the scapegoats Enver and Tal’at, who are otherwise not specially great repute with Angora) than on the Entente and those under the agitation of the diaspora Armenians, who intimidated the Turkish authorities and infuriated them.⁴⁹

This was not only contrary to the situation depicted by Anckarsvärd, Ahlgren and af Wirsén, but it also alluded to the very arguments used by the Turkish Republic to deny the genocide. The Armenians, according to Wallenberg, regarded Mustafa Kemal as their “time’s greatest man.”⁵⁰ The denial of the Armenian Genocide had begun in earnest.

In his report on April 21, 1921, Wallenberg claimed that the Christian minorities have manifestly started to

[a] large extent realize that there is indeed little motivation for calling themselves Armenians or Greek, just because they were Christians of Armenian or Greek rites, when they otherwise have the same language and same fatherland as their Mussulmen countrymen. Ever since the ‘Armenians’ in Anatolia have already during the past year freed themselves from the Armenian Patriarch’s influence, who is under foreign political influence, the ‘Greeks’ here have also started to show tendencies to separate themselves from the Ecumenical Patriarch.⁵¹

This indeed implied the forced Turkification of all non-Turkish minorities, as a consequence of the Nationalistic slogan “Turkey for Turks.” It is noteworthy how Wallenberg puts “Armenians” and “Greeks” within quotation marks as if they are nothing but artificial denominations, constructed by external actors for agitation through the respective church.

Wallenberg’s negative reporting continued well into 1922, until the Sovietization of Armenia and the subsequent treaties between Kemalist Ankara and Bolshevik Moscow put an end to the Armenian Question; for the time being.⁵² While Anckarsvärd hardly made any direct recommendation for Swedish involvement or reaction regarding the treatment of the Armenians (although alluding to such needs in the future, once the war was over), Wallenberg was more than clear on deterring Stockholm from any such commitment. Armenia was simply not worth it. Once the trade and economic aspects were weighed in, the issue of human rights and committed “crimes against humanity” faded in comparison, especially since Turkey and other neighbouring countries offered so much more potential profit for Sweden.

It should be added that Wallenberg and Sweden were far from alone. The Swedish reaction was in fact well aligned with the international community at large and the Major Powers in particular. Among others, the US High Commissioner in Turkey, Admiral Mark L. Bristol, argued that “The Armenians are a race like the Jews – they have little or no national spirit and poor moral character.” Bristol called Turkey “a virgin field for American business and American financial exploitation.”⁵³ In contrast, Bristol referred to Armenia as a “lemon” – a land with no natural resources or even seaports. According to Bristol, the Armenians and the

Greeks “have many flaws and deficiencies of character that do not fit them for self-government.”⁵⁴ The sooner U.S. dropped its support for Armenia in order to improve its relations with Turkey in order to get access to the Ottoman oilfields, the better.

Few statements have described the abandonment of the Armenians and the perplexity of the international community in a clearer way than the remarks by the Swedish Social-Demokraten correspondent in Geneva, reporting from the session of the League of Nations in regard to the support for Armenia:

The civilized nations looked at each other, a bit ashamed indeed and each and every one whispered their answer to the Council: ‘Surely Armenia must be aided. It is a responsibility towards all humanity to aid Armenia. It must not happen that Armenia is not aided. But why should I do it? Why should I? Why should I?’ was sounded from every direction. ‘Why should exactly I expose myself to the risk and the inconvenience of putting my nose in this robber’s den?’ And so, all the civilized na-

tions stood on the shore around the drowning people, each and every one with its lifeline in hand. But no-one wanted or dared to throw it, fearing they would themselves be drawn into the water.⁵⁵

The Armenian fate was sealed in the Lausanne Treaty which replaced the Sèvres treaty. The Turkish delegation leader, Ismet İnönü, made it abundantly clear that any attempt to discuss the Armenian Question would lead to the termination of the negotiations. US Ambassador Grew noted that “there is no subject upon which the Turks are more fixed in obstinacy than the Armenian Question.”⁵⁶ The Entente powers gave in to this threat and the Turkish victory at Lausanne was total. Winston Churchill wrote: “In the Lausanne Treaty, which established a new peace between the allies and Turkey, history will search in vain for the name Armenia.”⁵⁷

The Armenian Genocide has justly been called “a successful genocide.”

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Endnotes

- 1 H. Carlback-Isotalo, Sweden and Russia in Dissolution 1918–1919. Some Political and Economical Aspects of the Swedish Government Policies towards the Baltic Provinces, the Ukraine and Other New States, in Aleksander Loit, (red.), *The Baltic in International Relations Between the Two World Wars* (Stockholm, 1988), p. 218; W. M. Carlgren, *Ministären Hammarskjöld: Tillkomst – Söndring – Fall, Studier i svensk politik 1914–1917* (Stockholm, 1967), p. 78, 101; Tommy Hansson, *Neutralitetsmyten: En granskning av svensk utrikespolitik* (Stockholm, 1991), p. 7; Herbert Tingsten, *The Debate on the Foreign Policy of Sweden, 1918-1939* (Oxford, 1949), p. 11–12; Per Ahlin, *Folkrätten i svensk säkerhetspolitik* (Stockholm, 1993), p. 46.
- 2 Gunilla Lundström, Per Rydén, Elisabeth Sandlund, *Den svenska pressens historia, Det moderna Sveriges spegel (1897-1945)*, Vol. 3 (Stockholm: Ekerlid, 2001), p. 124.
- 3 Lundström, Rydén, Sandlund, 2001, p. 125.
- 4 Lundström, Rydén, Sandlund, 2001, p. 124.
- 5 Tommy Hansson, *Neutralitetsmyten: En granskning av svensk utrikespolitik* (Stockholm: Contra, 1991), p. 20.

- 6 Among numerous photos and testimonies by Americans, perhaps the most famous belongs to the American Ambassador in Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's story*, New York, 1918.
- 7 Colonel G. Ahlgren's accreditation in this matter is mentioned in a communique between the American and the Swedish legations. See Riksarkivet, *Utrikesdepartementet, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 370*, Konstantinopel, 8 september 1917.
- 8 Nya Dagligt Allehanda's German affiliation would grow into full sympathy for National-Socialism during the 1930s. See Lundström, Rydén, and Sandlund, 2001, p. 258; Britt Sturve, Reider Sunnerstam, Ebon Sönnergren, Armenienfrågan i svensk press under första världskriget, in Göran Gunner and Erik Lindberg (eds.), *Längtan till Ararat, En bok om Armenien och armenisk identitet* (Göteborg: Gothia, 1985), p. 215.
- 9 Nya Dagligt Allehanda, Stockholm, April 23, 1917.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Gustaf Hjalmar Pravitz, *Från Persien i stiltje och storm* (Stockholm: Dahlberg, 1918).
- 12 Pravitz, 1918, p. 22, 226–227.
- 13 Pravitz, 1918, p. 219, 221–223.
- 14 Krigsarkivet, *Generalstaben*, Meddelande 8, 13 maj 1916.
- 15 Einar af Wirsén, *Minnen från fred och krig* (Stockholm, 1942), p. 220–226.
- 16 af Wirsén, 1942, p. 220.
- 17 af Wirsén, 1942, p. 223.
- 18 af Wirsén, 1942, p. 226. For this aspect of secrecy see also Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence: Berghahn, 2004), p. 289, 384–385.
- 19 Dadrian, p. 243.
- 20 af Wirsén, 1942, p. 226.
- 21 The information is found among the legation's documents about personal files. Riksarkivet (RA), *Utrikesdepartementet, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 370*, 1890–1920, RA, Stockholm.
- 22 Riksarkivet (RA), Utrikesdepartementet (UD), *1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1148*, nr. 241, 15 december 1914: Turkiska parlamentets öppnande, Anckarsvärd till utrikesminister K. Wallenberg.
- 23 RA, UD, *1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1149b*, Nr. 260, Inrikespolitik i Turkiet. De maktägande, Ahlgren till utrikesminister A. Lindman, 10 september 1917.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 The first occasion where the “Armenian Question” was raised internationally as part of the “Eastern Question,” encompassing the diplomatic and political problems posed by the decaying Ottoman Empire, earning it the title of the “Sick man of Europe.” For the San Stefano Treaty see Michael Hurst, *Key Treaties of the Great Powers, 1814–1914*, Vol. 2, Oxford, 1972, p. 528–548.
- 27 Between 1894 and 1896 around 150,000 Armenians were massacred while 40,000 were forcibly converted to Islam and another 150,000 fled to Caucasus, Europe or USA. See Kristian Gerner and Klas-Göran Karlsson, *Folkmordens historia, Perspektiv på det moderna samhällets skuggsida* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2005), p. 120; Hrant Pastermadjian, *Histoire de l'Arménie depuis les origines jusqu'au traité de Lausanne* (Paris, 1949), p. 412.

- 28 RA, *UD, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1148*, Nr. 99, Den armeniska upprorsrörelsen och dess senaste yttringar, Anckarsvärd till K. Wallenberg, 30 april 1915.
- 29 *The Porte or Sublime Porte* is a metonym for the Government of the Ottoman Empire, by reference to the gate of the building from which orders and decrees were announced. RA, *UD, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1148, Nr. 117*, Händelserna i Armenien, Anckarsvärd till utrikesminister K. Wallenberg, 7 juni 1915. For the excerpt of the ultimatum see Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, 1918 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967), p. 52.
- 30 For the provisions of the treaty see World War I Document Archive, *Peace Treaty of Sèvres*, Brigham Young University Library, Utah; wwi.lib.byu.edu.
- 31 RA, *UD, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1148, Nr. 137*, Förföljelser mot armenierna, Anckarsvärd till utrikesminister K. Wallenberg, 6 juli 1915.
- 32 RA, *UD, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1148, Nr. 142*, Förföljelserna mot armenierna, Anckarsvärd till utrikesminister K. Wallenberg, 14 juli 1915.
- 33 RA, *UD, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1148, Nr. 145*, Förföljelserna mot armenierna, Anckarsvärd till utrikesminister K. Wallenberg, 15 juli 1915.
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- 35 RA, *UD, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1148, Nr. 170*, Förföljelserna mot armenierna, Anckarsvärd till utrikesminister K. Wallenberg, 18 augusti 1915.
- 36 RA, *UD, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1148, Nr. 182*, Förföljelserna mot armenierna, Anckarsvärd till utrikesminister K. Wallenberg, 2 september 1915.
- 37 RA, *UD, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1148, Nr. 183*, Förföljelserna mot armenierna, Anckarsvärd till utrikesminister K. Wallenberg, 4 september 1915.
- 38 RA, *UD, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1149a, Nr. 80*, De beramade öfverenskommelserna mellan Turkiet och Tyskland, Anckarsvärd till utrikesminister K. Wallenberg, 20 maj 1916.
- 39 RA, *UD, 1902 års dossiersystem, vol. 1149a, Nr. 9*, Uttalanden om situationen i Turkiet, Anckarsvärd till utrikesminister K. Wallenberg, 5 januari 1917.
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