“No need to exaggerate”

– the 1914 Ottoman Jihad declaration in genocide historiography

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Abstract

Limiting the primary sources to scholars who have published in peer-reviewed journals in fields relevant to Holocaust and Genocide studies, and thus avoiding the journalistic and polemical accounts that dominate the narrative on this topic, this study aims to provide an analysis of the impact of the 1914 Ottoman Jihad declaration on mass violence against Ottoman Christians, specifically the Ottoman Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks. The study identifies several central issues relating to the declaration and the wider concept of Jihad in the late Ottoman Empire and concludes that, in stark contrast to the scant attention it has received, the scholarly consensus on the topic appears to be that it had a considerable impact on mass participation in these events. While the role of religious ideology can only provide part of the explanation for these events, our study traces the lack of scholarship on the Jihad declaration to the emphasis on elite ideology in the field of genocide studies. The study concludes that the lack of scholarly work on the Jihad declaration represents a significant lacuna in the field. Of secondary importance is our activist analysis. While the letter of the declaration explicitly targeted the Entente and its allied governments, a small number of scholars in this study either omit the countries mentioned in it or claim that it was overtly directed at Ottoman Christians. The misrepresentations provided by two of the scholars appear to form part of a pattern of unscholarly practices, such as the citation of sources, that upon inspection, do not support their claims.
To my Mother Carina, for her love and support
In addition to my mother, to whom this thesis is dedicated, I wish to thank my brother Jacob who encouraged me to apply to the M.A programme and who has kept encouraging me throughout my studies and the writing process. My best friend, Christian Helanow, provided inspiration and came through for me when I needed it. I am very grateful that David Gaunt agreed to supervise me and I want to thank him for his patience and advice. For the assertions in this thesis as well as any mistakes, I am solely responsible. I especially want to thank the light of my life, Iryna Dmytruk, for putting up with me during these last months and for taking such wonderful care of me during what has been a very trying year.
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Introduction

For seven months, Armenians spread out in the greater part of the Ottoman Empire have been victims of the most atrocious persecution […] In several provinces, all of the male population above 10 years of age has been massacred, the young women have been kidnapped by Muslims and the children torn away by force from their parents have been entrusted to the care of Islamic families […] Finally, in other provinces, the Armenian population has been completely destroyed. The fields and the main roads are strewn with corpses; the rivers have transported quantities of them […] if the rivers and the lakes reddened with the blood of so many women and children will not incite the pity of Germanic Christianity, especially in the face of the Jihad so glorified, which has had, as a result, the clearest extermination of a Christian people, who, for centuries in western Asia, adopted European civilization with enthusiasm.1

- Confidential Letter to the German ambassador from Patriarch Zaven Der Eghiayan, Constantinople, 10 November 1915

The present study is an analysis of how the Ottoman Jihad declaration has been interpreted in the historiography of genocide and mass violence against Ottoman Christians during World War I. Having consulted hundreds of articles and monographs looking for scholarly works that mention, however briefly, the impact of the Ottoman Jihad Declaration on mass violence against Ottoman Christians, this study has only found a total of 23 scholars, most of whom devote very little space to it. While most of these primary sources deal only with the Armenian genocide, this study also include works on the Ottoman Assyrians2 and Greeks3. Some basic historical information will be provided for the purposes of clarification but I4 wish to emphasize that this is neither a study of Islamic theology nor the history of Islamic warfare and that the subject of the modern Jihadist movements will not be covered at all. The primary aim is to examine whether the scant attention given to the declaration in the historiography is an accurate reflection of the impact attributed to it by the small number of scholars who address it. In other words, does it deserve to be such a neglected topic?

2 In this study, we will be following the most common scholarly usage in referring to Assyrians, Syriac Orthodox, Nestorians and Chaldeans, collectively as “Assyrian”. The reader should be aware, however, that this is a controversial issue within these groups. For details on the question of identity, see and David Gaunt, Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia During World War I, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006 and Gaunt, The Complexity of the Assyrian Genocide, in: Genocide Studies International, Volume 9, Number 1, Spring 2015, pp. 83-103.
3 In the Ottoman Empire, subjects were divided according to religious affiliation, not ethnicity. We will be following the usage in Hofmann et al. and refer to Ottoman citizens of “Greek ethnicity or Greek Orthodox faith” as “Ottoman Greeks, or simply “Greeks”. The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks: studies on the state-sponsored campaign of extermination of the Christians of Asia Minor (1912-1922) and its aftermath: history, law, memory / Tessa Hofmann, Matthias Bjørnlund, Vasileios Meichanetsidis(eds.) New York & Athens, Melissa International Ltd, 2011, pp.10-11.
4 Since it refers to personal experiences, the introduction will be using the first-person singular pronoun form.
The study of any historical phenomenon requires special attention to the context in which it occurred, and while comparative studies can be of great value, they are also often done at the expense of crucial historical details. In journalistic and polemical accounts, the role of religion in the Armenian genocide is often treated in a simplistic “either-or” fashion: Islam is interpreted as having had everything to do with the genocide, or, as having had nothing to do with it. In the first view, simplistic comparisons are made between the Ottoman state and ISIS: The Armenian genocide is presented as a “Jihad genocide”⁵, *tout court*, without considering the vast complexities of World War I.

On the other extreme, we are told that: “It is difficult to believe that a devout Muslim would murder a single human being, let alone millions!”⁶ In this view, the fact that many Muslims rescued Armenians outweighs whatever limited effect it had on inciting the masses. As on the other end of the spectrum, counterarguments are rarely offered, and the fact that many Muslims helped Armenians out of financial incentives⁷ is not mentioned.

Leaving these tedious narratives, let us instead turn to the man who conceived the idea of genocide, with its inherent complexities: As a law student in Lwow (now Lviv), Raphael Lemkin read about the trial in Berlin of a certain Soghomon Tehlirian, a young man who had shot dead Talaat Pasha, the former Ottoman interior minister, on an open street in broad daylight. Tehlirian, who had lost almost his entire extended family during the genocide, waited for the police to apprehend him, as had been planned by a secret organization of avengers, known as Operation Nemesis. Lemkin asked his law professor how it could be that Talaat, the man responsible for the deportation order, to mention but one of his murderous initiatives, could have died a free man, whereas Tehlirian was on trial for murder? His professor’s answer was to set Lemkin on the path towards creating the specific legal concept of genocide: That what a state does to its own citizens was not punishable by any existing law. This being a historiographical study, it will not be concerned with the legal framework of genocide, nor with the many competing definitions proposed by scholars in the field. It is, however, of interest to note that, according to a close friend of Lemkin’s, “it was the intended

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⁵ See the articles on this topic by Andrew Bostom, for an example of this narrative. For example: [http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2005/04/the_jihad_genocide_of_the_arme.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2005/04/the_jihad_genocide_of_the_arme.html)


destruction of the Armenians that triggered Lemkin’s moral interest in the protection of groups”. In his autobiography, Lemkin writes: "In Turkey, 1.2 million Armenians were put to death for the only crime of being Christians". As I developed an interest in the history of the Middle East and later travelled throughout it, I began to get a sense that the role of religion as an identifying factor was vastly underestimated in Western journalistic accounts of the region. I became particularly interested in the religious minorities, and as I listened to many, usually elderly, Middle Eastern Christians and Jews, a pattern seemed to emerge: When speaking of their lost homelands, it often sounded like a very harmonious place filled with intercommunal friendships. Yet these memories could also abruptly shift to descriptions of fear, mutual suspicion and constant uncertainty. Reading about the Muslim world was equally confusing at first: In some accounts, I read of “golden ages” of tolerance, innovation and prosperity but I also discovered the somber narrative of the dhimmi, a subjugated and humiliated second-class citizen, who, when not subjected to massacres, was living in perpetual fear of the massacre that was inevitable coming. What was one to make of this?

Speaking of similar accounts, the French historian George Bensoussan calls them “des récits complementaires”, and not as he initially thought, “des récits contradictoires”. The same place and time could in fact contain elements of both heaven and hell, and the situation varied greatly according one’s financial status. What was a “golden age” to a wealthy merchant in the capital could indeed have been one of torment to the farmer in the periphery. Yet often, the same accounts contain elements of both these aspects. I first heard of the Assyrian genocide from an Assyrian acquaintance (although he would prefer to be called an Aramean) in Stockholm about a decade ago. Not only was it the first time I heard about the slaughter of a non-Armenian victim group, the perpetrators in the case of his family were their Kurdish neighbors, not “Turks”. Also, he told me, Greeks had been killed as well, in other parts of the Empire. I later learned that, at the turn of the last century, Christians made

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up a quarter of the Ottoman population. Today, Turkey’s indigenous Christian population stands at about 0.1 percent.\footnote{This number does not include migrant workers, most of whom come from Georgia and Armenia. Tessa Hofmann, Matthias Bjørnlund and Vasileios Meichanetsidis, \textit{The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks}, p.3.}

To my acquaintance, and to many others in the Assyrian diaspora that I have talked to over the years, this statistical shift was simply the result of a religious genocide. Some spoke of it as a Jihad against all Ottoman Christians. My previous perception of an “ethnic conflict” between “Turks” and “Armenians” was now being turned on its head, yet some things in this new narrative were familiar to me from my studies of the Middle East, where sectarian allegiances usually trump all others: For example, I have heard Iraqi Shi’a describe the martyrdom of Hussain at Karbala in 680 as if it happened yesterday. A Turkish (Sunni) academic, who seemingly embodied tolerance, told me how the Alevi and Shi’a “aren’t really Muslim, you know?” I have come across many such examples but I am also wary of overemphasizing the role of religion: The Middle East was and is a very complex scene and in addition to sectarian affiliations, others, such as tribal or political, also play a part.

In this study, we\footnote{The rest of the thesis will be employing the customary first person plural pronouns.} will be employing collective terms such as “Armenians”, “Assyrians”, “Ottoman Muslims”, “Kurds” etc. They were of course, each consisting of a great number of individual actors as well as various different-sized groups of actors. That we are not able to afford to delve into the intricacies within these subdivisions in the present study should not be taken as promoting essentialist interpretations of these groups.

The present study largely deals with the effects of religious incitement to violence. As such, the focus will necessarily be on those who participated in the violence, and not on those remarkable and praiseworthy souls who risked their lives to help their fellow man.\footnote{For examples of rescuers and “the ambivalent picture” on part of the Muslim population, see Taner Akçam, \textit{A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility}, Translated by Paul Bessemer, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006, pp.179-180.}
Research problems and aim

The Committee of Union and Progress (henceforth CUP) are often described as being, “like the Nazis”\(^{14}\), a group of “irreligious” or even “atheist “, men. In many accounts, the “Islamic”, “traditional and repressive” nature of the 1894-96 Hamidi\(^{an}\) massacres is juxtaposed with the nationalist, secular, modern and revolutionary character of the Armenian Genocide\(^{15}\). In Michael Mann’s analysis:

This was not primarily an Islamic but a secular nationalist genocide, though the long European struggle between Christian and Muslim had left deep marks on community enmities.\(^{16}\)

Today few, if any, leading scholars argue that the Armenian genocide was “primarily Islamic”, a term that Mann does not define. This, however, does not mean that religious factors were insignificant. In the conclusion of his study of the Assyrian Genocide, David Gaunt writes that “This recurrent stream of religious hostility was a necessary, but not sufficient, cause of genocide”\(^{17}\). In his analysis, certain aspects of the extermination process of the Assyrians, such as the public humiliation, torture and mutilation of bishops and priests, points to “extreme pent-up hatred on the popular level” against Christian “infidels”.\(^{18}\)

As we shall see, the CUP and Mustafa Kemal immediately after them were in no position to disregard the traditional Islamic persuasion of the masses. The Ottoman state in WWI and the subsequent Turkish National Resistance movement both made great use of religious rhetoric and both proclaimed Jihad. Since religious ideology was deemed necessary for mobilization, could it not also have contributed to mass participation in violence against Ottoman Christians? The study of the Armenian genocide has focused largely on elite ideology, especially the concepts of “Turkish nationalism”, “Pan-Turkism” and “Pan-Turanism”, while mass incitement based on religious ideology has received comparatively little scholarly attention. The lack of attention given to the Jihad declaration is part of this wider phenomenon. Most of the works we have read on the Armenian genocide do not mention of the Jihad declaration of 1914. When it is mentioned in works relating to WWI, it


\(^{18}\) Ibid. p.304.
is usually only briefly summarized as a German scheme that failed miserably. To the best of our knowledge, several of the leading scholars on the Armenian genocide do not mention the Jihad declaration in any of their books or articles. They include scholars such as Taner Akçam, Hilmar Kaiser, Erik-Jan Zürcher andUGHÜngör, who all produce state-of-the-art research based on Ottoman documents. In our estimate, this cannot be attributed to them minimizing the role of religion, as Taner Akçam, for example, clearly emphasizes that:

[…] without a grasp of the particular circumstances of the Muslim-Non Muslim relationship, we cannot understand the process that led to a “final solution” of the Armenian question.”

Also, even in the scholarly works that mention it, it is usually only given cursory treatment, its impact usually limited to a few lines or paragraphs at the most. It would thus appear to be a topic of very little significance, yet we have noticed some interesting contraindications to this in the literature, which led us to conduct the present study. By analyzing the contributions of the 23 scholars we have found who mention the impact of the Jihad on mass violence against Ottoman Christians, the primary objective of the present study is to answer the question: “Is the scant attention given to the Ottoman Jihad declaration an accurate reflection of its impact on mass violence against Ottoman Christians, as viewed by the scholars who have analyzed it?”

Disposition

After a brief look at the state of previous research on the Ottoman Jihad, we present our methodology and research aims and how we conducted the gathering of primary sources, which made up a significant part of our work. Then, in the theory section, we look at how legitimate historical interpretation differs from activism. The main part of our study is the empirical analysis relating to our primary objective: it is divided into several shorter sections that present relevant issues within the historiography and various key aspects of our specific topic. The final, and considerably shorter, section of the analysis is devoted to our secondary objective: the activist analysis. We conclude our study by summarizing our findings and how this relates to our hypothesis. We also look at future research possibilities relating to the topic of this study as well as to the wider subject of mass violence against Ottoman Christians.

19 Akçam, A Shameful Act, p.20.
Theory and methodology

Research overview

In our estimate, the following quote by scholar David Fromkin is representative of the historiographical situation at present, where treatment of the Jihad declaration is usually limited to its failure to incite rebellions among the Muslim subjects of the Entente countries: The Jihad proved to be, in the coinage of the first world war, a” dud”, a shell that was fired but failed to explode[...]the jihad was proclaimed, but nothing happened [italics in original].

Fromkin, whose book deals specifically with the Ottoman Empire in WWI, briefly mentions the Jihad on a few occasions throughout the book, but only in relation to British military efforts, not the impact it may have had on the Armenians or other Ottoman Christians.

Rudolph Peters writes that “Despite the efforts of the Central Powers, the effects of the Ottoman Jihad Proclamation and the subsequent stream of religious propaganda was minimal”. Like Fromkin, by this he means that “nowhere did anti-colonial revolts break out in support of the Turks”. In a work which devotes a relatively large ammount of attention to the Armenian Genocide, historian Martin Gilbert does not mention the Ottoman Jihad at all.

Leading Ottomanist historian Erik-Jan Zürcher, whose work will be used extensively as secondary sources in this study, only provides a brief summary of the Jihad declaration:

Expectations about the effect of this declaration on the Muslim inhabitants of the colonies of the Entente (and of Russian Central Asia) were very high among the Germans (though less so among most Ottomans), but in spite of a considerable propaganda effort by the Ottoman government, mainly through the Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa, its effect was negligible. [italics in original]

The Ottoman Jihad is often described as a Jihad “Made in Germany” – the brainchild of an eccentric amateur archeologist, Max Oppenheim. This narrative, which largely ignores Ottoman agency, has more recently been nuanced by Turkish historian Mustafa Aksakal:

The Ottomans, as a sovereign state and empire, were certainly circumspect in employing this tactic themselves, because for much of the nineteenth century they sought to become a member of the European state system. When they did embrace jihad, however, they did so for domestic reasons, to mobilize the loyalty of a majority Muslim society behind an Islamic empire. Had the jihad indeed been ‘made in Germany’ it is unlikely that publications intended to foster morale and cultivate an Islamic Ottoman identity would have continued all through the war even after its global impact, in which Kaiser Wilhelm II had put so much faith, had proven so negligible.

23 Erik J. Zürcher, Turkey – A Modern History, 3rd edition, New York: I.B Tauris, 2004, p.113
Our study deals only with the impact of the Jihad declaration on Ottoman Christians, and not with how the Jihad scheme came into being, although this topic does make for fascinating reading. Genocide scholar Mark Levene employs a similar analogy to the aforementioned “dud”: “In fact the fatwas were to prove a damp squib. No major uprisings anywhere in the British, French or Russian domains” Later in his account, however, he adds an important caveat: “[…]while the declaration failed to elicit its intended results[…]Closer to home, however the impact is less easy to assess” All our primary sources, save for 2, were published in 2003 or later, which may indicate that this topic is increasingly becoming the focus of scholarly attention. However, in a 2016 publication dedicated to the very topic of the 1914 Jihad declaration, we are treated to such fascinating topics as “Architectural Jihad” and “Gendering Jihad”, but its impact on mass violence against Ottoman Christians is nowhere to be found.

Theory

In the preface to his first book, the German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) wrote: History has had assigned to it the task of judging the past, of instructing the present for the benefit of the ages to come. To such lofty functions this work does not aspire. Its aim is merely to show how things actually were. To Ranke, a prominent figure in the historicist movement, “detachment from present-day concerns was a condition of understanding the past.” He was convinced that the pursuit of immediate goals, obstructed the historian in his quest for understanding the past. While Ranke’s predecessors and contemporaries might have succumbed to such immediate goals as “the desire to preach” or “to shore up the reputation of a ruling dynasty”, it appears to us that other kinds of immediate goals are still prevalent in historical accounts, perhaps especially within genocide studies. What do we then mean by immediate goals in this field? The most extreme example is that of the genocide denier, most famously represented by

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27 Ibid. p.136.
28 While our edition of Dadrian’s *The History of the Armenian Genocide* was published in 2003, we count him here as one of the two pre-2003 scholars, along with James J. Reid, since the first edition was published in 1995.
31 Ibid. p.8.
Holocaust deniers and many scholars affiliated with the Turkish government. Their *immediate goal* is to call the charge of genocide into question, employing a variety of methods, such as minimizing death tolls, “blaming the victims”-tactics, etc. Leaving aside the issue of Holocaust denial and looking at the field of the Armenian genocide, which we are more familiar with, we have also noticed that there are various levels of what could be labeled “denial”. Some scholars may refrain from employing the term genocide for various reasons, but nevertheless contribute greatly to our understanding of the past.32 There are many interesting studies and articles dedicated to the topic of denial33, but in this study, we will deal only with a different form of *immediate goals*, which we will term *activism*.

What differentiates *activism* from denialism is that the latter entails the wholesale distortion of historical truth, as viewed from the opposing side, usually represented by a scholarly consensus. In this adversarial setting, the two sides are in complete disagreement on the question at hand, such as genocidal intent or the applicability of the term genocide. In contrast, our *activist* is the academic whose overall argument we agree with, yet whose occasional excesses can clearly be ascribed to *immediate goals* rather than legitimate historical analysis. Because most analyses of historical misrepresentation deal with denialism, we believe that it can be beneficial to widen the scope to include scholars other than “such obvious soft targets and straw men as Holocaust deniers”34.

As Ranke’s ideal became highly influential, historians well into the 20th century aspired to join the ranks of the exact sciences: The image of the ideal historian was a “disinterested, ‘passive’ observer “who could delve into the past “without preconceptions and without moral involvement”35. Eventually, however, the discipline of history came to accept that the total suspension of biases and preconceptions was an unrealizable ideal:

[...] it is a fallacy to suppose that the aspiration to reconstruct the past in its own terms carries the promise of objectivity: no essay in historical re-creation is proof against the values of the enquirer36.

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32 Perhaps the most striking example that we have come across is Michael A. Reynolds magisterial *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires*, 1908–1918. Reynolds, whose research is based largely on work in the Ottoman and Russian archives, does not shy away from analyzing the calamities of Ottoman Armenians and Assyrians in detail and without minimizing the role of the state. The fact that he does not employ the term genocide should not, in our opinion, qualify this valuable contribution as “denialist”.


35 Tosh, p.177.

36 Ibid., pp.49-50.
The desire to champion a certain cause does not disqualify a historian’s work as illegitimate, if his "primary obligation" remains "to be true to the past."\(^{37}\) Biases are inevitable, but only pose a problem when immediate goals take precedence over historical accuracy.\(^{38}\)

Our activist model derives from the “Ward Churchill report”, an inquiry by a panel of academics on academic conduct following accusations of plagiarism and other forms of misconduct. In a manner similar to how Richard Evans’ team analyzed the publications of David Irving, they scrutinized much of Churchill’s academic publications (as distinct from his polemical works, with which they were not concerned) and then presented their findings in a report. Unlike the adversarial setting in the Irving trial, the members of the investigation Committee concurred with Churchills general argument on the plights of Native Americans.\(^{39}\)

Dubbing himself a scholar of “Ethnic Studies”, Churchill is a well-known figure in genocide studies, and remains cited by scholars such as Adam Jones\(^ {40}\), even after the investigation resulted in his loss of tenure at the University of Colorado. Here we wish to emphasize that unlike Churchill, no scholar in our study has been accused, let alone found guilty of, plagiarism, to the best of our knowledge. Also, our familiarity with the complex subject of settler genocides is very limited and our use of the report should not be viewed as endorsing its position on this question. We see it as pertinent to our purposes for the following reasons: Firstly, that the report took issue with individual misrepresentations of facts rather than the overall argument. Secondly, the report stated that, while Churchill’s educational background (an M.A in Communications) is unorthodox for a scholar writing on historical and legal issues, the committee decided to apply the American Historical Association’s “Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct”\(^ {41}\) because his work contains” a strong historical component”\(^ {42}\). This we found relevant to our study since our primary sources are scholars from a variety of disciplines, writing in the form of historical essays. Like several of our primary sources, most of Churchills academic publications are “works of synthesis” where he reinterprets original primary source research made by other scholars. While the committee considered this a “potentially valuable type of academic

\(^{37}\) Ibid., p.48.

\(^{38}\) Tosh, p.23.

\(^{39}\) Marianne Wesson, Robert Clinton, José Limón, Marjorie McIntosh, Michael Radelet, Report of the Investigative Committee of the Standing Committee on Research Misconduct at the University of Colorado at Boulder concerning Allegations of Academic Misconduct against Professor Ward Churchill, 9 May 2006, p.7


\(^{42}\) Ibid., p.6.
work,” they viewed as highly problematic when bold, new assertion were not accompanied by original research. The committee stated that detailed references are not needed in general works for non-specialist readers, if the interpretations “are in accordance with established academic accounts”. The committee stressed, however, that when scholars “challenge existing accounts and present a new interpretation”, these should be supported by references. Following the report, we will be applying the above historical criteria to all statements of the Jihad declaration, regardless of scholarly background. Furthermore, the report provides a clear example of how, to the activist, the immediate goal of convincing the reader takes precedence over the integrity of the historical method:

The Committee does not agree with David Henige’s statement, quoted approvingly by Professor Churchill, that when scholars are attempting to challenge established historical beliefs about topics for which the evidence is limited, “The aim is to convince without being able to demonstrate. In the circumstances, disputants are forced to take liberties with the evidence and presentation, for to maintain rigorous standards would be to abandon the contest as unwinnable” […] (as cited by Professor Churchill in Submission C, with the comment, “Exactly so”).

The title of our study derives from the following excerpt. Having found that Churchill’s mistakes were not random, but clearly served to buttress his claims, the committee expressed how such scholarship is damaging to the very cause that the activist is championing. In our view, this passage is a powerful statement on why it is essential to subject all scholars to the same degree of academic scrutiny, whether one agrees with their overall narrative or not:

Judging the seriousness of the misconduct described in this report requires consideration of the damage Professor Churchill’s conduct imposes on other scholarship in the field of ethnic studies, especially Native American studies. This damage is particularly likely to be felt by those whose work concerns the mistreatment of Native Americans by European explorers, traders, settlers, and military personnel. Plenty of reliable evidence supports the conclusion that Native Americans were on more than one occasion subjected to racist genocidal campaigns by some of these actors. There is no need for any scholar to exaggerate data to support that conclusion. Those who do so inflict harm on other scholars doing meticulous work that documents aspects of the racism and genocide inflicted on Indian peoples of the Americas by the settler society, and on the enterprise of such scholarship more generally. Since this area of scholarly inquiry is often targeted by the hateful, the naïve, and those bent on denying alternative historic truths, it is especially vulnerable to injury by association with work employing unacceptable scholarly techniques. (our italics)

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43 Ibid., pp.6-7.
44 Ibid. p.10 and p.45.
46 Ibid. p.97.
Methodology and research questions

As we shall see, among our 23 primary sources, we only found two cases of activist interpretations of the Jihad declaration, the second of which appears to us to be a considerably more flagrant case. The bulk of the present study will thus consist of a comparative historiographical analysis, with only a secondary focus on the theoretical aspect of activism. We will be conducting our study in the form of solving a puzzle: since most of our primary sources offer only brief statements on the impact of the Jihad declaration in relation to mass violence against Ottoman Christians, we will be making extensive use of secondary material with the goal of putting things in context and forming a somewhat coherent narrative. Although this study centers around the 1914 Ottoman Jihad declaration, we will also examine how the concept of Jihad in the late Ottoman Empire extends beyond the declaration.

We also aim to analyze the current topic in relation to the subject of perpetrator ideology, which is why significant attention will be given to secondary sources from the historiography of the Armenian Genocide as well as late Ottoman history. In our opinion, this wider analysis is necessary to make sense of our primary sources. Examining the above aspects will ultimately serve to test the following hypothesis, which is our main objective:

The scant scholarly attention given to the 1914 Jihad declaration in the historiography of genocide and mass violence is an accurate reflection of the impact attributed to it by the small number of scholars who address it.

Through this hypothesis, we are attempting to discern if the Jihad declaration represents a lacuna within genocide studies, where new research could be beneficial to the field at large. As for the potential usefulness of this study, we hope that it will provide a more detailed and extensive account of the impact of the Ottoman Jihad than what is found in any of the individual primary sources at our disposal. As such, it can provide a useful introduction and guide for scholars who want to tackle this specific topic in more depth.

The last part of our analysis will be dedicated to the scholars who have presented a misleading or vague interpretation of the Jihad declaration. Their interpretations will be analyzed in relation to their overall narrative as well as to the primary sources who have accurately represented the declaration. This part presents several activist characteristics of these two primary sources, and in the more prominent activist case, includes examples from his work on other subjects that may be interpreted as forming part of the same phenomenon.
Implementation

The gathering of primary source material for this study has been a time-consuming effort that entailed several months of preparatory research. This meant collecting every available scholarly source that mentioned the Jihad declaration in relation to mass violence against Ottoman Christians. Originally, we also wanted to include the Ottoman Yezidis in our study because they are sometimes cited as fellow victims\(^{47}\), but we have unfortunately not been able to locate any sources that mention the impact of the Jihad declaration in their case.

Our criteria for primary sources was the following: scholarly works in English that mention, however briefly, the impact of the 1914 Ottoman Jihad declaration on mass violence against Ottoman Christians. We limited our primary sources to writings in the form of historical essays. Most of our sources deal uniquely with the Armenian genocide, and acknowledge it as a genocide. We did not, however, include the criteria that the scholars employ the term genocide – and three of our primary sources do not.\(^{48}\) As the aim of this study is the understanding of a historical event, we did not want to exclude any sources on moral grounds. However, with one exception, we did not find any scholars associated with various levels of denial who met our criteria.\(^{49}\)

The search began with books in our own possession and in libraries, then extended to e-books and articles available through the Uppsala University library site. Every time the declaration was mentioned in a book or article, we checked the cited source and used it in google searches to find other scholars who had cited it. Google search was also employed extensively, using various combinations of words such as: “Ottoman Jihad declaration”, “1914 Jihad declaration”, “Ottoman holy war 1914”. When we could not locate a copy of a book in its entirety, we searched using “limited previews” on Google Books using the following terms: “jihad”, “holy war”, “djihad” (a spelling used in older works), and the Turkish spellings “cihad” and “cihat” (used for example, by Vahakn Dadrian). Although we


\(^{48}\) As we shall see. Guenter Lewy briefly mentions the declaration. The other two sources are McMeekin and Reynolds. McMeekin employs quotation marks when referring to the genocide and writes favorably of Lewy’s work. In his subsequent publication, however, McMeekin appears to have moved closer to the denial narrative: see Sean McMeekin, The Russian Origins of the First World War, Cambridge, MA & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011, pp.141-174.

make no claim of having located every scholarly work that fulfill the above criteria, we find it reasonable to assume that we have located the majority of them. We have not kept records of every source that did not meet our criteria, but we believe it amounts to several hundreds of articles and books, most of which deal with the late Ottoman Empire, WWI and comparative genocide studies. We did come across a small number of older works on Google Books where no preview was available. However, since our list of primary sources indicates that the historiography on this subject is a predominantly recent phenomenon, the above is not likely to have had a significant impact on the final result concerning the number of primary sources.

By “scholarly” works, we chose the criteria of having published a peer-reviewed article, in English, within a discipline of relevance to Holocaust and Genocide studies. We used the Uppsala University Library search engine but chose the search option that includes articles outside the library’s collection. Some of our primary sources were initially found through this search engine, and we also used it to verify every potential primary source found through other means. Because this study includes scholars who mention the impact of the Jihad declaration in more than one work, note that the number 23 refers to the number of scholars, not works. Also, works used in this study by any of these 23 scholars which do not mention the Jihad declaration have been counted as secondary sources.

C. Empirical Analysis

The term “Jihad”

The concept of Jihad is one of the most prominent bones of contention in contemporary debates on Islam, and this is somewhat reflected in our primary sources: For example, Vahakn Dadrian writes of Jihad uniquely as a “holy war” against non-Muslims, inciting massacres throughout history, while Michael Mann states that "Jihad does not necessarily imply violence and should not be translated as “holy war,” for Christians understand by that

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50 For example, the aforementioned Andrew Bostom is the co-author of a significant number of medical articles, but we have found no peer-reviewed articles by this author in disciplines relevant to this study.

51 The most notable work that did not meet the criteria is Sebastien DeCourtois’ The Forgotten Genocide, because we could not locate a peer-reviewed article in English by the author. It does, however, appear in the present study as a secondary source. Sebastien De Courtois, The Forgotten Genocide: The Eastern Christians - the Last Arameans, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004.

term actual war.”\textsuperscript{53} [our emphasis]. However, the translation as “holy war”, while not literal, is still considered as acceptable by specialists. In this view, the truly inaccurate part of translating Jihad as “holy war” lies in the un-Islamic concept of sanctifying a human action, that is, the addition of the adjective “holy”:

In Western parlance, the adjective “holy” is necessary, since there are other laws of other origins. In Muslim parlance, the adjective is tautologous. The shari’a is simply the law, and there is no other. It is holy in that it derives from God, and is the external and unchangeable expression of God’s commandments to mankind. It is on one of these commandments that the notion of holy war, in the sense of a war ordained by God, is based. The term so translated is jihad and Arabic word with the literal meaning of “effort”, striving” or struggle”. In the Qur’an and still more in the traditions, it has usually been understood as meaning “to wage war”[…] \textsuperscript{54}

Genocide studies pioneer Leo Kuper accurately points out "that the concept of jihad has a wider connotation than “holy war,”, and that it included what would be considered "secular” wars in Christian thought.”\textsuperscript{55} Kuper’s quote points to an awareness of a key distinction between Christian and Islamic doctrine:

In Christendom the existence of two authorities goes back to the founder, who enjoined his followers to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s and to God the things which are God’s. Throughout the history of Christendom there have been two powers: God and Caesar, represented in this world by sacerdotium and regnum, or, in modern terms, church and state.[…]In pre-westernized Islam, there were not two powers but one, and the question of separation, therefore, could not arise. \textsuperscript{56} [italics in original]

The word Jihad is derived from the triliteral Arabic verbal root j-h-d, meaning to strive or struggle, usually “in the path of God”. As pointed out by Lewis, certain modern-day reformers and Sufi mystics have argued for the existence of an “inner jihad”, sometimes referred to as the “greater jihad”, meaning a non-violent, internal struggle against sin \textsuperscript{57}. This interpretation is cited by one our primary sources, Roland Grigor Suny:

The term \textit{cihad} in Turkish can be variously interpreted as a great personal struggle against one’s urges or a campaign against infidels. To the West jihad meant a “holy war” directed at mobilizing Muslims against Christians. \textsuperscript{58} [italics in original]

\textsuperscript{53} Mann, p.578.
\textsuperscript{56} Bernard Lewis, \textit{The Political Language of Islam}, p.2.
For this assertion, Suny cites scholar Michael Bonner, whose relatively brief section on the question of “the greater jihad” is based more on contemporary reformers than the canonical sources such as the Hadith collections or opinions of classical theologians.\(^{59}\) In contrast, David Cook’s study of Jihad is very critical of what Cook argues are western apologists who claim, disingenuously, that military Jihad is of secondary importance to the inner struggle. In Cook’s analysis, while the Qur’an does contain examples of the word Jihad in both violent and non-violent contexts,\(^{60}\) the importance of the former dominates and the sum of the canonical Hadith literature, opinions of classical jurists and historical practice clearly favor the military interpretation.\(^{61}\) Also worth noting, is that many Sufi orders, such as the Naqshbandiyya order (to which many Kurds belong) were of a very martial character, in contrast to what the popular connotation of the word Sufi would suggest.\(^{62}\) Like Cook, Bernard Lewis writes that, although, starting in the 19th century, there have been some attempts by reformers and mystics to emphasize the non-violent interpretation of Jihad:

The overwhelming majority of classical theologians, jurists, and traditionists, however, understood the obligation of jihad in a military sense, and have examined and expounded it accordingly.\(^{63}\) [italics in original]

The Ottoman Jihad declaration was in fact officially referred to as a “cihad-i ekber”, which means “greater Jihad”.\(^ {64}\) Also noteworthy is the fact that the Ottoman minister of war Enver Pasha used the literal translation of “holy war”, writing shortly before the war broke out that: “Such a war [with England] would be a holy war [Böyle bir harb mukaddes olağına]...it will certainly be pertinent to rally the Muslim population”[…]\(^ {65}\) [italics in original].


\(^{62}\) Ibid., pp.44-46

\(^{63}\) Lewis, The Political Language of Islam, p.72.


The historiographical context

Because of the tremendous discrepancy between the volume of work dedicated to the Armenian Genocide and studies of the other Ottoman Christian victim groups, the themes treated below will refer to the Armenian genocide, unless specifically mentioned.

As a natural reaction to denial, the efforts of the first generations of scholars became heavily influenced by what we interpret as the immediate goal of combatting the official Turkish version, sometimes at the expense of providing a full historical account. These earlier efforts were characterized by a “prosecutorial approach” and scholars avoided using any Armenian sources, since these would be considered “suspect”. This immediate goal of recognition also led to an avoidance of the study of topics such as conversion to Islam and the abduction of women and children into Muslim households. Those attacking the deportation convoys often took women and children as part of the loot. Seeing as the genocide convention explicitly prohibits “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” , why were these aspects avoided? In Akçam’s analysis, Armenian genocide scholars, in this respect, “suffered from the general weakness of the emerging field”, where similarities with the Holocaust were viewed as the sine qua non for a case to attain the status of genocide:

The Holocaust became the yardstick against which an event might or might not measure up as a genocide. Consequently, researchers spent enormous amounts of energy trying to prove that other incidents of mass violence were in some way comparable to the Holocaust. Exacerbating this general problem was the Turkish Republic’s long-standing denial of the Armenian Genocide. Whether or not to apply the 1948 definition, or other definitions, to the physical extermination of the Armenians became the touchstone for all debate. As with other instances of mass violence, the fear that the events of 1915, collectively, would not be considered genocide if they did not resemble the Holocaust precluded serious analysis along the lines of dynamic social processes. Meanwhile, a concerted effort was made to ignore all the differences such as forced assimilation that might arise between any two discrete episodes of mass violence.

This dissimilarity is sometimes cited by scholars writing on the uniqueness of the Holocaust, notably Steven Katz: Katz states that the absence of racial ideology enabled an estimated 200-300 000 Armenians, particularly women and young children, to escape death by forcible or voluntary conversion to Islam, and that, while the role of the CUP in this is

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69 Ibid. pp.287-289.
unclear, they did not oppose conversion as it furthered their goal of “Turkification”. What is missing from Katz’ argument, however, is the fact that conversion did not guarantee survival: In contrast to the massacres in the 1890s, conversion in Anatolia warranted survival in 1915–16 only if the Ministry of Interior permitted it exceptionally. Conversion of religious identity and confession of faith was secondary to the demographic rationale; or, as the governor of Trabzon put it at the beginning of July 1915, “an Armenian converted to Islam will be expelled as a Muslim Armenian”. Based on original Ottoman documents, Akçam argues for the existence of a demographic policy guiding CUP directives, which he refers to as the “5 to 10 per cent principle”: Taking “governability as their central principle”[italics in original], the CUP allowed conversion wherever Ottoman Christians would make up less than, depending on the district, 5 or 10 percent of the population, and thus would surely be “dissolved within the Muslim majority”. If the number was expected to exceed the allotted figure, converts were annihilated along with the others, and conversion was prohibited - sometimes to be allowed and then prohibited again in a fluctuating pattern. The fact that an estimated 200 000 Armenian women and children survived did not stem from any moderation in genocidal intent on the part of the CUP elite, since they aimed to destroy the group, not, as in the Nazi case, the “race”. The destruction was based on “a cold-blooded calculation”, as was clear to the German Ambassador in Constantinople, Paul Wolff Metternich, who wrote that: “the decisive motivation in the forcible conversion of the Armenians’ religions[sic] is not religious fanaticism but the blending of the Armenians with the Muslim people of the Empire”

In our analysis, this is a clear example of how immediate goals can have a detrimental effect, not just on the overall quality of historical research, but also on the struggle towards genocide recognition. The Armenian scholar Ara Sarafian argues that the “Holocaust model”, which he considers “fundamentally flawed”, together with the “prosecutorial approach”, constitutes two of the major obstacles to the advancement of the field. These two approaches are highly characteristic of the works of Vahakn Dadrian, who is considered a

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71 Ibid., p.70.
73 Akçam, The Young Turks Crime against Humanity, pp.290-291.
74 Ibid. pp.290-291.
75 Travis cites a figure of 170 000. Genocide in the Middle East, p.287 Akçam uses an estimate of 200 000, adding that this is “mere conjecture”. A Shameful Act, p.183. Kaiser writes that “Possibly more than 150 000 Armenians had been forcibly assimilated” (not including 1917-1918). Genocide at the Twilight of the Ottoman Empire, p.382.
76 Akçam, The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity, p.307.
pioneer of the serious scholarly study of the Armenian genocide. For example, in his work “The History of the Armenian Genocide”, Dadrian only mentions abduction and conversions during the 1894-96 Hamidi massacres, but not during the Armenian Genocide.

As in Holocaust studies, the scholarly debate on genocidal premeditation can be divided into Intentionalist and Functionalist approaches: While the former argue that the decision for genocide had already been taken in a secret meeting of the CUP elite before the war, the latter interprets the genocide as the result of wartime radicalization triggered especially by the Russian invasion and the Galipolli campaign. Unlike scholars who argue against the existence of genocidal intent on the part of the CUP, Functionalists cite “The very nature of deportations” as sufficient proof of intent given their foreseeable consequences. Akçam prefers to label these two approaches continuity and contingency: Intentionalists also tend to emphasize the aspect of continuity throughout Ottoman history, owing largely to “Islamic doctrines and traditions”. In this view, WWI provided the perfect opportunity to implement a decision that Dadrian places as early as 1910, yet the existence of genocidal intent is interpreted as having preceded the CUP. Continuity-oriented scholars view the genocide as the last stage in what Dadrian terms “a Turkish subculture of massacres”. Dadrian interprets the lower death toll of the massacres of 1894-96 as “signs of expediency and exigence” rather than the absence of genocidal intent.

In contrast, functionalists view WWI as a necessary cause, providing an entirely new set of circumstances, upon which the genocide was contingent. In this view, religiously-derived animosity can only provide part of the context. They see the emphasis on Islamic tradition as questionable on two main points: firstly, the key figures behind the genocide were “not religious fanatics but secular men who embraced the fashionable science of the day”, and secondly, this model cannot explain why mass killings of Armenians did not occur during the previous centuries of Ottoman history. In our view, the continuity approach is difficult

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81 Akçam, The Young Turks’ crime against Humanity, p.127.
83 Hovanissian, The Armenian Genocide – Wartime Radicalization or Premeditated Continuum, pp.9-11.
84 Akçam, The Young Turks’ crime against Humanity, p.127.
86 Ibid. p.31.
to reconcile with the enormous impact the Balkan wars had on CUP radicalization. Despite his emphasis on anti-Christian elements in Islamic tradition, Dadrian consistently omits other Ottoman Christians from his analysis. The exclusive focus on the Armenians is characteristic of the historiography at large, and has been the subject of criticism in more recent scholarship. This bears some resemblance to scholarly debates on the non-Jewish victims of the Nazis. It is possible that many scholars were not aware of the non-Armenians victims: For example, much of the literature reflects the fact that most rescue-workers and missionaries were in areas with a predominantly Armenian population. Also, the Seyfo (Sword in Neo-Aramaic) was radically different from the Armenian genocide in its primary mode of destruction, which affected the testimonies of many Armenian survivors:

The Assyrians were seldom placed into deportation columns, but rather were killed in their villages by large assemblies of local Kurdish tribes coordinated by local militia. The Ottoman authorities used the divide-and-rule approach. In large towns and cities with a mixed Christian population, the Armenians were arrested, killed, and deported in the first phase. Thereafter, the attention was turned on the Assyrians and they were given the same treatment. But this temporary respite gave many Armenians the false impression that Assyrians were spared [our italics].

Some very important works do, however, mention the Assyrians: For example, in 1916, historian Arnold Toynebee and Viscount James Bryce published a “Blue Book”, titled “The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-16”. While the English original contained documentation on the massacres of Assyrians, these were not included in the French translation that was presented at the 1919-20 Paris Peace Conference.

In his 1918 memoirs, which the Holocaust scholars Robert Jay Lifton calls “a unique and remarkable source because of its view of genocide from the top”, Henry Morgenthau Sr, the U.S ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, stressed the similarity of the victim groups:


92 Originally titled Papers and Documents on the Treatment of Armenians and Assyrian Christians by the Turks, 1915–1916, in the Ottoman Empire and North-West Persia, Travis links these changes to Bryce being a “champion of the Ottoman Armenians”. Travis, Native Christians Massacred, p.331.
The Armenians are not the only subject people in Turkey which have suffered from this policy of making Turkey exclusively the country of the Turks. The story which I have told about the Armenians I could also tell with certain modifications about the Greeks and the Syrians.[Assyrians]. Indeed, the Greeks were the first victims of this nationalizing idea.94

Genocide scholar Adam Jones writes that, at the time of the deportations and massacres, western newspaper-readers were well informed of the suffering of all Ottoman Christian groups, and their plights were perceived not as three separate cases, but as belonging to the same process of destruction.95 The 2007 resolution of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, represents what we will refer to as the inclusivist position:

[...] WHEREAS the Ottoman genocide against minority populations during and following the First World War is usually depicted as a genocide against Armenians alone, with little recognition of the qualitatively similar genocides against other Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire;

BE IT RESOLVED that it is the conviction of the International Association of Genocide Scholars that the Ottoman campaign against Christian minorities of the Empire between 1914 and 1923 constituted a Genocide against Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontian and Anatolian Greeks.96

Adam Jones, who drafted the opposition, writes that it was passed emphatically “despite not inconsiderable opposition”97. The skepticism was directed primarily at the inclusion of the Ottoman Greeks. Israel Charny attributes this to a common psychological pattern of victim exclusivity98 but this fails to explain why the Assyrian case met with less opposition. From our studies on that subject, we are of the impression that the IAGS resolution is not indicative of a historiographical consensus. We wish to stress, however, that it could be misleading to even speak of a “consensus”, because of the very small number of scholarly works that deal

93 Suny, Writing Genocide Writing Genocide, p.15.
with the Greek case. Further complicating the issue is that these few scholars differ wildly in their estimates of death tolls and the nature of the events: For example: Jones writes that 350,000 Pontian Greeks were killed between 1914 and 1922, whereas Stéphane Yérasimos provides an estimated death toll of 65,000-70,000 Pontian Greeks, a third of which he claims were insurgents. Tessa Hofmann introduces the concept of a “cumulative genocide” for a genocidal process which, in her analysis, under different elite perpetrators and with differing intensity, killed over 1 million Ottoman Greeks between 1912-22.

On the other extreme end is the perfunctory treatment of the Ottoman Greeks by political scientist Manus Midlarsky. Subtracting the number of Greek Orthodox in the 1923 population exchange with Turkey (and the Istanbul Greeks who were exempt), from what appears to us to be a rather low pre-war population estimate, Midlarsky concludes that the Ottoman Greeks were spared large-scale massacres, citing his own model of “Affinity”. In Bloxham’s analysis, Ottoman Greeks were not killed in significant numbers until the 1921-22 “war of extermination”, where he argues that the occupying Greek forces and Mustafa Kemal’s forces targeted the civilian population to a similar degree.

Scholars also disagree in whether the Armenian genocide should be interpreted as continuing after the CUP years, with intentionalist scholars generally arguing that Mustafa Kemal’s forces simply took over where the CUP had left off. Although far from an intentionalist, historian Mark Levene does not exclude that interpretation:

[...] the Turkish war à outrance versus the newly created state of Armenia in 1919–20, just three years after an attempted Turkish mass extermination of the Armenian people, represents a state commitment to pursue genocide but, in changed circumstances, by a somewhat different route. [italics in original]

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100 Jones, p.163.
103 Of which 550,000 before 1918. Ibid. p.109.
106 Hovanissian, *The Armenian Genocide – Wartime Radicalization or Premeditated Continuum*, pp.9-11.
An interesting aspect of post-CUP continuity, not mentioned in any of our primary sources, is the use of religious rhetoric in the Turkish National Resistance Movement:

[...] in 1919 religious leaders in Mustafa Kemal’s resistance movement – hence technically not the Ottoman state – declared jihad against Greece, to mobilize support for Mustafa Kemal against both the Greek armies in May 1919 and against the British-controlled government of the Sultan in Istanbul.108

**Religious ideology and mass participation**

In the section titled “Perpetrator’s motives: Ordinary people or fanatics?”109 sociologist Michael Mann first describes the famous Milgram experiment, which concluded that “ordinary modern people can kill if an order comes from a legitimate scientific authority”.

Among the nine types of perpetrators he describes, Mann writes that “Ideological killers” are especially prevalent among upper-level perpetrators, and that they are convinced of the “righteousness of murderous cleansing” that to them is “justified by higher goals”:

Such an ideology might resonate in certain contexts (like war) or in core constituencies – like refugees who have already suffered at the hands of the out-group. The ideology might resonate in the practices and subcultures of certain professions. Doctors and biologists in the early 20th century found biomedical models of ethnicity and race particularly attractive. But the most common ideological motive is to self-righteously justify killing as self-defense. The killer protests that he is really the victim.110

The genocidal events of WWI and its aftermath does indeed contain all of the above examples111, yet there is one ideology that is conspicuously missing from Mann’s model: religious ideology. Leo Kuper writes that “The intimate relationship of religious difference to genocide” is evident all throughout history.112 It is safe to assume that, to the believer, what is perceived as the will of God is even more compelling than the authority of “a legitimate scientific authority”. Motivational factors such as “paradise” or “eternal hellfire” are not found in Mann’s book yet these concepts were intensely real to many Ottoman Muslims and Christians alike. Although the present study deals with perpetrators and not rescuers, we believe that it is important to point out that there were Muslims who saw the murder of Armenians as incompatible with their religious beliefs, and that Muslims who helped

109 Mann, pp.26-29.
110 Ibid, p.27.
Armenians, often did so at great peril. Decrees from the Ottoman army made it clear to the population that all Muslims protecting Christians “would be killed in front of their homes and the homes then burned”.¹¹³ To Libaridian, this helps explain why more Ottoman Muslims did not help their Armenian neighbors and friends, yet the segment of the general population who participated in the massacres, were not forced to do so through government intimidation. Rather, Libaridian writes that they were motivated by “the promise of loot, of approbation of women and children and of an afterlife in heaven.”¹¹⁴

This brings us to another of Mann’s categories: “materialist killers”, who are “lured by the prospect of direct economic gain”.¹¹⁵ Levene mentions “Legitimized plunder” as motivating those he terms “grass-roots killers”¹¹⁶, although he does not specify the nature of this legitimization. As we are attempting "to be true to the past" and “reconstruct in its own terms”¹¹⁷, it is imperative that we pay heed to the ever-present religious dimension: plunder that did not conform to the Shari’a, was Haraam (forbidden). Reynolds emphasizes the importance of material incentives for mass participation, but the following excerpt also shows how the CUP employed religious terminology in their incitement. As previously mentioned, the separation between temporal and spiritual is a concept alien to Islam:

In order to sway the Kurds and other Muslims in Iran to join their jihad, the Ottomans emphasized that all booty and loot acquired in the course of the jihad was helâl, or religiously permissible, and belonged in its entirety to its captors.¹¹⁸ [italics in original]

The “loot” often included women and children: Girls were either forced to marry – which saved the captor the substantial cost of a dowry – or used as sex slaves and house servants. Boys provided slave labour and often succumbed to starvation since it was cheaper to find new ones than to feed them properly.¹¹⁹ The concept of helaal (Arabic: Halaal) also appears in another one of our primary sources. Describing the massacres in the province of Diyarbakir in southeastern Anatolia, Kevorkian notes how the CUP representative adapted his rhetoric to the devout Kurdish inhabitants, inciting them:

[…]against the “infidels” with the help of religious references and with the support of the hojas, rather than Turkic discourse. One slogan was repeated everywhere: “God, make their children orphans, make widows of their wives through and give their property to Muslims.” In addition to this prayer, legitimization of plunder,

¹¹⁴ Libaridian, p.139.
¹¹⁵ Mann, p.28.
¹¹⁷ Tosh, p.48.
¹¹⁸ Reynolds, p.119.
¹¹⁹ Kaiser, Genocide at the Twilight of the Ottoman Empire, p.377.
murder, and abduction took the following form: “It is licit for Muslims to take the infidels’ property, life and women” (“giavurların mali, canı ve namuse helal dir islamlara”) \(^{120}\) [italics in original]

As mentioned in the theory section, human nature precludes certain aspects of Ranke’s ideal historian: while moral involvement should not, ideally, be allowed to interfere with scholarly conclusions, no historian can entirely suspend their preconceptions and act as a completely “disinterested, passive observers.” \(^{121}\) When studying the late Ottoman Empire, one need to be especially aware of certain modern preconceptions, and avoid projecting them back unto the object of study: these preconceptions are those derived from a secular or atheist view of concepts such as identity, morality, life and death.

In the words of Bernard Lewis, the neotor of Middle East studies:” For the Muslim, religion was the core of identity, of his own and therefore of other men's.” \(^{122}\)

Islam divides mankind between those who profess Islam and those who reject Muhammed as Allahs final messenger. All Muslims are considered part of one community (Arabic: umma, Turkish: ümmet) and Islamic doctrine does not recognize national borders between Muslims. Lands that are, or have at one time or another been, under Muslim rule are known collectively as the House of Islam (Arabic: daar al-Islam). Non-muslims are known collectively as “infidels”(Arabic: sing. Kaafir, plural. Kufaar and in Turkish: Gavur, plural: Gavurler) or unbelievers. Lands under infidel rule are known as “the house of war” (Arabic: daar al-Harb). \(^{123}\) Letters from 16\(^{th}\)-18\(^{th}\) century Muslim visitors in Europe show an interesting contrast to letters from European visitors to Muslim lands during the same period: The European travelers refer to themselves as Englishmen, Frenchmen or Germans and they describe the local inhabitants as Moors in North Africa, Turks in the Ottoman Empire, Persians in today’s Iran. The Muslim travelers, however, invariably refer to themselves as Muslims visiting the lands of the infidels. Not only is the word infidel used instead of “German” or “Frenchman”, it is also used in contexts where the European visitor would write of “a human being” or “a man”. Also, they all refer to their own country as “the lands of

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\(^{121}\) Tosh, p.177.


\(^{123}\) Ibid., pp.171-72.
Islam”, and not as the Ottoman Empire, Persia or Morocco, although they constituted separate political entities, as the latter two were never conquered by the Ottomans.124

Within those who do not profess Islam, there are two subcategories. The first are those who are considered as professing some form of Idolatry (Shirk in Arabic). This includes all polytheists, animists and even atheists. They are to be given the choice between death and conversion, although in practice, they were often taken into slavery. By contrast, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians are considered “people of the book” (ahl al-kitaab), monotheistic religions recognized as having received revealed scripture. Because of their corruption of the original, the final, unaltered, message was revealed to Muhammed, who is known in Islam as “the seal of the prophets” (khaatam an-nabyiin). The “people of the book” may live in the House of Islam provided that they abide by certain conditions of legal inferiority, in which case they are to enjoy the protection of the Muslim ruler. This pact is called the dhimma and the individual subject is known as a dhimmi.125 The protection accorded to the dhimmi rests on his acceptance of specific regulations: because the Koran contains a passage that prohibits the forced conversion of “the people of the book”, these regulations are intended to make the life of the dhimmi difficult and humiliating, which encouraged conversion to Islam126. In addition to the tax levied on all subject of the Muslim ruler, the dhimmi pays a poll tax, known as jizya in Arabic(Turkish: cizyet)127. According to a Turkish historian, this tax accounted for 45% of the Ottoman government’s revenue at the beginning of the 18th century.128 Unlike Muslims, the dhimmi was forbidden to bear arms. This added a constant element of precariousness, especially in areas with little government control, such as southeastern Anatolia. While Christians in the larger cities usually did enjoy some measure of protection in, the Armenians and Assyrians in the countryside were literally at the mercy of their neighbors, particularly the nomadic Kurdish tribes.129 Because of the prohibition on bearing arms, non-Muslims were neither required nor allowed to perform military service. When in, 1909 the CUP-led Ottoman Government introduced compulsory military service for non-Muslims, this caused great resentment among the Muslim population as it was

124 Ibid., p.173.
125 Ibid., p.171
127 Akçam, A Shameful Act, p.23.
129 Dadrian, Warrant for Genocide, pp.31-33
considered a violation of the Shari’a. The dhimmi was to be constantly reminded of his inferior position: he was obliged to step aside when a Muslim approached, he could not ride horses, only less noble animals like donkeys, and was forbidden to wear certain garments. The ringing of church bells and the building of new houses of worship was forbidden, and the houses of non-Muslims had to be lower to the ground than those of Muslims. Before the Tanzimat reforms, all Ottoman subjects were divided according to the millet system where the religious authorities enjoyed a great deal of autonomy over the affairs of their flock. All Muslims belonged to one millet, as did the Jews. Christians were originally divided into the Greek Orthodox (Rûm) millet and the Armenian (Ermeni) millet of the Armenian Apostolic Church. During the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire accorded separate millet status to some of the various Churches who had been placed in the above millets, but in fact were distinct forms of Christianity, differing in doctrine and liturgical language: The various Assyrian churches (Syriac Orthodox, Chaldeans, Syriac Catholics and Nestorians) had previously belonged to the Armenian millet as had the Armenian Catholics and Protestants, who had recently been converted by missionaries. The Bulgarian and Serbian Orthodox churches, which had previously belonged to the Greek Orthodox millet, also got their own separate millets in an attempt to placate their nationalist tendencies, but to little effect.

Non-Muslims were free to handle their internal legal disputes within their millet, but in disputes with Muslims, the case would go before an Islamic court of law. There, the testimony of a dhimmi was not accepted. By contrast, the testimony of two Muslim males was considered adequate proof. This was used extensively to stake false claims on Christian property in southeastern Anatolia. Also, a Muslim convicted of killing a dhimmi, even with premeditation, was very rarely executed.

According to Dadrian, the explanation for the relative prosperity of Ottoman Christians can be found in “the divisiveness of the Ottoman theocratic Islamic system.” Not only was a military career closed to non-Muslims, but government jobs were also generally reserved for Muslims. In time, Christians and Jews naturally excelled at the few professions they could practice, such as trade and artisanship. Although most Ottoman Armenians were in fact poor farmers, social envy against Christians was widespread and many considered them “leeches

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130 Ibid. p.64.
132 Dadrian, Warrant for Genocide, p.16.
134 Dadrian, Warrant for Genocide, p.133.
on the Muslim element”.

As many Ottoman Christians became aware of the standards of democracy in 19th-century Europe, they found their traditional status increasingly unacceptable. This awareness led to what Dadrian calls “The clash between Democratic norms and theocratic dogmas”, and the Armenians in particular began calling for foreign intervention to guarantee the rights that the Tanzimat reforms had promised them. Britain and Russia used the Ottoman Christians as “a pretext for interfering in domestic Ottoman Affairs”, which caused great resentment among the Muslim population. This was added onto already prevalent negative attitudes towards the Christians, described by Dadrian as “scorn blended with latent hatred”.

While the term “infidel” technically includes all non-Muslims, in Ottoman usage, it had long since become “virtually synonymous with Christians”. In stark contrast to current attitudes in the Islamic world, Jews were no longer referred to as infidels, only as dhimmis. This is found both in the official and popular usage of the day. Although the Qur’an and the authoritative Hadith literature contain more negative passages about Jews than about Christians, general attitudes eventually changed in favor of the Jews: Part of the reason was that Judaism is considered a purer form of Monotheism than Christianity, and indeed has some significant similarities with Islam such as circumcision and the prohibition of pork. In contrast, the Christians doctrine of the Trinity was, and is, often interpreted as dangerously close to polytheism. More important, however, was that the Jews were a small and powerless population, and at the time, Jews “were no longer considered to be in a state of war with Islam”. This was no guarantee against humiliation, however. For example, after massacres in the Diyarbakir region, the local Jews were forced to gather the corpses of the Armenians and Assyrians. In the words of a young girl Armenian girl who managed to survive: “The Mohammedans did not kill them, but they liked to compel them to do such awful tasks.”

In the words of Taner Akçam: “In sum, the pluralistic Islamic model rested on both humiliation and toleration.”

135 Kieser, Hans-Lukas, From ‘patriotism’ to mass murder: Dr. Mehmed Reşid, p.135.
136 Dadrian, Warrant for Genocide, p.16.
137 Akçam, A Shameful Act, p.27.
138 Dadrian, Warrant for Genocide, p.25.
139 Lewis, The Muslim Discovery of Europe, pp.171-72.
According to the Shari’a, Muslim men are free to marry women from the “people of the book”, but the inverse case is punishable by death, as is apostasy from Islam. Starting with the Tanzimat Edict in 1839, and reinforced by the so-called “Gülhane Edict” in 1856, all Sharia-derived legal distinctions between Ottoman subjects were removed. Although the death penalty for apostasy was officially abolished in 1844:

Armenians who took up Islam during the mass conversions often later returned to their original faith, depending on local conditions. But apostasy was still seen by the Muslim general population as a mortal sin, and many an Armenian was deterred from apostasy by a fear that his Muslim neighbors might well take the law into their own hands, as in fact often occurred.

The Declaration

Several different dates can accurately be given for the for the Jihad declaration: On November 11, it was first presented to “political, military, and religious dignitaries” in a closed ceremony. On November 13, it was officially proclaimed by the Sheikh ul-Islam and on the following day read to the public with “great fanfare”. Sometimes referred to as a singular fatwa (Turkish: fetva), it in fact consisted of five separate fatwas, that is, Islamic legal opinions. These had been drafted by the Sheikh ul-Islam, then signed by 29 religious authorities and received the blessing of the Sultan prior to the first date. Copies of the declaration were posted on government buildings immediately after the proclamation.

The CUP had removed Sultan Abdul Hamid II after the reactionary 1909 counterrevolution, and his successor Mehmed V, did not enjoy any actual power. This was, however, not known to the much of the Muslim public, to whom he Sultan remained the object of unquestionable loyalty. As the Empire’s foremost authority on (Sunni) Islamic jurisprudence, the office of the Sheikh ul-Islam had been appointed by the Sultan throughout the Empires history. The current one, Mustafa Hayri Bey, however, was a CUP member, described by Kevorkian as having “nothing of the clergyman about him”.

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142 Deringil, There Is No Compulsion in Religion”, p.556.
144 Kevorkian, p.212.
145 For example, in Suny, They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else, p.238.
146 Aksakal, Holy War Made in Germany, pp.84-85.
147 Gaunt, Massacres, Resistance, Protectors, p.62.
149 Kevorkian, p.212.
Schwanitz provides an accurate summary of the five fatwas: As a response to the aggressions of Russia, England and France, all able-bodied Muslims are required to join the jihad in defense of the Islamic community. Those who refuse are committing a grave sin for which they will be punished in the hereafter. The Jihad is not limited to the Empire’s subject, but Muslim subjects of the Entente are forbidden to fight against the Ottomans – which according to the fatwas qualifies as murder of fellow Muslims, punishable by eternal hellfire. Instead, they are required to rebel against their oppressors, i.e. the Entente plus Serbia and Montenegro (the last two are not mentioned by Schwanitz). Notably, all Muslims are explicitly forbidden to fight against the German and Austrian allies of the Empire.\textsuperscript{150}

Mentioning Christian allies in a formal declaration of Jihad was "legalistically problematic"\textsuperscript{151}, to say the least. For example, prominent classical theologians such as Ibn Qudama held that Muslims are in a perpetual state of war with Christians, and for this reason, formal declarations of Jihad are not necessary. Also, Ibn Quadama argued against "the idea that people should migrate long distances just to fight a given enemy when an enemy is close at hand"\textsuperscript{152}. In Michael Reynolds’ analysis: “The idea of waging a holy war in alliance with the infidel powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary was dubious at best”\textsuperscript{153}. McMeekin also describes it as theologically “unsound” to Muslim clerics and that its literal meaning left citizens of neutral countries as possible targets.\textsuperscript{154} Bloxham refers to the declaration “as a corruption of the Quranic prescription”\textsuperscript{155} and as a “false religious imperative”\textsuperscript{156} but he does not point out that the essence of this “corruption” was the exemption of certain Christians.

At over 1000 pages, Raymond Kevorkian’s groundbreaking work has been described as an encyclopedia of the genocide, rather than a book. In a highly laudatory review, Taner Akçam writes of the monumental importance to the field that Kevorkian bases his narrative on Armenian sources, in addition to the commonly used western sources, thus breaking with the earlier mentioned tradition among Armenian scholars. As the first major work to do so, to

\textsuperscript{152} Cook, p.61.
\textsuperscript{153} Reynolds, \emph{Shattering Empires}, p.122.
\textsuperscript{154} McMeekin, pp.124-125.
\textsuperscript{156} Bloxham, \emph{The Great Game of Genocide}, p.74.
Akçam, the importance of this “cannot be stated enough”. Kevorkian describes the CUP-orchestrated demonstrations that followed the public reading of the declaration, through the lens of an Armenian eyewitness: Krikor Zohrab, a lawyer, intellectual and member of the Ottoman parliament, noted in his diary on November 14:

A grand comedy was staged. The Turks solemnly proclaimed a jihad against four belligerent states, Russia, France, Great Britain and Serbia. The first to laugh at this farce are the Turks themselves ... In my opinion, the people of the city took no part in this demonstration [which saw] attacks on commercial firms belonging to a number of enemy powers and peaked in the demolition of the Tokatlians’ hotels.

Five days later, however, Zohrab writes, that ever since the Jihad was declared, people in the capital had taken to wearing fezes instead of European-style hats, because it had become preferable not to look like a European. His diary also contains two anecdotes that to Kevorkian are illustrative of the mood among Armenians at the outbreak of the war:

A middle-class Armenian came to see Vartkes Seringiulian [a parliamentary deputy] to tell him about his apprehensions and ask for advice. Vartkes told him that nothing could be easier; he had a very good solution that would cost no more than five kurus[sic]: “Keep a white tülbend (turban) in your pocket. As soon as the Turks start the massacre, pull it out and wrap it around your fez to make a turban. Then declare you’re a Muslim. No one will harm a hair of your head.” The man replied, “I’ll do no such thing. Vartkes. When the Armenians of Sasun were massacred, did they abjure their faith?” “There’s another solution,” Vartkes answered: “buy a weapon and defend yourself, if need be.” After a moment’s thought, the man replied, “I’ll do no such thing, Vartkes, because then they’ll massacre my kith and kin into the bargain.” Vartkes asked, “What are you going to do, then?” “God is merciful,” the man replied. Vartkes brought their conversation to an end with the following words: “Everyone says that. The world is awash in blood and God is merciful. What if God is merciless?” To convert to Islam or pretend to, to defend themselves, or commend themselves to God’s mercy, such were the Armenians’ options. Another story doing the rounds in the capital illustrates the reignng mood: a twelve-year-old Turkish schoolgirl in a German school in Istanbul told one of her Armenian classmates, “After we win the war, we’re going to massacre all the Greeks first.” Bewildered, the young Armenian asked her, “and what are you going to do with us?” The bell announcing the lunch break interrupted the conversation.[italics in original]

The above-mentioned destruction of the Tokatlian hotel is also cited by Suny and Balakian. Suny, one of the most well-known functionalist scholars of the genocide, criticizes what he sees as Balakians overemphasis on Islam, including the impact of the Jihad declaration:

Following Dadrian’s Warrant for Genocide, Balakian sees mass killing as a product of religion—the deep antagonism of Islam toward Christianity—and he refers to the proclamation of jihad by the Ottoman Sheik ul-Islam and its influence on officers and ordinary people who carried out the killings. In fact, as historians and eyewitnesses from Morgenthau on have shown, there was little immediate response to the call for jihad other than the destruction of a rather exclusive Armenian restaurant, which, it turns out, was staged by the CUP.

158 Kevorkian, p.212.
159 Ibid. p.863.
161 Suny, Writing Genocide, p.31.
In our analysis, the word “immediate” is of importance here. Because of the moderating effect that the presence of foreign diplomats had in the capital, we find it unconvincing to cite the absence of massacres in the capital as evidence for the negligible impact of the declaration. An argument commonly used by denialist scholars is that Istanbul Armenians were “spared deportations”. Although an estimated 30 000 Constantinople Armenians were in fact deported in a piece-meal fashion throughout the war, beginning with the declaration initiative of rounding up intellectuals on April 24, 1915, the CUP bowed to German diplomatic pressure and abandoned their plans for a general deportation order in the capital. Similarly, it appears reasonable to assume that the large presence of foreigners, notably German diplomats, pressured the CUP to prevent anti-Christian pogroms in Constantinople. McMeekin writes that “efforts to curtail the violence” against foreigners and other Christians, in fact came from none other than Talaat Pasha. An utterly ruthless but pragmatic man, Talaat was keen on not provoking the neutral countries, notably the United States. The declaration had caused an atmosphere of panic among Americans and Europeans in the city, all convinced that anti-Christian massacres were imminent. Wanting to appear to foreign observers as a moderate, Talaat asserted control over his subordinates, and the anti-Christian massacres did not materialize, although looting did occur. Morgenthau and the American embassy are said to have played a significant preventive role as well. In the peripheral areas, however, there would be no such protection from the mobs.

To Balakian, the destruction of the Tokatlian hotel was foreboding of more sinister things to come. As the following passage shows, Balakian interprets the Jihad as a very important component of the genocide. Also worth noting here is that, although Balakian’s emphasis on Islam largely follows Dadrian model of genocidal continuity, unlike Dadrian and many other scholars, he does not completely omit non-Armenian victims from his narrative:

“Tokatlian’s, the most important restaurant in Constantinople,” as Morgenthau called it. That it was run by an Armenian, he noted, made it “fair game.” Then Turks broke the mirrors and windows and smashed the marble table tops; within minutes the restaurant was “completely gutted.” If the jihad failed to incite a worldwide call for three hundred million Muslims to take arms against Christians, it did fan the flames of Turkish nationalism and continued to escalate what Jay Winter has called “the cultural preparation of hatred.” As the American ambassador put it, the jihad “started passions aflame that afterward spent themselves in the massacres of the Armenians and other subject peoples.”

162 Akçam, The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity, p.399. For example, Guenter Lewy claims that Constantinople Armenians were “spared deportations” with no mention of the exceptions. Lewy, p.207.
164 McMeekin, pp.127-129.
165 Balakian, p.170.
Balakian also mentions other Ottoman Christians earlier in his book when describing an important reason for the deep-seated animosity on the part of the Muslim population. Suny claims that scholars such as Balakian and Dadrian see “mass killing as a product of religion—the deep antagonism of Islam toward Christianity”, while he himself only goes as far as to write that religious sentiments “may have fueled the hatred toward the Armenians” [our italics]. While praising Balakians beautiful prose, Suny criticizes his book for its lack of analytical depth. In our analysis, Balakian correctly points to a profound cause for this antagonism – the idea that appeals for equality were a transgression against the natural order of things according to Islamic law and Ottoman tradition:

At the heart of the problem—whether in the Balkans or in the Armenian provinces of the east—was the legal, political, and social status of Christians in the Ottoman Empire. On one front the fundamental question was: Can a Christian be the equal of a Muslim? The question was raised again and again by the Christian minorities and by the European powers, and in the end the answer from the Ottoman ruling elite was a resounding no. And the Armenians, as well as the Assyrians and the Greeks, all paid dearly for that answer.

“National” Identity

Ambassador Morgenthau writes of the CUP, that “Practically all of them were atheists, with no more respect for Mohammedanism than for Christianity.” His account has most likely influenced the historiography on this point: for example, Suny writes that many of the leading young Turks were “even hostile to Islam”. In fact, most of the Young Turks strongly identified as Muslims, and the organization did not accept non-Muslims as members during its formative years. Zürcher’s work points to the fact that they were not at all anti-Islamic, as is often stated, but rather, that they saw themselves as Muslim modernizers:

Inspired by positivism, they were vehemently anti-clerical, but with the possible exception of Abdullah Cevdet, the ‘atheist philosopher’ (dinsiz mutefekkir) every one of them saw in a ‘true’ or ‘purified’ Islam, which was envisioned as a ‘rational’ religion open to science, a valuable building block of Ottoman reconstruction and a social cement.

In our analysis, a comparative look at Mustafa Kemal’s Turkish Nationalist Resistance Movement and the CUP indicates that many works on the Armenian Genocide suffer from an exaggerated focus on elite ideology as well as a misleading, or at least confusing, use of the

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166 Suny, Writing Genocide, p.31.
167 Balakian, p.43.
168 Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, p.323, quoted in Suny, Writing Genocide, p.18.
169 Suny, They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else, p.238.
term “Turk”. Zürcher, whose research shows the continuity between the CUP and the Young Turkish Republic, describes how the foundation of the resistance movement arose out of local CUP branches, formed in late 1918 as the carving up of the Empire was imminent. These societies for the “defense of national rights” (Müdafaà-I hukuk-u milliye) often had men of religion such as muftis (Turk. müftüler) as titular heads, to “emphasize it national character” and to gain popular support. Since the CUP and its successors are usually described as “nationalists”, it may be of interest to examine the word “national” in its original form. The Ottoman Turkish word millye and its more familiar noun form millet, come from the Qur’anic Arabic word milla. In the original Aramaic, it means “a word”, and came to be used for: a group of people who accept a particular word or revealed book. In Christian Aramaic it is used to translate logos. In Qur’anic and subsequent usage, it is more strictly religious in its connotation than umma. It is used of the religious community of Islam; it is also used of other, including non-Muslim, religious groups, and of some deviant groups within the Islamic world. In the Ottoman Empire it became a technical term, and was used for the organized, recognized, religio-political communities enjoying certain rights of autonomy under their own chiefs. Again, the primary basis was religious rather than ethnic. Either interpretation is possible for the Armenians and the Jews, since these could be defined in both religious and ethnic terms. But the composition of the largest and most important of the non-Muslim millets, the Greek millet, makes it clear that the basic classification was religious. […] Similarly, there was only one Muslim millet in the Ottoman Empire and the term was not used for Turks, Albanians, Arabs, Kurds or other ethnic groups within the larger Muslim community. The Ottomans saw even the outside world in similar terms. [italics in original]

The traditional Islamic view of an undivided Muslim community is evident in the rhetoric of the societies for the defense of national rights, emphasizing that all Muslim compatriots form one millet, invariably translated as nation. On the rare instances that Turks are mentioned as a distinct group, it is done in conjunction with an emphasis on the overriding Muslim identity of Turks and Kurds, which are described as belonging to one community (ümmet):

What the society aims to achieve in political terms is made abundantly clear: it portrays itself as the ‘guard of the Islamic Caliphate and the Ottoman Sultanate’ and the ‘real protector of the Muslim rights’. The latter term, hukuk-u islamîye, appears to be a synonym for the better known and more widely used hukuk-u milliye (national rights). The Muslims it represents want to remain part and parcel of the Ottoman Empire.

Whereas milla became obsolete in Arabic, its Ottoman derivatives such as milliyet (nationalism) continued to be used in the Turkish republic even as it pursued heavy-handed secularization and Turkification (now in a stricter ethno-linguistic sense). This has probably

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contributed greatly to the largely false dichotomy between “nationalist” and “Islamic” in many narratives on the Armenian genocide. Although the man who would be known as Atatürk had already envisioned many of his drastic secularist and westernizing reforms\textsuperscript{175}, he knew that his views were not shared by most of his Ottoman Muslim compatriots. To win their support, “the nationalists”, who had been branded traitors by the Istanbul government, emphasized that “they were fighting for the preservation of the sultanate and caliphate”\textsuperscript{176}. These were, however, to be abolished in 1922 and 1924, respectively.\textsuperscript{177}

The Young Turk movement began among Ottoman exiles in radical opposition to the despotism of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and its first congresses were held in Paris. They were disproportionally made up of “children of the borderlands”\textsuperscript{178}, far more familiar with the coffee-houses of cosmopolitan cities such as Salonica than the Anatolian “Turkish heartland”. Outside of their religious affiliation, they had precious little in common with most of those who would do the actual fighting for the Empire, a fact they were keenly aware of:

The very fact that the call to holy war came from a Caliphate operating under the auspices of a CUP government rather confirms not simply the latter’s pragmatism but the degree to which - for all the modernizing aspirations of its leaders – they were still bound to the sinews of a traditional Islamic society”\textsuperscript{179}.

Morgenthau describes Talaat Pasha as contemptuous of all religions, telling the ambassador: “I hate all rabbis, priests and hodjas”\textsuperscript{180} Interestingly, in a telegram found in the Ottoman archives, Talaat refers to the 500 soldiers he sent to assist in the siege of the Assyrian town of Azakh, as mujaheddîn\textsuperscript{181}. This is the plural form of mujâhid, one who engages in Jihad. We cannot be sure as to why Taasha chose to employ this term, but whether it was to placate to the ideology of his subordinates or not, it is an interesting indication that this topic could benefit from more research in the Ottoman Archives.

While Zürcher has not written about the impact of the Jihad on the Armenian genocide, he mentions it in the context of continuity between the CUP and Kemal’s forces:

\textsuperscript{175} These included the prohibition of polygamy as well as mandating the replacement of the fez with the European-style hat, popularly associated with the foreign gavur. Zürcher, 

\textit{Zürcher, Turkey – A Modern History}, pp.172-173

\textit{Zürcher, Turkey – A Modern History}, pp.188-190

For a detailed account of the radical language reforms, which included the Latinization of the script and a vast purge of Arabic and Persian words, see Geoffrey Lewis, \textit{The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success}, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

\textit{Zürcher, Turkey – A Modern History}, p.152.


\textit{Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story}, p.20

\textit{Gaunt, The Complexity of the Assyrian Genocide}, p.91
What was deemed ‘national’ was no longer in doubt by the end of 1912: the empire had been attacked by a coalition of Christian Balkan states, the loyalties of the Ottoman Christian communities were questionable at best and the big powers of Europe did not lift a finger to help the empire in distress. When the Young Turks organized the war effort through countless political, social, economic and cultural organizations, all of which carried the title millî (‘national’), it was clear what this term meant: by and for the Ottoman Muslims. Defining the national as Ottoman Muslim continued throughout the years of World War I (which was also officially declared a Jihad and which was partly fought out as a brutal ethnic/religious conflict in Anatolia) and beyond. The proclamations of the national resistance movement in Anatolia after 1918, for example, make it abundantly clear that the movement fought for the continued independence and unity of Ottoman Muslims. The religious character of the movement was often remarked upon at the time, with religious ceremonies accompanying every major event. It was the only period in recent Turkish history when the country knew prohibition of alcohol.182

Considering the above similarities, it is our impression that most scholars writing on the Armenian genocide may have focused disproportionately on the ideology of a small number upper-level perpetrators, and neglected the ideological framework of those that Mark Levene refer to as “grass-roots killers”183. This could possibly be traced to a more general situation in the wider field of comparative genocide studies: where prominent scholars, including, for example Eric D. Weitz, link genocide to concepts such as “illiberal elites”, “the warped ambitions of modern politicians” and a utopian drive to fundamentally restructure society. The work of sociologist Helen Fein has been especially influential in making “ideologies of race and nation; revolutionary regimes with utopian aspirations of social or ethnic purity, moments of crisis generated by war and upheaval” standard ingredients in comparative works on genocide.184 While sociologists, historians and political scientists are better equipped to dissect, challenge and nuance these notions, they can often lead to flawed conclusions when they are borrowed wholesale by scholars from entirely different disciplines. For example, in an analysis of perpetrators in the Armenian genocide, social psychologist James Waller writes that “Ottoman tolerance was abandoned for the ideology of pan-Turkism – a version of racial nationalism […]”185 This statement is incorrect on all counts: We have already touched upon the issue of tolerance for non-Muslim Ottomans. As we shall see, the influence of pan-Turkism was marginal, and it was never “racial”. In Robert Melson’s analysis, the “revolutionary transformation of ideology and identity for the majority had dangerous implications for the minority.”186. “Once Ottomans became Turks”187, Melson writes, this

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186 Melson, Revolution and Genocide, p.139.
187 Ibid. p.169.
spelled disaster for the Armenians. Our main issue with this interpretation, is that Melson appears to argue that this ideological shift was not merely limited to the CUP elite:

The Armenians were in danger of being conceived as enemies of Turkey and of the Turkish revolution once Ottoman Turks came to view themselves not in religious terms but in ethnic terms.\textsuperscript{188}

Looking at recent Turkish history, it is arguable whether this shift ever really took place in the minds of the majority, and to the extent that it did take place, projecting it back to the late Ottoman empire is anachronistic. For example, a scholar associated with the official Turkish position on the Armenian genocide writes that, in the late Ottoman Empire, those who we today call Turks, Albanians, Kurds or Arabs “would call themselves simply, Muslims”\textsuperscript{189}.

In his influential work \textit{Revolution and Genocide}, Melson writes of the CUP’s increasingly “narrow, exclusivist and antiliberal” ideology of Turkish nationalism, which was similar to European forms of integral nationalism, and contained racist elements. He also attributes great weight to Pan-Turkism, which he claims increased a sense of “Turkishness” among Ottoman Turks\textsuperscript{190}. Furthermore, Enver Pasha’s decision to attack the Russian army at Sarikamish is interpreted as the direct result of his Pan-Turkist ideology. In Melson’s analysis, this ideology was a significant driving force behind the Empire’s entry into the First World War on the side of the Central Powers,\textsuperscript{191} and the Pan-Turkist goal of “carving or reclaiming a new Turkic empire out of Russian lands” was “crucial for tracing the origins of the Armenian genocide.”\textsuperscript{192} This perspective is also seen in Balakian’s analysis:

The Young Turk leaders, especially Enver Pasha, went beyond pan-Turkism and became obsessed with the idea of pan-Turanism, an ideology based on the hope of reclaiming the Caucasus and central Asia—an idea laced with some of the occultlike fantasy characterized by the Nazi belief about ruling the world for a thousand years. For Enver it fueled his desire to wipe out the Armenians, whom he saw as an obstacle to Turkish expansion into the Russian Caucasus and then into central Asia, and it dictated some of his military strategy\textsuperscript{193}

Rather than as a clear indication of his Pan-Turkish/Turanist zeal, Reynolds argues that the decision to attack the Russian army at Sarikamish derived from concise and limited strategic

\textsuperscript{190} Melson, \textit{Revolution and Genocide}, pp.163-164.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid. p.167.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid. p.168.
\textsuperscript{193} Balakian, p.165.
motives\textsuperscript{194}, although the daring initiative was certainly characteristic of Enver’s rash personality and \textit{amour-propre}. It would appear to us that many scholars focus disproportionally on expansionist \textit{dreams} at the expense of the actual concrete, minimal \textit{goal} of the CUP, which was, in Kieser’s analysis: “the preservation of the Young Turk power organization together with the establishment of a firm Turkish Muslim base or home in Asia Minor.”\textsuperscript{195} Also, Melson and many other scholars use the terms “Turk” and “Turkish”, when “Ottoman Muslim” would be more accurate. In an otherwise favorable review, Quataert notes Donald Bloxham’s haphazard use of “Turk” and “Ottoman”. Quataert sees this as typical of many works on the Armenian genocide and has served to obscure the issue and make reconciliation even less likely. To Quataert, although he is clearly aware of the difference:

\[\ldots\] Bloxham consistently betrays a careless use of the terms Turk and Turkish when referring to the Ottoman state or some of its Muslim subjects. In this regard, he has plenty of company. [\ldots] he too very often writes Turkish when he means Ottoman. Within the space of a single paragraph, he refers to “Turkish suspicion” and “Ottoman troops,” and, even worse, in two consecutive sentences, he wavers from “the Ottoman army” to “the Turkish armies” [\ldots] Who committed the deportations and slaughters? On a moral plane, does the elision of Turk and Ottoman mean that modern-day Turks are liable for the sins of the Ottomans? On the historical plane, were the killers Ottoman officials bent on saving the state in a wartime crisis, or were they Turkish chauvinists or racists bent on purging the land of its non-Turkish populations? Bloxham seems to believe the latter to be the case (94, 135). In one of his milder formulations, he argues that the military commanders of the early Turkish Republic were as “equally nationalistic” as officers of the late Empire. But this characterization of the Ottoman officers as Turkish nationalists is too simplistic and unfair. Many of these officers remained loyal Ottomanists until the elimination of the Empire. Thus, even though, at many junctures, Bloxham labors to establish historical contingency, his narrative has an air of inevitability about it. He rushes to judgment too hastily about the ideological bent of the late Ottoman civil and military leadership, fully ignoring and thus summarily dismissing the opposing position (58–59). Considerable scholarship, based on Ottoman archival sources and other materials, suggests that most of the Ottoman leadership during the final decade of the Empire’s existence remained committed to an ideology and system in which Ottoman subjects would, or should, be loyal to the state.\textsuperscript{196}

Quataert’s article also points to how question of recognition and denial has impeded the research in another way: Because the Turkish government provides funding for many Turkish and Ottoman studies departments, many of those with the training to study the Ottoman archives avoid the topic altogether. To read the handwritten documents in the Ottoman archives is a very difficult task, even for a native Turkish speaker. Written in the Arabic script, which is tremendously ill-suited for the vowel-rich Turkish language\textsuperscript{197}, Ottoman Turkish also contains a very large amount of Arabic (and to a lesser degree, Persian) words

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\textsuperscript{194} Reynolds, \textit{Shattering Empires}, pp.124-126.
\textsuperscript{195} Kieser, \textit{The Ottoman Road to Total War (1913-15)}, p.38.
\textsuperscript{196} Donald Quataert, \textit{The Massacres of Ottoman Armenians and the Writing of Ottoman History}, The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Vol. 37, No.2(Autumn 2006), (pp. 249-259, pp.254-255.
\textsuperscript{197} McMeekin, p.125.
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that were purged during the language reform. Quataert describes the Armenian question as “the elephant in the room” ever since he had entered the field in the 1960s, and that there was an implicit understanding that anyone who wished to have some sort of successful career as well as continued access to the Ottoman archives had better stay clear of it. Because of the avoidance and the self-censorship on the parts of those who had the real expertise, non-Ottomanists naturally came to dominate research on the Armenian genocide, a fact that Quataert in hindsight saw as regrettable due to their often-superficial knowledge of the Ottoman context. While he expressed some reservations about the use of the term genocide, because of its association with the Holocaust, he did not object to it, and believed that it was now (2006) high time for Ottomanists to tackle the question in earnest.

This article would lead to his resignation from the Institute of Turkish Studies following pressure from the Turkish ambassador, proving why the elephant was still, very much in the room for Ottomanists. Long considered a taboo subject on academic conferences in Middle East Studies, some of the most established of historians still tip-toe around the subject. For example, one of the leading historians of the late Ottoman Empire devotes half a page to the “one of the most tragic events of the war”, treating the deportations as a military necessity that got out of hand, without mentioning death tolls, the question of intent, or for that matter, the dreaded “G-word”.

After the abolishment of the Caliphate in 1924, the young Turkish republic witnessed rapid and wide-ranging secularist reforms. These reforms, and the continued efforts at forging a new national identity, did not, however, change the previous notions of identity: “Turk” continued to be synonymous with “Muslim”. As Bernard Lewis’ puts it: “One may speak of Christian Arabs, but a Christian Turk is an absurdity and a contradiction in terms”. We are of the impression that the use of the term “Turk” in historical accounts can often be misleading, as the modern western reader intuitively interprets it using more familiar concepts of ethnicity and nationality: The Ottoman dynasty and the original Turkish settlers

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198 See Lewis, The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success
199 Quataert, The Massacres of Ottoman Armenians and the Writing of Ottoman History, p.249.
200 Long considered a taboo subject on academic conferences in Middle East Studies, some of the most established of historians still tip-toe around the subject. For example, one of the leading historians of the late Ottoman Empire devotes half a page to the “one of the most tragic events of the war”, treating the deportations as a military necessity that got out of hand, without mentioning death tolls, the question of intent, or for that matter, the dreaded “G-word”.

204 Ibid, p.15
started out as a distinct people from the steppes of central Asia, but with extensive intermarriage and their complete submersion into Islamic culture, the term “Turk” lost its original ethnic meaning. This was equally true in Ottoman and European usage and the English expression to “turn Turk” meant simply to convert to Islam, even if this conversion took place outside the Ottoman Empire, such as in Iran, India or Morocco. Further complicating the matter is that while Westerners referred to all Muslims as Turks, most educated urban Turkish-speakers themselves considered this word a pejorative term for the peasantry, and would only refer to themselves as “Ottomans”. For example, Zürcher writes that the disasters of the Balkan wars caused an enormous upsurge in “Ottoman Muslim Nationalism”. In 1919, the National Pact of the Kemalist national movement speaks of “Ottoman Muslims, united in religion, in race, and in aim” and nowhere in the pact are “Turks” mentioned. It is admittedly confusing, however, when we read in Zürcher, that the Balkan wars resulted in a new emphasis on Anatolia as the true “Turkish fatherland”. This is because CUP propaganda used the terms “Muslims” and “Turks” interchangeably and despite numerous references to “Turkishness”, no efforts were made to explain what this really meant. While Melson’s work was indeed an important contribution to the field, we are not convinced by his assertion that the radicalization of the CUP “indicated a profound transformation of identity for the Turks”. Unlike Nazism, to which Melson broadly compares it to as an ideological component of genocide, Pan-Turkism was only popular within a very small group of intellectuals. Both Zürcher and Reynolds argue that the impact of “Pan-Turkism” and “Pan-Turanism” on the Ottoman war effort and the genocide has been greatly exaggerated. In Zürcher’s analysis, this phenomenon is particularly prevalent among Armenian scholars. We have found an exception to this among our primary sources. Armenian historian and former diplomat Gerard


207 Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation-Building*, p.112.
208 Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p.352.


Libaridian writes that Pan-Turanism “remained an abstraction for most of the people it was supposed to inspire”\(^{215}\). In contrast, religion was “particularly potent in moving the ignorant masses, in ensuring the support of the *mollahs* (Muslim clergy) and the *softas* (students of religion) for the Holy War.” \(^{216}\) [italics in original]

**The impact of the declaration**

Unlike Dadrian and similarly to Melson, Kuper sees the Armenian genocide as fundamentally different in character from previous massacres, but he also notes the continuity aspect of religious factors, and he attributes a considerable impact to the Jihad declaration:

The Turkish genocide of Armenians in 1915–1916 was not a reaction to transgression against the standards appropriate for former Christian dhimmis. There is wide agreement that the Young Turk government was motivated by an extreme chauvinistic nationalism, and not by religious fanaticism. But it unleashed religious fanaticism in the most varied strata of Turkish society, which participated extensively in the genocide. *The declaration of a jihad by the Sultan on the outbreak of the First World War must surely have inflamed religious passions within the Ottoman Empire*, though it was primarily directed to Muslims outside the Empire where it had little effect. There was the same pattern of religious atrocities in the genocide as in the massacres of 1895–1896 under the Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the forced conversions under the threat of death, the seizures of children to be brought up as Muslims, the atrocities against priests—humiliated, tortured, murdered—and the desecration and destruction of holy places.\(^{217}\) [our italics]

In our primary sources, we have found that perpetrators did not always heed the advice of the religious clerics, in the instances when it was even sought out. This presents one of many counterarguments to the claim, as quoted in our *Activist* analysis, that the entire process of the Armenian genocide can be reduced to a Jihad. For example, in Diyarbakir, June 1915:

[...] the mufti, İbrahim, was asked to state whether the massacre of women and children was in conformity with the precepts of the Koran. The clergyman recommended sparing both children under 12, in order to Islamicize them, and the most beautiful young women, who could be integrated into harems. Overriding his opinion, the assembly decided to spare only the comely young women.\(^{218}\)

Although Ottoman Christians were not mentioned in the Jihad fatwas\(^{219}\), neither were they specifically exempted like the Germans and Austrians. To Kevorkian, the declaration “attested to a discursive radicalization whose import was lost on no one”, as the following passage shows, invoking the humiliating losses at the hands of their Christian subjects:

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\(^{215}\) Libaridian, p.142.

\(^{216}\) Libaridian, p.141.


\(^{218}\) Kevorkian, p.362.

\(^{219}\) McMeekin, p.125.
The text also recalls the traumas of a more recent past – only yesterday, one might say; during the Balkan War, which [the Entente] provoked by encouraging and protecting our neighbors, it was the moral and material cause of the annihilation of hundreds of thousands of innocent Muslims, the rape of thousands of Muslim virgins and the fanatical desecration of things sacred to Islam.\footnote{Kevorkian, p.212.}

The inflammatory potential of the above is especially evident for those familiar with the cultural significance of namûs, where the honor of the family is tied to the virginity of its unmarried female members, and by extension, even the public perception of their chastity.\footnote{Aysan Sever & Gökçeçicçek Yurdakul, \textit{Culture of Honor, Culture of Change: A Feminist Analysis of Honor Killings in Rural Turkey}, Violence Against Women, 09/2001, Volume 7, Number 9, pp.964-998, pp.973-975.}  Genocide scholar Adam Jones argues that \textit{humiliation} is one of the key psychological components for explaining genocide, and links the string of Ottoman military defeats of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century with the radicalization against its Christian subjects. Most of the refugees, (\textit{muhacirler}) were eventually settled, deliberately, in areas with large Christian populations “where most festered in poverty, and many yearned for revenge.”\footnote{Jones, p.152.} The first Balkan War of 1912 would prove the greater disaster of all: In six months, the Empire lost almost all its remaining European territory\footnote{Ibid. p.152.}, and “hundreds of thousands of Muslims, including a disproportionate percentage of the political and cultural élite, lost their ancestral homes.”\footnote{Zürcher, \textit{The Young Turk Legacy and Nation-Building}, p.71.} These refugees were constantly exposed to propaganda reminding them of their pain and humiliation, onto which the explosive content of the Jihad declaration was added:

\begin{quote}
Societies established for and by the refugees flooding into Istanbul at the end of the war saw as their central task taking revenge for lost land and fellow Muslims who had been slain. In a journal published by one of these societies, we read “Let this be a warning! O Muslims, don’t get comfortable! Do not let your blood cool before taking revenge”\footnote{Akçam, \textit{A Shameful Act}, p.86.}
\end{quote}

Considering the above, we agree with Rubenstein’s description of the declaration as “inflammatory”. He omits the countries mentioned in it, calling it simply a “fatwa against infidels and enemies of Islam”\footnote{Rubenstein, \textit{Jihad and Genocide}, p.54. Because of the similar titles, note that this refers to his 2010 book.} One of the sources he cites, Balakian, only describes the declaration as summoning “the Muslim world to arise and massacre its Christian oppressors”\footnote{Balakian, pp.169-170.}, but the other, Morgenthau, correctly mention the designated targets:

\begin{quote}
[... on November 13th, when the Sultan issued his declaration of war; this declaration was really an appeal for a Jihad, or a "Holy War" against the infidel. Soon afterward the Sheik–ul–Islam published his proclamation,
\end{quote}
summoning the whole Moslem world to arise and massacre their Christian oppressors. "Oh, Moslems!" concluded this document. "Ye who are smitten with happiness and are on the verge of sacrificing your life and your goods for the cause of right, and of braving perils, gather now around the Imperial throne, obey the commands of the Almighty, who, in the Koran, promises us bliss in this and in the next world; embrace ye the foot of the Caliph's throne and know ye that the state is at war with Russia, England, France, and their Allies, and that these are the enemies of Islam. The Chief of the believers, the Caliph, invites you all as Moslems to join in the Holy War!"  

A comparison with the official French translation shows that his rendition is accurate:  

O Musulmans, épris de gloire et de félicité, prêts à sacrifier votre vie et vos biens et à braver tous les périls et toutes les luttes pour la défense du droit, groupsez vous, solidaires et unis autour du Trône impérial, conformément à l'ordre du Très-Haut qui nous a promis le bonheur dans ce monde et dans l'autre, pressez d'une étreinte commune le socle du Khalifat et sachez qu'en ce jour où notre Etat se trouve en guerre avec la Russie, la France, l'Angleterre et leurs alliés, ennemis mortels de l'Islamisme, le Commandeur des Croyants, Khalife des Musulmans, vous appelle à la Guerre Sainte.  

The source Balakian cites, Ulrich Trumpener, also writes of a “Jihad, a holy war of Islam, against the Entente Nations”. He also describes the Jihad as having been “promised” to the Germans and that it should not be dismissed as “completely useless”, because it caused a great deal of worry for the Entente.  

Also citing Trumpener, Dadrian writes that the Jihad declaration “proved an expedient catalyst” of the genocidal intent inherent in the “The religious strain in the Ottoman-Turkish martial legacy” “despite the fact that it was formally aimed at the Entente Powers”  

Unlike Rubenstein, who bases his account entirely on secondary sources, Balakian’s work makes significant use of documents from the German Foreign ministry and the U.S state department. As we shall see, Balakian attributes considerable importance to what the refers to as “Jihad ideology”, so why then is he relying of a secondary account for such as important document? It turns out he is far from alone in doing this. Upon closer examination, we found that out of the 23 scholars who make up our primary sources, only Meichanetsidis, Kieser and Kevorkian cite the original Ottoman Turkish version. Travis, cites the French

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228 Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, pp.161.
229 Proclamation de la Guerre Sainte (Jihad) à Constantinople le 14 novembre 1914, Excerpt from the Ottoman daily La Turquie, November 15, 1914 Available online at: http://www.impresscriptible.fr/documents/djihad.htm (last accessed 9.5.17).
231 Ibid, pp.118-119.
translation published in the Ottoman daily “La Turquie” on 15 November 1914 and Schwanitz cites an English translation by Rudolph Peters for his summary of the fatwas.

The Ottoman Turkish version cited by Kieser and Meichanetsidis is found in the doctoral dissertation of the Sheikh ul-Islam’s great-grandson, where it is transliterated in Latin script alongside a German translation. Here we also learn that in 1975, Turcologist Geoffrey Lewis had to rely on a French translation because the original was in such poor condition.

Kieser, an expert on Turkey and the late Ottoman empire, is capable of the rare feat of reading Ottoman Turkish documents. He does not, however, quote the declaration. Kevorkian mentions that the original was read out during the 1919 Ottoman court-martials and subsequently published, and he appears to be using a French translation of that document. Because, as we shall see, Meichanetsidis only quotes from another, incorrect, translation, Kevorkian is the only one of our primary sources who quotes from a correct translation of the original. In sum, the literal meaning of the Jihad declaration occupies a very insignificant place in the historiography of genocide and mass violence. We can only speculate as to why this is: it appears that for a long time, the original may have been very difficult to come by. This does not, however, explain why translations are not used by more of our primary sources: in addition to the French version in “La Turquie” and Geoffrey Lewis’ 1975 article, there exists an English translation by Rudolph Peters, which is used only by Schwanitz.

Considering the above historiographical situation, it is very interesting to read about how ambassadors Morgenthau, Pallavicini and Wangenheim reacted to the Jihad declaration.

A Predictable lack of distinction?

As Suny points out, while Morgenthau was an “highly ethical” man and a “sensitive and engaged observers”, his writings in many reflects the time it was written in, with “all the attendant prejudices of the early twentieth century”. Particularly irksome to Suny is his

235 Ibid. p.659. The article, which we have not been able to obtain, is Geoffrey Lewis, The Ottoman Proclamation of Jihād in 1914, in: Islamic Quarterly, 19.3-4.1975, pp.157-163.
236 While we cannot be sure from Kevorkians footnotes, it appears that his rendition is from a French translation of the 1919 court document. pp.212-213 and pp.862-863
237 Kevorkian, pp.212-213.
essentialist view of “the Turk” and the belief that violence is inherent to Islam. McMeekin, who quotes Morgenthau’s memoirs extensively, notes that they are “not-always-reliable”, owing to the fact that they were written after the U.S had entered the war, and are “properly read as war propaganda, even if America had been neutral for most of the period covered in Morgenthau’s narrative.” We agree with Suny’s statement that the propagandistic nature of the memoirs is highly exaggerated, at least concerning the events surrounding the genocide. While the following statement does seem to indicate an excessively benevolent attitude to the colonial projects of the Entente countries, this could also be explained by a belief, typical of its time, in the merits of the mission civilisatrice:

From the first, however, the Holy War proved a failure. The Mohammedans of such countries as India, Egypt, Algiers, and Morocco knew that they were getting far better treatment than they could obtain under any other conceivable conditions.

We find Michael Reynolds’ summary of the failure of the global Jihad scheme more convincing, that although the Jihad declaration had backing from both Sunni and Shi’a religious authorities: "Most Muslims did not find that their own circumstances merited war, regardless of what a religious scholar in Istanbul might declare." The one example McMeekin cites of this unreliability is an alleged statement by German ambassador Wangenheim, that the Germans “would do nothing to help the Armenians”, which McMeekin is convinced is almost certainly not true. Contradicting Morgenthau’s allegation of insensitivity towards the Armenians is the fact that Wangenheim suffered greatly when learning of the horrors of the deportations, as attested by Pallavicini, the Austrian ambassador. Wangenheim had a mental breakdown in June 1915 and Morgenthau himself noted how depressed he seemed when they met in October that same year, shortly before Wangenheim died of a stroke:

At the root of the problem, Pallavicini believed, was the gnawing sense of guilt Wangenheim felt for helping bring Turkey into the war. The German’s breakdown, Pallavicini wrote, had most likely resulted from ‘the feeling of great responsibility pressing heavily on his shoulders. Several weeks after Wangenheim’s death, Pallavicini went deeper into the matter. Connecting the Armenian tragedy, as Morgenthau later would, to the unleashing of a holy war in Ottoman Turkey, the Austrian Ambassador produced a withering critique of Oppenheim’s jihad stratagem.

239 Suny, They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else, p.263 and Writing Genocide, p.16.
240 McMeekin, p.257.
241 Suny, Writing Genocide, p.16.
242 Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, p.168.
243 Reynolds, p.122.
244 McMeekin, pp.257-258.
Morgenthau mocks the German Jihad scheme and how ridiculous it was of them to except this “wildly fanatical people”, to distinguish between different kinds of Christian nations, since “the simple-minded Mohammedans” understands these distinctions “about as completely as he understands the law of gravitation or the nebular hypothesis.” Others expressed similar concerns: the Austrian ambassador wrote that the Jihad declaration would “unleash the atavistic passions of Muslims against Christians” and even though Ottoman Christians were not mentioned in the declaration “long-standing precedent suggested that the brunt of Muslim rage would be directed at them, as Enver Pasha himself conceded to his friend Humann, the German naval attaché.”

Immediately after the declaration a “Jihad euphoria” spread all over the German press. In far-away Berlin, the “global Jihad” was hailed as the key to forcing a British surrender, while some who were more familiar with the Ottoman context predicted that the “fury of the Jihad” would first and foremost be unleashed against Ottoman Christians. Ihrig also notes that: “The call for Jihad, in this “modern form”, transcended borders – including, crucially, the borders between combatant soldiers and civilians, at home in the Ottoman Empire and abroad.” As we shall see in an upcoming section, “abroad” did not mean, as Oppenheim and others had hoped, a revolution in Indian or Russia, but large-scale massacres of Assyrians and Armenians around the Persian-Ottoman border, perpetrated primarily by local Kurds. In Bloxham’s analysis, Germany was well aware of the risk to Ottoman Christians of fueling “the explosive ethnic situation” of the region with initiatives such as the Jihad declaration. Especially considering the events of the preceding decades, this shows a characteristic disregard for civilian lives in the pursuit of the ultimate war aims, although few scholars still subscribe to Dadrian’s theory of direct German involvement in the Armenian Genocide. The escalation of violence after the commencement of the Gallipoli campaign and the Russian invasion would prove how prescient Pallavicini’s fears had been:

Already in November 1914, the Austrian ambassador Pallavicini, noted “that the jihad was being used by Enver to turn Muslims against local Christians. Finally, he had seen how difficult such an explosive policy would be to keep within any constraints, and predicted that it spelt grave danger for Christians if and when the Ottoman empire was attacked by the Entente.”

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246 McMeekin, p.125.
248 Ibid, p.98.
As a vital part of the global Jihad scheme, Germany had eagerly courted the most important tribes on the Arabian Peninsula. Especially important was the support of the sherîf of Mecca – the future King Hussein. To many Arab Muslims, the Turks had usurped the Caliphate, and unlike the Ottoman dynasty, the legitimacy of the Hashemites was evident in its bloodline:

In theory, the Sherifs of Mecca, born of the “Banu Hashim” or “Hashemite” dynasty, could claim direct descent by blood from Muhammad’s own tribe, the Koreish, via the Prophet’s grandson, al-Hassan ibn Ali. According to most Muslim Jurists, this gave the ruler of Mecca a much better legal claim on the Caliphate than the Ottomans – although it was moot in practice, because the Sherifs had nearly always recognized the Sultan’s political authority, which is to say his superior army.250

Ultimately, the Hashemites decided to side with an even more superior army, the British, and declared a Jihad of their own – against the Ottomans. While the stunning scenes in Lawrence of Arabia might have exaggerated their military importance, the fact that the guardian of the holiest places in Islam rose in opposition to Constantinople was of immense value in delegitimizing the global Jihad.251 Far away from the Arabian Peninsula, however, there were Arabs who remained loyal to the Ottomans. In Libya, the “militantly devout” Sanousi tribe252, who had fought alongside Enver Pasha and Mustafa Kemal against the Italian occupation in 1911, welcomed the Ottoman Jihad declaration with great enthusiasm. Here we again see evidence of how the distinction between different types of Christians was an alien concept:

Moreover, the Libyans heartily welcomed the declaration of Jihad on November 14, 1914. Oddly, they paid no attention to the fact that the Jihad was aimed at only the enemies of the Ottoman Empire, which did not include Italy at that time.253

An example of the above-mentioned “long-standing precedent” can be found in James J. Reid’s study of irregular troops in the Ottoman army: In the mid-1850s, Russia conducted a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing (or Genocide, according to the Turkish and Georgian Governments) against Muslim Circassians in the Caucasus. Hundreds of thousands perished on their way to the Ottoman Empire or at the hands of the Russian army.254 This ethnic group would later be disproportionally involved in atrocities against Ottoman Christians. Reid describes how Circassian irregulars in the Ottoman army invoked their traditional tribal code of vendetta when massacring Bulgarian and Armenian villagers. To them, they were taking

250 McMeekin, p.64-65.
revenge on the same group that have murdered their kin, that is, Christians, without any national distinctions. In Reid’s analysis, these massacres, as well as those during WWI, entirely contrary to the Islamic laws of war, which he somewhat confusingly often refers to as Jihad. Traditionally, the protected status of dhimmis could only be violated if they refused to pay the poll tax. In the case of pagans (the Yezidis are considered as such) they should first be offered the option of converting before being killed. Reid claims that, because of the perceived links between Western powers, Russia and the Ottoman Christians in the minds of Ottoman Muslims, Christian dhimmis were often treated as spies by Ottoman irregular and regular forces, both in WWI and during previous massacres:

Studying the long history of murders, massacres, and the Armenian Genocide using the Islamic law as a measure of performance, it is clear that Ottoman regular and irregular soldiers violated Islamic law frequently by abrogating the dhimmi protection of the Christians. The law was circumvented by fabricating claims that the Christians were spies (liable to execution under Islamic law). The disingenuous misuse of the Islamic law of war served as a means of exterminating entire villages [...] Ottoman autocracy and its successor, the Young Turk military dictatorship, employed jihad within the framework of a total war psychology, and bent the law of war to serve the purposes of total war. If jihad presented one face of Ottoman war policy, total war machtpolitik served as the spirit behind the policy. Islamic law could be used to justify attacks on Armenian dhimmis, even in contravention of the original Islamic law.256

For example, in 1877, Circassian irregulars used the above method of accusation as a means of justifying the looting of an Armenian village and the slaughter of its menfolk. In the minds of these and later perpetrators “cooperation with the enemy” was tantamount to spying, which is punishable by death in Islamic law. However, as Reid points out “One may rest assured that the irregulars did not carry a full set of Islamic legal volumes to be consulted”257 and Islamic military judges no longer accompanied the troops as they had in earlier Ottoman history. As mentioned earlier, Circassian irregulars had no qualms about corrupting the Shari’a by blending it with their tribal traditions of vendetta (turk. Intikim). In Reid’s view:

Islamic commentators on the shari’at did not consider an entire community to qualify as having the status of spies, and they seem to have envisioned individuals working secretly and giving information to the enemy from within the army's camp. If such large-scale collaboration did occur, the community in question was to be considered as part of the enemy's military organization, and only the person or persons who actually did the spying were to be executed. Giving aid in an active way to the enemy did not necessarily constitute spying, and if such people who assisted the enemy surrendered, they came under the Islamic law regarding prisoners of war.258 [italics in original]

255 Reid, Crisis of the Ottoman Empire, p.147.
Reid argues that implementation of religious law was in fact usually improvised on the spot by military men lacking the religious credentials, who distorted Islamic law for military purposes or personal enrichment. Reid is not a scholar of Islamic jurisprudence, but in our opinion, the real value of his examples does not lie in his analysis of the Shari’a, but in showing how acts that may have been very un-Islamic in character, were perceived as Islamic by the perpetrators. Reid, whose published work mostly deals with tribes in Iran and Ottoman irregulars, appears to us to be a valuable part of the historiography on this topic, and it is regrettable that he has not published anything on the genocide in over two decades, as far as we are aware. He is most convincing when he deals with folkloristic and cultural phenomena, as well as aspects of irregular warfare. When he attempts to draw on his specialties for conclusions on the genocide, however, these often become quite tenuous, and he offers little if any detailed evidence for these terse assessments:

The lack of internal restraints on such practices as the killing of war-prisoners in some of the madhhabs [Islam schools of jurisprudence, of which there are 4 in Sunni Islam] enabled the application of a genocidal policy toward Armenia. 259 [italics in original]

His work on the Ottoman Irregulars in the Crimean War and other 19th-century conflicts appear to us to be more well-founded, and contains many interesting observations, for example the views of Mustafa ‘Ali, a prominent 16th century historian of Bosnian origin, who wrote that: “the connection between infidels outside and under Ottoman control was an apparent one”. To ‘Ali, it was these “depraved infidels” who repeatedly “forced” the Ottomans into war. In our analysis, Reid’s interpretation of ‘Alis writings and other Ottoman-Islamic doctrine does appear to have some relevance to the fate of Ottoman Christians:

All infidels, left to their own circumstances, would revert back to their own depraved and corrupted condition [...] Jihad could be waged even against protected infidels if they ceased being quiescent and assisted in the assaults of another independent infidel power.” 260

Since we have no indication that Morgenthau was familiar with the works of Mustafa ‘Ali, were there other written sources, other than the declaration, that aroused his fears?

259 Reid, Total War, the Annihilation Ethic, and the Armenian Genocide, 1870-1918, p.40.
260 Reid, Crisis of the Ottoman Empire, pp.180-181.
The Mysterious Pamphlet

This brings to what we view as one of the most bewildering parts of the historiography on this topic. Several of our primary sources mention a highly inflammatory pamphlet that is said to have been distributed all over the Muslim world, and is described in some detail in Morgenthau’s memoirs.261 Our primary sources only give examples from Morgenthau’s memoirs and we ourselves have spent considerable time searching on the internet for other references to such a pamphlet, but without any results.

In Rubensteins words, this pamphlet: “offered a detailed plan of operations for the assassination and extermination of all “unbelievers” except those of German nationality, the empire’s wartime ally.”262 Schwanitz describes the 10 000-word Arabic pamphlet as asking “basically for the systematic assassination and extermination of Christian neighbours within Islamic lands” and specifying that “Whoever kills but one infidel, secretly or openly shall be rewarded by God”.263 The pamphlet described in Morgenthau’s memoirs does indeed contain the above, but unlike the above two scholars, Balakian does not omit a key phrase in Morgenthau’s description: “He who kills even one unbeliever,” one pamphlet read, “of those who rule over us, whether he does it secretly or openly, shall be rewarded by God.”264 As Morgenthau repeats the part of “those of who rule over us” several times, even specifying “that is, those who have Mohammedan subjects”, Rubenstein’s and Schwanitz’s failure to include this is noteworthy. Perhaps even more noteworthy is the prominent position given to this pamphlet by the “Morgenthau-sceptic” McMeekin: throughout his book, he provides examples of “blood-curdling” Jihadi pamphlets that gave us the impression that they were indeed several different ones, yet looking at the footnotes265, the source is always Morgenthau in one form or antother: Either diplomatic cables from the ambassador or his other memoirs, where the relevant pages contain the identical passages from the alleged pamphlet.266 Although we agree with the favorable estimate of the memoirs by many scholars and are not convinced by attempts at dismissing althogether267, we write “alleged” pamphlet because we find McMeekins caveat regarding the Ambassadors memoirs to be sound advice.

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262 Rubenstein, Jihad and Genocide, p.54. Note that this refers to his 2010 book.
263 Schwanitz, pp.194-195.
264 Balakian, p.170.
265 McMeekin, pp.381-384
266 Compare McMeekin, p.135 with Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, pp.164-168 and Morgenthau, Secrets of the Bosphorus, pp.106-110
for any historical document. Morgenthau’s pamphlet includes the call for a “battle which every Mohammedan is to wage in his community against his Christian neighbours”, although it goes on to say, on the same page, “Only those infidels are to be slain, "who rule over us "—that is, those who have Mohammedan subjects”268.

McMeekin mentions that these pamphlets contained quotes from the Qur’an: “Koranic passages in holy war pamphlets exhorted Muslims to slay infidels ‘wherever you find them’ (from Sura 9:5, the ‘Verse of the Sword’)”269 although his footnote does not specify from which pamphlets this was taken. That absence of pamphlets other than Morgenthau’s in our primary sources is especially puzzling given McMeekin’s statement that:

Compounding the difficulty facing Ottoman officials trying to restrain jihadi violence was the fact that the holy war propaganda leaflets exhorting Muslims to slay infidels were independently written, printed and distributed by Germans—not only by Oppenheim’s agents, but even by German civilians.270

In two of our primary sources we did find the mentioning of a short book in Arabic called _Haqiqat al-Jihad_ (the truth of Jihad). Hannibal Travis, who views the Jihad declaration and related propaganda as essential components of the genocides of Ottoman Christians, writes:

The Kaiser wanted to mobilize Muslim support for the Caliphate against the British and Russian empires. The German General Chief of Staff (Commander in Chief), Hellmuth von Moltke, the nephew of the Prussian pioneer of “total war” against the French, encouraged Enver Paşa to declare a jihad to incapacitate the Ottoman extremists’ internal rivals, i.e. the Christians. Max von Oppenheim, a German diplomat and archeologist, developed a detailed plan for the jihad, and led an Oriental News Department in the German Foreign Office to disseminate the jihad call widely throughout Ottoman and other Muslim lands. The German Society for the study of Islam published a book entitled _Haqiqat al-Jihad_ (The Truth of Jihad) in early 1915, a critical point in time for the anti-Christian movement in the Ottoman Empire. [italics in original].271

We will examine Travis’ unsubstantiated claims regarding the Jihad declaration in our final “Activist analysis”. Before finally locating a copy of the official German translation online272, we speculated that “Haqiqat al-Jihad” might have contained violent passages such as the ones in the pamphlet described by Morgenthau, but that was not the case at all. The 8 page commentary by At-Tunisi, a member of the Arabic branch of “the special organization” (teshkilat-e mahsua), is a far cry from Morgenthalus inflammatory pamphlet: in addition to a summary of the official Jihad fatwas it goes even further in its emphasis that the Jihad is not directed at all Christians, only at the enemies of Islam: that is, the Entente and its allies. It repeatedly distances itself from blind fanaticism, emphasizes the importance of “inner Jihad”.

268 Morgenthau, _Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story_, p.166.
269 McMeekin, p.130.
270 Ibid. p.134.
271 Travis, _Genocide in the Middle East_, p.189.
and quotes the Qu’ranic passage that “there is no coercion in religion”. According to Schwanitz, however, it was not intended for Muslims, but for German public opinion:

Sheikh Salih al-Shafir al-Tunisi, a Tunisian Mufti and confidant of the Ottoman war minister Enver Pasha, confirmed in a booklet this new doctrine of jihad on the side of the Austro-German central powers. Enver Pasha had asked Sheikh Salih to travel to Berlin to popularize the jihad among the Germans. Just for this purpose Sheikh Salih wrote a commentary. His *Haqiqat al-jihad* or *The Truth of Jihad* was published at the beginning of 1915 by the German Society for the Study of Islam.  

This booklet is the only example we have found of written propaganda related to the Jihad declaration other than the pamphlet found in Morgenthau’s account. While the absence of such documents is regrettable for the scholarship on the topic, we find it reasonable to assume that the most common Jihad propaganda was communicated orally. At the time, around 80 per cent of the Ottoman population lived in rural areas, and the vast majority was illiterate.

**Word of mouth**

In 1927, the year before the legal implementation of the Latinized script, the national literacy rate in Turkey was an estimated 10.6%. This would have been higher for men, because literacy among women was significantly lower, but we must also take into account the fact that rural areas had much lower rates than the national average: In 1950, the national average was 34.6% but only 13.4% in places with less than 5000 inhabitants, indicating that the WWI-literacy rates among rural males must have been staggeringly low. In rural Anatolia:

> [...] information circulated mostly by word of mouth, as newspapers were often read out aloud in coffeehouses and bards roamed the countryside updating the people on new developments.

This has profoundly affected the historiography as there exists almost no memoirs or other sources that can help us understand the motives of low-level perpetrators. To Üngör, much of whose research focuses especially on south-eastern Anatolia:

> Memoirs of contemporaries are a relatively unreliable but nonetheless indispensable source of places, times, persons, and stories that can show how subjective perceptions of the world by political elites shaped their attitudes and policies. They often contain information lost or censored in the etiquette of official correspondence. There is a large body of memoir literature of Young Turks, various European diplomats involved in Turkey, Armenian survivors of the genocide, and various nationalist activists. Most of these are ridden with apologia. Furthermore, since in this timeframe Eastern Turkey was a peasant society consisting mostly of illiterate villagers, the number of memoirs that detail the lives of these local people can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

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273 Schwanitz p.193.
274 Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, p.25.
275 Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p.310.
277 Ibid. preface xii.
Although there are references to oral incitement found, for example, in western diplomatic sources, these are usually frustratingly devoid of detail. For example, Kevorkian briefly mentions a hoja (cleric) in Mush who “preached the Jihad” and McMeekin describes how:

Many Muslim officials, ignorant of the subtleties of European politics and ignorant of European languages, simply lumped all foreigners together as infidels who were fair game for the jihad. Imams preaching the holy war during Friday sermons similarly made little effort to distinguish between the nationalities of those in the Dâr al-Harb against whom ordinary Muslims should target their wrath.²⁷⁹

According to Schwanitz, Oppenheim had conceived the stratagem as “an asymmetrical war waged by written and oral incitement to jihad” and we have found that most examples of Jihad-related incitement in our primary sources are indeed that of word-of-mouth transmission. These examples sometimes deviating significantly from the wording of the declaration. For example, in 1915, Dr. Mehmet Reshid, the vali (governor) of Diyarbakir told Kurdish brigands that he had sought the opinions of many muftis who said that killing Christians was in fact a good deed, and that they would enter heaven with "green hands" (green being the color of Islam). Describing the events of 1915 in Diyarbakir province, Levene also notes the role of incitement that differed from the official declaration:

[...] as in 1895, a sense that they were acting morally against those who had transgressed against not simply the political order but the religious foundations of the Islamic state seems to have played a powerful part. Indeed, oral history accounts point to the—albeit false—conviction, among at least some, that what they were doing had been specifically decreed by the Sultan.²⁸² [our italics]

Because of the comparative nature of the present study, let us look at the source Levene cites in the above excerpt. In the conclusion of a study that makes considerable use of survivor testimonies which have been passed down in the Assyrian diaspora, Gaunt writes:

As the oral history reveals, there was a widespread belief among local Muslims that the Sultan had issued a decree ordering the extermination and that killing of the treasonous non-Muslims was morally justified. Although these beliefs were misinformed, they did gain hold on an illiterate and superstitious populace whipped into a frenzy.²⁸³ [our italics]
A similar phenomenon is found in another of our primary sources. Writing in 2003, Bloxham states that the Jihad declaration “undoubtedly facilitated the participation of many individuals in atrocities against Christians”\(^\text{284}\). In his 2005 book, however, he writes that it “probably encouraged some Muslims to participate in the coming Armenian genocide”\(^\text{285}\). It is not clear to us what could have led to such a reappraisal of the events since Bloxham cites the same source for both occasions, and offers no other commentary which could explain this shift\(^\text{286}\).

Unlike some cases in the final section of the analysis (the Activist analysis), we interpret the above examples from Levene and Bloxham as falling well within the boundaries of legitimate historical interpretation, that is, belonging to the “endless creative dialogue within and between the past and the present”\(^\text{287}\). In their citations, they leave “a clear trail for subsequent historians to follow”\(^\text{288}\). Others can then add their interpretations, contributing to the “complex process of critical dialogue” that is essential to the historical discipline\(^\text{289}\).

We will now turn to another example of how word-of-mouth incitement may have been considerably more influential than the letter of the official declaration. The priest Grigoris Balakian, the great uncle of Peter Balakian, was among the prominent Armenians who were rounded up and deported from Constantinople on April 24\(^\text{th}\), 1915. The account of his exchanges with a devout and utterly unrepentant perpetrator would later appear his memoirs, “Armenian Golgotha”, as well as during the trial of Soghomon Tehlirian in Berlin. As the convoy of deportees made its way through Yozgat in central Anatolia, Shükrü, a captain of the gendarmes, told Balakian that the government had sent representatives all over the countryside and “in the name holy jihad invited the Muslim population to participate in this sacred religious obligation”\(^\text{290}\), that is, to kill Armenians. Interestingly, Captain Shükrü was himself convinced that the Jihad fatwa explicitly called for the murder of the Armenians.\(^\text{291}\) At the Tehlirian trial, Balakian testified how Shükrü boasted of having ordered the massacres of some 40 000 Armenians, mostly women and children. He also told Balakian that the Armenians had been allowed to take some valuables with them as it was easier to rob

\(^{284}\) Bloxham, *Determinants of the Armenian Genocide*, p.41.  
\(^{286}\) Leo Kuper and Gary Remer, *The Religious Element in Genocide*, Journal of Armenian Studies, 4, 1992, pp.307–30. We have unfortunately not been able to obtain this article.  
\(^{287}\) American Historical Association, *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct*, p.4  
\(^{288}\) Ibid. p.3.  
\(^{289}\) Ibid, p.2  
\(^{291}\) Balakian, p.338.
them (or search their corpses) than if they had been forced to hide it prior to departure\textsuperscript{292}. Not expecting him to survive the genocide\textsuperscript{293}, Captain Shükrü spent many hours talking with Balakian, during which he offered protect him if he embraced Islam\textsuperscript{294}. Being a man of religion, Balakian had a special interest in how a God-fearing man like Shükrü could order such unspeakable acts. Especially surprising to Balakian was that the massacre included even young girls, who in previous massacres had been abducted to harems. Since Balakian was able to impress Shükrü with his knowledge of the Qur’an\textsuperscript{295}, it is likely that he was familiar with the general Islamic prohibition against the killing of women and children:

Because holy war is an obligation of the faith, it is elaborately regulated in the shari’a. Fighters in a jihad are enjoined not to kill women, children and the aged, unless they attack first, not to torture or mutilate prisoners[...]\textsuperscript{296}

The historiography of mass violence against Ottoman Christians contains many examples of these prohibited actions. For example, during the 1847 rebellion of the Kurdish bey Bedir Khan, foreign observers wrote of the horrendous ways the Kurds would mutilate their Assyrian and Yezidi victims.\textsuperscript{297} How could devout Muslims like captain Shükrü perform prohibited acts yet invoke the name of Jihad? The most obvious explanation would be an ignorance of Islamic law. Being devout or even fanatical about one’s faith yet possessing only a rudimentary or flawed grasp of its tenets is far from an uncommon phenomenon, and by no means the unique property of Muslims.

There may be an additional possibility. Because we have only been able to locate a single scholarly source on the following question, we wish to stress the speculative character of its relevance to the present study: The term non-combatants does not have an exact equivalent in Islamic law. What Islamic law on warfare does include is “a prohibition against harming various groups of people”, only some of which are to be considered “immune from harm”. Ella Landau-Tasseron, a scholar of classical Arabic sources and Islamic jurisprudence sums it up as follows: “While it is true that all those who may not be harmed according to

\textsuperscript{292} Balakian. pp.248-249.
\textsuperscript{293} Ibid. p.183.
\textsuperscript{294} Ragan. p.176.
\textsuperscript{295} Grigoris Balakian, Armenian Golgotha, translated by Peter Balakian with Aris Sevag, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009, pp.140-141
\textsuperscript{297} An estimated 10 000 Nestorians (Assyrians) were killed. Reid, Crisis of the Ottoman Empire, p.441.
Muslim law are non-combatants, not all non-combatants are immune from harm.\textsuperscript{298} Because it is not an equivalent term, she writes “non-combatants”, using quotation marks:

The most stable element found in the rules concerning the “non-combatants” is that of refraining from harming women and minors. These two groups are mentioned in the earliest lists, and there are almost no disagreements about the prohibition against killing them under any circumstances.\textsuperscript{299}

This includes not only infidels belonging to \textit{ahl al kitaab} (Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians), but even includes idolaters\textsuperscript{300}, though they may all be taken as slaves.\textsuperscript{301} To the foundational Muslim jurists, women and children are considered property, so a Muslim who kills the non-Muslim slaves of another Muslim is obligated to repay their price.\textsuperscript{302}

Those considered “really immune” according to Islamic law are referred to as \textit{ma’Suum} (protected) or \textit{Haraam ad-dam} “one whose blood is sacred”, or more accurately, one whose blood is \textit{Haraam}, that is religiously forbidden, such as the eating of pork or the drinking of alcohol. For the category of non-Muslims whose killing is prohibited, however, a definitive legal term does not exist according to Landau-Tasseron. Instead, a variety of descriptions are used, such as “those whom it is not allowed to kill,” “one whose blood is not to be spilt,” “one who should not be aimed at,” and “one who should not be killed”\textsuperscript{303}. Particularly interesting is her conclusion that:

The prohibitions against killing “non-combatants” are not usually expressed by the word \textit{yuHarram} (forbidden), but rather by such terms as “not possible,” “not allowed,” “not proper.” All these words convey a weaker prohibition than that expressed by the root \textit{H}-\textit{r}-\textit{m}. It appears, therefore, that “non-combatants”—the infidels who may not be harmed—cannot be considered to have real immunity that protects them from harm.\textsuperscript{304}

In our primary sources, we have found only one indication of what level of sin this may have represented to a perpetrator. Captain Shükrü told Balakian that after he had ordered the massacre of every Armenian in Yozgat, “in the name of holy Jihad”, he recited a prayer so that “his soul would be absolved”\textsuperscript{305}. Although this indicates that he believed he had committed some sort of transgression, the following indicates a conviction that this was trumped by the virtues of fighting in defense of the faith. After the massacres, he knelt on his

\textsuperscript{298} Landau-Tasseron, p.1.
\textsuperscript{299} Ibid, p.19.
\textsuperscript{300} Ibid., p.19.
\textsuperscript{301} Cook, p.61.
\textsuperscript{302} Landau-Tasseron, p.3.
\textsuperscript{303} Ibid. p.3
\textsuperscript{304} Ibid. p.3
\textsuperscript{305} Balakian, p.183 and p.338.
prayer rug “giving glory to Allah and the Prophet who made me worthy of personally participating in the holy jihad in these days of my old age.”

**Beyond the Declaration – the “ideology” and “mentality” of Jihad?**

In several of our primary sources, the concept of Jihad is not limited to the events that took place after the 1914 declaration. To Balakian, it is evident from the words of captain Shükrü:

[…] how deeply the ideology of Islamic jihad was part of the psychology of the Turkish extermination program for the Armenians, as well as for the Greeks, Assyrians, and other Christians in the empire. [italics in original]

In a previous section, we noted how Leo Kuper describes the continuity of religious elements between the Hamidiyan massacres and the genocide. Interestingly, when describing the 1894-96 Hamidiyan massacres, Balakian writes that they were motivated by “Islamic fanaticism and a jihad mentality” [italics in original]: For example, he mentions that the killers were yelling “Allahu Akbar” as well as the disproportionate participation of religious students (softas), who usually were the ones rallying the mobs. These massacres did not, however, take place during an official Jihad. In fact, the very pious Sultan/Caliph Abdul Hamid II’s never proclaimed a Jihad, during his 33-year reign (1876-1909). In 1894, when European newspapers accused the Ottoman state of engaging in “in Jihad against their Christian subjects” this was immediately and expressly denied by the Sublime Porte.

In two of our other primary sources, we also find the use of the term Jihad for events which did not take place after an official declaration. Kevorkian writes that, during the 1909 Adana massacres: “The Muslim clergy spurred the mob on” and the local hojas “preached the jihad and made all those present promise not to leave a single Armenian alive.” [italics in original].

David Gaunt, describing how the Jihad declaration was received in the area around the Ottoman-Iranian border, writes that it “intensified already boiling jihad sentiments”.

Looking at our secondary sources, we learn that the concept of Jihad is not limited to events following a declaration. Most of the Islamic conquests were in fact never officially declared to be Jihad, only retroactively considered as such: For example:

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308 Ibid. p.112.
309 Kieser, *The Ottoman Road to Total War (1913-15)*, p.39.
311 Kevorkian, pp.84-85.
Islamic doctrine holds that a Jihad must be declared by a legitimate authority – however, this does not have to be the highest authority, the Caliph. An Imam, who leads the prayer, or a mufti, an expert on Islamic law, are also considered legitimate for this purpose. For example, in 1831-32, when a Kurdish tribal chief conducted a campaign of massacres and pillaging, primarily directed against Yezidis, but also targeting Assyrians and other Christians: “a fatwa by a local mufti declared his campaign to be a jihad”

Reid writes that the concept of Jihad was a popular theme in Kurdish folk-tales on religious motives, and that the tales in question do not specify whether the infidels were protected dhimmis or part of “the house of war”. Reid describes one such story, appearing in the late 19th century, which clearly “sanctions the notion that a righteous Kurdish Muslim can kill thousands of Christians to retaliate for the theft of one horse”. Here Jihad is interpreted as “the obligation of the community to make an attack-on non-Muslims”. In Aksakal’s analysis “The concept of jihad occupied a quotidian place in the Ottoman cultural register”. Its use was apparently not limited to warfare: In Salonica in 1876, a young Bulgarian woman who had converted to Islam was abducted and hidden by her family with the intent of converting her back to Christianity. This provoked riots among the Muslim population of the city, resulting in the brutal murders of the French and British consuls. As the large crowd stood outside the consulate, demanding her release, the ringleaders were reported to have said that “the holy war is about to commence.”

With the decline of the Empire, the Ottomans became increasingly wary of alienating their Christian allies by declaring Jihad. Although lambasted in the European press as the “Bloody Sultan”, after the “Bulgarian Horrors” of 1876, Sultan Abdul Hamid II saw himself as exercising considerable restraint with regards to wartime emphasis on religion:

313 Cook, p.2.
314 Ibid. p.164.
316 Reid, Crisis of the Ottoman Empire, pp.201-202.
318 Aksakal, Holy War Made in Germany, p.187.
“We are accused in Europe of being savages and fanatics [Yet] unlike the Czar, I have abstained till now from stirring up a crusade and profiting from religious fanaticism, but the day may come when I can no longer curb the rights and indignation of my people at seeing their co-religionists butchered in Bulgaria and Armenia.”

Let us here briefly mention a similarity between these two neighboring Empires: that the importance of religion as a powerful force for mobilization was tremendously important, whereas nationalism had nowhere near the appeal it had in Europe. The Russian Peasant, who “could not conceive of living in a country that did not profess the Orthodox faith” proved completely unresponsive to patriotic appeals and his “religious sentiments and inborn xenophobia made it possible to arouse him against foreign invaders.”

Aksakal writes that “in all its modern wars”, the Ottoman military employed the concept of Jihad for its “conscription and recruitment efforts, in the training and drilling of troops, and in its efforts at rallying army and society behind the flag.” During the Crimean war, when no Jihad was declared, special “jihad donations” and “jihad taxes” were collected. During other conflicts “the state subsidized the publication of books on Jihad”, and government officials employed rhetoric heavy on references to Jihad. Reid’s study of Ottoman irregulars contains interesting observations regarding the appeal of (undeclared) Jihad during the Crimean war: Muslims, many of whom did not even speak Turkish, came from far and away to answer the “the call for holy war”. In this context, Reid refers to Jihad as having: “strong appeal as a military principle in the waging of a popular war and was one cause of the mobilization of large numbers of irregulars and militia in the Ottoman Empire.” The waging of war against a Christian power appears to have been sufficient in the minds of these irregulars to constitute a Jihad. Reid provides a particularly interesting description of a group of Kurdish irregulars who had answered the “summons of Jihad” and joined the Crimean War effort: a band of “30 to 40 rabble-rout Bashi Bouzuk’s”, a term meaning “broken heads” in Turkish, used for irregulars. Although obstinately refusing to follow orders when it didn’t suit them, they were said to exhibit great ferocity and bravery, which Reid attributes to religious fervor. What makes the presence of this motley group of Sufi Kurds even more interesting is that they were led into battle by a 70-year-old woman! The devoted followers of this Shaikha believed her to be “a Muslim leader with magical

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320 Ibid. pp.60-61.
322 Aksakal, The Ottoman Proclamation of Jihad, p.60.
323 Ibid., p.57.
324 Reid, Crisis of the Ottoman Empire, p.125.
325 Ibid, p.158.
powers”\textsuperscript{326}. As belief in magic, not to mention claims of practicing it, is anathema to Islamic doctrine, one can only imagine how this group was viewed by the many other irregulars who adhered to stringent literalist and anti-mysticist doctrines\textsuperscript{327}. Here we have an example, perhaps rather extreme, of just how much could be contained within the concept of Jihad in the late Ottoman Empire.

Looking at the instances of formal declarations, we notice something of interest: As previously mentioned, the large-scale massacres in 1894-96, and 1909 took place in the absence of an official declaration. Also, the Porte declared Jihad in 1773 (against Russia), in 1809 (against the Serbian revolt), in 1829 (against Russia for supporting the Greek revolt) and 1897 (against Greece)\textsuperscript{328}. To the best of our knowledge, however, these conflicts were not accompanied by large-scale massacres of Ottoman Christians\textsuperscript{329}. From this, we draw the conclusion that an official Jihad declaration was neither a sufficient nor a necessary cause.

Also noteworthy is that the Ottoman states refrained from Jihad declarations during the 1911 Italian invasion of Libya and during the catastrophic Balkan wars.\textsuperscript{330} Hanioğlu writes that, while the Christian Balkan states had declared Holy War against the Ottomans and employed on a rhetoric of “cross against crescent” in their propaganda, the CUP used non-sectarian appeals not to disenfranchise the Ottoman Christian soldiers.\textsuperscript{331}

The CUP, did however, engage in anti-Christian propaganda in other forms. For example, in the wake of the Balkan Wars, the CUP referred to its organized campaign boycott of Ottoman Greek businesses as “The Muslim boycott”\textsuperscript{332}. Reflected in its propaganda, at the core of CUP ideology was the ideal of \textit{Milli İktisat}, translated as “National, Economy”. The goal was the transfer of wealth from non-Muslims to Muslims, and the creating of a Muslim middle class. Boycotts were an early step towards \textit{Milli İktisat}, but its full realization would be completed by the genocides and the expulsion of the remaining Greek Orthodox in 1923. This is taken from a call for boycott in July 1914:

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{326} Ibid. p.158
\textsuperscript{327} Ibid, p.158.
\textsuperscript{328} Aksakal \textit{The Ottoman Proclamation of Jihad}, p.57.
\textsuperscript{329} In the cases of 1809 and 1829, we make a distinction between the Serbians and Greeks in the contested areas and the Ottoman Christians away from these conflicts.
\textsuperscript{330} Aksakal \textit{The Ottoman Proclamation of Jihad}, p.59.
\textsuperscript{332} Akcam, \textit{The Young Turk’s Crime against Humanity}, p.83.
\end{footnotesize}
The Christians, profiting from our ignorance, have now for ages been taking our place and taking away our rights. These vipers whom we are nourishing have been sucking out all the life-blood of the nation. They are the parasitical worms eating into our flesh whom we must destroy and do away with. It is time we freed ourselves from these individuals, by all means lawful and unlawful. 333

The propaganda referred to the striving towards Milli İktisat as a religious obligation. For example, a 1917 Ottoman newspaper article called it an “economic Jihad”. 334

The Kurdish Factor

Before the Balkan wars, CUP policy towards Ottoman Christians had been, at least ostensibly, been characterized by an inclusive approach which included attempts at cooperation with Armenian parties. This caused great resentment among many Muslims, particularly in the backwaters of southeastern Anatolia. Reynolds writes that: "many Kurds (and other Muslims) regarded the Unionists’ recognition of equal rights for Christians as tantamount to betrayal." 335 In Gaunt’s analysis, the Jihad declaration “proved effective in mobilizing the Kurdish tribesmen, who might otherwise have been unwilling to ally with Constantinople” 336. Bloxham also notes how the Jihad rhetoric “assured the loyalty of many Sunni Kurds” who were at risk of siding with the Russians. 337

When examining these events, we must be careful not to project back modern notions of Kurdish nationalism onto the late Ottoman Empire. From our studies of that topic, it appears to be a predominantly recent phenomenon whose origins owe as much to western diasporas as the Kurdish heartlands. There and then, most Kurds saw their identity in religious terms, a fact went on for long after the demise of the Ottoman Empire. In the words of a Swedish ethnologue and specialist on Turkey, writing in the late 1980’s:

Some frustrations may be noticed among the Kurdish nationalists when elderly Kurdish-speaking villagers from Central Anatolia prefer to call themselves Turks or Muslims. The villagers are applying the millet-tradition, and to them the modern differentiation between Turks and Kurds has no relevance at all 338

335 Reynolds, Shattering Empires, p.56.
336 Gaunt, the Ottoman Treatment of the Assyrians, p.250.
337 Bloxham, The Great Game of Genocide, p.74.
Some of the CUP’s political opponents scoffed at their obvious “instrumentalization of the Muslim masses”\textsuperscript{339}. We are of the impression that the Jihad declaration and other Jihad-related propaganda (including before the declaration) boosted the Islamic credentials of the CUP where it was needed the most: among the Kurdish population. While the declaration contained problematic aspects from the viewpoint of Islamic jurisprudence, there was one question that rose above all others: Were the CUP fellow Muslims or atheist apostates? The dominating view among Muslim jurists throughout history is that “the worst of Muslim [rulers] is preferable to the best of infidels.”\textsuperscript{340} The 1908 revolution, with all its talk of “Ottoman brothers” of all faiths and the restoration of the constitution, only served to antagonize those to whom the concept of justice derives only from the application of divine law. Sunni Muslim doctrine and tradition hold that usurpers and tyrants are vastly preferable to rebellion and anarchy, as the unity of the ummah and the “social cohesion of Muslims” is preserved under the former, but not the latter. This principle, called “Islamic quietism” by Bernard Lewis, has been summarized by another scholar of the Ottoman Empire as “\ldots the age-old formula that whoever is in charge is legitimate as long as he is nominally a Muslim.”\textsuperscript{341} Its roots can be found in in the Qur’anic injunction to: “Obey God, obey his Prophet and obey those among you who hold authority”.\textsuperscript{342}

In our analysis, the Jihad declaration and the CUP’s use of religious rhetoric when dealing with the Kurds would have been enough to remove any general suspicion that they were apostates. This was not limited to the Kurds within the empire’s border, and appeals for Jihad were spread in neighboring Persian territories even before the start of the war.\textsuperscript{343} As early as August 1914, Djevdet Bey, who would later be responsible for large massacres of Armenians in Van, incited local Muslims in the area around Lake Urmia in Iran “join in a holy war”.\textsuperscript{344} The Urmia region would be the scene of mass atrocities against Assyrians when the region was under Ottoman occupation between 1 January and May 1915:

During these five months, soldiers, aided by local people, committed massacres and atrocities. In order to mobilize local volunteers, the Ottomans agitated for a jihad and posted declarations in the occupied region.\textsuperscript{345}

\textsuperscript{339} Kevorkian, p.175.
\textsuperscript{342} Qur’an 4:59, quoted in Lewis, \textit{Islam And the West}, p.161.
\textsuperscript{343} Gaunt, \textit{Massacres, Resistance, Protectors}, p.63.
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid. p.95.
\textsuperscript{345} Gaunt, \textit{The Complexity of the Assyrian Genocide}, p.88. The victims here were Nestorians and Chaldeans.
At the start of October 1914, the Russian vice-consul in Urmia, Vedenski, employed the term "Jihad" when describing the devastation of Assyrian and Armenian villages and churches by local Kurds joining a smaller Turkish military force. In January 1915, Russian diplomatic dispatches described the increasing success of "Pan-Islamic agitation among the local Muslims" in the area around the Ottoman-Iranian border. Reynolds also notes that in November 1914: “Inside Russian-occupied Iran, Kurdish bands encouraged by Ottoman propaganda for holy war against infidels began burning churches and wreaking havoc.”

In Mark Levene’s analysis, to the irregulars and vigilantes operating in Ottoman-Persian borderlands, the declaration could have been interpreted as the religious sanctioning of “slaughter, plunder” and “revenge on unbelievers”, yet the above sources point to the effectiveness of Jihad propaganda before the declaration as well.

Because many of the references to Jihad or “holy war” are from foreign observers, the following source is of particular interest: A letter from a Kurdish chieftain that was found in a 1917 raid by a group of Assyrian fighters. Addressing the governor (vali) of Mosul, Haydar bey, the chieftain writes that: “I had the honor of presenting myself to Your Excellency last spring during the “Great Jihad”, by which he meant the campaign of murderous ethnic cleansing of the Assyrian tribes in the Hakkari mountains of June 1915.

The Shi’a Jihad

When Ottoman forces occupied the Iranian province of Azerbaijjan during the early part of 1915, they urged the local population to "to act sincerely and unite yourselves against the infidel". Gaunt notes that the atrocities against local Armenians and Assyrians were committed by a very large number of tribal nomads, joining forces “a skeleton crew” of a few hundred Ottoman soldiers. Gaunt refers to these Muslim locals as “Persian and Kurdish”, but given the geographical location, it is likely that most of these “Persians” were Turkish-speaking Azeri Shi’a Muslims. Whether Azeri or Persian Shi’a, however, the Ottoman (Sunni) Caliph did not enjoy any spiritual authority over them, which is why the Ottoman authorities obtained separate Jihad fatwas from Shi’a religious authorities in the holy cities of

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347 Ibid. p.102.
348 Reynolds, Shattering Empires, p.118.
349 Levene, The Crisis of Genocide, p.137.
351 Ibid. p.87
Kerbala and Najaf.\textsuperscript{352} The Shi’a had historically been treated with suspicion and occasional violent repression by the Porte but thanks to large sums provided by the Germans specifically for this purpose, the Ottomans managed to procure the fatwas.\textsuperscript{353} According to Hanioğlu, the need not to alienate the Shi’a was the reason for the relatively few reference to specifically Sunni elements in the November declaration. Vice versa, the Shi’a Jihad declaration made few specifically Shi’a references\textsuperscript{354}, such as the martyrdom of Hussein. What the Shi’a jihad fatwas did contain, in contrast to the Sunni fatwas, was more traditional language portraying the conflict as a war between Islam and Christianity, as a response to the aggressions of the infidels (Arb.pl.\textit{Kuffaar}). Also, it did not mention the Christian allies of the Empire.\textsuperscript{355}

Rogan describes how, in Najaf, Shi’a clergy made eloquent calls for Jihad against the infidels, referred to as “worshippers of the cross”.\textsuperscript{356} Hanioğlu juxtaposes the “successful”, less ambitious and traditionally formulated Shi’a jihad with the innovative, global and ultimately unsuccessful Sunni one: he cites the fact that, while Sunni Arabs in the peninsula did not heed the call, the Arab Shi’a in Iraq displayed great religious fervor in their battles against British troops. Less convincingly in our estimate, however, is Hanioğlu’s claim that the Kurdish response was "too little to meet the expectations", by which he refers to the hope that the Kurds in northern and central Iran would join the Ottomans and provide large numbers of irregular troops.\textsuperscript{357} The above examples, however, point to a substantial involvement of Kurds, including those outside the Ottoman borders.

\textbf{An Igniting Force}

In Suny’s analysis, the Jihad declaration was by the CUP to facilitate mobilization, but it also alienated Ottoman Christians, which as previously mentioned, was one of the reasons the CUP had avoided proclaiming a Jihad during the Balkan Wars:

At the same time the proclamation of cihad excluded the non-Muslims of the empire and placed them in the anomalous position of being recruited to fight for the Ottoman cause while that cause was proclaimed a struggle against much of Christian Europe with whom many Armenians and Greeks identified. To inspire people to fight for the empire was a difficult task after the long series of Ottoman defeats culminating in the Balkan Wars. The call for jihad was meant to inspire people through their faith.\textsuperscript{358}[our italics]

\textsuperscript{352} Gaunt, \textit{The Ottoman Treatment of the Assyrians}, p.250.
\textsuperscript{353} McMeekin, pp.202-208 and Hanioğlu, \textit{Ottoman Jihad or Jihads – The Ottoman Shi’i Jihad, the Successful One}, p.120.
\textsuperscript{354} Hanioğlu, \textit{Ottoman Jihad or Jihads – The Ottoman Shi’i Jihad, the Successful One}, p.123.
\textsuperscript{355} Ibid, pp.123-124.
\textsuperscript{356} Rogan, p.237.
\textsuperscript{357} Hanioğlu, \textit{Ottoman Jihad or Jihads – The Ottoman Shi’i Jihad, the Successful One}, p.126.
\textsuperscript{358} Suny, \textit{They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else}, p.238.
Like Suny, Reynolds also mention how the sympathies of Ottoman citizens were largely divided along religious lines, which helped set the stage for the coming tragedies:

[...] the outbreak of war between Germany and Russia in the summer of 1914 had divided Muslims and Christians in Anatolia. This is a small but telling indicator of a broader fundamental polarization. Those villagers had nothing directly at stake in a conflict unfolding thousands of kilometres from them, but their understanding of Muslim and Christian interests as antagonistic and the perception of Russia as the Armenians’ patron spurred them to align their sympathies in opposing directions. 359

Bloxham claims that not only did the declaration not succeed in its goal of inspiring rebellions against the entente, it did not even succeed “in galvanizing the different Muslim communities of the Ottoman Empire.” 360 In contrast, Mann sees the Jihad as “a useful mobilizer”. 361 Their view of the Jihad as a motivating factor for lower-level perpetrators is similar, however, and these two scholars are, together with Suny, the primary sources that appear to attribute the least impact to the declaration, in relation to mass violence against Christians. To Mann, while “some” low-level perpetrators “legitimated killing in terms of Jihad “[italics in original] and that, as during earlier massacres, the rallying of mobs was accompanied by “Islamic slogans”362, the importance of such aspects has been exaggerated:

Turks were not the fanatics whom Armenians often described them as being. But genocide does not need to be backed by a whole people. Thirty thousand murderers set amid the silent millions will suffice. 363

Where does Mann get the figure of thirty thousand from? We assume that is a reference to a later chapter in his book, where he describes the events of the Holocaust in Lithuania:

SS men led Lithuanian police bands, killing all the Jews they could find, including women and children. Thirty thousand-strong police auxiliary battalions were formed from reliable anti-Semitic and anticommunist locals. The notorious 2nd Battalion murdered 500 Jews per day. 364

Coincidentally, Gaunt mentions that the intensity of destruction in the provinces of Diyarbakir, Van and Hakkari was equal to that of the Holocaust of Lithuania between July and December 1941. 365 Looking at the following three examples from our primary sources, it

360 Bloxham, Determinants of the Armenian Genocide, p.41.
361 Mann, p.171.
362 Ibid. p.171
363 Ibid. p.172.
365 Gaunt, Massacres, Resistance, Protectors, p.308.
would appear that Mann is underestimating the level of mass participation among Ottoman civilians. Describing a 1915 massacre in Urfa, Kevorkian writes:

The next morning, thousands of the city’s inhabitants, armed with sabers and rifles distributed by the authorities, attacked the three main Armenian neighborhoods. It seems that the mutesarif had activated the traditional springs of religious fanaticism, inviting the Muslim population to punish the unbelievers: at the head of the advancing columns, clerics invoked God’s blessings.»366 [italics in original]

The massacres in Diyarbakir province, where between May and September 1915, an estimated 200 000 Assyrians and Armenians were slaughtered367, involved “literally thousands of perpetrators”368. Also, the testimony of Grigoris Balakian in the Tehlirian trial describes a massacre in the province of Yozgat, in which a convoy of 4600 women and girls were slaughtered by a mob of 13000 villagers armed with crude implements, sparing only the most attractive girls who were divided among them.369

The witness preceding Balakian was Marshal Otto Liman von Sanders. In Dadrian’s words, Sanders testified that the men guarding the convoy (of Tehlirian and his mother) "were influenced by the spirit of cihad"370 In Stefan Ihrig’s account, closer to the original statement, Sanders testified “that perhaps many of the lower ranks of the guards of the convoys had misunderstood the Jihad and thought it “meritorious” to massacre Armenians.”371 In addition to the Teghlirian trial proceedings, Dadrian writes that many other German sources attest to these "excitory features of cihad, particularly against the Armenians".372 He also writes that "A confidential, internal German Foreign office memo stated that "cihad excited the passions of the Turkish people against the Armenians”".373 Isabel Hull, a leading expert on the Imperial Germany's military and the doctrine of “total war” concludes that “The jihad helped fuel the atmosphere of intolerance that aided the genocide”.374 Citing his own contribution to an obscure work on a German banker, Schwanitz

366 Kevorkian, p.618.
367 Gaunt, Massacres, Resistance, Protectors, p.177.
369 Ihrig, p.249.
372 Dadrian, the History of the Armenian Genocide, p.240.
373 Ibid. p.246.
writes that “countless reports” support the Jihad declaration as the “official reason” for the atrocities against Armenians “and others”.\textsuperscript{375} Guenter Lewy, who makes extensive use of documents from the German Foreign ministry, writes that:

Turkey's declaration of a "holy war" on November 13 denounced England and France as infidel nations and enemies of Islam. Even though the declaration was not aimed against the empire's Christians it nevertheless encouraged religious fanaticism.\textsuperscript{376}

There is, our analysis, one problematic aspect of Lewy’s emphasis on religious fanaticism, particularly among the Kurds. This has been cited by a leading scholar as a method towards exculpating the CUP from genocidal intent.\textsuperscript{377} Lewy also claims that the CUP had “little or no control”\textsuperscript{378} in certain areas where Kurds dominated:

With their religious fanaticism enhanced by government anti-Christian propaganda or simply out of greed for the clothing of the victims, the Kurds often murdered even women and children.\textsuperscript{379}

Two leading scholars in the field, Kaiser and Akçam, have pointed to many important inaccuracies in Lewy’s book, including his claims regarding the Kurds and CUP control:

Lewy doubts that the Ottoman central government had control over the deportations […]. His explanations for the causes of Armenian deaths remain unconvincing. Referring to Kurdish and other tribal groups as principal perpetrators is, at best, correct only in part. It is known that these groups acted in close coordination with or under the command of Ottoman officials. Likewise, German and Austrian eyewitnesses had met such commanders and their killing squads at the time. Lewy chose to ignore this information.\textsuperscript{380}

Lewy’s contribution to this study has led us to reflect on another aspect of relevance in the historiography: On one hand, the focus on elite ideology appears to us to have been at the expense of religious ideology among the masses. On the other, if a scholar is influenced by the immediate goal of minimizing or removing responsibility from the elite, emphasizing the fanaticism of lower-level perpetrators can serve as a useful tactic toward that goal. Because the present study focuses on the religious ideology and its instrumentalization by the CUP elite, we wish to emphasize here that this element can only provide part of the explanation for the events in question. While it is our impression that it represents a very substantial part and one that has been neglected in the historiography, as students of these

\textsuperscript{375} Schwanitz, p.197. The book, which we have not been able to obtain is: Vivian J. Rheinheimer (ed.), \textit{Herbert M. Gutmann: Bankier in Berlin, Bauherr in Potsdam, Kunstsammler}, Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 2007
\textsuperscript{376} Lewy. p.186.
\textsuperscript{377} Akçam, Review of Lewy's \textit{The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey} Genocide Studies and Prevention, 04/2008, Vol. 3, No.1, pp.,111-145, p.112
\textsuperscript{378} Lewy, p.194.
\textsuperscript{379} Ibid. p.187.
events, we need to be wary of explanations that reduce their causes to matters of religion. In our estimate, this quote by Kieser convincingly places the Jihad within the overall context:

In the Ottoman case, identity shifts and redefinitions of the early twentieth century mattered decisively. After a last Empire-wide revival in the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, a common Ottoman identity lost its compelling appeal after multiple interior and exterior setbacks had struck the Ottoman Empire in the months and years following the 1908 revolution. Leading Young Turks who had lost their homes in the Balkans shifted towards a post-Ottoman collective self-redefinition as an ethnic Turkish nation in Anatolia to which they believed Christians were not assimilable. The Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) at the reins of imperial power since 1913 combined in fact the igniting forces of ethnic nationalism, social revolution, and of Islamist jihad against other Ottomans, in particular Armenian Christians, whom they feared as political and economic rivals. They excluded them from a common future in Asia Minor. At the same time, they still pursued dreams of imperial restoration and expansion. In 1914, the CUP set in motion a drastic de-Christianization of the post-Ottoman world. [our italics].

**The Activist analysis**

Of the primary sources in this study which specify against whom the Jihad was declared, we have found four who in our estimate misrepresent the declaration to some degree: Rubenstein, Hofmann, Meichanetsidis and Travis. Two other primary sources, Balakian and Libaridian, offer somewhat vague or ambiguous accounts of the declaration, yet which we do perceive as actual misrepresentations. We include this rather lengthy passage to show just how much historical ground Libaridian covers in a short amount of space. Because his book deals with many different aspects of the history of modern Armenia, the chapter on the genocide is only 30 pages long, which obviously precludes detailed accounts of its various aspects. In our analysis, this helps explain the rather ambiguous reference to the Jihad, by which the reader cannot be sure if he refers to the declaration or the wider concept of Jihad:

The extermination was accomplished under the supervision of a secretive organization that functioned as part of the government, the Teshkilat-i Mahsusa, or Special Organization, run by the highest government and CUP officials, manned by convicts released from jail, and acting under the immediate supervision of select members of the CUP. The release of the vilest, unbridled animal passions served well the government’s purpose of ensuring extermination in the most humiliating, de-humanizing fashion. The torture of thousands of women and children became a source of satisfaction for those who sought and found official sanction from government officials as well as some Muslim, clergymen, since the murder of Armenians was characterized, like the war against the entente, as a jihad or holy war. [italics in original]

The inclusion of the word *entente* could be interpreted as a claim that it was in fact was part of the official designation, but this is far too speculative. Also, we have not found any *activist* indications in the chapter in question. We thus consider Libaridian’s description inconclusive.

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382 Libaridian, p.139. For his entire account of the genocide, see Chapter 8: *The Ultimate Repression, the Genocide of the Armenians, 1915-1917*, pp.137-168.
Balakian’s esteem for ambassador Morgenthau as an invaluable source is obvious throughout his book, as in many other scholarly accounts. This is also evident in his description of the Jihad: Morgenthau’s pamphlet is quoted whereas the official declaration is not. However, as previously mentioned, this is by no means uncommon in the historiography of the topic at hand. Also, unlike Schwanitz and Rubenstein, Balakian does not omit the delimitation in the inflammatory pamphlet - of those infidels “who rule over us”. While Balakian fails to mention the countries which the official declaration was aimed at he does include a mention of “Christian oppressors”. There is no claim that it was directed at the Armenians. When Balakian writes of the failed global jihad as a call to arms “against Christians”, this is exactly how the ambassador phrased it. While the mention of the Entente countries (the omission of Serbia and Montenegro is commonplace) as targets of the declaration would have been preferable for the sake of clarity, in our analysis, his account does not misrepresent the declaration. Although his emphasis on Pan-Turanism as a component of the genocide appears exaggerated in light of more recent research, his interpretations of religious factors appear to be substantiated by our secondary sources.

In an article on the Armenian genocide, Tessa Hofmann writes that:

on November 14, 1914, the Shaikh-ul-Islam, the spiritual head of all Sunni Muslims, had declared the jihad, the Holy War against all “infidels” and enemies of the Faith. This included the “internal enemies”, the Ottoman Christians. Killing an Armenian had become a commandment.

While this is an incorrect statement, for which she provides no source, her article shows no other indications of activism, in our estimate. Also, she does not emphasize Islam to the extent that Dadrian does, for example, so the misrepresentation does not to tailor to her narrative. In her conclusion, she emphasizes that “religion is not the main reason for modern genocides”. Also, this article appears to have been based on a lecture and was not intended for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, as far as we are aware. In comparison with some of her other works, it contains some indications that it may have been written in haste. In her more recent, much longer and considerably more detailed 2012 contributions to The

384 Balakian, p.170.
385 Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story p.170
386 Tessa Hoffman, Annihilation, Impunity, Denial: The Case Study of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire (1915/16) and Genocide Research in Comparison, p.39.
387 Ibid.50.
388 Compare for example with Cumulative Genocide.
Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks, she does not mention of the Jihad at all. We consider this case to be inconclusive.

As mentioned earlier, theologian Richard Rubenstein refers to the declaration only as a “fatwa against infidels and enemies of Islam.” Rubenstein freely admits that he is not an expert on the subject on the Armenian genocide, and the fact that he relies exclusively on secondary sources does not necessarily preclude quality scholarship. Many of the secondary sources he uses, however, leave a lot to be desired, such as Lord Kinross’ popular history “The Ottoman Centuries.” Despite this relatively late date of publication, Rubenstein does not mention the Assyrian genocide which would otherwise have seemed like a natural inclusion given the nature of his article and book. Also, he emphasizes the importance of Bryce and Toynbee’s Blue Book, which as previously mentioned, contains documentation on the Assyrians. This is but one of many indications of a lack of familiarity with the basic historiography of the subject. The most noticeable sign of this is his spectacular inclusion of a completely unsubstantiated “smoking gun” telegram, which we have not come across in any other work. Allegedly a 1915 telegram from Talaat Pasha to the police office in Aleppo, it amounts to a concise confession of genocidal intent, amazingly, without any use of coded language. It comes from a 1975 work, privately printed in India. Rubenstein also mentions the possibility for Armenians to escape annihilation by converting, and, as in Katz’ account, there is no mention of all those who converted only to be killed along with the others. Rather than any intentional activism, we interpret his flawed rendition of the declaration as typical of what, together with the next scholar in this analysis, we consider the weakest contribution to our primary sources.

Because of the comparative element in this historiographical analysis, it is necessary to point out the most flagrant cases that deviate from the other scholars in this study in their claims, scholarly depth and use of sources. This primarily concerns their renditions of the declaration, but the overall scholarly quality of our primary sources is also intimately linked to our primary objective: it would only be reasonable to consider the topic of this study a lacuna in the historiography if the impact attributed to it comes from primary sources of a

389 Rubenstein, Jihad and Genocide, p.54. Because of the similar titles, note that this refers to his 2010 book.
390 Rubenstein, Jihad and Genocide: The Case of the Armenians, p.127.
391 Ibid. p.132.
392 Rubenstein, Jihad and Genocide, p.53. Because of the similar titles, note that this refers to the 2010 book.
394 Rubenstein, Jihad and Genocide: The Case of the Armenians, p.133.
high scholarly quality. Our main reason for the primary source criteria in this study is our wish to avoid simplistic, inaccurate or polemical accounts. When and if such accounts occur in our primary sources, it needs to be mentioned for the sake of the overall conclusion.

We have found only one peer-reviewed article by Vasileios Meichanetsidis, the 69-page contribution to the spring 2015, special issue of Genocide Studies International, dedicated entirely to the “The Ottoman Genocides of Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks”\(^{395}\). Because of the tremendous dearth of material in English on the mass violence against Ottoman Greeks, this article constitutes a significant part of the historiography on this topic. Meichanetsidis, a doctor of canonical law, claims that the Young Turks had genocidal intent against all Ottoman Christians even before the Balkan wars\(^{396}\). Due to the enormous impact the Balkan Wars had on radicalizing the CUP\(^{397}\), we term this an extreme intentionalist position. In our analysis, his prosecutorial and polemical approach is exemplified by the claim that Mustafa Kemal was driven by a “Nazi-like ideology”\(^{398}\), a point which he does not elaborate on. He cites a work, although no specific pages, which makes no such claim, as may be surmised from its title: “Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination”\(^{399}\). In this work, Ihrig describes how the Nazis selectively used Atatürk and Turkey as symbols, discarding anything that did not fit the mold:

If Third Reich authors were to write a comparative history of fascism, they would have included Turkey as “one of them,” and in fact, as discussed in this book, they regularly did. However, this does not mean that Kemalism was in fact fascist. It only illustrates, on the one hand, how selective and predetermined the Nazi vision of Turkey was and, on the other, how ambiguous the Kemalist project still was, that it could “accommodate” such perceptions\(^{400}\).

This appears to us to be an attempt “to convince without being able to demonstrate”\(^{401}\), as mentioned in our theory section. We have found several other cases of the above phenomenon in the article: references that, on closer examination, do not support the claims they are cited for, including a reference relating to the Jihad declaration. In the main text,

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\(^{396}\) Meichanetsidis. p.113.


\(^{398}\) Meichanetsidis. p.114.


\(^{400}\) Ibid. p.169.

Meichanetsidis only mentions that a Jihad was proclaimed on November 14, 1914, but not against whom. He then goes on to claim that:

The jihad was largely understood by the Muslim population as granting mujahids, or holy warriors, permission to attack, kill, and plunder (al-ghanîmah) gavurs, as explained in the Qur’an and the hadith, or sunnah.\textsuperscript{402}

For this statement, he cites two polemical works\textsuperscript{403} but the assertion that, it was “largely understood” by the Ottoman Muslims in these terms, is his own since these works do not contain any such statements. He also cites Mustafa Aksakal’s article “\textit{Holy War made in Germany}”, which does not mention mass violence against Ottoman Christians during WWI. Nor does that article contain anything that can reasonably be used as supporting the above claim, again pointing to the above-mentioned pattern. In the footnotes, Meichanetsidis includes an excerpt of an English translations of the declaration:

\begin{quote}
The fatwa read in part, —[Question:] In this way, would it be a religious duty for them to declare war against Russia, Britain and France, and their helpers and supporters, who are enemies of the Islamic Caliphate and trying to—may God forbid—extinguish the divine light of Islam by attacking the seat of the Caliph and the Ottoman nation with battleships and land forces? —Answer: It would. \textsuperscript{404}[italics in original]
\end{quote}

If this had been an accurate translation, it would be very reasonably to argue that Ottoman Christians were collectively considered “their helpers and supporters”, since, as mentioned by Suny and Reynolds, their sympathies were largely with the Entente. Looking at his source, a private website by a Turkish academic\textsuperscript{405}, “specializing in international political economy”, the very passage appears exactly as quoted by Meichanetsidis. The problem is not that he used this translation, which he may probably have assumed was accurate, not least given the nationality of the author. The problem is that he also cites the above-mentioned doctoral thesis by Ürgüplü, which contains the accurate German translation alongside the original Ottoman Turkish (in transliteration). In contrast to the translation quoted by Meichanetsidis, the original text states:” […]ile onlara mu‘în ve žahîr olan ḥükümetlerin”'[our italics] and in

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{402} Meichanetsidis, p.122.
\textsuperscript{403} Ibid. on p.162, writes: “For an explanation of these terms and evidence from the Qur’an and sunnah, see Suhas Majumdar, \textit{Jihād: The Islamic Doctrine of Permanent War} (New Delhi: Voice of India, 2004). For the implications of jihad on non-Muslims, see also Andrew Bostom, \textit{The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims} (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2005).”
\textsuperscript{404} Meichanetsidis, p.162.
\end{footnotes}
Mistakes are an inevitable part of the historical discipline\textsuperscript{408}, but in this case, as in the case of Ward Churchill, we have found the repeated use of citations that “do not support his accounts”\textsuperscript{409}. Since this practice occurs several times in the article, we will consider the citation of the dissertation together with the (incorrect) italicized portion of the quoted translation as a case of \textit{activism}, although not as blatant as in the case of the next scholar. What is also reminiscent of the Churchill case is that Meichanetsidis’ account also contains many assertions on the plights of the Ottoman Greeks that we are in complete agreement with. While we are not as convinced of the applicability of the term genocide as in the case of the Armenians and Assyrians, we wish to stress that because of the lack of quality sources on the topic we can be sure neither of its applicability, nor of its inapplicability. If the historiographical situation improves, as we hoped it would for the centennial of WWI, we may be able to arrive at a conclusion, but as it now stands, the evidence that we have come across appears inconclusive. On related matters such as ethnic cleansing, mass killings, violent dispossession and forced deportations, the historiography clearly shows that all this took place. Several hundred thousand Ottoman Greeks may very well have been killed during WWI and the Greco-Turkish war, but as stated earlier, death tolls vary greatly between scholars. As we have seen, the scholarship on the Armenian Genocide has been held back by certain \textit{idées fixes}, notably “the Holocaust model”. Similarly, it may be just as important to examine the differences in the treatment of Ottoman Armenians and Greeks as their many similarities. What we can be sure of, however, is that the following quote used by Meichanetsidis offers a flawed and overly simplistic interpretation of the role of Ottoman Jihad, taken from a work from which does not mention Greeks as victims of this campaign:

The genocide of the Armenians was a jihad. No rayas took part in it. Despite the disapproval of many Muslim Turks and Arabs, and their refusal to collaborate in the crime, these massacres were perpetrated solely by Muslims and they alone profited from the booty: the victims’ property, houses, and lands granted to the muhajirun, and the allocation to them of women and child slaves. The elimination of male children over the age of twelve was in accordance with the commandments of the jihad and conformed to the age fixed for the payment of the zizya. The four stages of the liquidation -- deportation, enslavement, forced conversion, and massacre -- reproduced the historic conditions of the jihad carried out in the dar-al-harb from the seventh century on.\textsuperscript{410}

\textsuperscript{406} Ürgüplü, p.372.  
\textsuperscript{407} Peters, 1980, pp.90.  
\textsuperscript{408} Report of the Investigative Committee, p.96  
\textsuperscript{409} Ibid. p.63  
\textsuperscript{410} Bat Ye'or, \textit{The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam}, quoted in Mechanetsidis, p.107.
Based on our own reading of Ye’Or’s work, we agree with Arabist scholar Robert Irwin when he describes her style as “relentlessly one-sided and polemical”. Irwin also writes that Ye’Or owes her success not to her scholarship, which Irwin considers highly unsound, but to the fact that Middle East specialists avoided the subject of dhimmi inequality and subjugation for fears of accusation of bigotry, eurocentrism and the dreaded label of “Orientalist”. 411

Interestingly, Hannibal Travis was among the first scholars we read on the Ottoman Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks. Travis is a highly prolific scholar, publishing on a wide range of topics, predominantly within the discipline of Law, such as intellectual property law and cyber rights. His writings on the topic of genocide includes many cases other than the late Ottoman Empire, and he also writes on contemporary issues in foreign policy. Unlike Meichanetsidis, the fact that Travis is such an accomplished academic makes his repeated and inaccurate descriptions of the Jihad declaration even more pertinent to our activist analysis:

From 1914 to 1917, the German Reich under the Kaiser encouraged its Ottoman Turkish allies in World War I to declare a “holy war” against the indigenous Christian populations living in present-day Turkey, Greece, Iraq, and Iran. 412

Travis’ sources are also often highly unorthodox compared to most of our other primary sources: for such an important assertion as the above, he cites a work of popular history (which does not contain footnotes) and an episode from of a documentary series, based on the book by historian Hew Strachan413. After examining both sources, we found that neither of them, nor Strachan’s original book414, contain the claim that the Jihad was declared against the “indigenous Christian populations”. This claim appears several times in Travis’ 2010 book “Genocide in the Middle East”. Earlier in this in this study, we quoted a section which included Travis’ claim that von Moltke “encouraged Enver Paşa to declare a jihad to incapacitate the Ottoman extremists’ internal rivals, i.e the Christians.” [italics in original].415

The sources he cites here are two of the primary sources in this study, Schwanitz and Reid,


412 Travis, Genocide in the Middle East, p.189.


415 Travis, Genocide in the Middle East, p.189.
and neither source supports the claim in question. The cited article by Schwanitz is very similar to the one that we use as a primary source in this study, except for the fact that the former does not mention mass violence against Ottoman Christians. In fact, examining the pages in Travis’ citation, the part closest in resemblance to Travis’ claim was the following:

Max von Oppenheim served as an archaeologist and diplomat in the Middle East for twenty years, and Wilhelm II read his reports recommending the jihad. After the war began, the German General Chief of Staff, Hellmuth von Moltke, wanted Enver Pasha to *proclaim the jihad to weaken the enemies from within*. The kaiser asked him to enter the war too: he wanted the sultan to call for a jihad in Asia, India, Egypt, and Africa to get Muslims fighting for the Caliphate. Berlin and Istanbul cooperated closely in planning and realizing the jihad. Even some academics in Berlin expected to see “Islamic fanatics fighting for Germany.”

Comparing the above with Travis’ writing, we see that the passage contains certain superficial similarities (“weaken the enemies from within”, “internal rivals”), but that Travis’ claims about the target of the Jihad declaration is completely unsupported by the cited source:

The Kaiser wanted to mobilize Muslim support for the Caliphate against the British and Russian empires. The German General Chief of Staff (Commander in Chief), Hellmuth von Moltke, the nephew of the Prussian pioneer of “total war” against the French, encouraged Enver Paşa to declare *a jihad to incapacitate* the Ottoman extremists’ internal rivals, i.e the Christians. Max von Oppenheim, a German diplomat and archeologist, developed a detailed plan for the jihad, and led an Oriental News Department in the German Foreign Office to disseminate the *jihad call* widely throughout Ottoman and other Muslim lands. The German Society for the study of Islam published a book entitled *Haqiqat al-Jihad* (*The Truth of Jihad*) in early 1915, a critical point in time for the anti-Christian movement in the Ottoman Empire. [italics in original].

He also writes of the “The German’ call to pan-Islamic unity against Eastern Christians” but this very specific phrasing is unsupported in Gilbert’s cited book, which as mentioned in our research overview, does not contain any reference to the Jihad declaration, nor for that matter, to Pan-Islam. In another instance, the cited article substantiates the second part of the statement, but it contains no mention of the Sultan, Jihad or similar terms:

Within three months from the Sultans’ declaration of war on the Christians, most Armenians in the Ottoman army had been “worked to death or murdered in labor battalions or massacres.”

416 Schwanitz, The German Middle Eastern Policy, 1871–1945, p.7
417 Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East*, p.189.
418 Ibid. p.190
421 Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East*, p.191.
Also fitting the activist model is the fact that his other footnotes include the French translation of the declaration as well as references to other sources that list the countries the Jihad was directed at. In one of them, Sebastien DeCourtois clearly states that the declaration was not directed at Ottoman Christians422.

Because Travis was the scholar in this study that best fits the activist model, we will include another example of the above phenomenon, found in one of our secondary sources. In his 2014 article, Travis offers a scathing criticism of the exclusivist scholarship on the Armenian genocide that has deliberately refrained from mentioning Assyrians and Greeks. Similarly to the case of Churchill, as viewed by the members of the investigative committee, the problem here is not with Travis’ overall argument, much of which we ourselves agree with, but his use of methods to buttress his claims. On the violence against Ottoman Christian at the hands of the Turkish Nationalist Resistance Movement, he writes:

U.S. Senator William King contended that because of the U.S. tilt toward Turkey (perhaps due to a combination of missionary and tobacco interests), hundreds of thousands of Assyrians and Greeks “had been slaughtered by the Turks under Kemal Pasha.”423

We found it very odd that this source would not mention the Armenians, seeing as several hundreds of thousands of them perished during the years immediately following WWI. We thus decided to compare Travis’ statement with the original article, which fortunately, was available through the N.Y times website. The original reads:

Senator King charged that the provisions of this treaty((Sevres)), under which the allies guaranteed the religious and racial rights of minority peoples in the Turkish Empire, are not being enforced, and that as a result, hundreds of thousands of Pontian Greeks, Armenians, Nestorians and other small peoples in Asia Minor have been slaughtered by the Turks under Kemal Pasha.424 [our italics]

422 Ibid. p .190, Travis cites Trumpener, Germany and the Ottoman Empire, pp.114-115, and the Proclamation of the Grand Council of the Ulema, in LaTurquie, as quoted in DeCourtois, The Forgotten Genocide, p.152.
423 Travis, Constructing the “Armenian Genocide”, pp.170-192, p.178.
Concluding Remarks

Our findings indicate that the Jihad declaration represents a significant lacuna in the field of genocide studies. The importance attributed to it by the scholars in this study stands in sharp contrast to the meagre amount of scholarship that has been dedicated to it. We have found no scholarly work which deals at length with the topic of religious incitement during the Armenian genocide and as mentioned, mass violence against Ottoman Christians is conspicuously missing from the 2016 book dedicated to the Jihad declaration. Is the Ottomanist self-censorship mentioned by Quataert exercising its considerable pull on younger generations of scholars as well? This would be very regrettable indeed, because this topic is in dire need of research from the Ottoman archives. As it now stands, most of the analysis relating to Jihad during WWI is based on western sources, and these have been largely exhausted by now.

In Gaunt’s work on the Assyrian Genocide we found several indications of the importance of the declaration as well as earlier Jihad propaganda in attaining the loyalty of Kurdish tribes, who played a major role in the Armenian and Assyrian genocides. What is particularly interesting in the case of the Kurds is that the effects of Jihad propaganda predated the official declaration. This points to another, more central question: to what extent was a formal declaration even necessary to activate such forces? As we have seen, what Balakian refers to as the “ideology” or “mentality” of Jihad was a powerful mobilizing force throughout late Ottoman history even in the absence of a declaration from the Sublime Porte: it could be locally proclaimed by a mufti, or not even declared at all. The latter case is seen in Reid’s study of the Crimean War, where the powerful rallying cry of Jihad attracted the most heterodox groups of warriors. We also have examples of how Jihad was invoked during local massacres of Christians in peacetime, such as the 1909 Adana massacres.

Several of our sources also attest to the impact of oral propaganda – such as the false rumor of a decree by the Sultan that called for the murder of Christians. While there can be little doubt that word-of-mouth transmission played the larger role, it would also be beneficial to the subject if documents containing religious incitement could be found. We find the Arabic pamphlet described by Morgenthau especially problematic, even though we ourselves do not doubt the overall veracity of the ambassador’s account. In our primary sources, this pamphlet generally receives more attention than the declaration itself, and we cannot be sure of its validity, or at any rate, to what extent it circulated in Anatolia.
In our estimate, most of our primary sources are works of high quality scholarship, which gives added emphasis to our conclusion that the Jihad declaration is an important, yet very under-researched topic. Our study also includes a small number of works of comparatively much lower quality, works that use unscholarly or polemical sources yet make broad, sweeping statement about the nature of the complicated events in questions. This is also reminiscent of the situation described by Quataert earlier: the more the topic of religious incitement is neglected by serious scholars of the late Ottoman Empire, the more prominent the place of simplistic accounts will be. This is a very unfortunate situation indeed, not just for the state of the historiography but also for those who wish to learn about the role of religious incitement as a component of genocide and mass violence. The aspect of continuity can also provide many possibilities for new research, such as comparative studies on the use of religious incitement during massacres throughout Ottoman history. Also, the role of the 1919 Jihad declaration is completely missing from the historiography of genocide and mass violence, and here Greek sources could prove valuable in addition to Ottoman documents.

Our secondary analysis concluded that two of the primary sources conformed to our activist model, and this was particularly evident in the case of the more distinguished academic. In our estimate, their misrepresentations are not only completely unnecessary but potentially damaging to their cause. In the case of the history of genocide and mass violence against Ottoman Christians, there is certainly no need to exaggerate.
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